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

KENNETH A. STAMMERMAN

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INTERVIEW

Q: You go by "Ken," right?

STAMMERMAN: I go by Ken.

Q: Let's start at the beginning. Tell me when and where you were born, and something about your parents.

STAMMERMAN: I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, November 30, 1943. My father was a clerk. My mother was a housewife. This was a lower middle-class Catholic family.

Q: Your father... what type of clerk was he? What did he do?

STAMMERMAN: He worked at various jobs, the last as a plumbing supply clerk. Louisville in those days was a fairly sleepy Midwest town, Southern orientation.

Q: With a fairly substantial German origin population...

STAMMERMAN: Actually Louisville was by that time more Irish than German... the culture I grew up in was Irish American. Very Democratic political... the local political machine ran everything. The Germans actually had settled there first, and started the Catholic community. But many of them moved to Cincinnati after the anti-Catholic riots in the nineteenth century. So then the Irish came in and local lore has it that they took

over because they were too poor to move after the riots, but there were enough Germans left that it still had a certain balance. But the economics in our part of town were poor to lower middle class. The nuns assigned to our parish ran the parochial school. The parish charged us a dollar a month for tuition, and if the family couldn't pay it, the parish picked it up. And it was a good education.

Q: Did your parents have a college education?

STAMMERMAN: No. They each finished high school, which even so was sort of unusual for that culture.

Q: It was.

STAMMERMAN: They married late. They were in their mid-30s when they married. That was the Depression days. I was the youngest of three boys. My mother had had a professional career. She was running a shoe store, but then after marriage-

Q: It would stop.

STAMMERMAN: Right. She didn't work. So anyway, I grew up in Louisville, taught by the nuns.

Q: Were both your parents of Irish extraction, or German or what?

STAMMERMAN: My mother was pure Irish. Her parents were from Ireland and she was born in 1900, the last child of 8 or 9. Her mother died shortly thereafter. Her parents were from Cork, Ireland. My father was German-Irish. His mother was Irish, born in the States, but her family is from Galway. My father's grandfather came over from Germany, from Oldenburg. My grandfather was a butcher and my father was a clerk. In Louisville in those days growing up, the part of town where we were, was inner city and we had Catholics and there were Baptists, and never the two shall meet. All white; there was a black population nearby but no mixing. We didn't have "Jim Crow" formally; we had "Jim Crow" informally. You could sit anywhere you wanted on the bus, but certain parks were 'white only,' schools were segregated. Even Catholic schools by state law until 1954, which meant I went to an integrated school at the grade school level after 1955 once the segregation laws were struck down.

Q: How about at home, was there much discussion of events?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, the culture I grew up in was very political. That is to say, everybody was involved with the Party, well... not everybody, I should say most people I knew, especially Catholics I knew, were in some way connected to the Democratic political machine that ran Louisville. That's how you got your jobs. Jobs for kids, summer jobs. My brothers went through high school and college on patronage. I didn't, but that's another story I'll get to. But everybody read the morning newspaper and the

afternoon paper. From the time you were old enough to talk, you could sit around the table and talk about politics because that was the one thing everybody talked about all the time.

Q: What were the politics of the town? Who was the boss and where was Kentucky?

STAMMERMAN: Well, Louisville had its own Democratic machine based on the Irish-American community and Black and Jewish allies. Kentucky politics was divided between the Louisville machine plus the Louisville *Courier Journal*, which was liberal, very liberal for the Upper South, versus the country politics, Kentucky Democrats had a large majority. Republicans didn't count. So, there were two branches of the Democratic Party, one the Chandler branch based in Versailles, country people, around Lexington, Frankfort and to the west of Louisville other points in Western Kentucky. Dated back to the Civil War actually, Confederates formed the Democratic party in the country. In the city, Louisville was Union and more Midwestern. So the Louisville machine was liberal, except on matters of race. The *Courier Journal* was liberal even on race. When we talked politics, it was the country Democratic people versus Louisville. The machine ran Louisville for years and years and years, gave jobs to everyone who worked for them. The system worked. If you want your potholes fixed, you went to your precinct captain. If your street had voted properly, you got your potholes fixed. If they didn't, you didn't. Civil service ruined the system eventually, but it was a good system. A workable system.

Q: Well, it worked. This is one thing about the patronage system, it actually produced.

STAMMERMAN: Well, anyway, the politics were state level to a point, but that was personalities. But national too. You were expected to be able to talk about... Roosevelt... Wilson the hero. People still had Wilson as their hero from WWI. And Roosevelt, you could hear about the New Deal and how he saved the country.. The Democrats on the West End were very strong Democrats, and it was all very Catholic. Which is to say if you went out with a girl, your mother would ask you what parish is she in. Which was the code for "Is she Catholic?" And she had to be. Didn't matter if she was Italian or Polish because we weren't ethnic. In Louisville, the break is white/black or Catholic/Baptist. Not Irish, German, etc. Just so long as she was Catholic. The system worked fairly well until... Oh, I should get back. We were talking about national politics. Anyway, kids from whenever they could talk, could sit around the table and participate if they could talk intelligently. It didn't matter how old you were, you could talk politics. If you couldn't carry on a conversation, you were just shut out. So this would happen often over beers, and it would be a moveable conversation, from one family's dining room, I'd visit somewhere else, another family's dining room, same thing. So we were all very politicized on a national level. I was born in 1943 and I remember reading in 1950 in the *Courier Journal* about the Korean War. People would talk about Korea, about Eisenhower. All in all, it was a highly political atmosphere.

Q: Yes, so what about at home? So many of the people who had what we would call just a high school education, my parents came from the same thing... Very few people in my

generation - I'm older than you are, I was born in 1928 - had a college education, but they probably were a little better educated than kids today because they read a lot. What about reading for you and your family?

STAMMERMAN: Well, everybody read the newspapers. Everybody read a news magazine. We had Newsweek from whenever it started. The *Courier Journal* and the *Louisville Times* were morning and afternoon delivery and we got both. The *Courier Journal* was a surprisingly good newspaper. It's no longer independent nor as good now, Gannett took it over, but it was a very good newspaper, both locally and nationally. They had a Washington bureau they'd pick up all the international stuff. So we all read that. Not many books around the house. I read comic books, and went to the library.

Q: Did you have the Carnegie Library? Or the equivalent?

STAMMERMAN: The equivalent. The Louisville Free Public Library. It was wonderful. It was about a mile from our house and I would walk from the time I could carry books. My school library was nothing, just a poor little Catholic library, it had nothing. My brothers and I would all walk to the library and come home with books under our arms, on our shoulders.

Q: How heavy was the hand of the Church?

STAMMERMAN: Very.

Q: I'm talking about not just being around, but in doctrine,...

STAMMERMAN: All of the above.

Q: Fish on Friday...

STAMMERMAN: Absolutely...

Q: A mortal sin...

STAMMERMAN: Mortal. We were Irish, and same with the nuns, Irish. The line you walked was very narrow. You could fall off very easily. Of course, it led to scrupulosity. We were all servers, I served mass from 5th grade on, including 6:00 o'clock AM weekday mass. For us it meant getting up early, catching a bus to go to school, luckily the bus system was fairly good. You also had benediction and bingo on Thursday night, another nearby parish would hold bingo on Friday nights.

Q: Bingo being a lottery type, it's a game where they fill up cards, where they would raise money for parishes.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, and fish fries on Fridays with bingo. But the Church also played

a big role in the social life. Political life also, but indirectly. The Church would not take political positions. I understand other cities that did, but Louisville would not, openly, although it was always there. So, say someone had a family problem, they would go to the priest. Absolutely. If it was a public problem, you'd go to the precinct captain. I can recall in my family, we had a cousin who had been divorced, which is itself a scandal but was do-able so long as you didn't have a remarriage. And she wanted to remarry and my dad took her to the parish priest and said, "How can you fix this?" And he threw them both out. Shouted at them, and said, "You went to school here, you know you can't do that!" He threw them out.

She got married anyway. Then she dumped the church, and my dad had just got shouted at. So we were all very strictly in the Church, make sure you dated all Catholic girls, got married in Church. If you didn't send your kids to a Catholic school, you'd hear about it from the pulpit. We expected Catholic children to go to Catholic schools. Well, the public schools in Louisville were all Protestant. They would all have Baptist preachers teaching religion in the public schools. They had the Bible, and teaching Bible. So public taxes paid for Baptist schools and the Catholics paid for Catholic schools.

Q: It's hard to recreate that period now, but it wasn't bad, I mean kids got good educations and turned out all right. At school, how did you find the nuns? In elementary school, were they pretty good teachers?

STAMMERMAN: It was a mix. It depended on what you lucked out with. Some of them simply passed on ignorance, well, the old Church. We had a smart class, a small class, we weren't poor, we just didn't have any money. I had 12 kids in my grade school graduating class. We had 3 classes in one room by the time I was there, all three taught by one nun, with the older kids helping the younger ones. The neighborhood was changing, from white to black, Blacks were not Catholic in Louisville, so some of the churches were closing. Our class was one of the last out of that grade school. But of that class, 12 kids, 2 won academic scholarships to high school in a citywide competition. Pretty good. So a lot of it, we helped each other, small classes. Some of the nuns were good at certain things and not at others. Actually, we'd correct them because they didn't understand some of that stuff, especially politics and current events. I remember in grade school, the French-Indochina war was going on. We had maps on the wall and another kid and I would talk to the class about what was going on in the war and why the French were there and who Ho Chi Minh was and where the Viet Minh were. Pretty good for grade school...

Q: [laughter] It was very good!

STAMMERMAN: The nuns were strict, not well educated themselves. A lot of them were Louisville-origin themselves, and in those days, girls would go straight into the novitiate out of high school so they had, at best, a high school education with teacher training. Well, they had college degrees before they taught, I guess, but they had not seen much of the world. But the Brothers who taught our high school, the Xaverian Brothers (who are not ordained, but take religious vows), were based in Boston, Baltimore, and

they were pretty good. They worked us harder than anyone we were ever with. I've gone to my alumni class and people said, "I've never worked so hard in my life." They were good. [laughter]

Q: Again, because this interview is focused more on foreign affairs, were they had the Brothers had orders in other parts of the world? Were they pretty well plugged in to the world?

STAMMERMAN: They were plugged in, they had a national viewpoint. Much more than the Sisters, who were very local-oriented. They had at least been in Boston or Baltimore and they moved around the country a bit. They had a much wider world view. And they were good. Their degrees were in history, English. Math. I was a math major in college. They'd taught us math, a very good grounding. And they would encourage us; this would have been the late '50s, to talk current events.

Anyway, by then, back to the politics of things, in 1959 the Democrats lost control of the city of Louisville. Normally, the machine ran the city; the mayor was a figurehead. If you wanted a job, you went to the machine headquarters. You didn't go to the mayor's office or public works. They gave you a slip of paper and then you'd go to the parks department and get your job. You got the job if your father worked for the machine. It all worked out very well, except that in Louisville as I said we had informal Jim Crow, but it was not really Southern, that is to say, Black people could vote. In 1959, unfortunately, they nominated for mayor a man who was principal at a local high school, respected city elder, and so on. However, he was a segregationist. He opened his mouth and said so. We lost the Black vote, lost city hall, lost patronage. So, I when I went to college, I had a scholarship but, that meant I had to work for a real company in a factory for the rest of the tuition.

Q: How about... there was the Brown Case versus Board of Education, in 1954, how did that impact, eventually... this is desegregation... as you saw the school system?

STAMMERMAN: Well, the way it worked, in Louisville, in Catholic school, public schools, the public schools immediately desegregated in 1955 on a freedom of choice plan. That is to say, you can go to your neighborhood school, and in the West End, that meant that Black kids could go to school with white kids, where I lived. Before, they could not. They would have had to go to a school not too far away, but it was an all-Black school. But Louisville was ready to desegregate and did, on that basis, without trouble. No trouble, no demonstrations, no nothing.

In fact, the guy who was in charge of the school system, whose name was Carmichael, was invited by Eisenhower to the White House. "How did you do it?" Because there was no trouble. The next year you had Black kids and white kids sitting together in the same classroom. The Catholic schools had wanted to desegregate all along, but the law wouldn't let them. So the Bishop ordered the Catholic schools to desegregate. If there were Black Catholic kids, fine. If they were not Catholic, bring them in anyway. He did

not want whites to flock to the Catholic schools to avoid integration. So that meant in 1955, when I was still in grade school, we desegregated immediately. In our local school, which was in a mixed neighborhood where I lived, the Catholic school population was still mostly white. What happened after that was, the schools desegregated, but the neighborhoods then re-segregated. That is to say, the West End where I grew up, rapidly became a Black neighborhood. Now it's almost all Black.

So, the schools closed behind me. As white parents moved to the suburbs, not necessarily because of schools, but because the neighborhoods were changing. That was helped along by redlining. My part of Jefferson County was redlined. We had urban renewal downtown in the '50s and '60s, which was mostly a Black area, near downtown, and they gave mortgages to Black families to move to West End. Not to other parts of Louisville and Jefferson county. That meant that white families who lived in West End who didn't want to live next to Black people moved out. For the most part. My family didn't, until the mid-'70s.

Q: What was the feeling toward the Black neighborhoods in those times? Today a major concern is crime and drugs. Was there a concern in those days?

STAMMERMAN: No, not drugs because there weren't any. Crime, not really. It was more white people of my father's generation simply did not want to be around Black people. It was racism, pure and simple racism. It was partly economic - competition for jobs - but that generation was very racist. Which is interesting, because the Democratic Party was not. The Church was not. The establishment in town was not.

In fact, to digress for a minute to what happened at the state level, Happy Chandler, who was again in another part of the Democratic party from where my family was, he was governor 1955-59, and in '56 or '57 there was a court order in a southern Kentucky county to integrate the school, and there was trouble. The first day of school, some Black kids went there under court order and some rocks were thrown. Well, Happy sent in the National Guard and said, "We have a federal court order. Anyone who breaks it is going to jail. And that is that, I'm governor." And that was it. He was one of the Southern Populists, like Big Jim Folsom, and Jim Folsom of course got beat by George Wallace.

Q: In Alabama.

STAMMERMAN: In Alabama. Had only Folsom been governor, it might have turned out differently because they didn't believe in that sort of thing. Kentucky didn't have the trouble. There was trouble much later when bussing happened, but that was much, much later.

Q: Yes. While you were in school, how did things work in the classroom?

STAMMERMAN: Well, with the nuns and the Brothers, things worked out well. It helped that the school that I went to was very much into athletics, in addition to

academics. The Brothers' mission as they saw it, as much as I could tell, was to get us OUT. We were growing up in a certain culture, and they wanted to educate us to find a way out of that culture. [laughter] Get us out of there.

Q: Moving on! [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: Move us on, on to college. Their purpose was to get every kid in our school's classes into college. And they did pretty well. So there were two ways out: sports and academics. They had a strong sports program. They had no football field and no basketball gymnasium, no gym in the school. One year when I was in high school they took the State basketball championship, which is a big deal in Kentucky, and we were always the visiting team, since we had no gym. [laughter]

Q: Oh, yes. [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: Same thing with football, they were always the visiting team. They developed people like Paul Harnung, Howard Shnellenberger, all-American athletes in college, they were all from our high school. And then the Black kids came in and there were a lot of star athletes, which really helped. That made them acceptable to the local culture. But the Brothers would not put up with any racism. None. It was so understood, right off the bat. Any trouble like that and you were out of school. There was just no trouble.

In addition, the generation I grew up in, while there was racism at home, maybe it's the influence of the Courier Journal, I don't know, but we didn't have the racism that our parents had. Maybe it was because we were all rebelling against our parent. While they believed in segregation, most of us did not.

Q: Well the world was changing. What about books and movies? Were you told to get up and swear you wouldn't see such-and-such a movie?

STAMMERMAN: No, actually, we weren't. But the local Catholic newspaper, which we all read, would publish the Legion of Decency list. It was understood that you didn't see "C" movies. Period. And the objectionable one, it depended on how old you were, and in college you did it, because it was something to do.

Q: Was there anyplace you could sneak off to see them?

STAMMERMAN: Well, there were two places. There was an art theater, which showed foreign films, and that was the likely place I'd see them, but there wasn't much to them. And then there was a local burlesque place.

Q: You graduated from high school in...

STAMMERMAN: 1961.

Q: By the way, how did the 1960 Kennedy campaign...

STAMMERMAN: By the way, I should tell you that the books, you mentioned books, whatever you could get at the library you could read. We didn't buy books, couldn't afford them I suppose. You could read adult books, that is, in the adult section of the library, with no problem.

As regards the Kennedy campaign, my family was very much involved in it. For him, of course, for Kennedy, he was Catholic, Irish Catholic at that. Of course. His picture went up with Roosevelt and Wilson. He visited Louisville, huge turnout. Kentucky had a lot of anti-Catholics downstate, especially country Baptists.

Of course [the campaign] motivated a lot of people. Obviously, my generation was really turned on by Kennedy, by his inaugural address. When I started college, that was a huge motivation for a lot of us to be involved in political life. Not just the machine, but also in national political life. By the time I was in the first two years of college, my brother actually ran for alderman of Louisville on a reform Democratic ticket. We were that kind of family. He lost because Republicans were still in charge. They won two elections before we took over again. But by the end, they put in civil service, which destroyed the machine. Anyway, that very much affected many of us coming into college. I should say, to finish high school, when we got out of high school, my class, we had 124 kids graduating, we had four National Merit Finalists, which was pretty good for that class. There was another Catholic high school in town, taught by the same order of brothers, but with richer kids, and we had more than they did which was a point of pride. We learned a lot. Worked very hard.

Q: Obviously you were coming from a background where there wasn't going to be a lot of money for college. Where were you pointed? What were you after?

STAMMERMAN: Well, the Brothers wanted us to get out, which in Louisville geographically meant Notre Dame, maybe, or some other nearby college. I applied to lots of places around the country. There was a problem with money, so I applied to St. Louis, which is a Catholic college. A Catholic college would have been more acceptable. I also applied to a couple of Boston colleges. The Brothers said, "Try MIT" because that was a math place. I was very good at math. "Why don't you try MIT, or Boston College." So I wrote away to lots and lots of colleges. In the end, it was more of a money thing, so I stayed in Louisville. I went to the local Catholic boys' college, which became co-ed when I was there. I worked summers and Christmas holidays.

Q: What college did you go to?

STAMMERMAN: I went to Bellarmine College.

Q: What does that stand for?

STAMMERMAN: It was named after Saint Robert Bellarmine, who was a pillar of the Counter- Reformation. At the Council of Trent, he was a major figure. He was a Jesuit. The Bishop had wanted Jesuits to run the college when he started it in 1950; they didn't come, so it was run by the Franciscans, by the time I was there. Now, it's run by laity and diocesan priests, but the Franciscans were there. Different kind of Catholicism, much gentler than the strict Irish version I had grown up with.

Q: So you were there from '61 to '65, what was your major?

STAMMERMAN: Mathematics. But everybody had to take Liberal Arts. You took a liberal arts core and then a major on top of it.

Q: Did you find in your religion studies that the with the Franciscans it was a different world than you had gotten from the, what is it... the Xaverians.

STAMMERMAN: I had grown up with Jansenism. Jansenist-type Catholicism. Scrupulous Catholicism of the nuns and brothers. Yes, the Franciscan version was a much different kind of Catholicism. We had a scripture scholar who was one of their best to "learn about the Scriptures." Before then, we never opened a Bible.

Q: You were not supposed to open it... in those days, the Catholics really, the Bible was practically forbidden...

STAMMERMAN: You didn't do it on your own. But we had a Scriptures scholar, and I was in the honors program and we had really good teachers. He was quite good, we had a scripture scholar teaching a lot of stuff that the Protestants had 50 years earlier about who wrote which book. We all were taught in grade school and high school, if you did Bible at all, Moses wrote the first five and everything is literally true, more or less. But he taught us a lot, more the normal nowadays theology of text criticism. We had Franciscans who would say, "Catholicism is an easy religion, it's so easy, so difficult to fail. An abundance of grace." Very Franciscan, rarely a departure. Also, they were heavy into liberal arts. I had to take metaphysics, philosophy through metaphysics, four semesters of theology, we all had to take English, History, a language, it was all very rigorous.

Q: What language were you taking?

STAMMERMAN: French. I took Latin and French in high school, French in college.

Q: Your major is math, but was this pointed at anything at this time?

STAMMERMAN: It was pointed at teaching. I thought I would be a math teacher. A number of reasons, I like math. Still do. I just thought it was fun. I was good. Not great, but good. Did a math major. Keep in mind that this was 1965 when I graduated, so when I got enough education credits, I could get a certificate. We didn't do major/minors, we just

did majors, but I could have gotten an education certificate, and I did take my practice teacher course by teaching mathematics. That's how I found out I didn't want to teach. It didn't work out very well. I liked math, but I didn't like teaching. Keep in mind, those years were early Vietnam, '65.

Q: '61 to '65, yes.

STAMMERMAN: '61 to '63 was Civil Rights. I got very much involved in that, the Civil Rights Movement, which later helped me. That's part of the thing in the Foreign Service exam...

Q: What were you doing with the Civil Rights Movement?

STAMMERMAN: Well, I was in college, got very involved in national politics at the college level, it was the Kennedy era after all, and I got into some local college organizations that were very liberal for Louisville. We had political discussions around the college. We had a dean who was very political and would bring in... for example, our graduation speaker was Father Daniel Barrigan.

Q: Oh, my goodness, a well-known anti-war activist...

STAMMERMAN: Of the Catonville Seven, or however many of them there were, the Jesuit. He was a poet. He came in and spoke as a poet, not as an antiwar activist. He spoke at our Baccalaureate Mass. So we had people like that come in and talk to our groups or classes. So, I got involved in Civil Rights, so did a lot of the Franciscans. I remember in the autumn of '62 when James Meredith integrated Old Miss, I was on the campus paper. That would have been before our college semester started. Three of us piled in a car and drove down to Oxford, Mississippi. Some of the soldiers from Fort Campbell, Ky, went down there to enforce it, so that was sort of a hook to get us down there. We went down there to report on the integration of Old Miss. Was the first time I saw broken glass, tear gas and things like that to deal with it. In Louisville we had problems with open housing. I was part of a march for open housing in 1963 in the state capital in Frankfurt. Martin Luther King was there.

Q: I read a book called, The Children, which was about the integration movement of the early ones of the Black Movement. There are some black universities in Louisville, which was one of the centers. Maybe I'm wrong.

STAMMERMAN: I think it is near Lexington... KSU, Kentucky State University. Probably. Because, well, by the time I was in college the local universities in Louisville were integrated. There was no Black college like that in Louisville.

Anyway, every decision you made in regards to school had to do with the war in a way. We were all draft eligible in any case. My brothers had to be concerned about the draft, which led to a lot of early marriages.

Q: There was sort of a Yin and a Yang here... You had Kennedy as President calling for, get out and do something for your country. And yet there was maneuvering on the part of dealing with the military, which seems to be sort of the reverse sort of thing. Did you find yourself caught up in that sort of thing?

STAMMERMAN: Keep in mind the years... we are talking ’61 to ’65. Where we got involved was the Civil Rights side of the Kennedy message. Of course, in ’63 he died in the assassination, terrible thing. Johnson was the usurper, and perverted the message, so that by when I graduated in ’65 I immediately went to grad school. I remember in grad school we’d sit around TV and see Johnson and the Defense Secretary MacNamara, and we’d shout, “Liar.” I was bitterly antiwar. By then we all knew what was happening.

When I graduated from high school, the kids who didn’t go on to college went to the Army. That was your fate, because in the West End where we were, a lot of kids couldn’t go to college and they all went into the Army. While our Catholic high school sent 95 percent of its grads to college, the public high school in the same neighborhood sent maybe five percent of its grads to high school. A lot of kids were starting to be shipped off to ‘Nam by ‘64-’65, kids I’d played ball with were shipped out. I tell people Cassius Clay and I had the same draft board. It was an awful place. They didn’t care what you said, unless you were in college, you were wearing Army green.

So that made a lot of career decisions, and teaching was one way to stay out, another way at least early on was being married, and after that was having children. Nobody wanted to go. Nobody I knew believed in the war. All of our dads or uncles had served in WWII, but there was no duty on us to serve in Nam. This was by ’65. I was almost deciding to join Officers Candidate School, but decided I wanted to go to grad school.

Q: How was the National Guard? Was that a way to sort of stay around home?

STAMMERMAN: My brother did that, reserves actually, but you had to know somebody. I know somebody, for example, in ’66 he was draft eligible, but he was not from my part of town. He found a way to be interviewed by the general who was in charge of the local Reserve unit. The general was also a senior banking member of one of the major banks. The general said, fine we need somebody like you, as he was pre-law or something, because we’re going to need a lawyer in our group. So he got a Reserve commission. It paid to have influence. We didn’t. My brother got in Reserves, I don’t know how he did it. My oldest brother got out because he married. He was old enough that the war didn’t affect him. I didn’t know anybody who could get me into the Guard.

Q: So you graduated in ’65. What were you doing for the summers?

STAMMERMAN: Summers I was working in a factory. The first couple of summers... actually I got a job at the school library at Bellarmine but it didn’t really bring in enough money, so after my sophomore year I worked in a factory as a machinist. I still have my

machinist union card. It was a union shop, but the factory was pretty bad. We worked on multimetals. You made saw guards, made grinders, you would grind chips that cut things, sharp edged things. The first job when you joined there was to separate chips out... we called them chips. They were actually little metallic pieces with very sharp edges, and we stacked them in sizes. Everybody new got that job because what it would do is cut your hands. If you wore gloves, you wouldn't cut your hand but you couldn't make the rate. So you threw your gloves away and you made the rate. After a couple of weeks, your hands were scarred enough that they didn't bleed anymore. It was a sort of initiation, to see if you could take the work. It was dark and loud, and OSHA would shut it down today. I would work in there with acid on drill bits, with no skin protection. It was not pleasant but it paid well. So I did that every summer.

Q: So now we are up to '65.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, we had a Congressman who was a right wing Republican. I would write diatribes to him every so often about how what he was doing was terrible, and besides he was Republican. I was also in the debating club and we traveled around the country. Anyway, I would write him, and when looking at Junior Year and saw job notices I saw the Foreign Service exam posted. I said, "Would you send me material on the exam; you are a liar and a crook and your politics stink, but would you send me material on the Foreign Service exam?" [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: And he did. He sent me the entire package. He wrote to somebody in B/EX and they sent me the entire package. I said this looks like fun. So I applied. I also applied for the Federal Management internships. I took the FSO exam as a junior or senior, and passed the written exam. Next time they came around to Louisville, I took the oral exam. In those days, they even traveled to Louisville. It was the old kind of exam, I'm sure you took the same one that we all took in those days. You walk into a room where you have a chair, four people sitting behind a table, no windows, and you sit in the chair, and they could ask you anything they want for as long as they wanted. And they did.

Q: Do you recall some of the things?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, a couple of interesting things. One thing, at that time... This is back in my family... I didn't drink. There was so much alcoholism in my family that I was scared.

Q: Essentially, lower, middle-class, Irish. Drinking was a real problem.

STAMMERMAN: Drinking was a real problem on both sides of my family. That scared me, so I wouldn't drink at all. And one of the questions they asked was, well what do you do at a cocktail party? I said I ordered a soft drink. I kind of danced around that a bit. I

said the way you do it is order a ginger ale. I always remembered that in my Foreign Service career because it looks like Scotch and soda. But I sort of danced around it. They didn't make a big deal out of it. One of the other questions they asked was... there were four coups in Africa last year, which countries were they? I may have gotten that one. I was good at trivia. Who's in and who's out and what difference does it make to the United States? The point was, they knew eventually they'd find something you could not answer, and then what do you do? Turns out I did the right thing which was to answer a different question. Go back, when I didn't know the fourth country, I'd say, BUT... Nigeria, this is really important for U.S. policy because it does this and that, and then we'd go on and talk about Nigeria a lot. And that got us talking about civil rights, and they said, well suppose you were in Nigeria. You are from the South, right? South of the Mason-Dixon Line... what do you do when somebody asks you about the treatment of Black people in the United States? And I talked about how I was involved in the civil rights struggle, and Martin Luther King, and how we are making changes. We have difficult problems but we are trying. We have a long way to go. And that seemed to satisfy them. And after the exam they tell you to leave and you walk outside the door. About a half-hour later a guy comes out, shakes your hand, and says, "You're in." And then it was a matter of time. I stayed in grad school. Got married.

Q: Where was your wife from?

STAMMERMAN: She was originally from Detroit. That was my first wife. And went out to Louisville in high school. We got married when I was in grad school. I'd thought about joining the military, just because I thought I might be drafted out of the Foreign Service. I asked the Foreign Service recruiters, "Will you guys give me a deferment?" And they said, "We can't. We'll help you with a letter to your draft board, but we cannot defer you." And so we decided we'd get married, and then they changed the rules and said marriage didn't keep you out of the Army, only if you had children and we didn't have children at the time.

So we decided to join the Foreign Service anyway and take our chances. I asked them, what if I join the military first, will you keep that [Foreign Service] job open? They said, it all depends. Yes, you'll stay on the list, but where you are on the list right now, we will take you in December of 1966. When you come back four years from now, who knows where you will be on the list? So if you want it, take it. So we decided, yes, we'll go and we took our chances and came here at FSI, in December 1966.

Q: Well before we get to that, when you signed up for this, did you know anything about the Foreign Service?

STAMMERMAN: No. [laughter] Only what I could read in the B/EX material. I wanted to get out.

Q: Well, you always wanted to be a diplomat or something, so this is...

STAMMERMAN: No, no, no. This was to get the hell out of Louisville.

Q: You got to Washington in December, 1966. Was this your first time in Washington?

STAMMERMAN: Second. I'd come here on a school debate team trip in college. But it was first real time in Washington. Went to FSI and check in and get some advice on where to live. They pointed us out to Columbia Pike. So we went to the old FSI and learned about the Foreign Service. Classes in those days were small, about 50 people, mostly men. The FSI junior officer program was then run by Tom Dunnigan, though Alex Davitt taught the classes.

Q: Were you at all apprehensive about... here you had all these terrible sophisticated people, diplomats and all, or were you sort of oblivious, or were you wondering what are they taking me for?

STAMMERMAN: No, I was sort of oblivious to the whole thing. In those days the FSI junior officers training was fairly rigorous, I thought, so we worked pretty hard. And we got to meet everybody else in the class, who turned out to be pretty decent people. I'd expected much more Ivy League, sort of just from what I'd heard. But it wasn't. I think by the time I joined, I think there was one guy before me who was sort of Southern Catholic, but there weren't very many in the Foreign Service. But by then they were reaching out to sort of make the Foreign Service look more like America, so we had people from California and so on.

Q: Well, I came in in 1955, and there was talk, we want a massive intrusion of "Main Street" into the Foreign Service.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, we had very few Georgetown, Princeton. It was mostly people like us, a few from the South, but mostly Midwestern, California, East Coast.

Q: What were you getting as you talked to your fellow junior officers about, well I guess Vietnam must have been a major topic.

STAMMERMAN: Vietnam was very big. Up until our class, and this was the class that started in December, 1966 – January, 1967... up until that class, married officers did not get sent to 'Nam, unless they volunteered. During the class, we would call on other agencies, one was DOD, Department of Defense. Went to the Pentagon and got our Vietnam briefing. We want to know about Vietnam and Alex Davitt was our junior officers coordinator. Great guy. Alex was good because he taught us a lot about the Foreign Service, because he had stories. He would say, This is what we do. He would tell adventures. He'd been in Damascus for many years. He talked about shopping, about things he'd done. 'Uncle Alex' as we ended up calling him. Great guy. I don't know if he's still around. He worked with Tom Dunnigan. Tom was more dignified, Alex was more the raconteur.

Q: Tom does interviewing for us, in fact I have to call him today. [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: I saw Tom at Foreign Service Day two years ago. Nice guy. Anyway, Alex told the Pentagon that we wanted to talk about what was going on in Vietnam, so they put up a colonel to brief us on Vietnam at the Pentagon, with a map and a pointer and the whole thing. Remember, we were all young, 30 years old was the top age limit for joining the Foreign Service. We had a couple of veterans, people who'd done their military service and finished, one Marine, gunnery sergeant, and others who had been officers, but most of us were just fresh out of college. We went over to the Pentagon, and this colonel thought we were the usual State Department guys coming over for the standard briefing. We weren't. We questioned him, and essentially destroyed his briefing. We said, "Tell us the truth, you're not telling us the truth." He wasn't. We said, "You say you are ready to leave Nam what are the plans?" This is 1967, the American policy was, be there a short while, finish what we are there to do, and then we are getting out. "Tell us how you are getting out." He said, "Well that's highly classified." We said, "We're cleared." And it just finally broke up. After that, Alex was told don't bring a class like that back again, because nobody in our class was for the war. We all thought it was insane. My own background, I was very much against it, the draft board was giving me a lot of trouble.

Q: As you say, it was not a particularly responsive draft board.

STAMMERMAN: I always thought it was a criminal enterprise. It was run by a clerk, an old lady, who had ruined the lives of West End kids for a generation. She would say no to every request for deferment. You had to appeal. You couldn't do anything with her. And finally, Cassius Clay (Mohammed Ali) had the money to sue them and beat them. But until then, we all just went to appeal and usually got beat. I had my draft status shifted from my Louisville board to the Washington, DC board, and appealed on occupational grounds, and the DC board let me go, because they didn't need the bodies like the Louisville West End board did. They did draft one kid out of my FSI Junior Officer class. The story he gave was that he was from Virginia, and he appealed to the state board for occupational deferment, the Foreign Service had issued his orders, he was to be third secretary at embassy such-and-such. Their response was, "We don't give deferments to secretaries, and you're reclassified 1A." They did not understand the difference between a 'secretary' as in a person who takes dictation, manages an office, etc., and a 'third secretary of embassy' which is a diplomatic title. So he went. I figured once I got shipped overseas my Draft Board were not going to pay my way back. Once I got my orders, it sort of took me out of the draft business.

Q: They used to call it the old April Fool's Report that was due on the first of April, a post preference report.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: You had been looking at the profession for a long time, so you were obviously picking

up corridor information about what was the best career move, where to go and all?

STAMMERMAN: In those days, you entered the junior officers program, so you didn't have cone or anything like that. What you were looking for was a bureau. Your first assignment would be overseas, so you were looking for a bureau, a post. So we could talk with people who were in language training who had gone through this, what's the gossip...? Then the Junior Officer program gave us the list of the posts that would probably be open and we were to rank them 1, 2, 3. Of course, we put together a pot fund for whoever would get the worst assignment. Damascus was on the bid list. I've always been interested in the Middle East, for whatever reason, just from reading about it. So I put Damascus as my number one post. It would be open in, think about this, June of 1967.

Q: June 6, was that the Israel-Arab war?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, our assignments were made in early March probably. So anyway, we all gossiped around that if you were a single male, it was Vietnam duty unless you applied for something hardship, it was hard to tell. Most of us were married, but there were a couple of bachelors and we figured they knew what their chances were. So I put down my language, I knew I'd have to have language training because I'd studied French but I couldn't speak it. I looked for a French language post, something with French training associated with it. So I put Damascus as my first, France, then Canada, something like that... went down that list. So they sent out announcements and I got Damascus. I was the only person in the class [laughter] who'd put Damascus down, and it was my first [choice], so that was easy. I got it. Also that day, however, they named one officer to go to Vietnam, even though he had a wife and baby, an infant. His wife got up and walked out of the room crying. He went. Turned around and gave in his orders to resign.

So, I was assigned to Damascus. If you had applied for Paris, you got West Africa, pretty much. The plum assignment was staff aide in London, which somebody got, but he later got bounced. As he went into the area studies, the ambassador chose somebody else, and bounced him out and he ended up in Barbados or something. So we learned something there about how the system works.

I was assigned to Damascus. I went to French language studies. Very interesting there. One of the ladies who taught us knew Bernard Fall.

Q: He wrote, "Street Without Joy..."

STAMMERMAN: "La Rue Sans Joie" and Vietnam so we ended up talking about that. Everybody talked about Vietnam all the time.

Q: Were you running into anyone in senior levels there who was saying yes there was something there, or was it strictly in your environment there all anti-Vietnam?

STAMMERMAN: Every officer there that I knew was anti-Vietnam. Maybe before us, I don't know, but in our class and the language classes we were in, if you talked at all about Vietnam it was "Look how stupid this was."

Q: There was an organization called "JFSOC" was that going then?

STAMMERMAN: It was, but it had nothing to do with us, it was at Main State, we were at FSI and we were all focused on leaving, going overseas.

Q: So you were not part of the new political activism...?

STAMMERMAN: No, we were not. I studied French, everybody had their language classes and we sort of stayed together as a group, except for people that shipped out. Then, our orders were to go in late June, I guess, in late May when the Israel-Arab conflict was sort of heating up, they put a freeze on any movement and we knew we weren't going to go to Damascus. At least until things calmed down. Then war broke out and Damascus shut down. There were two of us who were assigned to the region...

Q: You're talking about the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the Six-Day War.

STAMMERMAN: All of our posts shut down except for Tel Aviv and Amman, I guess. They were shut down for a while. They would not let anyone new to be transferred, there were no transfers at all unless we were reassigned out of the Middle East. They closed down our embassy in Damascus, under fire, actually.

Q: I was going to say, people went over the wall to get out of there.

STAMMERMAN: Cairo shut down. That was a biggie. We had another junior officer who was assigned to Beirut as an admin officer. I was assigned as a junior officer rotation in Damascus. So I laid low, and he went over and bugged NEA and said what do I do now? I figured I'm not going to do anything, I'll just let this thing play out. Sort of a strategy thing. He bugged JOP, junior officer program, and they shipped him out to Tananarive, I think.

Q: Madagascar.

STAMMERMAN: I just sat tight, and finally, somebody called from NEA and said how would you like to Tel Aviv? That would be great, I'd be happy to go to the Middle East. Fine: that's the only place in the Middle East who is accepting junior officers, so you'll have a lot of company. So, this is fine, I'd taken area studies in preparation for going to an Arab country. I told the officer who was teaching us, who was actually a retired missionary, I think, "We're going to Tel Aviv." He shook his head and said, "Oh, that's awful. That's terrible. You won't ever be able to go to an Arab country." Which turned out not to be true.

Q: But at that time that was the conventional wisdom.

STAMMERMAN: Yes it was. So we shipped off to Tel Aviv in late June of 1967.

Q: June of '67, and you were in Tel Aviv from when to when?

STAMMERMAN: I was there twice. So this is the first time, from June of '67 until December of '69. Two and a half years; I extended.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived there?

STAMMERMAN: The ambassador was Walworth Barbour. Longest-running tour in the Foreign Service. He came there in '62 and he stayed through '72 –'73. Our own Sidney Greenstreet. Huge man.

Q: DCM was...?

STAMMERMAN: Bill Dale. When I left Tel Aviv two years later, it was Owen Zurhellan.

Q: What was the situation when you arrived in Tel Aviv?

STAMMERMAN: When I arrived there were four first-tour junior officers, and a couple second-tour junior officers. Again, that was because people were being reassigned. People who were evacuated from NEA posts, rather than go all the way back, some of them went to Tel Aviv. And Tel Aviv could take junior officers because it wasn't on their bill in terms of budget, it was on Central Personnel's JOP account. They weren't busy at the Embassy in the way that Tel Aviv later was busy. It was a post with sort of a classic organization, with the ambassador and DCM, formal staff meetings. Junior officers were pretty much left to the section chiefs to manage. It was the old Foreign Service, so spouses were graded, so the spouse's performance would go on your efficiency report. Tel Aviv was an exciting place outside the embassy. Israel was very exciting... it was still a new country, vibrant culture. We got there and sort of kept contact with the Embassy almost only to go to work to, and got out into Israeli society, and it was exciting. Jerusalem had just opened up for Israelis, so we'd go up to Jerusalem and go to the Old City, drive around the West Bank, go to Bethlehem. I studied Hebrew immediately, got into a Hebrew class. The embassy was formal, Walworth Barbour was one of the greats, I think. We didn't all go to staff meetings. Junior officers would rotate to the staff meetings. Junior officers were mainly seen but not heard at a staff meeting. You could sit there and get this wonderful education from Ambassador Barbour who knew everybody and everything in Israel. He would go to the embassy late in the morning, stay for 2 or 3 hours, and go home and take a nap.

Q: Is that right?

STAMMERMAN: He was already somewhat ill, had trouble breathing. But he would come in and say, "I saw the foreign minister yesterday and this is what she had to say." And you'd learn all this stuff. Absolutely great analysis. Political Chief was Howard Stackhouse. Excellent man. They kept the reading file, which is to say all the reporting cables, which we all could read, in the commo section. You'd sign the cover and then you could read. It was a wonderful analysis, so you learned how Foreign Service reporting was done by reading this excellent analysis about what was happening. They also told us about the events leading up to the war, what they saw, from their perspective. I was thrown into the visa mill, first job, visa officer, lot of Foreign Service officers do visa work, non-immigrant visas. That amounts to interviewing people who want to go to the United States as visitors, and you examine their bona fides, are they really visitors? A lot of times we'd get Israeli kids just out of the Army and they were really going to the United States to get a job. So we'd turn them down and tell them to get immigrant visas. Of course if they got in the immigrant visa line, they would have to wait for years. So they would always try to lie to us and say they were going to a cousin's wedding or whatever, and after a while you would learn who was good and who was not. The FS lady who was the consul in chargé of visas, Sarah Andren, was very tough. She was hard on junior officers. There were not that many women in those days in management positions. Usually they were consular or admin. But she was tough, and if you made a decision on a visa that she thought was questionable, she would give you a hard way to go. She'd shout about it, even though these were all judgement calls, you never know. But she'd take something out of a file and say, "Why did you give this visa? They're never going to come back. I'll show his adjustment slips six months from now. This is terrible." It was as if you'd misplaced top secret or something [laughter].

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: She would make it into high crimes or misdemeanor. She had quite a reputation. Even later in the Foreign Service, I heard of people who went through Tel Aviv in those days or elsewhere who suffered under her management. So, anyway, I did my visa work, non-immigrant visas, for six months in rotation. A funny thing that happened may be of some interest. That was when the Israelis starting putting security guards on their El Al planes. There had been some airplane hijackings, before then there were no hijackings. After the hijackings, the Israelis started putting security guards on their planes. These were all young men just out of the military, and they would need a visa because they were flying to the United States, and we'd refuse them. And we'd say, why are you going to the United States? And they'd say just to visit. No you aren't, you're an immigrant. So finally the Israeli foreign ministry came to the embassy and said you are turning down all our security guards. The consul said to us visa interviewers (two, usually), you guys are pretty good because you are figuring these guys are not really your typical visitors. So then they started giving us a list, and we would always give them without question their multiple entry visas. But that was when terrorism first surfaced.

Q: Visas aside, first... did you find you were trying to get to know the people, foreign post

and all... did you find that the visa thing would come up and hit you in the face at a dinner party and that sort of thing?

STAMMERMAN: Actually, it was very seldom. I found out that if I spoke Hebrew, I could cut the visa interview time in half. And the questions were roughly all similar: where were you born, what do you do for a living, what ties do you have in Israel? Things like that. So that encouraged me to learn Hebrew. I studied Hebrew very hard. After a few months, I could do the interviews in Hebrew. In Tel Aviv, you got people from all over the world, so you still needed help with the non-Hebrew translations, but it helped that I knew Hebrew. People out in the real Israel world, people might ask, and I would say if somebody wants to go for a visit it's no problem at all. Tell them to come and see me. But if they are kids who go to work, they are not going to get a visa. I think the Israelis knew that. Word gets around, everybody knows everything in Israel. You were describing coffee gatherings... there was no television in Israel in those days. So, politics. It was like sitting around the table in Louisville and we'd talk politics. Fascinating people, fascinating histories. I learned a lot about Israel and Israeli society. It was great.

Q: Were you picking up and of the feeling, even before you went out and when you went there, particularly at this time, there was often a divide between what has often maligned on the Arabists, but people who have been looking at... American relations with the Arab world, and the American relations with the Jewish world... and so it was always felt that by the people dealing with the Arab world was that our people in Tel Aviv had been seconded into the Israeli Foreign Service. Did you run across any of that?

STAMMERMAN: Well, it was interesting. We had a couple of people on the staff who had served in Arab countries. Part of that is because '67 when because of the war people were reassigned and released, so we had a political officer. And remember, that by that time, Gaza became within Tel Aviv's consular district. And the big argument that kept coming up, even to the present but certainly during my second tour there, between Embassy Tel Aviv and Consulate General Jerusalem over areas of responsibility. Now the embassy Tel Aviv reporting was candid because the contacts were with the Israelis and this was a very exciting society. The Embassy reported what people felt, I didn't do any political reporting in those days, I was consular. But people reporting out of the Arab countries, it seemed to us that they completely misunderstood what Israelis were like, and part of what we were doing was explaining what Israelis were really like. So embassy management were encouraging the embassy officers to please meet Israelis, the more the better. So, you had a substantive divide in reporting from the Middle East Foreign Service. I remember one from Saudi Arabia when I was reading the reading file, or the ambassador was reading it, and we all kind of laughed at it. It was one of these, "American has so thrown its policy in line with the Jewish state that our position in the Arab world is ruined forever." These were so stereotypical of reporting out of the Arab countries that they didn't know what the Israelis were all about. Of course, the Israelis didn't know what the Arabs were all about either [laughter].

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: But we would read what the Arabs and American officers reporting from Arab countries were writing about Israel, and it was simply wrong. Because we could meet the Israelis every day and look at them and say, "These are not the people you are talking about. They are warm, cultured, and agreeable. Would you please make a telephone call and everything would be settled." That was sort of the message. Obviously you don't read everything as a junior officer, but the feeling in Israel at that the time was that if the Hashemites, King Hussein's people, would simply talk to the Israelis, that they could have the West Bank in a minute. Because most of the Israelis I knew didn't want anything to do with the West Bank. These were American Jewish immigrants who wanted it. But most Israelis simply didn't want the West Bank, so long as they did not get the Arab Legion on their doorstep. They wanted to be able to travel. End of story. Peace would be very easy. When you read the reporting out of Jordan, Embassy Amman reporting about Israel, you were seeing a different country. We would have visitors from Amman very seldom because Embassy Amman would not encourage anyone to go all the way to Tel Aviv, they could go to Jerusalem, but not to Tel Aviv. If you were telling the embassy in Jordan this, they'd say well, the Jordanians are worried about the Palestinians. The U.S. Embassy in Amman argued that if King Hussein talked to the Israelis there'll be a revolt and the Palestinians would overthrow the king. We'd say, and the Israelis would say, "The king can beat them." That was before Black September.

Q: 1970.

STAMMERMAN: By then it was too late. By then the settlements had started, different government. But we would watch... by then the Rogers Plan had come out, we'd see the commentary about the Rogers Plan and about the UN shuttles, and we could see that it was fairly useless, it wasn't going to happen. You had to have direct contact or you were never going to solve the conflict.

Q: At this time, were you all feeling the heavy hand of what later became known as the Jewish Lobby, AIPAC, and all that. This was before...

STAMMERMAN: Again, people were reporting what I thought were fairly reasonable analyses of Israel foreign policy, what they were about. But there was no compulsion, by any means. I eventually got into economic/commercial work, in addition to consulate work. In fact I spent over a year, of my two and a half years, doing commercial/econ, and I don't think anybody had any feeling at all about the Jewish lobby. We always thought it was a joke. People would talk about a Jewish Lobby...where? There was pressure only on performance, but reporting was mainly, can you write well and report accurately. I was doing commercial/econ so there wasn't any [pressure].

Q: What about commercial developments at that time with Israel? You had a sort of socialist country up against American free enterprise. How did that fit?

STAMMERMAN: Not terribly well. There were some American investments so we

would have American businessmen coming and looking toward investing. But the market was protected. Tel Aviv never had an AID mission, so what little Agency for International Development work existed would go through the econ/commercial section and I would get involved with that. By then we had some small amount of food aid going, but not much. We'd do reports on local firms, WTDRs, and that was sort of the bread and butter. You'd go out and meet local companies. An American company wants to buy from you or sell to you and they want to know who you are... so we talked to them.

Q: I would think that you would have quite a bit of problem, because it's no revelation that the people from there and certainly the Israelis, but I mean people who would come to the United States were merchants par excellence, and so you would have Americans say from New York or in trade and wanting to do something sort of for their country of birth. But a hard businessman would go over and find themselves up against the controlled economy and come to the American embassy and pound on the thing and "You've got to sell because I'm trying to be a good guy and sell them sweaters and I can't get a sweater market."

STAMMERMAN: We would do things like...the Department of Commerce had trade missions and put on trade fairs. Actually trade fairs were a way to get through the tariffs, so we encouraged people to do things like that. But more often they were trying to sell something. So we'd tell them what you really want to sell it to is the Histadrut. Histadrut businesses, that was the trade union that controlled the big part of the economy. Not quite socialized... there was the Socialist part of the economy and there was trade union part of the economy. All the doctors worked for the trade unions, and so we'd make an appointment. If you want to sell sweaters you really want to sell to the Histadrut's Koor Marketing Group. But if it's something that's made in Israel, forget it. No way. But there wasn't that much trade. People would come through, but it wasn't that big a market. After all, three million people, it was a little bigger than the rest of the Levant, but not that much.

Q: I think the French were the main military suppliers at this point.

STAMMERMAN: Up to that point. In June '67, the French broke with Israel, because DeGaulle told them not to start the war and they did. So France then broke off relations. The big issue when I was there was supplying Phantom Aircrafts, which we did.

Q: F-4s.

STAMMERMAN: F-4s, that was our first major sale. One thing that helped, even then we were on the 3I circuit for congressmen, Ireland, Italy and Israel, we had a lot of CODELs, congressional delegations.

Q: These are people pinning the ethnic button back in their district.

STAMMERMAN: Absolutely. So it was not necessarily Jewish, it was also Irish,

Italian... So we got to accompany congressmen around, take notes, we learned to write, and heard what the Israelis were up to and we got to meet people and travel around the country. I recall one time, probably ’68, I was with a congressman from Los Angeles and we went down to Sde Boqer to interview David Ben Gurion, the foreign ministry had set it up, and we sat there for two hours listening to Ben Gurion talking about Zionism and the history of Zionism. He talked about his discussions with DeGaulle, then the French-Israeli relations and the French-American relations and the American-Israeli relations. The French were cutting off military supplies.

Q: Sitting in on staff meetings and so forth, what were you picking up about Israeli politics at that time, and the leadership?

STAMMERMAN: One of the persons talked about a lot at the time was Golda Meir, Golda was foreign minister. A lot of discussion was about the Eshkol government from just before the war started, because then - Prime Minister Eshkol had appeared on radio than a month before the war started, and gave a very rambling, talk, speech, sounding nervous, sounding unsure of himself. After that speech, he was forced to bring in Moshe Dayan as defense minister from RAFI, part of what had been the Labour Party, let by Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres. And David Ben Gurion. They broke with the Labour Party back in 1964, over the Lavon Affair, a famous affair. I have no idea what was the truth of it. Historically, it was Israeli spies were caught in Cairo dealing with Egyptians, planning to do some terrorism against an American installation. Lavon was then the defense minister, and the Labour Party split over this. David Ben Gurion, Moshe Dayan, Shimon Peres walked out on the basis that the truth wasn’t told. Golda Meir stayed in, and Eshkol led Mapai, (Mifleget Poalei Yisrael) the main part of what became the Israel Labour Party. That was the name of the party before the war started, though Mapai was forced to accept Rafi, which had a much harder line from a security point of view. David Ben Gurion was after all the architect of Israeli involvement in the 1956 war, Dayan had come into the cabinet in May of ’67. From what people at the embassy told me, that was the key that Israel was going to war, once Dayan was in the cabinet.

So at staff meetings, they would talk a lot about Golda Meir, the Rogers Plan, that was later in about ’69, the Rogers Plan was a way to bring Israel and Egypt to discussing things indirectly. It was subverted, we later heard, by Henry Kissinger, [laughter]. That’s when Rogers was Secretary of State. But a lot of the talk was about Golda Meir, the peace process, how the Israelis wanted to deal with Egyptians and Jordanians, and how could they do that. Moshe Dayan was then Defense Minister, and I knew very little of them personally. I knew a lot of Israeli military, everybody was in military, so we heard just by being in Israel about what’s going on in the military, lot of gossiping and so on.

Q: Were you picking up the feeling that Nasser was sort of a spent force?

STAMMERMAN: No, in those days, the Egyptians sort of thought Nasser could have lost it in ’67, but he didn’t, so therefore he was in charge. The Israelis still feared that Nasser could block any peace moves by other Arab states with Israel, but were not in

those years worried about the Egyptian army.

Q: Also the war of attrition was on, wasn't it?

STAMMERMAN: Just started. '68 is when it started. '67 was when you had the Barlev line that was being built. Actually the Barlev line, I take that back, started in '69, after the war of attrition was underway. We were sitting in Israel after all, and the Israelis, when the war of attrition started, the Israeli were doing some very imaginative things. My landlord, it turns out, it came out in the newspaper months later, I was renting from an Israeli Army colonel. Turns out he was on this raid that went behind the lines on the other bank of the Suez. He crossed from the Sinai, behind Egyptian lines and had blown up a bunch of installations. The Israeli also grabbed an entire Russian radar installation down on an island in the Gulf of Suez. So, very imaginative and exciting things. We thought it was fun, in a way, oh boy, people we knew were doing these things.

The Egyptians were more and more, from our point of view, in the pocket of the Soviets. I heard from my Israeli friends about an encounter between Israeli pilots and Russians over Suez, later written up in various places in the newspapers. One of my Israeli friends in the Air Force said, "Ken, did you hear about this? We took out the Russians." That there had been a flight of Israeli planes over Suez, ran into Russians, who were covering for the Egyptians, because Israelis were regularly shooting down every Egyptian plane that came up. So apparently the Russians sent a flight up and the Israelis took them out. The Israelis were monitoring and heard the Russians, Israelis speak Russian, a lot of them do, and heard the Russians say when the Israelis attacked, 'they are going to kill us all,' and the Israelis did it, and the Russians that didn't escape the first encounter, the Israelis shot down on the run back to the Egyptian base. So that was one of the things we'd hear. Whether it was reported, or whenever, but I read it later in the newspapers. So we would hear from the Israelis what was happening in the war of attrition.

Q: How was King Hussein regarded by this time?

STAMMERMAN: Well we had two levels here. One, the American embassy in Tel Aviv, point of view as I understood it was that the King is in a stronger position than he knows. The Israelis tell us that if he takes on the Palestinians, he will win. And if need be they (the Israelis) will help. They won't have to because the Israelis really respected the Arab Legion, they always did. Remember their hardest fighting in both 1948 and 1967 was against the Arab Legion. They said that if the King took the PLO on, he can't lose. The embassy in Amman, the feeling we all heard, the embassy in Amman thought he could not, that if he tried to take on the Palestinians, it would be the end of the Hashemites.

The feeling among the Israelis was "Why can't you guys [the Americans] tell him that? His future is with us, not with the Russians, who want his head, and the Nasserites want his head, the Syrians want him dead." So the Israelis were saying he should come with us be on their side. But he didn't.

Q: What were you getting at the point about the Likud and Begin and Sharon and those people?

STAMMERMAN: Well, Sharon wasn't visible yet, not until '73. He was a colonel in the Army then. I'll tell you about that later. Next assignment.

Q: But did...

STAMMERMAN: Likud (which was then Herut) was off limits. You didn't talk to them. Period.

Q: What was the rationale for that?

STAMMERMAN: They were terrorists. They blew up the King David Hotel.

Q: You are talking about the star...

STAMMERMAN: You simply do not. I was not doing political reporting so it didn't affect me. The word was around the embassy was, certainly among political officers, they are off limits, no, don't talk to them. Nor should it get back to the Labour Party that we are talking to them. That was another thing. From Labour's view, we are the government. We are legitimate. And among the Israelis, the feeling was, the people I knew, the old Mapai, European Jews, sort of the people, Likud, Herut was not nice people.

Q: I mean, looking back on it, and you went there later on, did you feel like you were dealing with sort of Ashkenazis and the European types...was this pretty much your world?

STAMMERMAN: It was all Ashkenazis. Almost all. There were the Sephardic Jews who worked at the embassy, the drivers. In our neighborhood, I lived in a suburb called Ramat Hasharon, pretty far from the rest of the American diplomatic community, because we were on the economy rather than housed in embassy-owned or managed housing. The newest junior officers like me were simply given rent money and told to find our own housing. I lived in an Israeli neighborhood; I was one of the few Americans who did. The American embassy had bought or built housing in Hertzlia Pitruach, which turned out later to become an exclusive suburb, next to Kfar Shmaryahu, another exclusive neighborhood. I lived in Ramat Hasharon, which was almost all Israeli. My neighbors were all Israeli, and I got to know a lot of them. But our neighborhood was Ashkenazis. There were some Yemenite Sephardic Jews who lived in a suburb next to it and they lived among themselves. The Ashkenazis areas spoke Hebrew, which I was learning more of. Yiddish was a language that was not spoken. Young Israelis thought Yiddish was European, a diaspora language. It was not done. You spoke either French or English or Hebrew. I'd studied enough French so I could get around using French. You could speak French to the cabbies, many from Algeria or Morocco.

Q: How about the religious community?

STAMMERMAN:..There was the NRP (National Religious Party) sort of equivalent to what would be the current Shas up there in Jerusalem, too. But when we were there, I had almost no contact with the parliamentary NRP. We did and we didn't see religiously observant Jews. I'd go to the village for the Habad movement, Kfar Habad, because I was really into learning about the culture. It was a fascinating place. So I would go to some of these religious groups and their festivals. But you'd go and talk and they'd dance and you'd see all sorts of cultural things. But politically, they were not that important. And in Tel Aviv, as opposed to Jerusalem, the religious were and still are for that matter relatively few in number. The NRP was in the government, Allied to the Labour party, always had been. You had the small parties like Aguda, but then you had the ultra orthodox which were out of the government. They got to where they thought the Jewish state was an obscenity, blasphemy. The Luboviches accepted Zionism. Some of them were and some were not, but they were not radically anti-Zionist. (End of tape)

So this would have been around 1968. As I was saying, our Israeli FSN women visa clerks would often walk in and kind of shake their heads and raise their eyebrows about ultra-religious visa applicants; and these guys would come in with the long side curls and the coats and the hats. Again, Tel Aviv had a religious suburb, but most of the people who were ultra religious, Jewish observant, lived in Jerusalem or else in separate communities like Moshav Levi, that were ultra religious.

So anyway, these guys came in one day and the head of the Lubovich community in Israel was with them. There were four or five orthodox Jews wearing the long side curls and coats and hats, 20s to 40s probably, and the clerk didn't even type up a form, she said she knew they'd need an interview. Our policy at the time was that anyone who had recently come out of the Soviet Union was ineligible for a visitor visa because they had no ties to the state of Israel. They were just using Israel as a stopping point. They'd go to the States and we'd never see them again. And the American law said: If they are not coming back to the place where they got their visa, don't give them a visa. Plus, we had to find out if they were Communist. A lot of Israelis who'd lived in Romania or Russia, or whatever, had been members of the Communist Party, simply because they needed to join before they could get a job as a university professor. So, we had to process them as so-called defectors. And they would laugh and say,"Of course we defect, but we were members of the Communist Party." That always took a while with the INS, so that they knew that I'd talked to these people.

So, this one day, this group piled in to my office. I had these four guys and a man who ran the Lubovich community in Israel, and we started this interview. It was a funny interview to begin with because they spoke Georgian and Russian; they were from Georgia, part of the former Soviet Union, so Georgian and Russian. We had an interpreter who spoke Russian and Yiddish. So they went from Georgian to the one among them who spoke the best Russian to our interpreter to me. So it was a roundabout interview. They all said they wanted to go to the United States because the Lubovich Rabbi wanted to see them.

They'd just gotten out of the Soviet Union, really. Oh, okay, so I asked them about what had been going on...had the Communists been in their village. Oh, yes, they came, we threw rocks at them and they left us alone. So we had a little Jewish village out somewhere in Georgia. "What in the world were you doing out in Georgia?" These are Europeans, not native to the Caucasus.

What in the world were you doing in Georgia? They said, well what happened is that when... our group is from Poland, as most Lubovich Jews were, our group is from Poland and when the Red Army was collapsing against the German onslaught when the Germans broke out and the Germans betrayed the Russians and moved into eastern Poland... as the Red Army was falling back they put us on their trucks and said, "The Nazis will kill you. Come with us." So they thought the Red Army were great guys. The Red Army was taking them and their parents out of Poland all the way out to Georgia, as far away from Nazis as possible. I don't know who did, but somebody in the Red Army was moving people out. But they said, "but the local Communists tried to tear down their synagogue, and we threw rocks at them and they went away and that was that." So they were describing the Lubovich community in Georgia and eventually the kids grew up speaking Georgian and Russian. Eventually they all made it to Israel, though, and so I said, "First I have to ask you a question, are any of you members of the Communist party?" That was a laugh, they laughed and laughed. They thought that was the funniest thing they had ever heard. Of course they were not. They never went to university, they were simple, they'd only studied Torah. (In those days, there was a forest near Jerusalem which was called the Red Army forest. At Israel's founding, the Israelis were close to the Soviets on a number of issues, out of gratitude for defeating the Nazis in WWII and because they were instrumental in 1947 and 1948 in getting the UN to approve the formation of the Jewish State)

So, I said "Will you come back to Israel," and they said "we'll do whatever the Rabbi tells us to do." Honest answer. So I spoke to the guy in charge, I spoke to him in Hebrew. I said, "Rabbi, if I give visas to these people, will they come back? Will you make sure the Rabbi sends them back, at some point, because American law won't let me issue visas otherwise." And he said, "Yes, we'll get them back here." Meanwhile, while I was talking to one of them, the others would be praying, reading the Torah and rocking back and forth. So the whole thing was kind of funny, happening in an American visa office. And he said, "Yes, we'll get them back here." I said, "Fine, I'll write your visas." So I gave them all visas, and he was surprised because he was prepared for a really hard way to go. He said, "What you have done is a mitzvah." A mitzvah, which is what we would say would earn you an indulgence in Catholicism, probably. I said fine, "I may need that some day." So we let them go, and the local employees were shocked. They didn't like these guys to begin with. They didn't care for these people, but I let them go. My boss didn't like it either, but I said, "They are going to get to the United States no matter what we do. So I gave them the visa. They'll come back." So we had contacts like that.

Q: But we were not looking upon a divided society there where at that point where religion would be... really orthodox would become a major factor.

STAMMERMAN: At best, they would be a marginal player. The feeling when we would read reporting from other Middle East posts would suggest that Israel was some kind of religious state. But we'd say it's not. Yes, on Yom Kippur you don't drive a car anywhere in Israel because you get a rock thrown at you. Because that's the one day the kids are told they can throw rocks at cars, so they throw rocks at cars. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: But the State was just not religious. Very marginal things.

Q: What about the West Bank, in Gaza? Could you do anything there?

STAMMERMAN: You could visit the West Bank. We got to know people in Bethlehem. My son was born in Israel, in 1969. We would visit, we got to know people in Bethlehem very well. There's no border. The road just went on, that had been cut between 1948 and 1967. There was no 'green line' along the 1948 Armistice line anymore, you just drove wherever you wanted to drive. Occasionally, you'd see Israeli roadblocks, but there was no terrorism. The two places we didn't go... we didn't wander around Gaza, and you didn't wander around Jenin, which is a city in the northern West Bank. There was already trouble there. We'd avoid those areas. But we would drive down to Jericho and go to restaurants in Jericho and East Jerusalem and Bethlehem. We weren't supposed to report on anything, we might tell the ambassador or the DCM something, but Jerusalem felt that was their reporting prerogative. I didn't care, I went there on weekends. Tourism.

Q: Was there much contact, say, were there junior officers at consul general in Jerusalem and were you all in contact sort of chatting around, or did you find there was a social divide?

STAMMERMAN: There was a social divide. We seldom spoke to them. They would not come to Tel Aviv. That was a problem.

Q: Was that on purpose?

STAMMERMAN: We sort of understood they did not come to Tel Aviv because they saw themselves as the consulate to the Palestinian Arabs. They just wouldn't, there was a divide. The more they kept themselves away from coming to visit… We would drop... well you didn't go by the consulate because you were embassy. You might run into them occasionally. But I didn't know anybody up there. Occasionally one of us would remind them that they had a large Jewish presence in their consular district in West Jerusalem, but then and when I was posted their later, they seemed to ignore their Jewish residents and only report on Palestinians. They were never accredited to Israel, still aren't. They are accredited to the city of Jerusalem.

Q: While you were there, you had to be thinking about whether your future, and did you

feel that you were imprinted with the Israeli brand or something, or did that say the Mideast is your Bureau?

STAMMERMAN: No, not really. The way it was set up... We enjoyed it there because I was not thinking career, because we were still at the point of well if something better came along we might take it.

Q: Sure.

STAMMERMAN: And let's look at our next assignment.

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: Because we knew we'd have another overseas assignment and that would give us another bureau. The embassy personnel admin people were not helpful at all. In theory, the DCM does junior officer training, and we thought there was not a whole lot being done. We worked with our immediate superiors. That's how you learned about the Foreign Service. I learned visa work from this lady who shouted a lot. I learned commercial work from, it was not an FSO - we used to have FSROs brought in. He was a former used car salesman or something. And so I learned a lot about business, but he was good at what he did though. But I learned most of all from my local employees, they were good. The local employees from Tel Aviv were very good.

Q: I imagine they would be. This of course is at a time all over the world where our local employees were first rate. Because working for the Americans was a damned good deal.

STAMMERMAN: It was. They were well-educated people and we talked a lot about Israeli history. You learned from the other junior officers what the deal was on what to bid on and things. We extended six months, by the way, because first of all my son was born in June of '69, and we decided we liked it there, so it was a good excuse. We then looked at what was open, and I went through the same procedure of let's not bid on Paris or Madrid or London or whatever. Let's look at something that is probably underbid but might be a pretty good job. There was a commercial job open in Manila, so I bid on it and got it. It was off-cycle at that, so that made it even easier. Off-cycle meant I could go in December. But I learned from Tel Aviv lots of things. You had to make your own deal because the administrative section was not set up to help, the people in the State Department would not help. The admin embassy people were looking at budget reports or whatever, and they didn't do their jobs very well. What decent admin work that was being done was because we had first-rate FSNs. Junior Officers suffered in the sense that people had to do things on their own, rather than work through the American embassy. But it was a very exciting place in general.

Q: Well, I'm told by people there that particularly those who were involved in the political side were working at fever pitch the whole time.

STAMMERMAN: Well...

Q: Maybe in those days it was not quite as bad...

STAMMERMAN: Well, '67-'69 was not quite at fever pitch, but it was interesting. Good work was being done.

Q: What attracted you toward Manila?

STAMMERMAN: First of all, I had become qualified in foreign language, I was not longer on foreign language probation because I had qualified in Hebrew at a 2-2 level. So I could look at places where they spoke English. I didn't want to go through language training again. It was commercial work, I liked commercial work, so I applied for it and got it. We did our usual list of three or whatever, and no negotiation or anything. I just put it down and they said, "You got it."

Q: Did you go out there or home leave...

STAMMERMAN: Home leave, went back to the United States in the middle of winter. Everybody caught colds.

Q: Did you find when you got home much interest in what you had been up to?

STAMMERMAN: None. That was our first experience and we wanted to talk about it, and all the exciting things had been done in the Middle East, and nobody cared. Not family, not... nobody. Nobody cared.

Q: It's quite a shock.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. All these things we'd been involved in. I should mention one other interesting thing that happened. The first brush with terrorism in the Foreign Service. Junior officers cover vacation breaks for other officers. So I was the acting GSO, and in those days that meant that I was the acting RSO. In those days we had no professional regional security officer. There was no Regional Security Officer in Tel Aviv. There was no security officer. All we had, we had a Marine Gunny Sergeant. He was really in charge of security. Nobody else really cared. It was an open embassy. We had a library on the first floor. People walked in and out all day long, with a receptionist, who was an Israeli. We had a Marine who would guard the classifieds.

Well, when I was there, as acting GSO, of course you had no cameras in the embassy. That was another rule, no cameras past the classified door. But the GSO has a camera for general work, you know, when fixing something inside the embassy so you had to take a picture of it and send it back to FBO in Washington. Anyway, somebody put a bomb inside the embassy library, USIS' library in Tel Aviv, in 1969. I was the GSO. They found it two days after it was supposed to have gone off. It was in a satchel. It was

dynamite sticks, a clock, and whatever else you'd put in a bomb. It made it to the newspapers, so it was public that it happened. A library clerk found it. It was a satchel that looked like it had been left behind. So after it sat there a couple of days, she opened it. She looked inside and saw wires, a clock, dynamite sticks, and she screamed and whatever. One of the local cleaning personnel, one of our char crew came over and looked at and said, "Oh, that's a bomb." He picked it up and walked it to a vacant lot across the street, at which point the Israeli bomb squad showed up and disarmed it.

They then brought it back inside the embassy, somewhere, and said, "You guys want to see this?" Yes, we want to see it. So then the bomb squad went to the GSO office, which is a public area, and they took the sticks out of the satchel for us, it had been disarmed, one by one, I was taking pictures of it. I thought, somebody's playing for keeps. I said, "What happened?" They said, "The clock is defective. It would have blown up the library had it gone off." Sticks of dynamite. One of the Palestinian groups took credit for it. Word got out, it was in the *Herald Tribune*. I wrote home and said, "Yes, I know about this." Nobody seemed worried though.

Q: This brings up another point. Did you have much, when I say you I mean you and the embassy and all, have much contact with Arab Israelis?

STAMMERMAN: No, actually I had contact with Palestinians on the West Bank. I did, because through merchants... we'd shop in Bethlehem every other week and had gotten to know a family very well. When I had visitors I'd take them up there, and they'd get a good price because I knew them, and so on. So I got to know Palestinians reasonably well. But the Israeli Arabs, we'd go to Nazareth to shop. Some in the embassy did. We had one of the officers, John Leonard, and another, Jay Freres, who had been in Cairo, would visit Arabs in Nazareth.

Q: Were there any Jewish officers in our embassy at that time?

STAMMERMAN: I don't remember, none that I can think of, none comes to mind, no. Interesting.

Q: Ken, you had said something, when we were talking about Jewish officers that you were just mentioning something else about that.

STAMMERMAN: Right. When I was in Tel Aviv, '67-'69, I don't think there were any Jewish officers at Embassy Tel Aviv. It was my impression at the time that no Jewish officers were being assigned to NEA. I don't know if there was a formal rule or whatever, I didn't know of any Jewish officers there. And the Israelis would sometimes ask us why there weren't any Jewish officers at the embassy, so I'm fairly sure there were none at the time. Some Israelis, and for that matter some Americans, thought we were Jewish since my name is one of those that could be either.

Q: You were in Manila from when to when now?

STAMMERMAN: I was in Manila from early 1970 through December of 1971.

Q: When you arrived in Manila, who was the ambassador?

STAMMERMAN: The ambassador all the while I was there was Henry Byroade.

Q: He had quite a reputation in many ways. He was the youngest general in the Army in WWII. How was that? I realize you were some distance removed, but...

STAMMERMAN: Actually, I only saw and spoke to Ambassador Byroade twice, when I arrived and when I left. It was a massive embassy there, and unless you were a fairly senior officer, you didn't even deal with the ambassador. He was very much involved in the base negotiations and there were a lot of things happening in the Philippines at the time. Marcos was consolidating his rule. They had one election while I was there, which was the last semi-free election in the Philippines for a long time. So, he was very much involved with them, so even if you pulled duty, which was seldom, the embassy was so huge that the duty officer would report to the DCM, not to the ambassador. I had almost nothing to do with the ambassador. The only connection I can think of at all was when my spouse was required to help with one of the charities that Mrs. Marcos was sponsoring, they rolled bandages, some medical charity Mrs. Marcos was at. All the embassy ladies were drafted. Most of us, the junior officers especially, thought that the Marcos' were crooks, which they were, and people in the Embassy should have nothing to do with, and this was a source of some resentment that we would even lend our assistance in anything she was involved in.

Q: What was, as you saw it when you arrived there in 1970, what was the political economic situation there?

STAMMERMAN: The main issue was working out the American relationship with the Philippines at the close of the Laurel-Langley arrangements. These were the arrangements that had prevailed from the time of independence in 1946, full independence, until the early '70s. So, we were negotiating with them the base rights, the Clark Air Base, Subic air base, and we had lots of other bases around, including Cubi Point. At the same time working out Laurel-Langley, which gave the United States preferred commercial and economic access to the Philippine economy. There was a lot of embassy staff involved. There were some overflows that were from Vietnam as well, but mainly it was Laurel-Langley. The political section was consumed with the future of the Marcos government, he was again consolidating power, moving towards taking total power. At the time there was a lot of private armies running around, so that was going on.

Q: When you went there, what was your job...were you still rotating?

STAMMERMAN: No, this was two years straight commercial work. I was working in the commercial/industries office. And that meant promoting American products, and

putting on trade fairs, and trade missions, and calling on businessmen and that sort of thing. Helping American businessmen sell their products, helping Filipinos who wanted to go to the States and buy stuff. And of course the embassy, we often got involved with businessmen who needed visas. One of the biggest visa mills in the world, renowned. In that embassy, everything revolved, not everything, a lot of things revolved around visas. Everybody we met either wanted a visa or had a daughter or cousin who needed a visa.

Q: Who was consulate general at the time? Do you remember?

STAMMERMAN: It changed... A guy named Larry Loren came out, midway through there. Before then, I can't remember who it was. But Larry came out to clean the place up.

Q: How did you feel about that?

STAMMERMAN: He was... He had a good reputation. A friend of mine was a second tour visa officer in charge of the NIV section. They had 8 or 9 junior officers on the NIVs in the morning, it was terrible work. Overwork. And he would handle appeals, and he thought Larry was doing a good job. I didn't know him particularly. I met him, but you know. He had a good reputation.

Q: You mentioned being a little bit, about the impression of the Marcos'. You are still basically a junior officer, did you see a divide in the embassy between the more senior and the more junior officers?

STAMMERMAN: Very much so. As far as we could tell, political people, section people we knew or talked to, saw the relationship with the Filipinos as being very important to the U.S. position in southeast Asia. The status of the bases was overriding, almost everything revolved around Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. We had our econ section, but we are all concerned with Laurel Langley, that was important, but if the crunch came between giving up our commercial position, we had a very favorable commercial position, and the bases... everybody understood that the bases were what was important. And the key to the bases it seemed, was placating Marcos. Because, the junior officers would talk about it and discuss it, it seemed that that was all that really mattered. There would be times that thing would come up, you'd see things and you'd ask, and you'd be told, "You didn't see that." Or, "That's not happening, don't worry about it, it's none of your business."

Q: What would this be? Corruption? Or...

STAMMERMAN: No, corruption, we reported it immediately, it was standard. No, it was American military activities, both bases. Things like that. It was none of our business. Anything to do with the status with forces that might involve the embassy, we saw it as none of our business. The cooperation between the American and Filipino military was simply none of our business.

Q: You mentioned that there were still armed groups going around. Was it sort of a war lord situation or moving away from a war lord situation?

STAMMERMAN: The way it was set up there, most provinces were under the control of a warlord. As for Marcos, the Lopez family of Cebu was now on his side. Again, we knew some missionaries who had worked around Clark airbase, and they would tell us the (Communist guerillas) Huks control the area at night and the Government controls the area during the day. They were all corrupt. Neither was better or worse than the other, you got to be worried if you got stopped by a roadblock. Then you know somebody or could pay somebody, or you might be in trouble. It was the only place where I was stopped by police and I was really worried, and they wanted a payoff. And these guys are armed, and all I've got is my diplomatic ID, and they want money. There's not much you can do about it, except either pay them or put a 10 peso note with your drivers license. Once you were outside of Manila, say, in the warlord provinces, the Philippine government didn't rule there, the warlords did. They didn't usually bother Americans because we would cause them too much trouble if something happened to us.

But while I was there, we were giving up our base, we had a naval airbase which was in the province of Cavite. We'd pulled most of our soldiers and sailors out of there, moving up to Subic, just closing down for budget reasons, not policy. The bank got robbed, there was a Marine-guarded bank on base there. The Marine reaction squad showed up and they all got shot down by a gang of thugs who were much better armed than they were. Some pictures of the thugs revealed that they were members of a private army that the local governor ran. Whether they were renegades or not, who knows, but it was ultra violent. The general feeling around the Embassy was that everybody was corrupt. Choosing Marcos or choosing the other people made no difference. I heard a Catholic missionary tell me, "Ken, everybody's corrupt. The Communists are corrupt, everybody is on the take. Honesty is not a value in this country."

Q: I was talking to somebody just the other day in an interview who said he was there just after Marcos had declared martial law and the main difference was... before, everybody had guns, now the Marcos bully boys had guns and the others didn't. But he said one of the questions was why was it that in southeast Asian where we were even beginning to see a real change in say Singapore, Malaysia, even Vietnam, up until all hell broke loose, as far as economic pursuits and getting on with it, was that in the Philippines it really hadn't taken on. There seemed to be something that inhibited the Philippines. Did you ever discuss this or look at it?

STAMMERMAN: We would kick it around, as to what this all about. The Chinese ethnic families were not quite as strong as the Philippines, but the rest of southeast Asia, they were strong. The Chinese were discriminated against in the Philippines, that was a problem right there, so you didn't have that angle. You had the American connection, Lauren Langley sort of tied them to us. There was easy money to be made around the bases. Very easy money.

Q: Were we concerned at that time, American business paying off, you know, bribes...?

STAMMERMAN: The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act... I don't think it was enforced at that time.

Q: I don't think it was either, but I was wondering whether, was this...

STAMMERMAN: We couldn't obviously not say anything about that, but in general, because of our preferred access and the Laurel Langley, the competition from others wasn't that strong. The British, French. They got in, but our people really... our people had been there since independence and before independence. So they had established market already. The big companies did.

Q: Instead of preferred access, we were valiantly trying to open up markets in what had been the French and British colonial empires and all. But I take it this was sort of a post-colonial sort of thing?

STAMMERMAN: The relationship, in economic terms, very much. Not even post-colonial. Neo-colonial. And the Filipinos played the neo-colonial role. The relationship between the old families and the Americans were very, very strong. The major families, who some of them who were dual citizens, American and Filipino, it was very strong. We were playing the neo-colonialism game on our side, and sort of the attitude... we lived very well in the Philippines. We lived in these gated cities, like Magallenes. You'd go into a gated city, our residences behind armed guards, you'd ride to the embassy in a bus that had wire mesh and all. We had Seafront, which was our sort of commissary, swimming pool, everybody had a couple of maids, no problem, everything was cheap.

Q: What were the relations between the officers and the upper-class Filipinos?

STAMMERMAN: Well, you sort of made your own. I knew a lot of businessmen and we'd get invited to their place, sort of social occasions when you'd meet them. The really old families, I don't know if we really had that much contact with them. The entrepreneurial classes were what we'd see. They all lived well, we'd get invited to their places, mansions. I was active in the Catholic church there, which was a reforming church. Remember, the Catholic Church was trying to reform... and the cardinal archbishop's name was Sin, Cardinal Sin...it was the funniest joke. But they would preach these sermons that were revolutionary in a way, about economic justice and the rights of the poor. I was a lector and I would read at mass, and there was a letter from the bishop, this one down in Forbes Park, which is the richest suburb, and they had a letter to the Catholics from the bishop. I saw it before mass and I said to the priest, "I can't read this. You read this. I work for the American Embassy." [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: It said things about Marcos, about the government, about the rich, stuff like that.

Q: Was it felt that Marcos at this time at all playing the populist, or doing things for the poor classes, or was this not even in the cards?

STAMMERMAN: Not really. He would say things, but I don't know if any body believed him. Again, there were no good guys. A lot of the Filipinos who cooperated with him knew him to be a crook. He had a lot of goons from around from his home province. I don't really think he had a popular following as much as he had the guns. The opposition was just as corrupt.

Q: What about Imelda, his wife, what was her role at that time?

STAMMERMAN: One never knows. It was hard to tell just what... we didn't see ordinary Filipinos because it was rich or very low middle class or poor; as for the middle class, there aren't any. So we didn't know what people think of her. Some people said she was a great lady, she dresses well, oh Imelda this, oh Imelda that. But our general feeling was that she and her family were corrupt, landowners, and the reliance between her and Ferdinand was an unholy alliance of families, just looting the state.

Q: Did you see any... now here the Catholic Church is making an effort to extend assistance do something for the poor people of whom there was a multitude...

STAMMERMAN: Camped outside our door, these walled villages, which had barbed wire on the top, and inside the villages you had a wall around your house with broken glass along the top of the wall, and against the outside of these villages were hovels, just vast camps of utterly and completely poor people. Awful.

Q: Was there any effort to reach out and do something about the wealthy class?

STAMMERMAN: No. Not from the Embassy. The Catholics yes, but from the Embassy, nothing at all. Nothing. Our concern was military, that Marcos or someone similar would stay in power and the bases stay open. The Church was reaching out. It was trying to. They had organizations of the Young Catholics, Catholic Action. I knew one priest who was very active in this whole thing and one Sunday he wasn't there at mass. I said, Where is he? The pastor said, I don't know. I asked someone else and he said, he left for the hills. Joined the People's Army.

Q: Oh. Was there a feeling that this situation was so bad that there is going to be a revolution, or was the corruption so bad that what would you be revolting against?

STAMMERMAN: We didn't know. That was the choice that the junior officers and middle grade officers talked among ourselves... what comes next? Will it be a revolution that will throw us out completely? Or maybe the other bad guys will eventually take over.

It depends how pessimistic you wanted to be. With the pervasiveness of corruption was that there would never be any good guys, to even Huks, but the Huks were known to be corrupt and living off the rackets. There was no one for any Filipino who was really disgusted with the situation to turn to.

Q: How did you handle visa requests? Did you get them?

STAMMERMAN: All day. You did... they had a system... essentially, you could recommend to the visa office. I tried to say, If you've got business... I'm a commercial officer, I know you have business in the States, I'll try to hook you up, but I won't sign it. I backed off. The people we dealt with mainly had money. They always got visas.

Q: Was it sort of a clan system, so that they would have a poor relative who wanted to be a nurse and she was from upcountry and they'd say... did you get caught in those things?

STAMMERMAN: Sometimes. Not very much. That sort of thing happened though. As commercial officer I could maybe help you with things with business. But if you were a student, I'll tell you about a friend of mine in the visa section to talk to and good luck. Everybody had an angle, so you were always suspicious of people who tried to make friends.

Q: Was there a problem... At a later date, I was consular general in Seoul and we were always concerned about too many gifts and things like this. You had to kind of watch yourself.

STAMMERMAN: Absolutely. We all had to watch ourselves. All we could ever take was things like they might pass you a bottle of something or those flowered leis they put around you. But we had to be very careful.

Q: Well, I think we had two if not more of our consular generals were under suspicion because of sex mainly. Sexual favors and all that.

STAMMERMAN: When I was there, there weren't any particular scandals, it's just that the junior officers were very unhappy at work.

Q: How were you feeling about the Foreign Service at this time? Vietnam was still going... we were getting ready to pull out... just starting.

STAMMERMAN: I always told people the Foreign Service has never asked me to lie for them. I can do my duty in the Philippines doing commercial work, just don't ask me any questions about Vietnam and I won't lie to you. Everything else we are cool on. I was figuring that we'd do this tour, and I'd seen a really good tour, some really top people. Looking back by then, I really thought Tel Aviv, that Israel is a great country. Because the difference in Israel, customs are honest in Israel, nobody is taking bribes, it's a new country, pioneer spirit. And Manila, corrupt, ultra violent; when nobody has guns there's

no violence. In the Philippines, everybody has guns, there were shootouts in the street. So I thought, "Let's see what comes next and give it [the Foreign Service] another chance."

Q: So, in '71 you left.

STAMMERMAN: Got on a plane, doing the equivalent of sort of shaking the dust off my feet saying I'll never be here again. I have to say... one time we had a square dance club there, there is a Filipino square dance organization and we went to visit them in Olongapo, which is just outside Subic. It was probably the most corrupt city in the world. It looked like it. We went up there and visited some really decent Filipino people there. The port area was awful, hookers and sailors, something like you'd read in a book.

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: So, we were glad to leave there. Went back to the United States and got into the economics course.

Q: Was this a six months economics course?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, 26 weeks.

Q: Had you met or passed under the eye of Francis Wilson at this point?

STAMMERMAN: No. Never met...

Q: She had such an influence on promoting the economic side as a civil servant. You took the six months economics course. How did you find it?

STAMMERMAN: Hard. Very hard. John Sprock was teaching it. John was the deputy director, I forget who the director was, but John Harrington was then the math teacher. I took pretty well to it, did pretty well in it, worked very hard.

Q: Well the math is usually what sinks most of our people and you happened to have an affinity for it.

STAMMERMAN: I had the math. And I learned to program. That was when computers were just getting into economic work. So the 26-week course, I taught myself Basic.

Q: Basic being...

STAMMERMAN: Basic being a computer program language. So when we did those projects during the course, I did a project that used Basic Language and put together an economic model that John thought was really neat because they hadn't had our guys doing that. This was something new. So when I got out, they arranged for me to be assigned to E Bureau, which is now economics and business, EB, because they thought

I'd done pretty well in the course. So I had a 2-year assignment in EB, office of trade.

Q: This would be from '71 to...

STAMMERMAN: Summer of '72 to summer of '74. Six months from winter of '71... So, office of trade. What I really did was run computer models.

Q: This was brand new...

STAMMERMAN: Brand new. There were three of us, Jim Ozello, and another officer I can't remember, and myself, who were running economic studies, computer models, economic studies, for the State Department which there wasn't a whole lot of that going on in the U.S. government outside of the Council of Economic Advisors. So we had basically trade models, trade negotiation for the Kennedy round was going on. We were running these models. What would happen if you lowered the tariff by whatever, 10%? What would that mean in U.S. imports/ exports trade models. These trade models were set up and I did the programming. I taught myself Fortran, which is another computer program language. So I had two years and great fun building economic models for the State Department.

Q: Were you in contact with the Defense Department, which was running training programs and computers and all?

STAMMERMAN: Very little. I remember we were at one point, but not much really. We were focused on one area, and there wasn't much connection between the information departments of one agency and another.

Q: Did you find, particularly in the trade, you lower this and this happens, I would think that your point of view would be quite well received.

STAMMERMAN: Well, in the trade office, it was, in Geneva where some negotiation was going on, they kind of liked it because it was interesting. They liked to impress their negotiating partners with Hey, we know this stuff, and we're using computers, so we can show you that if we cut our tariff on steel by 10%, we'll import 5% more steel. Or something like that. That impressed the Europeans who weren't doing anything like that in negotiations. We would sort of dictate. We'd also write economic papers. So when the German currency crisis, the dollar/Mark rate fell in '73, we were writing- (end of tape)

Q: What was your impression of the trade negotiating type people that you were working with in the bureau?

STAMMERMAN: They seemed very wrapped up in tactics, not in fundamentals of economic analysis of what we were doing. They were good at what they were doing, I didn't consider them that deep... Jules Katz, he was falling in and out of State's good opinion at that time... brilliant... He was a good negotiator and brilliant in his economics.

But he was the exception. A lot of people working were tacticians more than... they actually listened, I thought, to the industry people. In fact, the State man often got into trouble because he didn't listen enough to the industry people. But the point of view where I was working was, "Here is the economics of it: free trade is good. The freer the trade, the better off you are. We benefit, even if our imports increase. That's not what you worry about. You worry about decreasing the level of tariffs worldwide, and that's our goal." Theirs was more, well we've got to make an even trade. If we go any lower on our tariff on steel, they've got to lower their tariff on corn. We don't think it makes that much difference, really. So we were always preaching the free trade gospel, and industry over time was getting more and more upset with the State people who were talking that way. So eventually, there was an STR, which took it out of our hands.

Q: Well was it that the industry wanted to make sure that whatever they were doing was protected or that they were given a more favorable advantage?

STAMMERMAN: They wanted to make sure that whatever they were doing was protected. We had different points of industry. People making machine tools wanted both access to foreign markets for their top end stuff and no access to the American market for their low end stuff. Which was in their best interest, but they were wrong. And when we would say things like that, they would come back and say, "But these are Americans and your job is to protect American business." Well...

Q: Did you find in the economic world, I mean there are always economic advisors that move in and out of government and academia, was there much connection between what the people in the academic world and the pundits of economic affairs were saying and what we were doing?

STAMMERMAN: Occasionally there would be. We would have people sit in E Bureau, academics, who'd write papers. I'm not sure they had any influence. It probably helped them to learn how the U.S. government works. They'd come in for a few months. On their résumés, they had that they'd been consultants for the State Department, but I don't think they had much influence. Congress had so much influence on that whole thing. But I had a fairly good time. I was doing what I liked. My efficiency reports were fine. My immediate supervisor was Gordon Streeb, who was a very good economic officer. Gordon knew what I was doing, although I'm not sure his boss knew what I was doing, but they were happy have a little think tank back there that was turning out papers that people would say, hey this is pretty good economics. Because most of what they did was not economics, it was something else. And there were a few officers here and there doing that, but most people did sort of industry and commodity stuff. I was in OT during the oil price crisis of 1973, and State's fuel and energy office was a backwater. Commodity staffing operation. This was really a backwater, and suddenly oil policy came front and center. NEA of course did the political stuff, but NEA had no economists. So they turned to EB, and that meant somebody like Jim Akins and his people, who as far as we were concerned weren't doing economics either. They were talking about cartels, where we wanted to talk about the theory of cartels, they wanted to talk about OPEC's got us over a

barrel as it were. So we would churn out these memos about how to take the cartel apart from an economic point of view. The economics of cartelization and da da da da da da dum. These went nowhere.

Q: Well, 1974, were you pointed towards something then?

STAMMERMAN: Uh, no, the way it worked... getting in this job '72-'74 was nice, the E Bureau let us do our thing and write some economics and maybe get some training, but I wanted to go back to the university because I knew FSI had university training. I had an undergraduate degree in math, but I thought I'd go back and do some graduate work. So I kept in touch with FSI all along, showing them some of the work we were doing, which I thought was great, that we were doing real economics, because that was what they were teaching people with 26 weeks course to do, but very few of them ended up doing because they did other things. So I kept in touch with John Sprott and applied for the university training, and he said sure and they approved it and off I went to the University of Wisconsin.

Q: Oh, so you were in Wisconsin from when to when?

STAMMERMAN: Summer of '74 to summer of '75. I went there because FSI had some lecturers from Wisconsin on international economics, David Richardson among others. So I said, fine, I'll go and study under Richardson, and went up to Madison. I froze. It was cold. Unbelievably cold up there. Got there at the end of August and the temperature went below freezing that first night, and I thought, I'm in trouble. It snowed, and I had a little boy in tow then too. And my son went out there. I worked very hard, graduate work, studied international economics, international trade, the basic micro-macro thing, that every graduate student takes. Wisconsin doesn't have a special program for outsiders, visiting students. So I had to enroll in the regular graduate program, so I was then in my early 30s and all the rest of the kids in my class were in their early 20s and I was making more money then, as a mid-level FSO, than some of the professors, and certainly more than some of these kids could hope to make in a long time. But they were hungry. They were smart. The Wisconsin graduate school in economics was one of the better ones. The top flight kids were really good. Very hard working.

Q: Was Wisconsin's school of economics a classical….

STAMMERMAN: Well, they were a part of the neo classical school... them and Michigan from what I gathered.

Q: What does that mean, or did that mean...

STAMMERMAN: Well, it's somewhere in between. You weren't the Keynesians, or the Tobin or Ivy League, the whole Keynesian school, nor were you Chicago school. Neo classical economics, takes the Chicago school basics and brought in a lot of what is called ISLM analysis of the Keynesians. On the international side, it wasn't terribly important

because the international economics that was taught... it was a standard model being developed. Richardson was part of the development of the standard model. And so I took his course in international finance. A course in international trade, took a statistics micro-macro, and then I left that next summer with a masters degree because I loaded up my courses so I could finish and get an MA in economics. FSI did not require nor encourage you to get a graduate degree if you took university training. If you did, fine, if you didn't, fine. If you really wanted a degree, you go to the Kennedy school, and get a Master of Public Administration; if you wanted a degree in economics, you would have to go to Wisconsin or Michigan or something like that.

So I got my degree in economics, which left me in the summer of '75 looking for a job. And I'd get on the phone and call my personnel officer starting in February or March and say, "What's open?" And they'd say, "Oh there's a job in Paris or there's a job in London. You've got a degree in economics? What have you been doing lately?" "Oh, building economic models." "Oh." So they didn't know what to do with me. So finally I got a call from my personnel officer, he said, "You know, Ken, we have an opening that has been advertised from OECD, in Paris, we have very few Americans on the international staff at OECD. We should have more. Would you like to go to Paris and join the OECD out there?"

Q: OECD being...

STAMMERMAN: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In Paris. It was the economic club of the North, of the North-South discussions. It's also a major source of economic analysis and economic statistics. So they advertise jobs, which would fill up from the various countries, and the countries could name them. They hire locally, but if the countries name a candidate, then generally they accept them, at the officer level. So I thought that might be a good idea. And they said, "Do you speak French?" I said, "Well, I studied French at with FSI with a two plus three." They said, "Well, it's a French-speaking job. Okay, well we'll see. But you have to pass an interview." "Fine. Who does the interview?" "Well, a Canadian. You'll work for a Canadian. It's an international staff. Nothing to do with Americans." This guy was on home leave in Toronto, so the State Department flew me to Toronto to talk to him. I did, and he said, "Well truly English and French together, but if you studied French you can pick it up." So they said fine because they were under all kinds of pressure by Americans because almost all the people in the Statistics Bureau at OECD were French speaking and they were all Europeans. They hired me on as the head of Economic Trade Statistics section of the OECD.

Q: This is from when...

STAMMERMAN: I went up there in the summer of '75, until February of '77.

Q: As the new boy on the block, what did you think of the OECD and the international staff?

STAMMERMAN: Well, they were top flight. I got out there and I found out they knew what they were doing. I was not doing economic analysis, but I was doing statistics, which was somewhat of a new field to me. But I got in and there were some people who were my assistants who were well educated and filled me in on what I needed to know. They were doing some actually very advanced work in international statistics. Very academic stuff, stuff that journals would have. If you do percentage changes in price vs quantity index how does this affect your analysis of international trade? Trade in constant prices, things like that. And I thought this is fun stuff. We had a U.S. mission to the OECD in the same building, so I kept contact with them, just to see and keep on what's going on in the Foreign Service. I went to the embassy for the commissary, I would see somebody from the mission once a month, but aside from that, I worked for the OECD. Writing an efficiency report was funny; in my case, the task went to the senior American on the staff who was a deputy director of OECD, an American, and I'd tell him what I did and he would write it up. That was the first time I filed a grievance with the State Department.

Q: What was that about?

STAMMERMAN: Which I won. What happened is I arrived there and found out I was not on the diplomatic list, I was seconded to the OECD, at level below which the French government gave OECD diplomatic privileges; only the top tier of OECD officers had diplomatic privileges. I said, okay, I'm an international civil servant. And I looked up the regulations, there was another FSO in the same situation. He'd been there longer and had been moaning and groaning about this. I looked up the reg and it said, if you are assigned to an international organization, to a position of which pays more than the FSO salary, you get the international salary. So I reminded the State Department of that and they said, "You can't get paid that kind of money, you are only an FSO-4. You are a Foreign Service officer." So I said, "Fine, put me on the dip list." They said, "No we can't put you on the dip list, you are an international civil servant as far as we are concerned." I said, "You can't have it both ways," so I filed a grievance. I walked over to the embassy and filed a grievance. They thought it was a bad idea... you shouldn't really DO that. In those days, a grievance was considered something you didn't do except in extreme cases. The other officer in my situation told me that he had in fact been warned to quit grousing. And I said to Personnel, "You bet I will." And I won. So that after I'd been there for about a year, I got a check for $5,000. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: And years later, when I went back to the State Department, and went to personnel, they'd say, "Oh, you're Ken Stammerman. You're the guy who set the Stammerman precedent." [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: Nobody would ever tell you this.

Q: Well, you know, they talk about this, but people change...

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: What about your computer modeling? Were you able to bring that skill, or was the OECD into it?

STAMMERMAN: Where I worked was not into it. They used computers a lot, but it was information processing, rather than modeling. That is to say, we would take all the tapes from the member nations and reformat them and put them out in a way that people could read them. We did this research on statistical matters. It was professionally very interesting. It wasn't computer modeling, not at all.

Q: Did you get a feel for the different types of economies in Europe... talking about the French heavily-controlled subsidies, and Germany, and Great Britain, this was before Maggie Thatcher started doing her thing. We're talking about a socialized economy.

STAMMERMAN: We used to call it...the French said, derigisme, heavy direction.

Q: Heavy direction.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, it was happening. They were loosening up among themselves, but you still had the banks and the companies all worked together, very close knit, and I could see how the Americans were slowly getting pushed out of the markets from the commercial point of view. The only people I was talking to about it were the other OECD personnel. They had some top flight economists there. So you'd talk economics. It was like an academic campus. We did our work. People liked the statistics work we were doing.

Q: Did you find, here you were an officer, this was an assignment, but for the most part, were these sort of OECD people who stayed on?

STAMMERMAN: They stayed on forever. These were 20-year careerists, even though they were young, they had their career ahead of them. Whereas I was coming, probably going in a few years, as far as anybody knew. It was a two or three year assignment, but it was one of those, who knows. So obviously they didn't have anybody in mind to replace me. People do extend, being Paris and all. I should say that when I was there, I was there for most of the time as a single parent. My son was then five. My spouse, who is now my former spouse, stayed behind in Madison, Wisconsin. She liked Madison. So we decided I was the better parent in that situation actually, that was the way it worked. So I had a lot to do with the childcare.

Q: I would think this would be very demanding.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, so I was very busy going to OECD and doing the work, and he would go to school and stay with a French babysitter and I'd pick him up and the next day we'd start around again. But he and I of course saw the French museums, the Louvre, and he played with French kids. He speaks a perfect accent in French. A child's French, but he learned perfect Parisian French because he played with French kids. He went to the American school. But I was very much involved in childcare issues. France is not a nice place for kids. Children are not seen.

Q: I watch French films often, and children are often nuisances and discarded.

STAMMERMAN: Children were to be not seen or heard. But on weekends, we would go to museums and have fun. He and I were having a pretty good time. My spouse rejoined us in the fall of '76 so we were there together in the fall. At the time it was nice. Sort of uneventful. I did an interesting job. Again, I wasn't really worried about the Foreign Service. And another one of these twists of fate... unfortunately, an officer who was assigned to Tel Aviv, a macro-economist, at the embassy, was killed in a car wreck. This was in the winter of '76, and the embassy asked the State Department to find somebody. We want a macro-economist, graduate degree, who spoke Hebrew. [laughter]

Q: [laughter] a lot of those...

STAMMERMAN: Yes, a lot of those [laughter] so I got a call from personnel... they said, "Would you like to go to Tel Aviv? We know you are in Paris, and people kill for Paris, so we will not break your assignment. But if you want the job in Tel Aviv, it's yours." I said, "Send me a ticket. I'd love to go back to Tel Aviv. We have friends there, it's a wonderful place, we really liked it." So we left.

Q: Well, I would have thought that one of things would be, well the OECD thing, you are part of a big bureaucracy, most Foreign Service officers respond to challenges, they like coups, wars, always something going on.

STAMMERMAN: Oh, in a way, that wasn't it as much. I like the way the OECD was a fun place to work. It was professionally interesting, and I could have stayed there another year easily. Very easily. I didn't like French, but that's okay. We'd still visit Chartres or elsewhere on weekends, and there was enough to see to make up for the French. Anyway, I was glad to get back to the Foreign Service. It was after all my profession at the time, although it was still touch and go, I didn't know if I would stay but who knows? I owed them four years anyway, from the year in Wisconsin. So in January or February of '77, we came back to Tel Aviv.

Q: And you were there until when?

STAMMERMAN: Summer of '81. That's four and a half years.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you got out there?

STAMMERMAN: When I arrived, they were between ambassadors. The chargé d'affaires was Tom Dunnigan, of all people.

Q: I just talked to him today.

STAMMERMAN: Tom Dunnigan was the chargé, Malcolm Toon had just left, this was before Sam Lewis showed up. I worked for the econ counselor at the time.

Q: Who was that?

STAMMERMAN: Bill Dozier. He was soon to retire. It was a very quiet embassy. Toon... I heard this from the Israelis, not from Americans, Toon's ambassadorship, at least near the end, was not a very pleasant experience with the Israelis. The Israelis felt threatened.

Q: I was talking to Dayton Mak, who said that he'd talked to Mac Toon and it was said they wanted a son of a bitch and they sent Toon out. And so Toon went there as sort of a curmudgeon.

STAMMERMAN: He went there to carry the bad news.

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: They'd done the Sinai Two Agreement with the Israelis, but after that, it was tough. The Americans were unhappy about a lot of the things the Israelis were doing. It was the latter stages of the Ford administration. You are exactly right. The Israelis told me that. The local employees were unhappy... they said, normally working for the American embassy is a good place to be for Americans and Israelis. It was not a pleasant place. The embassy was making the Israelis unhappy, in many ways. But when I arrived, it was quiet, a very quiet place. I came in, and moved into the office, and who do we call on? Well, we'll call on the people at the Finance Ministry, we'll see somebody at the Foreign Ministry. By the way, we've got elections coming up, so... The elections were going to happen in May, '77 and we should do some reporting on that about the economic issues. Let's redo the econ trends report. You know, just sort of getting you back in the Foreign Service. I called on Tom Dunnigan. Tom is a very nice man, a wonderful man. And he remembered me from my junior officer days, and asked me how my friends were. He was chargé so we didn't have any DCM as such. The political officer was John Crump, a very decent man. So we all started writing papers about the election and... Well, the political section of course was writing about how Labour was going to win. And how their majority would be either greater or reduced and how that would affect American policy in the Middle East. We mostly wrote about the economic situation at the time. Israel was going through some economic problems and there had been a recession at one point. They were not in a recession then, but they were worried about it. So we mostly

wrote descriptive economics, not much in the way of political economics. At least not when I arrived, that's what was going on. What I would call descriptive economics, not political economics, as such. So, we met people, met all our Israeli friends who were happy to see us back. And we jumped back into Israeli society and were having immediately set to deal with school and everything else. And then the elections happened, and surprise, surprise. Begin wins.

Q: And the Likud came in.

STAMMERMAN: And the Likud came in.

Q: Did all your people, I take it, were they all of the Labour persuasion?

STAMMERMAN: Well, I was hearing... the Israelis didn't think Likud would take power. I was meeting people who, some businessmen, for example the... we were trying to sell machine tools to Israeli Aircraft, so I would meet these Israeli businessmen who were working with the armaments industry, which in those days you could do. It wasn't a problem. We had ways and means of doing it. We'd sell machine tools... we wouldn't sell weapons, we'd sell machine tools. And I'd meet some of them who were very much right, Likud. I remember being at a cocktail party that Dunnigan gave for whoever, for some reason I got invited there, and Ezer Weizmann was there, and he was telling people, we are going to win. You will be surprised, but we are going to win this one. Ezer was the head of the Likud, the campaign director for Menachem Begin. He led an American style campaign. But still, Begin wasn't around. Begin was a no no. Nobody in the Embassy spoke to senior people in the party. Ezer Weizmann obviously did speak to us because I remember seeing him. But generally you didn't talk to Herut or Likud. As for my Israeli friends, I was just getting back into the swing of things, I'd just arrived. And we'd talk, who's going to win, and we went around the staff meeting at the embassy, and I said Labour with a reduced majority, it's going to be close. Well, of course, Sam Lewis, who arrived after the election, didn't particularly appreciate being told all these things about Labour winning and who was going to be in charge when he arrived, and it turned out to be Menachem Begin, and not Shimon Peres. Because Rabin had just been replaced as head of the Labour Party, and then Begin defeated him. That was part of what was going on. Ambassador Lewis arrived, brought people with him, did a bit of housecleaning. The first year was hard.

Q: What was the spirit? Was it that this embassy was too close to Labour or was it that it was not running very efficiently and we needed a new broom...

STAMMERMAN: He got in and it was, "You guys don't know what you are talking about, thoroughly unprofessional job... Econ, by the way, you guys are pretty good. We hear back in Washington, they like what you are doing. Keep doing what you are doing. Okay, now... everybody else in the embassy, especially Political... you don't know what you are doing. We are very upset, we are very angry. Dick Viets, DCM, he's going to turn this embassy upside down. Blackwell is going to be your new Pol Chief for a while,

deputy DCM sort of, and John Hirsch will join Pol."

Shortly thereafter, John Crump was told to leave, so he left early, soon retired. Anyway, the message from her office was, This has been a thoroughly unprofessional embassy, didn't have all the right contacts, didn't write enough. We don't like these think pieces, these long, rambling. We want action, we want everybody to write a cable a day, and you better have somebody's name on it. Someone as in you talked to so and so and they told you blunk. The ambassador called on and got to know Begin right away. Legend had it, and I don't know if it's true, that the only person the U.S. Government who had talked to Menachem Begin since 1948 I guess, was Alexander Haig, who had been there as NATO or something and had made it a point to see him. I don't know if it was true, but it was legend, that certainly nobody in the embassy knew him or his lieutenants.

So, Lewis came in. He was a bit above it all. Dick Viets was sort of the hatchet man. My boss left shortly after because he was retiring or going to a retirement post. Sam Hart came in to be the economic consular. He came in and told me, " People like what you are doing back in Washington... Whatever you are doing, keep doing it." Which I did, I had in fact started doing economic modeling. I talked to some Israelis in academics and the finance ministry and started putting together the model and sent it back to another U.S. government agency to run and said, "Let's try this." So we were doing that. And the economists at the U.S. Treasury and other places were very happy with what I was doing. State people in NEA, ehhh, they didn't particularly know what I was doing, but they didn't care because other people were happy.

And then there was a rapid changeover of personnel in embassy Tel Aviv. I figured, after a year, we looked around one time and there were maybe 3 or 4 officers econ or pol left from when Lewis arrived. People had their tours curtailed, people were being forced out of the Foreign Service by bad efficiency reports, get them out of here. It was tough.

Q: After time, did you feel that it was an embassy that was too complacent or was it just a new person coming in and wanting to take control?

STAMMERMAN: No, you had a new guy coming in who knew what he wanted. He wanted really top level professionalism, a lot of reporting. This was his model of what an embassy should be doing, and it wasn't doing that. He could point out that the embassy had failed in its whole analysis of the election. So if anybody raised an objection, that you guys are wrong. But more than that, I think Ambassador Lewis really wanted to step up the professionalism. He felt that it was complacent, but he also felt that it wasn't being run very professionally. Not a high level of professionalism among the staff. The people who were there when I arrived, junior officers rotate so that made no difference... but Ted Feifer, for example, stayed on, I was there, one political officer was still there, but pretty much everybody else was gone. It was not pleasant in that sense.

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: Management from the front office was with a very heavy hand. In econ, we missed a lot of it because Sam Hart was very good. They liked my product, so we were encouraged to do more political economic reporting, which we did. And that brought us into conflict, occasionally, with the political section or the DCM's office. Whenever it happened, it happened, but Sam and I found that if we were reasonably well-grounded, we could take on the DCM and not suffer any consequences. It wasn't spiteful in that sense.

Q: No, well, Sam Hart, I've interviewed Sam, and he is not a gentle soul.

STAMMERMAN: No, there were not many gentle souls in that embassy. When I arrived, there were fundamentally decent people. Some like, John Crump, Tom Dunnigan, fundamental, decent people. So people were brought in who in our opinion were not fundamentally decent people. [laughter].

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: The strange thing, Sam Lewis is nice, I like him. But some of the people he brought in were not. He was brought into a job... well one of the people who stayed was a pol officer named Gil Kulick, he survived after a couple of years. But most people were transferred. The political counselor they brought in had no redeeming qualities.

Q: Who was that?

STAMMERMAN: Bob Blackwell. As a person, he had few redeeming personal qualities in my opinion. He was tough. He required his officers to put out a cable a day and he'd shout at people and bang doors and caused an immense amount of stress in the political section. Not just among his officers, but secretaries... people were unhappy, very unhappy. I never really knew Dick Viets when I was there. I knew Dick better afterwards, but never did understand all that he was doing. The second year we were there, maybe later, well the atmosphere changed after a year, kind of eased up a bit.

Q: When you arrived there, even before the change in the embassy and before the election, did you find that... you were getting out the economic ministry, did you find that there was not the ease of entry that there had been before?

STAMMERMAN: It's funny, but for me there was a great ease of entry. I don't know about my political colleagues; they were always saying, things are hard. I called on the Finance Ministry and the Bank of Israel that was my main government contact, and businessmen of course, but I was doing economics this time, not commercial work, so my focus was on Finance Ministry and Bank of Israel which was in Jerusalem, not in Tel Aviv, and the Defense Ministry. I had a lot of contacts there because we were selling them things. These were professional economists, and I spoke their language. They were happy to know me.

Q: And your OECD qualifications must have been very useful...

STAMMERMAN: It helped open doors to people in the government. I get along well with Israelis. There was another problem too. When I arrived, a lot of people, Americans, in the embassy didn't like Israelis. In fact, in my first tour in Tel Aviv, 1967 to 1969, a lot of people in the embassy did not like Israelis. Did not like the way they behaved: they shouted in traffic, they pushed in lines. A lot of people in the embassy did not like Israelis. But I did. People would say, You came back here voluntarily? I'd say, "Yes, it's a great country, wonderful." We get free tickets to the opera (the Embassy rec association had season tickets), we'd go to Friday night talks. Wonderful people. And they'd say, "What country are YOU in?" I'd say, "What the heck, this is fun."

So I would go and look up people like the guy who put together the Israeli statistical abstract in the census bureau. Obscure little statistical tables. And I could talk to him about this, and he'd provide data, so pleased to find someone interested. WOW. And he was a great source for all kinds of data I needed which would have taken me forever to find out. So I got to know them very well up in the Finance Ministry. I'd go up there and just sit there for an hour or two. We'd talk about economics, I'd pick up information. These were good people, so my analysis would reflected a lot of what they were predicting and it would turn out to be true. And I could tell Cabinet changes even, and who's likely to be Finance Minister. When Begin took over, he changed the Finance Ministry so it was much less socialist. They went cold turkey, free markets. They tried to float in the exchange rate.

Q: Interesting. But you would have thought Likud would have been even more statist.

STAMMERMAN: No. It was because Likud was part of the Gahal, which is the bloc of Herut and Liberal, liberal meaning European liberal. The deal was, the Liberals gave him respectability. These were sort of the middle class, old Ashkenazi businessmen. These were the Liberals. Herut was Irgun, nationalists, ultra nationalists. Gahal brought them into respectability. Likud took over from Labour, and the Liberals were given economic ministries. Likud took the prime ministership and Defense as well as the Foreign Ministry. Foreign Ministry being Moshe Dayan, who came over from Labour. The Liberals were free market liberals, and Begin knew nothing about economics, so he said, okay, that's yours. So they went straight free market liberal, floated the exchange rate, tried to sell off state enterprises, which they did not do, but they would have liked to. They did a lot of other things, decontrolled prices and all, so it was very exciting in that sense. They went from a socialist economy to free markets in many ways. The Israeli economists were excited about it too, so I would be calling them. You had floating exchange rates, and in the West Bank they had both the Jordanian dinar and the Israeli lira were legal tender. All these fascinating things you only see in textbooks when you have two currencies circulating in the same currency area. So it worked very well. It was fascinating.

Q: Did you notice the change since the '73 war? What was going on with the Egyptians and Syrians?

STAMMERMAN: Well, the Labour party lost its legitimacy because of '73. People talked badly about them. We didn't think they'd lose in '77, but there was a real crisis in confidence. The Labour Party, that whole establishment, the Ashkenazim. Well one time, we were in a staff meeting and Jimmy Carter announced that he was inviting the Russians - this was in the summer of '77 - back into the UN peace process, under the UN auspices. Some of the Israelis absolutely hated it of course. I remember the ambassador announced at the staff meeting, and he said, "You will support this policy. This is the policy of the U.S. government and keep that in mind when you talk to people, when you talk to Israelis, this is the policy of the U.S. government." That's all he said. Obviously he disagreed with it, but we would not rock the boat.

Q: I think when the Carter administration came in, he was full of brotherly ideas and cooperating, and I was in Korea at the time and he was going to haul out the American division which was sort of the cork in the bottle. We all thought that this could lead to another Korean war. And sitting in Seoul, we weren't too happy about this. That early Carter period, he knew what he was doing, he thought, and had all sorts of ideas most of which were kind of lousy.

STAMMERMAN: Well, the Israelis thought that, especially since he'd been elected on a platform that included moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which we didn't think would happen, but, all the same, the Israelis were disappointed to say the least. They weren't surprised, but they were disappointed. What happened after that, Sadat came to Jerusalem, in the fall of...

Q: Talk about that...

STAMMERMAN: Well, you know, history in the making, one of the things you join the Foreign Service to see. There was a CODEL in town, Jim Wright, who later became Speaker, but was not then.

Q: From Texas.

STAMMERMAN: Jim Wright brought a CODEL of probably 12 congressmen to Jerusalem, it was a recess, so he brought them to Jerusalem. Since the focus of the CODEL was economics, Sam Hart and I were the control officers. You had two control officers because there were so many of them. By then, I always got a lot of CODELs, I probably got more CODELs than anybody else because I'd been there long enough that I knew the Israelis, I knew the protocol guy in the Foreign Ministry well and so on. So I got a lot of CODELs. We all went off to Jerusalem with this CODEL, to the King David, there was a standard routine, we would rent rooms at the King David. Remember, the embassy is in Tel Aviv. The consulate general is in Jerusalem, but it can't talk to the Israeli Government. In those days, you simply could not talk to them. So all CODELs,

congressional delegations, had to be handled by the embassy in Tel Aviv at a distance. We'd all move up to Jerusalem and live in the King David. We all went to the King David because of security. The Israelis wanted us to be in the King David.

So we had all these congressmen there and we were doing the usual rounds. Begin saw every Congressman who came to Israel, he made it a point. Menachem Begin, he'd see every Congressman, every Senator. So we went up to call on Prime Minister Begin, Sam Hart and I, we went to the prime minister's office. He shook our hands and we talked a little bit about this and that; they knew he wasn't into economic policy, so it was a courtesy call. So the Speaker spoke about how much we value the relationship with Israel, and the usual protocol kind of things, and then they stalled, Begin said, "My friends, I have something to tell you. After we finish this meeting, I'm going to walk out of this room and announce to the world that we have been talking to the Egyptians and that President Sadat is going to visit Jerusalem, and you are the first to know about it."

Q: My God.

STAMMERMAN: How do you like that? I thought, wow! Like, where can I find a telephone? And then he turned to the congressmen and said,"The Egyptians will be staying at the King David Hotel. Now, we know you are staying there, but you can remain, but we are clearing everybody else out for security reasons. But you can remain. This is a wonderful historical moment." Then he went out and held a press conference, and announced that Sadat is coming in just a few days. Great, this is a really exciting time. And then we called the embassy and they said, well we need more people obviously if we are going to support all these congressmen while all this stuff is going on. So they sent up another secretary and other officer and then we started working with the consulate general to get some bodies, some help. Two interesting things afterwards. The Egyptians of course had nobody there. The Egyptian team, nobody to meet them other than the Israelis, so we were backing up the Egyptians delegation with our office set up within the King David. Of course we sold commissary goods to the congressmen, we also sold commissary goods to the Egyptians. We made our commissary budget that year. But mainly we sort of backed them up so that when Sadat made his speech to Knesset, we had one of the only Arabic typewriters in town with somebody who could type that fast and that well. So we were very much sort of backing up both sides, really. The fly in the ointment was the congressmen. We had to stay there for a few days until the Egyptians arrived. We heard from one of the congressmen, Ken we are leaving. I said, "Why?" They said, "We have business back in the States, we have constituents." [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: The majority of the congressmen told Wright, "We're leaving. We don't care what you are doing about this Knesset-Sadat thing. No Egyptians vote in our districts." Wright twisted a few arms, and they stayed. (End of tape)

Q: You were saying you were taking Congressmen for visits...

STAMMERMAN: Yes, I was taking congressmen for visits to the old city in Bethlehem, showing them around simply because we had a few days to spend while putting everything together, or rather while the Israelis were putting everything together really. But we were inside the whole King David circle there. But we'd go off to the old city or Bethlehem and I talked to my Palestinian friends, and I'd say, "Isn't this exciting?" They'd say, "This is terrible." Already, they saw this is not opportunity, Sadat is making separate peace, we're being betrayed again. What, opportunity is here. Everything's against us. I would argue that now's the time for people to do things. But see, I wasn't talking to Palestinian politicians, they were merchants. They said, "No, Ken, you really don't know what's going on here. These Egyptians they are not talking for us. This is not a good day." And so when Sadat arrived, they all closed their shops. They were very much against him.

Q: We're having Camp David II, as we speak, between the Palestinians and the Israelis out at Camp David. And it was pointed out that on the West Bank, Camp David is not a good name. We're talking about the year 2000. For the Palestinians, this is a sellout.

STAMMERMAN: They thought the Egyptians were selling them out. Between the Sadat visit and Camp David, a lot of things happened. We had all manner of high level visits back and forth, as the Egyptians and Israelis worked out their relationship. In fact, they were trying to work out a bigger deal. The Egyptians did not want to be seen as making separate deals. But the Israelis wanted first of all nonaggression with the Egyptians because that took the Egyptian Army out of the equation. Once the Egyptian Army is out of the equation, no general Middle East war happens. Can't happen. So that was their focus. The Egyptians were focusing on bringing in Palestinians, somebody, anybody else. And there were various people, there was a special Middle East negotiator and stuff like that.

Q: It must have been interesting to see the Egyptians come to the King David Hotel. I'm talking about the support staff, they must have felt like Alice in not-exactly-Wonderland.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, we found them surrounded by Israelis security people. They were worried, the Egyptians felt threatened by other Arabs. This was also funny, the Israelis were all over the Egyptian delegation protecting them. They saw us and the Egyptians foreign ministry people, I was in the King David the whole time, I don't recall hearing anything from Embassy Cairo. I'm sure things were going between Cairo and Tel Aviv, but we didn't hear much about who these people were anyway. But we worked with them and helped them where we could. Gave them supplies. They didn't have any supplies, typing paper, anything. So we helped them with that stuff. And Sadat left and the Israelis were absolutely euphoric. The isolation was broken, peace in our time, so on. And then we started holding, it was us and the Egyptians and the Israelis, three-way discussions. Quite a bit after that, they got the peace treaty. Carter visited Jerusalem. I was deputy control officer for that one. I did a lot on that visit. And I knew the Israelis well, so whenever we would worked these visits, we had a local FSN contingent, and I would go

and an admin officer, and we'd do everything that needed to be done. I probably did more CODEL visits the years I was there than anybody else. [laughter]

Q: [laughter] Well, you were there for starting the Camp David process. What was the feeling as it started? From the embassy. Was it going to work, how did we feel about it?

STAMMERMAN: I'm not sure we really knew. We knew Begin. I'd been, by that time, probably in dozens of meetings, because of the CODEL visits, and lunch with Begin. And he's a charming man. We knew that Begin would always surprise people. Those of us who had seen him operate. He had almost infectious enthusiasm, and we knew he wanted the best for Israel. Outside, the view in many other embassies in the Middle East, was that he was a not very slightly reformed terrorist. A nationalist hard liner, a tough little man. And we all saw him at his best, a charming man. Those of us who saw him the most thought, well, he can do it. If the Egyptians have any give, because we only knew of the Egyptian side what Embassy Cairo told us, and we'd seen Sadat do his thing in Jerusalem. And Sadat in Jerusalem was very hard line. Very true to the Arab negotiating position. The Palestinians need a state, the PLO is their representative, all Arab territory must be returned. All of the above. So, the feel was, if the Egyptians are willing to negotiate, the Israelis will negotiate, they will do almost everything short of Jerusalem.

Q: Were you looking during this period at the settlement policy, or was this much of an issue at this time?

STAMMERMAN: It was an issue...

Q: I'm talking about the West Bank...

STAMMERMAN: West Bank settlements, Gaza, West Bank and Gaza. There was an ongoing argument with Jerusalem and Consulate General Jerusalem in the embassy over settlement policy, or what U.S. government policy should be over the settlements. Our official position was the settlements were obstacles to peace. But in those days, still in the '70s, there weren't that many people in the settlements. We had seen Israeli settlements in the Sinai Peninsula, the Israelis had settlements in the Sinai, in the Golan, in the West Bank, in Gaza. We could visit those places if we wished, and we did. The general feeling over the West Bank settlements, a lot of them were Americans, who were out playing cowboys and Indians, and if the Israelis really wanted to deal, the settlements would not be a problem. There were arguments. This was not a settled issue within the U.S. government. I was not part of it. I would do econ analysis of the West Bank which for some of us made no difference at all.

Q: Were you looking at, as the peace process developed what it meant economically?

STAMMERMAN: Very much so. A lot of things went on including on the economic side. Remember we had Sinai II, which was then governing our relationships with Israelis and Egyptians, before the King David Hotel experience. Part of that was that we'd

guaranteed an oil supply to Israel if Israel couldn't get it anywhere else. Well, with the Iranian revolution, the Israelis couldn't get oil from their former supplier, Iran. So it was a question of whether they would trigger that Sinai II provision. In the end they did not, they thought it would be a bad idea. Americans were in gasoline lines in the United States, for us to dip into our oil reserves and ship to Israel would not be good for us or the Israelis. They and we thought that would be a bad idea. So they didn't ask. They found it somewhere else. The economics of the peace process became very much a lot of what we were doing after about 1979. For example, the Israelis had two wonderful airbases, our military said, inside the Sinai. Etzion and I forget the other one. And so the Israelis flew me and some U.S. government analysts to the bases to show us the value of what they were giving up. Wonderful... our military analysts saw hardened hangars, quick fueling setups, out in the middle of the Sinai, the Israelis were going to give it up as part of Camp David. So I said, well, if they give that up, it's worth this much money, this is what the budget is, it's going to cost them this much inside Israel proper. So, if we are paying for it, this is the price. I was involved in that sort of thing.

Q: I remember in my interview with Sam Hart, he said that at one point he got pretty disgusted because he would go through, they would look at aid, and they would figure out what aid should be to Israel and come up with an economic balance, and he said, you know, and the Israelis would laugh in his face, and they got exactly what they wanted basically through Congress. Were you feeling his frustration or was this Sam Hart?

STAMMERMAN: Well, Sam Hart was more frustrated than I was, because I sort of understood how the game was played and accepted it more than he did. What happened every year was the Israelis would give us a so-called white paper. Essentially, it worked out the current account balance of payments deficit, it described their economy, their policies, and they'd come to a balance of payments of deficit. And that was the bill. And they'd show us they needed two billion dollars in economic aid and a lot of that was due from their analysis to their activities over the peace process. Or their economic adjustment process in liberalizing the economy, both of which we favored. They would come to a gap. It was a gap analysis. So it was a well-written paper, I knew the people who would write it, and I'd take the paper apart, and I'd write a long analysis of the paper and say they're wrong. They always exaggerated. I knew they exaggerated, they knew they exaggerated, but we'd go through the detailed analysis. It was good economic analysis on their part, nevertheless, though overdrawn.

A little aside now, but I'll get back to that. There was one day which I thought was kind of strange. I got a call from the director general of the Finance Ministry, the top civil servant. Or his advisor, sorry. And he said the director general and the advisor and so and so, an economic analyst, we will be in Tel Aviv this afternoon to present our aid request. There was no USAID mission, it all goes through the embassy. We have our white paper. I said fine. The Ambassador said he wants to receive that. They said, we know. Well, fine. Where are you going to be? Well, we'll be in the economic ministries office in Tel Aviv. This was a Friday afternoon. So Shabbat (Sabbath) is approaching. Sundown on Friday, everything stops. So we'll see you at 3 o'clock this afternoon. Okay. I run to the

front office and tell Ambassador Lewis that the Israelis have the white paper. Okay, fine. Do you know where it is? Yes, I know where it is. So I got the ambassador's driver and he and I drove to the, it's called the Kiria, where the government offices are in Tel Aviv. So we drove in and the streets are deserted. Nobody's there. We pulled up. These looked like little quonset huts. And we pulled up aside one, and this is the place. The char force is leaving. The Ambassador says, "Are you sure?" "Yes, this is the place." I walked in. The hall light was off, down the way there's a room with a light on. So I flipped the hall light on. I knew my way around. He said again, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yes, I know where we are going." So we walked down to the room. Sure enough, there they were, three Israeli senior government officers, one the director general of Finance Ministry, senior civil servant, his advisor and macro analyst, the three of them sitting behind this table. In this bare room, just a wooden table, sitting in bare chairs, looking up, just like this, waiting for us to walk in the door. And we did. They said, "Oh, hello, welcome." And we sat down and the director general gave us a little spiel. He said, "We have done our analysis, here's our white paper, we expect our aid request this year is for $1.8 billion in economic aid and here is the military aid is this much money, that's a separate job, but that's how much we're asking." And the ambassador handed me a copy real quick and said look at this. And then we all shook hands and left, and we left these three men sitting in this deserted building in a deserted part of Tel Aviv. They'd just asked us for $1.8 billion dollars. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: The Ambassador said, Ken, you get back to the embassy and tell them they just asked me and you for $1.8 billion dollars. Here's the paper. And that was the routine. A weird thing. But their analysis was serious enough.

Q: Did you take each analysis and say alright this is the proper proportion but it's an inflated figure.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, that's what we did. We said the analysis is decent, but this is where they missed. Invariably. We'd disagree with them and I'd tell them that I think your numbers are wrong, informally. Not calling them liars, but you don't really believe this, do you? And we'd talk, and I'd write up my cable to recommend to say the bottom line is not $1.8 billion, it's $800 million. And I'd shop it around, getting clearance from the appropriate people, and bring it to the DCM and look at it. He'd say, "Do you really want to do this?" "Yes, I really want to do this. It's the right thing to do." He'd give it to the ambassador and naturally enough, he'd then call Sam Hart and me, a military attaché and the DCM into the front office and say, "Do you really want to send this?" I said, "Mr. Ambassador, the analysis is good. Nobody would fault the analysis." He'd kind of roll his eyes a little bit and then he'd say, "Do you understand the politics?" "I understand the politics, but we can do it." Not U.S. domestic politics which is not part of our game, but the relationship between Israel and the United States. I said, "If we recommend all that they ask for, to be the State Department's position, that does harm to our relationship, because they think we are buying a lie. It's not right, and they know it's not right. An

exaggeration." And we'd go round and round on that. It would go in some very highly classified level, and that was the last we would see about it. I would have a draft that I thought was honest and professional, and Sam Lewis never made me change a sentence. We'd argue sometimes. Again, I think anybody who had survived that first year, he accepted as we can talk straight, and we may disagree, and if we change something I'm not going to ask you to change it, I'll change it, or I'll write a paragraph stating the above is written by my economic analyst whose analysis I respect, but... our political relationship will not bear... something. But he was clear with me, that front office never made me change a word of economic analysis.

Q: But then again, what was the final outcome of these things?

STAMMERMAN: The money was the final outcome. But, the relationship between the embassy, the U.S. government in doing analysis after all was about further developments, other agencies were doing analysis, commerce, AID, everybody was doing it. Our input was professional. We were in fact telling the truth to people further up the line. They knew whatever the result was, they knew what the truth was, with decent analysis. This was all done on good terms with the Israelis, they knew what we were doing. They knew what I was doing, because I would talk to them about it.

Q: In a way you had to because otherwise you would be considered patsies.

STAMMERMAN: Exactly.

Q: Were you feeling the heavy hand of the Israeli lobby in the United States at this point?

STAMMERMAN: Never did. Not a bit. You asked earlier. We were talking about Jewish officers, by that time, we were talking about '79 or '80, there were quite a few Jewish officers. It was no longer unusual. Although it was funny, interesting at the time, because I had made by then good contacts with sort of religious elements in Israeli society. I had my old friends the Chabad and the NRP people. I made it my business to look into the culture, the religious elements. So that when Eli Weisel, the Nobel peace prize recipient came out to do the research for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial, with his delegation, I was named control officer. And went with him and his American group to all of the Israeli Holocaust memorials. So I knew the people at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial, and was pretty much involved in that sort of thing.

Anyway, Sam Hart left, and Rich Kauzlarich replaced him.

Q: Who did?

STAMMERMAN: Rich Kauzlaurich later became our ambassador to Azerbaijan.

Q: How do you spell his last name?

STAMMERMAN: Kauzlaurich

Q: Oh, yes, yes sure out of Azerbaijan. I've interviewed him.

STAMMERMAN: Okay, well Rich succeeded Sam Hart. Rich was not quite as flamboyant, let's say, as Sam was. He was a very good economist. We got along well. Though Ambassador Sam Lewis had this unfortunate thing sometimes of calling officers in without bringing their office superiors in. So I was the analyst and sometimes after talking to the Ambassador I would have to come back and brief Rich. But that was just a staff thing. Rich was a fine officer, a good worker. He stayed after I left.

Q: How did the events of November/December '79 affect you all? I'm talking about in Iran and Afghanistan, and Pakistan? The Islamic world took a nasty turn.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. I didn't know our Ambassador in Kabul, I remember the assassination, but I don't know when that was.

Q: That was in '79, earlier in '79.

STAMMERMAN: I didn't know him, but Sam Hart and a lot of other people did. That hurt. A lot of people were very upset.

Q: I knew Spike Dubs quite well. A very fine man.

STAMMERMAN: Did you really?

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: I didn't know him. Then we were focused on Teheran, you know, in the hostage taking and all that; the Israelis were very obviously upset about what was happening because they got all their oil from Iran. It was an open secret. That was the whole point of part of what was going on in 1967. Once the Egyptians closed the Straight of Tiran, they cut off Israel's oil from Iran. The Israelis had very good contacts in Teheran. They in effect had an embassy there. The new government came to power and threw them out. Executed a lot of the leaders in the Teheran Jewish community. The Israelis were, for them it was a defeat. They lost their position. For a lot of the Israelis that was just, they would tell us, it shows you the kind of region we live in. These people are crazy. You've got to trust us as your strategic partner. The embassy though was sort of looking at it at a distance. There was no, inside the Israel territories proper, no trouble. I remember when we did the hostage rescue attempt, people were just so upset with Jimmy Carter. We'd been in Israel for Entebbe, this is not the way you do a rescue. We knew how the Israelis would have done it, we saw the complete incompetence at senior levels in the U.S. Government. That was the general feeling. Also, there were a lot of people upset with what our embassy in Teheran did, but it was at a distance, we didn't know. It looked bad.

Q: Was there a change in mood because of a seeming rise of Islamic fundamentalism that felt more besieged than...

STAMMERMAN: No, I would say no. Not in Tel Aviv. The Israelis said, what a bad neighborhood, it's gotten worse. And the embassy in a way reflected that. Although, some of the reporting analysis coming from other American embassies was along the line of see what our policies in the Middle East have brought on us. Our embracing Zionism is just another reason why the Arabs and Muslims have nowhere to go but they turn to extremism. We of course shrugged that off.

Q: How about Sharon? Was he a figure at all when you were... by this time?

STAMMERMAN: No. We'd see him, because of course he was the hero of the '73 war, the Canal crossing He was on the embassy invite list. So we'd see him sometimes. You couldn't miss him, he was a huge man. And he would just be absolutely outrageous in what he would say. And what would he say... in terms of his attitudes towards Arabs and not the Egyptians but anybody else. You know, "We're going to keep the West Bank." He'd say that right out. "We're keeping the West Bank, you can be sure of it."

Q: Did you see a change in attitude at this time, I'm talking about a little compare and contrast, from you really started June of '67, in the attitude of the embassy towards the Palestinians and the PLO. I'm not talking about formal recognition, but Golda Meir was supposed to have said one time, there's no such thing as Palestinians. And I was wondering whether the embassy at one point was thinking this was just a little problem, go away, or were we taking them more seriously or not?

STAMMERMAN: I would say there was a dispute within the embassy on that. But in general, the attitude was there are Arab states; the Palestinians are not one of them. That Jordan is the key is an Israeli deal with the Arabs on the West Bank, and the sooner the Hashemites talk to the Israelis, the sooner that problem will be solved. Perhaps in some kind of federation, but the PLO is out of bounds. The PLO was considered way beyond the pale. An Arab would speak up to a congressional delegation, my friends with Bethlehem would say, oh the PLO is our representative. People would get up and walk out. We generally wouldn't stay in those conversations. We would just simply say, no, we don't talk about PLO. Consulate General Jerusalem was another case, what they did. By then, things were also getting very tough in Gaza. We wouldn't go to Gaza. It was already becoming a violent place. Intifada had not started until years later.

Q: Was it violent against Americans or is it just because of overcrowding, or just plain violent?

STAMMERMAN: Against the Israelis. We might be taken for Israelis.

Q: Yes, you had license plates.

STAMMERMAN: We had license plates. I would go there occasionally. I remember taking congressional staffers, not congressmen. I would take staffers into Gaza. We had some voluntary agencies down there. I'd go down in an embassy car. The embassy driver would drop us in front of one of these places and he would drive our car to Israeli military camp and arrange to meet us at a certain time. He was not going to be on the streets of Gaza. In the West Bank... no trouble. We'd go anywhere, maybe not Jenin or Nablus. I remember one of the last times I was down there in Gaza, I would say not touring, but there's a United Nations craft shop. I took my son down there, nine or ten years old. We walked along the street and did our shopping, and had gotten out and he said, "Dad I don't like the way these people look at us." They were not friendly. Maybe inside the shops, they were selling, but out on the street, we were not in a friendly place. So that was it. Things got bad. West Bank was like always.

Q: Did Lebanon...

STAMMERMAN: It boiled over occasionally. That's when the Israelis had a retaliatory raid and the UN set up UNIFIL. Happened during 1979-80, when there was an incursion by the PLO, and then there was an incursion by the Israelis in response, and the Israelis refused to get out until we somehow blocked that border. So the U.N. sent in a force called UNIFIL. And the people in the embassy generally thought it was a bad idea. But they did it; it didn't work very well.

Q: When you left there in '81, from your perspective, whither Israel?

STAMMERMAN: I was very confident about the Israelis. I figured the Israelis would do piece-by-piece negotiations with the Arab states. The Israeli-Egyptian treaty was signed. The Lebanese border was reasonably quiet. Syria was quiet. That the Egyptian-Israeli relationship would develop, that's the key door into the Arab world. That in time the Israelis would be accepted. What we would hear through the different embassies about who the Israelis were was simply wrong. We could see that. They were not Europeans living in the Middle East. This was their country. They were sure going to stay. They had overwhelming power, they would keep overwhelming power because the United States would supply them, and the Israelis, if it took 20 years, it would take 20 years, because the Israelis could manage very well on their own. The Palestinians were not causing any trouble before the Intifada. The main trouble was the PLO, but, that could be handled, that was minor stuff. I thought they would manage.

Q: Well, 1981... whither?

STAMMERMAN: As for me?

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: Well, 1980 I won the economic reporting award.

Q: Which reports... a particular report or a series of reports?

STAMMERMAN: A series of reports. Rich Kauzlaurich, the econ counselor, nominated me. A lot of it had to do with the analysis of the white paper, that sort of thing. This was an annual reporting award on the topic of international economics, and I won it. So that's some pretty decent credentials. I signed on to go work on the Egyptian desk. Time to go back to Washington, besides which my first marriage, at that time my first marriage, came apart. My wife went off her way, and I went mine.

Q: Was it the Foreign Service... I mean I don't want to get into the personal side...

STAMMERMAN: It was the Foreign Service.

Q: Just to get a feel. The Foreign Service can be very difficult on... moving around...

STAMMERMAN: Moving around. Lots of things. Professional ambitions with the spouses. And the occasion, the Foreign Service. I thoroughly enjoyed Israel, I thought it was a great place. Sometimes it's hard.

Q: I think all of us have felt the strains.

STAMMERMAN: So I went back. We had joint custody, so my son stayed with me; we had to go to Washington, that was the understanding, 1981. I had been in Israel for 4 and a half years. It was a 3-year assignment; I kept extending. I would have extended forever, but finally NEA personnel said, "Enough is enough, you can't keep extending." So I had to move back to Washington. By the time I left, I was the longest serving officer in the Embassy by far. I'd served longer than Ambassador Lewis. He stayed longer, but I was the only officer who had been there before him. And I went back to Washington and wanted to go to an NEA desk, went to Egyptian affairs, because I'd known something about it, because of Camp David and the analysis. Ed Peck was the country director. Great man. Of course the consummate Arabist. Had been in Iraq and elsewhere in the Arab world. Great man. And I spent two years working on Egyptian affairs.

Q: Was that '81 -'83?

STAMMERMAN: NEA/EGY, first year was interesting. But the Reagan administration had just taken power. They put someone in charge of AID, whose name I don't remember. Who wanted to use AID to force free market economics on the rest of the world. So he wanted to make our aid to any country contingent on their becoming free market economies. Egyptians were socialists. Arab socialism from Nasser was still the way things were done. We were pumping in over a billion dollars, I guess it was just over 800 million dollars in aid to Egypt, just under what Israel was getting. The aid mission could not spend it all. With the Israelis, it was very simple, we wrote them a check. Because of financial analysis. They needed $1.2 billion, we wrote them a check for $1.2

billion. End of story. Economic. Military was something else. The Egyptians though, we had an AID mission. We had hundreds of people. Hundreds of officers, AID employees in Cairo, spending the money.

Q: And also, the bill for these Americans came out of the aid, the bid...

STAMMERMAN: Came out of the aid. It did. Plus the American consultants. Every university that knew anybody who worked in AID would find a reason to get a consulting contract and go out to Cairo. All that money eventually was spent on American services or American goods. The Egyptians didn't see much of it. To them... what's changing. How do we know? There were no obvious things happening. No Aswan Dam. And then we got the new head of the AID, courtesy of the Reagan administration, who wanted to force the Egyptians to adopt free market economic policy, or we wouldn't give them anything. Mubarak's ministers would say, "Wait a minute... that aid's for Camp David. The Israelis get that aid no matter what they do. They can turn Communist. They can form communes in the desert for all we care. But that aid holds Egypt into Camp David, so get out of the way. Spend your money on our consultants, but don't mess with our Egypt economic policy." And that became the fight, for two years, we fought that battle. And it was hard.

Q: How did the battle shape up from your perspective at the desk?

STAMMERMAN: Well, it shaped up like this. Let's say we're having a visit from President Mubarak. I'm doing economics. Mubarak is going to visit the United States, he's going to see the President. He's concerned because, this is 6 months after the assassination of Sadat, the AID people were telling him, they want him to raise the price of bread. The last time, when Sadat raised the price of bread, 1976, the Egyptian Army lost control of Cairo for three days. They had bread riots. And Mubarak was saying, "You guys are crazy." But you've got the AID guys saying, "Look, unless you increase the price of bread, we're not going disburse this loan and this loan and this loan." They had a billion dollars in undisbursed loans because AID would not approve... this is crazy, the Egyptians were very angry because they always had all this money in the pipeline. It wasn't being spent. AID wouldn't spend it because they want to leverage it to force economic change on the Egyptians. They thought of themselves as a mini-IMF.

And I'd say, "Look, I'm a macroeconomist, I know what the Egyptians should do. That's not important. Our foreign policy goals require that we disburse this money, and do it now. That's how Mubarak sees it, and how his opposition sees it." And we'd fight that battle every day for two years. You fight it by writing position papers. You write a paper, Mubarak's coming, because the NEA front office did not want to deal with this. Nobody really wanted to face up to this. Because in taking on Reagan administration ideologues against foreign policy requirements, I kept arguing, and Peck kept arguing, "The goals of the Administration are not consistent. We've got a good economist here who says, we don't need to force economic change on Egypt. At this point, it really doesn't matter."

So we'd write the paper saying, trying to get clearance through the State Department, tell Mubarak, don't worry, he's going to get the money. Or something to that effect. Or we'd urge the Egyptian government to continue its policy of economic reform, while in the meantime we're trying to disburse money as fast as we can, and we'd find the right words to say. AID would see that as stepping in and taking over their responsibility. AID refused to clear, it would go up to the secretary of state, he'd go to an AID guy who'd argue about it, he'd go to the NSC. Then one day, we had a couple of senior Egyptian government visits that went poorly in terms of just infighting bureaucracy, which I hated, because I like to do economics. I'm not somebody who likes to pound on tables and find a cute way to leverage the bureaucracy. I'm just going to do it straightforward. I've got ten AID clearances on these papers. Because 600 people out in Cairo each of them have backups, ten guys working Washington. I've got to get clearances.

Anyway, one time I wrote a paper for a Mubarak visit, it got as far as the Secretary who was still fighting the AID/State fight, and got a call from the Secretary's office, and the Secretary's aide said Secretary Haig wants whoever wrote that paper to come in and see him right now. It was me of course. And luckily, I saw Ed Peck. I said, "Ed, the Secretary wants to see us." "Great, let's go." We were walking along, and things fall into place. We ran into Ambassador Atherton who was back on consultations because of the Egyptian President's visit. So we saw Ambassador Atherton and said, "Haig wants to see us about this paper, it's about such and such" So we all walked up to the Secretary's office, his anteroom was full of very quiet people. NEA people in those days were typically shouting and banging doors. The Secretary's officer was very quiet, wood paneling, carpets.

We walked in and Ambassador Atherton knew the Secretary and introduced me and Ed. And the Ambassador said, "I know Ken, he did a great job in Tel Aviv, and I knew him from there, and this is Edward Peck," and Haig stops and says, "I've got this paper and I've got to brief the White House in an hour. And you've got to simplify the issue." The problem was, of course, the ideology. "Because I've got to talk to the President in language he will understand, so make this a lot simpler. If you'll make the economics a lot simpler, then I can handle the issue." I cannot make the economics any simpler. Luckily, I'd started, and Ambassador Atherton said, "Well, this is something we discussed Mr. Secretary when you were in Cairo. Remember it has something to do with that pipeline? Remember the Egyptians have a billion, however much money, unspent money and we're trying to find a way to spend the money so Mubarak will be happy with what we are doing and he can satisfy his cabinet." "Oh, okay, I remember." Okay, and we said goodbye. It was kind of lucky that Atherton was there.

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: But Haig seemed very concerned about having to explain this to the White House. There was this contradiction for almost two years, and was never solved.

Q: Was there any attempt to stop this aid proliferation in Egypt? We'd established this huge apparatus there which you say is just a way of spending money.

STAMMERMAN: The ambassadors and DCMs would go out there and resolve to clean it up, and were defeated. It was beyond me why, but they could not do it. We would come in for our weekly secure telephone talks with Embassy Cairo, and they'd say, "you've got to do something about this AID mission," and I'd say, "you've got to do something about this AID mission." I remember being on the Hill with (NEA DAS) Maurie Draper who was testifying on aid to Egypt and we had the AID assistant administrator there, and she and her minions passing papers to her and I was there passing papers to Maurie. One day this congressman says, "How many people do we have in the AID mission?" And she said, "On our Washington books we have about 100 people. I think more than that. Well, we have people who are paid out of the mission, the funds that are being allocated to Egyptians." "How many more are there?" "Well that's another 400 people. We have 500 people in the mission. Well sort of. Because we also have all these dependents. A lot of them work..." At that point, the congressman said, "What are you telling us? You know, we've got hundreds and hundreds of people out there in Cairo." She said, "Yes." Even Congress wouldn't do anything about it. It was beyond me. And the Egyptians got madder and madder at us. They got more and more upset about it.

Q: We weren't delivering what they expected us to deliver.

STAMMERMAN: No. That's what they would tell us. What I heard in Washington on what was going on in Cairo and maybe the ambassador had heard other things, but I would hear from Egyptian embassy people and they weren't seeing it happen.

Q: You were there two years. What happened then?

STAMMERMAN: On the desk. I was thinking I didn't want to go back out again, because my son was just starting high school. I wanted him to go to high school in the United States. So I looked for another 3-year assignment, and there was an FSO position at FSI. On the econ teaching side, to be deputy director. I said, Fine, I'll take that one." Then I walked over and talked to John Sprock who said, "Wonderful. We'd be happy to have you." Since I'd won the reporting award, I would develop an economic reporting manual, which is something the econ studies did not have. That is, they taught econ studies, but not how to report. So I would develop a reporting manual. So I went over and joined the econ course and taught economic reporting, case studies. And then after two years, the director moved on, and they made me the acting director of econ studies. That's a civil service position, so I knew it was temporary. I followed John Harrington, who was then the director, and I hired Dr. Lisa Fox to be the deputy. John moved to the State Department to another civil service job, and I moved to be the director with Lisa Fox was the deputy with the understanding that she would become director when I moved on. Which I did. May of '85.

Q: Close to '86.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, summer of '86. Summer of '83 to summer of '86.

Q: Did you see by this time a change in... were you talking to junior economic officers...?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, well we also had this disastrous experiment in mid-level officer training that went on at that time.

Q: It's hard to get people to do that, isn't it?

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: Once they are launched on their career, sort of a six-month assignment doesn't really...

STAMMERMAN: Well actually, economic training didn't have a problem. Because of its reputation.

Q: That got you...

STAMMERMAN: It was a ticket to punch. If you were going to be a senior officer in the Foreign Service, concentrating on economics, you had to take that course. But the political officers, not to mention others, consulars, saw no worth in the training. The consular and admin types had specific job training, how to do GSO work, for example. Political officers saw no worth in training. None at all. It was just time out of their careers. But Congress had said we should do mid-level training. So a mid-level training course was put together, econ had a small segment of it. And it was a disaster. Not because the content wasn't good. I thought the content was good. Not only from econ's point of view, but from the Foreign Service point of view, but political officers thought it was not worth doing. So they complained. Eventually the Undersecretary heard them and canceled it.

Q: The economic officers you were looking at, were you seeing, was there a different breed of cat coming down the pike?

STAMMERMAN: Yes there was. This is something we were surprised at. Many of us.

Q: Did they have a pretty good economic background by this time. Was it better than, say, before?

STAMMERMAN: Not really. We were trying to recruit economic officers. The idea by the early '80s was that we would recruit people by cone, bring in economic officers so that we would not have to train them. Because why train people in jobs you hired them for. Well, the problem was, you couldn't hire top-level professional economists to do Foreign Service economics. They couldn't pass the regular exam. The economic content on the exam that would throw people into economic cone was not very deep. If you knew Econ 101, that's all you would really have to know to pass the economic content. So

people found they need training. There were various studies were done that kept coming to the same conclusion that no matter what we do we have to continue training people in economics. They still do. So I guess we were right.

Q: In '86, you are off...whither?

STAMMERMAN: Arabic language training, which was off to Kuwait via the Arabic language training.

Q: Did you sort of feel like you belonged to NEA at this point?

STAMMERMAN: Yes. I had to go overseas again after the FSI job. I knew if I took language training for a year, that would give us an extra year and my son could graduate high school. That would eliminate a lot of other problems. So I was looking for an NEA job that would give me some Arabic, which I wanted. NEA was my home bureau by then, yes. So I knew NEA EX, I knew people there from Tel Aviv and EGY days, and I found the Kuwait job was open. They needed an 02 economic officer. I went to the NEA EX and said, "I want that job." They said, "You want that job?" I said, "Sure." "Nobody else wants it." I said, "Fine, I'll take it." So when we got it clear with the desk, I walked up to the NEA Gulf Affairs and said, "I want that job." They said, "Do you know Arabic? You really want it?" "Yes, and I'll take Arabic." They just thought the exercise of filling it was terrible. You had to force somebody to go up to that point.

Q: Why was that?

STAMMERMAN: Kuwait was seen as the end of the world. There was a war going on, the Iran-Iraq war was just part of it, the oil, OPEC, it was the end of the world. And missiles were falling nearby, it was very hard to fill. I walked in and volunteered for it and was pretty much fully qualified. And so they said, "Sure, you've got it." So, the paneling was no trouble, passed the panel just by asking for it.

Q: How did you find the year of Arabic?

STAMMERMAN: It was hard. Very hard. Oh, I had remarried in 1985, so my wife gave me a T-shirt at the end of it that had the two dates, the date when I started and the date when I ended because I had done nothing but Arabic for a full year. Listening to cassettes, memorizing the idioms. Arabic is a hard language, the usual thing is one year, one year in FSI, and one year, in those days, in Tunisia. But I couldn't do that. Besides, I was already senior enough that they didn't want to invest two years. But I did one year, which is enough. I got a 2-2, 2-1+ or something like that, in Arabic. It was very hard, but it was fun. I knew FSI already. I had been working at FSI for three years. So I also worked with area studies while studying Arabic. I helped teach a course, either way. Once at FSI, I got some material published in a professional area studies book on Israeli economics. I would also help area studies with their lectures on Israeli economics. So, I went back to FSI, studied Arabic, very hard. It was a good year. And then off to Kuwait.

Q: You were in Kuwait from '86 to

STAMMERMAN: '87. Summer of '87 to summer of '89. '86 to '87 was Arabic.

Q: As economic counselor.

STAMMERMAN: As economic counselor.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you arrived?

STAMMERMAN: When I arrived, it was Tony Quentin. Just two months. Jim Hooper was the DCM, so Hooper was chargé for a short while, and then Ambassador Matt Howell arrived. I knew Matt from NEA days. And Matt was the consummate Arabist. He'd done Jordan and served various places. Ambassador Quainton was not an Arabist at all. He apparently left a good impression with the Kuwaitis. A week after I arrived, an American flagged Kuwaiti tanker hit a mine, and the started the whole episode of the U.S. escort of Kuwaiti oil tankers. That was Howell's baby. Tony Quainton and I only crossed paths for a little more than a month.

Q: From your point of view, Kuwait is so small and so wealthy, what does economic officer do? I'm not denigrating, I'm just saying it must be quite specialized as opposed to other places.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, well this is what we got involved in. Got involved in of course energy economics. The Kuwaiti oil minister Sheikh Ali Khalifa al-Sabah was one of the founders of OPEC along with the Saudi Sheikh Zaki Yamani. They were the two prime movers, way back when. The Kuwaiti Emir, a very smart man, was once finance minister. He started this process in Kuwait of taking 10% of their oil income every year and putting it into Western capital markets. Investing, a Fund for the Future. They put very little money into Kuwait itself. The roads are so-so, in fact he brought in the FHA to administer contracts to build their roads, they didn't want corruption. No palaces. In terms of Saudi palaces, or Bahraini palaces, nothing like that in Kuwait. But we had a lot of issues because the Kuwaitis were funding the Iraqi war effort, along with the Saudis. Whatever the IMF rescheduled the Latin American debt, this was the big Latin American debt fiasco, the Kuwaitis were always in on it because they had invested so much money in the international capital markets that we had to convince the Kuwaitis to go along with rescheduling.

They had some very good economists, sort of like the Israelis. Their finance ministry had very good people. The Kuwaitis would talk to us about economics. Granted I had studied some resource economics, but I got to do a lot of financial reporting and got to know a lot about the Kuwaiti oil industry. The Kuwaiti oil minister Sheikh Ali Khalifa, he's cousin of the Emir, distant cousin... He's a brilliant man. Brilliant. One of the smartest people I've ever met in my life. Of course, he has his doctorate from an American University.

We did this with all the senior OPEC people. We educated them, gave them doctorates in economics, they went back and formed OPEC.

Q: And we've been suffering ever since.

STAMMERMAN: Suffering ever since. And he's one of them. When I got there, the Iranians started mining Kuwaiti ports, or Kuwaiti ships, because the Kuwaitis were funding the Iraqis. So, the U.S. Navy started escorting the Kuwaiti ships, Kuwaiti ships reflagged with U.S. flags. Well we have no military attachés in Kuwaiti, the Kuwaitis never allowed military attachés. That meant that the contact with the Kuwaiti government was through the Embassy Kuwait economic section, and the Kuwaiti Petroleum Corporation. We were working as intermediaries with the U.S. Navy and the KPC, with the escort mission, which was an unusual position for an embassy to be in. We did it.

Q: The Kuwaitis have a reputation of being disliked by about everyone.

STAMMERMAN: By everyone, yes. I liked them. I used to call them my poor little Kuwaitis. The reason nobody likes them, is they have a reputation for being abrupt. And they are, so those of us who have been elsewhere in the Arab world, like Saudi Arabia, when you walk into a meeting, you call on someone, they offer you coffee. You talk about a lot of things, about the weather, about people's cousins, about camel racing, about... you may have seen the guy yesterday, but you talk to him for 45 minutes before you ever get around to the subject of the meeting. With the Kuwaitis you walk into a room and he looks up and says, "What do you want?"

Q: Sounds like the mirror image of the Israelis.

STAMMERMAN: Very much so. I got along with them very well, because I could talk... We had these wonderful Arabists walk into a meeting like that and they are insulted. If they know the culture they aren't surprised to be talked to this way. "Did I do something?" "No, they're just that way, because they do this to Arabs too." That's why other Arabs think they are just arrogant. They're not arrogant, they're just direct. They've been merchants since 1850 when they starting going out in sea-going vessels into the Indian Ocean, merchant peoples. They learned how to be merchants, they're not desert Arabs, they are town Arabs and seagoing, and they are very direct. I got along with them fine. They also had these diwaniyyas, night meetings, where the families meet together, the men of the families, and that's where business gets conducted. Well, I and a political officer would go to these, we'd get invited, we'd go to these things. We got to know the Kuwaiti families. There are 15 major Kuwaiti families, I knew them all. Their genealogy is fascinating. Learn the genealogy, get to know who's kin to whom, learn the marriage connections and you'll know how Kuwait works, which is what we did.

Q: You got the impression from the newspaper accounts and all, that although we were trying to do something about getting, you know flagging the tankers and escorting the tankers, that the Kuwaitis weren't very pleasant recipients of our efforts or not.

STAMMERMAN: Well, they were. What the Kuwaitis were upset about was, they came to us first. This was before I got there actually. They said, "We want to put American flags on our tankers, and we also want to put Russian flags, we want to foreign flag out tankers so that the U.N. major powers will allow us to take oil out of the Gulf despite the Iranians." But we had of course a Carter Doctrine, which said the United States will maintain access to oil in the Gulf, by war if need be, and the last thing we want to do is invite the Russians into the Gulf. So we said, "Fine, hey, our goals coincide. You want your oil to get out, we want your oil to get out, if you want to flag your boats, good idea. That'll make it easier under international law for our ships to escort you." So they went ahead and did it and then they found out about things like the U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. maritime laws. They didn't like that. They said, "We got a deal, why are you doing this?" "Well if you fly our flag, you've got to have a U.S. radio operator." "Our ships have no radios, we have a captain, we have this electronic gadgetry." The old days with the dit dit dit dit... You don't have those people any more. Well, the U.S. maritime law says you have to have one. So the Kuwaitis rolled their eyes.

So this is how they did it. Not just Kuwaitis, the Kuwaiti Petroleum Corporation has a lot of foreigners working, mostly the Irish and British. They went to Florida to old people's homes, to retired sailors homes, and hired people who still had their radio operator papers and put them on the stupid ships. We said, "Why did you do this?" They said, "Well we'll put them on the ships if you want." "Okay, do it." So they did it. But they didn't like it. They then had to refurbish their ships. They didn't have to double the hull, but they had to, the safety standards. They'd hire Filipinos, and really cheap labor. They said, "No, no, under the U.S. flag, you're going to pay U.S. wages." They didn't like it, but they understood it.

Q: How did the Iran-Iraq war play while you were there? '87-'89?

STAMMERMAN: Well, here's how we heard it. The embassy in Kuwait was an old dilapidated bunch of buildings. I don't know if you have ever been there, but these looked like early post-war Army barracks. Remember, our embassy had been bombed. So the main building, which was not in a terribly secure area or street, it had been bombed. In 1985, by a group called al-Dawa, not exactly clear who they are.

Q: It was a Lebanese connection.

STAMMERMAN: Lebanese, Iraqi connection, they were anti-Saddam, but it was unclear exactly who all they were, but they were in jail. They tried to assassinate the Emir as well. They hit the American embassy and the French embassy. They weren't executed because the Amir would not sign the death warrant. So they were in jail all the while I was there. We never rebuilt the embassy; that part of the embassy was repaired, but the Ambassador's office was in sort of like an old Army surplus building. Had a tin roof that would creak in the wind, noises all over the place, the walls would shake, and you'd hear the thud of the war. The Iran-Iraq fighting was just north of Kuwait, we'd be working and

everything would just shake, baboom, baboom. You knew the Iraqis or Iranians, some soldiers being pounded in the trenches. This would just go on, day in and day out, you'd hear this shelling to the north.

The Iranians were mad at the Kuwaitis, so they would shoot missiles at Kuwait, missed everything. They were firing Silkworm missiles which are shore to ship. If they missed, they'd fly straight over Kuwait, which they did, fly over Kuwait City and crash in the desert. And the Iranians were fomenting unrest, send in agents in to set off bombs around town. We did get followed sometimes, but it was one of those... you just do your job and we weren't targets, not really, because the Kuwaitis were targets. I think in Israel you are not really targets because everybody's targets. So the Iran-Iraq war, the Kuwaitis would talk to us about it. Not a lot, but they would talk to us about the Iran-Iraq war. They didn't care for the Iraqis, but they were afraid of the Iranians. They knew if the Iranians won, they'd immediately march into Kuwait. Kuwait had 30% Shia population. Kuwait is very Westernized.

Q: Did we try at all as a mediator or something via the Gulf Arab states, Saudi Arabia, or the Jordanians to be nice to the Kuwaitis? Did we as an intermediary?

STAMMERMAN: No. The Kuwaitis were part of the Gulf economic corporation, the GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council. Inter-Arab affairs was their bag. We were promoting the Peninsula Shield which would be a joint shield against northern invasion, meaning literally Iraq and then Iran, in the end it was Iraq. In terms of foreign policy, the Kuwaitis were aggressively neutral. Their Sheikh Sabah was the longest serving foreign minister in the world. And he was very anti-U.S. At the United Nations, he would also be the most pro-Palestinian and would often denounce the United States because of our Palestinian policy. That was the foreign minister. Meanwhile the oil minister would talk to us about our close economic ties. Culturally we were close. The Kuwaitis would send every male who graduated from high school to study in the United States. Almost completely. They really wanted that Western education. They weren't worried about their kids coming back too Westernized. The Saudis were. The Saudis brought American teachers to Saudi Arabia. Kuwaitis just sent their kids to study in the United States. So, no, we did not try to improve the Kuwaiti image. It's funny how the embassies in the area, region, sort of reflect their surroundings. Embassy Kuwait would report on its own, of course, but Embassy Riyadh would always try to speak for the embassies of the Gulf. We would not clear anything. Why should we? They would report something about the Arabs think this, or OPEC ministers think this. And we would report, that's not true, the Kuwaitis think this and this and this and this.

Q: What was our impression of the Gulf Cooperation economic pact?

STAMMERMAN: They were a gentlemen's club. We didn't see there would be any integration of the economies, there was nothing to integrate. They would keep from competing on certain things, so that one company would build the petrochemical plant and the other would build a different kind of petrochemical plant. But they would not

compete in export markets. It was a nice gentlemen's club, but we did not see any future political integration. The Saudis like to think of it as, this is what will be the future state dominated by Saudi Arabia or GCC, the club of the Gulf. A lot of the other Arabs didn't like that idea, but they couldn't speak out against the Saudis, they were just too big. The Kuwaitis would make fun of the Saudis, a bunch of nomads who found oil and didn't know how to spend it, where we know the value of a dollar.

Q: Did the Iran Contra affair have any affect on you while you were there? Or was that dissipated by that time?

STAMMERMAN: It was dissipated, didn't have an effect.

Q: I mean nobody was coming around... did you find yourself in any of things where for one reason or another would come around hat in hand wanting money?

STAMMERMAN: No.

Q: Was there anything we were trying to direct the Kuwaitis to...

STAMMERMAN: No, this was '87, so we are already fairly well along with that. The Kuwaitis would sometimes look us and say, "What in the world are you guys doing talking to the Iranians?"

Q: A lot of Americans would just...

STAMMERMAN: These are a bunch of rug salesmen. They really took you guys to the cleaners. We weren't part of it... Mostly we'd talk about money, rescheduling debt.

Q: When you left there in '89, did you feel Iran was... the war was still on, I guess, wasn't it?

STAMMERMAN: No, the Iran-Iraq war was running down. I think it ended right when the Vincennes shot down that Iranian airliner.

Q: The airbus.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, the airbus. I was still there when that happened. After that happened and the Ayatollah said, "We can't fight the Iraqis and the Americans, and the Americans will do anything, they will kill women and children. So we will make peace," along the lines of the Algiers agreement or something. So it ended, before I left, because the Kuwaitis were already talking to the Iraqis about debt, about rescheduling economic reform. The Iraqis owed the Kuwaitis a ton of money, and the Kuwaitis as they had done, they were leveraging their aid. There was always the contrast between the Kuwaiti foreign aid operation and the Saudi foreign aid operation. When a Muslim ruler from a developing country would come to the Saudis and say "I need to build a new mosque,

some water works, I need some money." The Saudis would hand them a bag of gold and say, "Very good, tell them to go ahead and please name the mosque after King Fahd." And the Kuwaitis would say, "Show us your project plans, and we are going to send in our accountants to make sure your people get the money." That would make everybody mad. So the Kuwaitis were very strict on their aid, though they were very generous. But nobody appreciated it. The Saudis would hand the leader a bag of gold and everybody loved them, and the Kuwaitis would give a higher percentage of their GDP in foreign aid and everybody hated them because they were just so rigorous. They wanted to be sure the money would be well spent.

Q: Was Saddam Hussein by the time you left seen as a real threat to the region? Was he...

STAMMERMAN: No. Not by the Kuwaitis, and I don't think by the Americans. He was very weak because his country was worn out. I do remember years earlier, when I was in Tel Aviv, back in the late '70s, I once took a congressman around to see the usual round of people the foreign ministry gives us. One of the people they put on our list was the Speaker of the Knesset, Mr. Shamir, who by then barely spoke English. Used a foreign ministry interpreter. His English was very poor. The congressman listened as they took him on a tour d'horizon of the region, and then asked Shamir "What do you think of Saddam Hussein?" Remember this is Israel 1980, and the Israelis had bombed the Iraqi nuclear reactor. He said, "Mr. Speaker, what do your people think of Saddam Hussein?" Shamir said, "Aaah, what do you consider a man who had 25 people who elected him, put him in power and he then killed every one of them. That's what we think of him. We know what he is." The Israelis hated him all along. The Americans figured he was kind of worn out, the Iraqi army was tired, had fought a hard war. The Kuwaitis thought he was broke and they wanted to help, but as far as the economics, the Kuwaitis would get in there and show the Iraqis how to run their economy.

Q: Okay, this probably is a good place to stop in this thing, and I put at the end here so we'd know how to pick it up... in 1989 where did you go?

STAMMERMAN: 1989, I went to Dhahran as Consul General.

Q: Alright, then we'll start that way.

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Today is the 4th of December, 2000. Ken, Dhahran. How did you get the job and would you talk a little... how did you get the job.

STAMMERMAN: When our time to leave Kuwait came around, we wanted to stay overseas. We did not care to go back to Washington ever again for that matter, and looked for a job in the Gulf. We saw that the consul general job in Dhahran was open. I knew the position. Dhahran was the place the backup post, as it were, for Kuwait. We would get the pouch. Material would come into Dhahran, so some of us would make the

pouch run, every two weeks from Kuwait to Dhahran. It was always a bit of an adventure since you went from Kuwaiti to Saudi Arabia. And it was funny when we would re-enter Kuwait from those trips, the Kuwaitis would search us thoroughly. This always caused a problem, being diplomats and all, and we had a big thing about the pouch, of course, they could not search the pouch. All the Kuwaitis were worried about was booze, because they knew the Saudis allowed liquor for diplomats. Sort of an open secret. And the Kuwaitis did not. Kuwait was the driest post in the Foreign Service in those days. They would not allow liquor imports. They would look at our stuff, not take it apart, but just look, so that was always an adventure. And contrasting the living styles of the Saudis and Kuwaitis, for those living in Kuwait it was always an adventure because Kuwaiti women could drive and don't wear an abaya, the cover-all cloak.

Q: You were saying the Kuwaitis didn't allow liquor... it's the reverse, wasn't it?

STAMMERMAN: No, the Kuwaitis were the driest post in the Foreign Service. The Kuwaitis, they are not Wahhabis, they are not that branch of Islam, but the government at that time, the parliament had been dissolved or suspended, and the area is very devout Muslim, and the government felt that Islam indeed forbade the consumption of liquor. So they banned it, completely. Granted, they respected people's privacy, so if you made your own, they would never raid anyone's home. Of course there was some smuggling done, but by and large Kuwait was dry. They would do things like when businessmen would move in, the Kuwaiti customs would go through their shipments, down to fingernail polish, to see that they were not smuggling alcohol. So the Kuwaitis were concerned about alcohol. They didn't care about anything else.

So they would look in our cars and we would have to open the trunks. They wouldn't actually take our stuff apart, but they would look. I remember we had one admin officer who really objected to this. They said, "Open your trunk," and he said, "No." Well they said. Fine, well we won't search your trunk but you aren't entering Kuwait. So you can go back to Dhahran or you can open the trunk." That's just the way it was. The Kuwaitis were very strict on that. Saudi Arabia, by contrast, there was an unofficial arrangement by which diplomats were able to obtain alcohol. It was sort of well known. So that when we had diplomatic receptions in Saudi Arabia there were always these codes. You would have a wet bar and a dry bar. The wet bar was in alcohol, and the house man, or whoever was pouring, people would ask for white or brown or red, that is there were certain codes... gin, or scotch or bourbon, there were all these codes that nobody said but everybody knew what it was. There was all this hypocrisy, but it was I always called an open sort of constructive hypocrisy. Everybody knew what was going on. And so they could tell the Wahhabis, all these guys forbid liquor, and they would look the other way. It made things go pretty smoothly.

Q: Did you ask NEA to send you there, was there any problem?

STAMMERMAN: Going back to how did I get the job... I applied for it. When I'd gotten the Kuwait job, I was the only person who applied. When I applied to be the Dhahran

consul general, and it's a CG job after all, as I recall there were two applicants. The requirement, they wanted someone with an economic background because the reason we are in Dhahran is ARAMCO. They wanted someone who had energy reporting background. Well, I had that, I did in Kuwait, doing energy reporting. Embassy Riyadh was well aware of my kind of reporting. So, essentially, it amounted to getting the ambassador's agreement in Riyadh more than NEA personnel. In previous jobs, I always got my jobs by going to NEA personnel. In this case, Dhahran is a subsidiary post to Riyadh, it amounted to getting an okay from the DCM and ambassador. Now, it happened that they were between ambassadors in Riyadh, so it amounted to getting the DCM, David Dunford, to agree. David later became ambassador in Oman. Anyway, David agreed, and then NEA saw that, hey, they had somebody at grade applying for it who had a 2-2 in Arabic, I guess I had a 2-1+ in Arabic, who knew some economics and had been there. Because before then, Dhahran had usually been a retirement post. It's a quiet place, normally. So it had been often, I won't say always, but often a retirement post. Quiet little place. You had your consular cases among the ARAMCO Americans. You would write, the reporting was on the tribes in the Eastern Province, and Shia problem of the Eastern Province, which were long-standing issues. So for a retiring Arabist it was a nice place. This time, though, they wanted somebody who could do the economics, and I was then the only qualified candidate. Once Riyadh said okay, it was okay.

Q: You served in Dhahran from 1989 to when?

STAMMERMAN: 1989 to 1992. Three years. Summer of 1989 to summer of 1992, which meant I saw the military come and I saw the military go.

Q: When you arrived in Dhahran, what was the situation?

STAMMERMAN: In what sense?

Q: Political, economic... was there anything happening?

STAMMERMAN: Well things were fairly quiet because the Iran-Iraq war had finished by then, pretty much. The Saudis were nervous about Iran, but there was no war going on in the north. There were economic problems because the price of oil had fallen, and the Saudis weren't able to pay their bills. The princes were being told to cut back on their lifestyle. But one of the good thing about Dhahran was that very few of the Saudi princes lived there. I think the most we ever had five princes in residence in the Dhahran area. Three of them were very busy. One was the son of the King, Mohammad Mohammed bin Fahd, was the governor of the province. He had taken over after the previous governor had lots of Shia trouble, had not been able to keep the Shia problem in check, so they brought in the king's son. Kept everything in check, very strongly. Then there was another prince, Turki bin Nasser, who ran the Dhahran airbase. King Abdulaziz airbase in Dhahran... massive airbase. He was a jet pilot, general in the Saudi Air Force, and he pretty much 'owned' the airbase, so within the airbase his word was law. There was another prince, Prince Mishari bin Saud, who ran the Saudi National Guard in the

Province. And he was a power unto himself. Then there were a couple of other princes who were there, one was the deputy governor. One was the former astronaut. There was another prince occasionally there, so at most I think we had five or six. And that helped because it meant, Dhahran was the creature of ARAMCO and pretty much what you focused on in our reporting and our relationships was the Saudis at ARAMCO.

We talked to the government agencies and all because we had some business with them, but generally, the idea was we were promoting American business. We dealt with ARAMCO, worked on getting more of an American market share in ARAMCO purchases. We'd talk to the Saudis about their production levels. It was a fairly small post. When I got there, I was surprised... I was the only person, the staff was fairly small, but I was the only person there, save one, who had ever served in an Arab post. Most of the people there, it seemed to me, were there because it was a quiet place and you got a salary supplement because of the heat, and the fact that it was very remote. We had a military liaison group who trained Saudis and helped maintain the Saudi weapons and secure the base. McDonald Douglas had a big contingent, Bechtel had a big contingent of Americans, and ARAMCO had roughly 13, 14,000 American citizens. In those days, I guess it still is, ARAMCO was one of the wonders of the world. I don't know if you've ever seen it... For those who haven't seen ARAMCO...

Q: I served 2½ years in Dhahran, but this is the fifties, but even then it was...

STAMMERMAN: So you know. ARAMCO was a wonder. ARAMCO is this American city, town, American suburb out in the middle of the Saudi desert. It is, once you pass inside those gates, you are, for all intents and purposes, in America. Women drive, whereas in Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to drive. There are swimming pools where men and women swim in the same pool, which is unheard of in Saudi Arabia. There are arrangements so that Christian religious services were held, but very quietly, but people know what's happening. It was also interesting as a side light, there were often requests from the outside Christian community that the American consulate host religious services, which we refused to do since they were in general available at ARAMCO for the American population who knew who to ask, and would likely attract third country nationals. Again everything works in the Eastern Province in a very constructive way, the hypocrisy is very constructive. So religious services go on if you don't make an issue of it and if you don't make it too public. ARAMCO was very much an American place.

Q: I've heard of the Saudis taking over ARAMCO, at the top. But at the time you were there, how much were operations and all in American hands?

STAMMERMAN: That was changing during the years I was there. Because when I was there, ARAMCO became Saudi-ized. Saudi-ized in the sense that all of the top officers of the corporation, except one, were Saudis. Not only the Saudi-ization, but the Sunni-ization. ARAMCO had been a nondiscriminatory hiring place. That is, the ARAMCO Americans would hire who ever was best for the job, and promote who ever was best for the job. Once the Saudis took over, and they started taking over in the early '80s, by the

time I got there everyone but the legal advisor was Saudi. The Shia could no longer get promoted, and few were hired if there were Sunni candidates. That said, the senior people at ARAMCO culturally were, it seemed to me, were as American as they were Saudis. Some of them had come in out of the desert when they were 12 years old, entered ARAMCO, learned to speak excellent English, went to school in America, got their graduate degrees in America, went back and worked their way up by merit through the system. So that the top echelon at ARAMCO, these people could, I'm told, they'd be welcome at any major oil company at the same job, as the executive vice president for exploration or as president or whatever. The Saudis by then, they had Americans there, but they were slowly being eased out in every job. No new Americans were being hired, a reduction in American staff more by attrition than by firing. So you'd promote a Saudi, but the American would still work beside him until he really learned the job, and when the American left, they would not be replaced. But the Saudis had talent at the top, and they could bring in anybody... By the way, they kept the arrangement, and this was arrangement, they kept their partnership arrangement with the former partners of ARAMCO, companies like Texaco or Exxon, or who ever, Mobile.
Whenever the Saudis needed a particular expertise that they didn't have, they could call on the former partners who would send people over immediately. They were being run very well.

Q: How did you deal with them? Because when I was there, although they were making all sorts of arrangements with the Saudis, it was an American staff at the top and we had very close relations, so if you want to get statistics or how things are going, you could go right to them. How did you find it when you were there?

STAMMERMAN: There were two channels. ARAMCO still maintained, by then it was called Saudi ARAMCO, they maintained a government relations office. This was a kind of funny office in a way because the government that their relations were with to begin with was the Saudi government. It being Saudi ARAMCO you kind of wondered what happened, because they kept these guys as a liaison to the government which owned the company. What also became very interesting, as I found out over the two years that I was there, was that the Saudis who had grown up in ARAMCO, and they did, they joined as children, culturally were as American as they were Saudi. Many of them. I won't say that of all of them, so that talking to them, speaking perfect American English, to them I would say things about the Saudis that they themselves wouldn't know, culturally. They were uncomfortable between two worlds it seemed to me. There was also a rule that whenever they officially met the foreigners, which included the American consul general, or especially any visitors, they had to wear Saudi dress. Well, these people were uncomfortable in thobes and khaffiyas, because they hardly ever wore Arab clothes, many of them.

Q: Thobe being...

STAMMERMAN: Being the Saudi robes, and the khaffiya or gutra, the head covering. They hardly ever wore them except when they were on duty for visiting foreigners, or

with other Arabs. Normally, when you saw them just working around ARAMCO, they dressed as Americans. In work clothes. They had suits and ties, but they hardly could wear those in ARAMCO because in ARAMCO everybody wears work clothes all the time, up to the president. And it's interesting, these two tracks we had then, we had the liaison office then would deal with us. We'd ask for certain statistics, or publicly available material, or if we had a visitor coming. A congressman is coming through, or someone from the State Department who needed a tour, maybe a flight over the oil fields, we would officially go through the government liaison office which would set these meetings up, of course with ARAMCO. The rest of the Saudi government and ARAMCO, as far as I know, didn't talk to each other. Because ARAMCO dealt with the oil minister and the king. The government inside ARAMCO was a law unto itself, pretty much. But also within ARAMCO, I could also to the Saudi executives at the vice president level and above. There was no restriction. If I wanted to call the senior vice president for exploration, say, I'd call him and say I'm coming over to the building today, could we drop by. I'd like to talk about some fields you're working on. So we didn't have much of an access problem. They are Americans, culturally, these guys were very easy to work with. They had no problem with our staff meeting people. You might be interested, we had a female FSO who was assigned as our petroleum officer. We worked an arrangement with ARAMCO since she didn't have that much training in petroleum work, she had economics, but not been out in the field much. She went out on an exploration trip with a Saudi ARAMCO team. Took her backpack, sleeping bag, and they went off for a few days camping in the desert and watched these big machines pound the earth and figured out how much oil was there. And this was no problem. The Saudis knew about it.

Q: What about with the governor and the Americans coming... I think of people get tossed in jail because of automobile accidents, or maybe the home brew liquor blew up, or other things such as an American woman marries a Saudi man and then there's a child dispute, in other words, consular cases. How did that work for you?

STAMMERMAN: Consular cases of course were the problem. A lot of our collective time was spent on those cases. You mentioned liquor problems. That was not that big a problem when I was there actually. Inside ARAMCO the Saudi government pretty much did not care. If you went to a meal inside an ARAMCO American's home, with Saudis present, they would serve homemade home brew of some sort.

Q: Sadiki juice.

STAMMERMAN: Sadiki (homebrew). They'd serve sadiki. And nobody cared. The Saudi government didn't care as long as it stayed inside those walls. Out on the town, I was really surprised, early in my stay, when I was invited to a dinner by one of the senior businessmen, and his guest list included one of the senior police officials in the area, one of the senior government officials, and a couple other businessmen. They knew I'd been in Kuwait so we talked about Iran-Iraq, Kuwait, and business in general. At the end of the meal the host got out a bottle of Scotch and set it in the middle of the table. I was the only one there who wasn't drinking. I will drink at home, but if I was driving myself home that

evening, I don't care to drink at all if driving. And these guys would just merrily pour themselves a few shots of Scotch. This open hypocrisy I understood. But we did have Americans in jail over liquor, and these were people who had done things like driven up to the main Shia village up in the Qatif oasis, opened the trunk of their car and were selling sadiki out of the back of their car. This is not smart because you will be arrested. Generally the Shia don't care for that stuff in public. The Saudis had a very heavy police and military presence in Shia land so they were noticed. These were two guys and they got thrown in jail, five-year sentence. The Saudi system, they were not mistreated, but they were treated like other prisoners. Meaning no air conditioning. That's tough. They complained about it, though they were being treated like everyone else. Adequate water, and so on, but they were just uncomfortable. So the way this worked, every year when the eids, or religious festivals, came around, very Biblical process, we would ask the governor for a pardon. On the occasion of the holiday, it was the custom of the governor to release prisoners. And we would write a note saying, knowing of your generosity and so on that we ask for the release of the prisoners John Jones and Joe Smith or whoever. And sometimes we would get people released and sometimes not. But, one thing the Saudis did, and we'll get to this later, as the American troops started deploying, they released every American prisoner from their jails. They did not want the American press to start finding American people in the clink. Which was smart on their side. Not that we had that many. At most at any given time we had about 6 or 8 people in jail. It was always on account of liquor.

Q: When they were released I take it that then they left the country. In other words, they were not hanging around afterwards.

STAMMERMAN: They were released on condition that they'd get a one-way ticket out of the country, never, ever to come back. We'd tell some of these ARAMCO guys, businessmen, we'd tell them you've got a good deal here, good salaries, don't play games with liquor, it's stupid. You'd get a one-way ticket out of here forever. At the very least you are gone forever, it's over with, and you lose access to this money machine out here. But that was not a major problem. Those were our major jail problems. The more pressing problems, the sadder problems were the children of the families who broke up in America and the father took the children to Saudi Arabia, or, more often, the cases where an American woman would marry a Saudi man and they'd move to Saudi Arabia and immediately go under the Saudi system. They'd have to, impossible to do otherwise, unless they're ARAMCO, where they'd end up in some little village and she's married to this Saudi who not this dashing guy who drove a big car out in California. The Saudi young businessman lives in this village and commutes to work, and she's left there, naturally with kids, and a mother-in-law she can't talk to and is very miserable. Eventually, the marriage breaks up. The rule in Saudi Arabia was that the woman would get custody of the children until the children were of age, which generally meant around 11 or 12, and the father would pay child support. But they could not leave the country, because the judges knew that if she left the country with the kids, they'd never, ever see them again. Of course, in Saudi Arabia the judges are all religious, the concern was that the children would not be raised as Muslims if they were taken out of Saudi Arabia.

These became very sad cases. We would put pressure, and the governor' office would cooperate, in putting pressure on the Saudi husband first to make sure that the family was well taken care of, and second, if the mother wanted to leave Saudi Arabia and come back that the ex-husband would agree to sponsor her on a visa. And, as a general request, we would really like the mother to be able to leave with the kids. Of course, they always said no to that last part. Almost always, without the father's permission. If the father said it was okay, that was the end of it, but if the father wanted the children to stay in Saudi Arabia it was practically impossible for them to all get visas to leave. The concern with the Saudi authorities was that the Muslim religious courts would feel offended, and the Saudi regime was legitimate only because it was back by the Wahhabi religious authorities. And we all sort of knew that, so they would not step on the court's prerogatives, but they could pressure the husband. They could pressure him to allow the woman to come and go, to sponsor her own visa, pressure him to make sure the kids were well taken care of. And he did. Generally. There were some cases that just degenerated into really bad situations. The husband was violent, and then it just... those were difficult.

Q: Well did you have any of these cases that every once in a while get their way into movies or books or something while you were there, or congressional pressure, a lot of American attention in the media and all?

STAMMERMAN: We did have one, that was during the war. Not before the war. Before the war we had, and we used congressional letters, but these were usually long-running cases. One of my junior officers nearly resigned. She started crying at one point. We did succeed on one long-running case where, which involved, it was trouble, it was violence in the family, the man was not providing properly. There were all kinds of problems. The lady, let's say she didn't have the most ingratiating personality, but that being neither here nor there... The ex-husband finally said, "I've had it, I'm giving them all visas and they can go." So she left with the two kids. And six months later, she came back, in hopes of a reconciliation. At that point, my vice consul started crying, after years of patient work by our various vice consuls and consuls and consul generals in getting this person out of the country, she returned. And within a month, she was a consular case again.

Q: Oh, boy.

STAMMERMAN: What can I say?

Q: Yes, I know. This is what I was saying, particularly when there is abuse, and going all out to get the American back to the States and all, a significant number of times they come back. Not if there's just plain disagreement, they get on with their life. But when you get that abuse, a dependency builds up.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: I mean, it's the damnedest thing.

STAMMERMAN: It was the strangest thing. When we get onto the Department though there were a couple of other things...

Q: We'll come to that, but first, sort of doing a tour of the horizon. When you arrived there what was your impression of the Shia community, that was in Qatif...

STAMMERMAN: Qatif, and there was another oasis, but Qatif was the center. I had visited there. It was very interesting. Over the three years that I was there I would visit Qatif with my driver, a Yemeni, and we'd pass through the Saudi roadblock. I would go in there, other than my driver, by myself. Occasionally, with another American officer. Occasionally, we'd actually have some social gatherings where we'd bring several officers, including females, to have a dinner, hosted by some Shia notables, just for a cultural orientation just so they could see what village life was like. But in general, I would go down there by myself making arrangements through an intermediary. I'd call an ARAMCO employee and say I plan on going down there and meeting so and so. And I would go down there and we'd eat in a majlis, one of the Saudi family rooms and a Shia notable or two would come by and we'd talk. We'd talk about employment, about young people's attitudes, about how the Saudi authorities were treating them in terms of employment, was there any active repression going on? Stuff like that. Much of which eventually found its way into the State Department human rights report on Saudi Arabia, which is always critical of the Saudis being repressive.

Q: In what form were you seeing the repression?

STAMMERMAN: No, in fact there was not open repression. It was job discrimination or religious discrimination. It was hard to get permits for mosques, or more often though it was jobs. ARAMCO had been a source of jobs there since 1940 something, and as ARAMCO is Saudi-ized, the situation is simply that if you are Shia, you were not welcome. That was the hardest part. Then was petty harassment, road blocks, government contracts would not go to Shia companies and so on. Roads were not repaired. That sort of thing. I would often call upon the governor of the Qatif sub-province. Depends when I went there. If I went there in the daytime, I would usually call on the governor. It was assumed that provincial governors like Mohammed bin Fahd held power, not the district governor. I would call on them. It was sort of irrelevant in any way, he was a nice little man. We'd come by, sort of pro forma, give him a courtesy call, and then do whatever else I was going to do that day.

Q: How about the business community there?

STAMMERMAN: The American?

Q: And the Saudi... and the American... was it an international business community there?

STAMMERMAN: International business, yes... many of them were Americans, many of

them were British. Because the airplane deal of the century, so-called, was the Saudi purchase of the British Tornado jets. When we refused to sell them F-16s, on the grounds that they might be dangerous to Israel. Even the Israelis thought that was stupid, many of them did. The Saudis were not going use F-16s against Israel. So there were a lot of British there, because not only do you sell a lot of British jets, but you sell a lot of other British things there. And there were a large number of British people working there on the airplanes, just like McDonald Douglas worked on the F-16s. You had British people working on the Tornado set-asides. A large group of foreign businessmen were American, and they would do quite well. I would go to their quarterly meetings. There was a long-running argument when I was there, which the Americans were still winning, on whether you could have a mixed gathering at hotels. It always had to be at hotels, and the American businessmen would bring their spouses. Saudi custom does not permit that. At least modern Saudi custom cannot have men and women together at a social function in a public place. So, it was a long-running problem. When I was there you could still do it. I've been told since then that you no longer can. It's men only, which is unfortunate. So, I'd speak there once a year or so. Generally, though, they had outside speakers, including the ambassador. We had some visitors like a congressmen who would talk. They were doing very well in terms of money. Contracts were still flowing. Some problems. Saudis, again, were slow in paying their bills, because the oil prices were low.

Q: The community of workers from the Philippines, Ceylon, Korea, did they play any role in the area?

STAMMERMAN: Talking about the third country nationals, not really. They were necessary, so for example, ARAMCO's nursing staff was also Filipino, and a lot of the doctors were third country nationals. They worked cheaper than Americans, so a lot of doctors in the area, especially ARAMCO third country nationals. Filipinos made up a large number of the unskilled workforce. Saudis did not do unskilled labor. Usually. They simply didn't. So they brought in Pakistani, Filipinos. The drivers were Yemeni, everybody had Yemeni and Pakistani drivers. A lot of the household help around was Yemeni. It was like the Indians in Kuwait, they did a lot of the work, but had no role in other things, culturally or politically. Every once in a while, the police would arrest a couple dozen Filipinos for holding religious services. Mutawwa would crack down. It was interesting the role of Mutawwa, active in the province but not as active in Riyadh and Judah.

Q: These are who?

STAMMERMAN: Okay, the Mutawwa are the religious police. In the country, they were a power unto themselves. In Saudi Arabia in general. The Saud family and the government itself are reluctant to interfere with their activities, because the Mutawwa ultimately answered to the religious authorities, the Wahhabis and to the ulema authorities. So, the al-Saud family is reluctant to get involved. However because of the history of the Eastern province which, as I say, is the product of ARAMCO that's what they say now, culturally even among the Shia, they do not respect, the Shia don't look

like Mutawwa anyway because they are all Sunni, but even among those who regulate external observances. the Eastern province didn't allow Mutawwa as free a range as they had in Riyadh or elsewhere.

This of course led to a lot of mixed signals for people who traveled to Dhahran and to Riyadh. Even among the Americans, our advice, backed up by the government, was American do not wear an abaya they do not wear the coverall, they dress modestly, you know, modestly, wrist length or ankle length clothing, but that's all that's necessary. My wife never wore a veil or an abaya or anything like that. She wasn't expected to. So the Mutawwa were sort of reined in. There were occasional abuses of Americans, but usually it was the Americans whom the Mutawwa mistook for Saudis or other Arabs.

In Dhahran, as in the rest of Saudi Arabia, you have prayer calls. The times are posted in shops, there's no business then du du du dum, and all the stores close. Actually they close ahead of that, they close and everybody should go to a mosque or go pray. In fact, the process is, if you had been shopping, you'd have to leave and they'd shut the door, as they usually do, and you have to wait until they reopen. There would be occasions when people would do stupid things like one lady got in trouble because she waited outside a mosque for the stores to reopen. Of course, when the Mutawwa saw her, and thought she was a Saudi lady, they arrested her. We complained. They didn't keep her, they just arrested her and called for her husband to come get her. So we protested that to the governor. Where in Riyadh that would be commonplace. But it was unusual in Dhahran.

Q: What about the Saudi military? This was before the war. What was our impression of the Saudi military?

STAMMERMAN: We had a military liaison group with us who worked as trainers, essentially. Who actually trained the Saudi? You have the Saudi military, the Saudi Army, the Saudi Air Force which is at Dhahran airbase. There were several other groups. There's a coast guard, sort of a frontier force, equivalent, and then there's the national guard. The feeling there, essentially was that the air force was quite good, for their region, for their threat. During the Iran-Iraq war, when the Iranians had tested the Saudi perimeter, the Saudis had sent jets up and pushed them away. They intercepted them properly and so the feeling was that the Saudis could defend their air space against any threat. They would be capable against anything other than out and out invasion by Iran or Iraq, when we'd be thinking about American backup. But short of that, just some border clashes or a matter of defending the air space, the Saudis could do it.

The national guard was made up only of Bedouin, levis from the Bedouin tribes, from the tribes who were historically loyal to the Al-Saud. They are tough and very lightly armed. Their function is to defend the regime. That's their defined function. They are also in charge of defending the country from internal insurrection, meaning the Shia. The national guard was very strong in the Eastern province. The military was there to defend the borders and we sort of had to watch over their presence out there at the causeway between Dhahran and Bahrain. And up near the Kuwait border. But they were not a major

force, we never saw many of them. But we saw the national guard often, and the impression was that they were tough fighters, not terribly well armed, and not well educated in modern warfare.

Q: How about the neighborhood when you arrived there... the Gulf States, Iran, Iraq, Bahrain. How did you view the neighborhood when you got there?

STAMMERMAN: The concern at the time was Iran. It was a big problem. Iraq much less so. The feeling was that the Iraqis were indebted in more ways than one to the Kuwaitis and Saudis. Saddam Hussein was a problem, but he had to borrow more money from the Saudis and the Kuwaitis, so he wasn't particularly a threat, was the general feeling. But Iran continued to be partly because they saw themselves as protectors of the Shia, and there were OPEC problems. The Saudis were producing a lot of oil, and the Iranians, and the Iraqis, but particularly the Iranians wanted the Saudis to produce less to keep the price up. The Saudis couldn't produce any less because they were already down to five millions barrels a day. They didn't want to be the swing producer. So there was concern about an Iranian threat, not an immediate threat, but what a lot of us worried about was Bahrain, actually. Bahrain has a government which is Sunni, though the Shia are the majority of the population. They don't do census very well, but the ruling Sunnis are a minority. But should there be a Shia rebellion or takeover in Bahrain, the Saudis would intervene, almost certainly. They could likely bring in the Iranians. So you could have a Saudi – Iranian fight break out over Bahrain. There might be other reasons, but that was one of the immediate reasons. So the concern was Iran, we were worried about Iran, we watched Iran, people were watching Iran very closely. But when I got there, it didn't seem to be too hot of a problem.

Q: Was there any American military presence in there?

STAMMERMAN: Yes there was. We had trainers. It's called a liaison group. They lived on the Saudi air force air base. In fact, a lot of our consular people would drive over there for lunch, they had the equivalent of an Officers club. And they had a PX, which was convenient. So we would visit them occasionally. We had joint outings sometimes. I once organized an outing with the governor of Khafji, who invited of us up, to show the Americans the desert. So I worked with the military commander and we all brought up families up to Khafji which is on the Kuwait/Saudi border. He had a camp 20 miles out in the middle of the desert, which we would all go out to and spent several days, the kids having a great time riding camels. It was sort of a cultural thing. A lot of these Americans never really got off that air base and never saw Saudi Arabia at all. We got along reasonably well. The air base is where my wife and I first met General Schwarzkopf. When he took over Central Command (CENTCOM), he toured the region and stopped at this liaison group. He was checking out the region. Central Command had been sort of a major player when we were escorting the Kuwaiti ships during the Iran-Iraq war, but CENTCOM thereafter got to be a very quiet command, 1989, early 1990. Our relationship with CENTCOM was reasonably good. I met the American General in charge at the liaison group early on, it was usually run by one-star or two-star air force man. I

went to see him and we worked out arrangements. Our chain of command went to Riyadh separately because they are the liaison group working with the Saudi military. There is no clear line of authority between State Department and Defense in a situation like that. We simply said, if we have any problems any issues, we would try to solve them on a local level, rather than bouncing them up to Riyadh to have the country team try to fight it out. And that generally worked. I would not assert anything and he would not. We would always just try to solve any issues informally. And we didn't have that many issues. We dealt with them on matters like PX and such.

Q: Were you in touch with your former colleagues up in Kuwait?

STAMMERMAN: Often. Very informal stuff. But also, they would send people down on that pouch run every two or three weeks, so I could keep up with who was there and the gossip and what was happening. Another thing was going on. It turns out that the Saudi business community in Dhahran, who I got to know reasonably well, there were some former Kuwaitis who were there and had married into Saudi families. And I would see them fairly often. I would keep up with what was happening inside Kuwait itself.

Q: Did you find, when you were in Saudi Arabia, that there was sort of a natural aversion of Saudis towards Kuwaitis?

STAMMERMAN: Ah, good question. The Saudis and Kuwaitis don't particularly care for each other. The Kuwaitis think of themselves as merchants and they have a merchant culture. They left their Bedouin roots long ago. They claim to still have some Bedouin connection; they don't. They are merchants. They send their children to study in the United States, they are bankers, they are comfortable with Western style banking. They general consider the Saudis to be Bedouin who happened to have struck oil and don't know how to handle the money, besides which they are, in Kuwaiti eyes, sort of backward and are religious fanatics in many ways. The Saudis had a real problem with Kuwait. First of all the Kuwaitis have elections. That's a real problem. The people who are close to the Al-Saud are very disturbed about the Kuwaitis. The Emir is not strong. That's a rule. He's equal with the major Kuwaiti families. This is not good from the Saudi point of view. But in merchants, there's less of a problem because a lot of merchant families run across the border. There's much stronger kinship ties among the Sunnis, along the Gulf, rather than the Gulf into the interior. So I would meet any number of people in Dhahran who might have the same family name as someone in Kuwait, who might be distant cousins. The Kuwaiti businessmen who visit in Dhahran would never think of going to Riyadh. So, the business communities got along well, but the official communities did not get along well at all.

Q: While you were there, when was there any growing disquiet, I mean, how did things develop there with Iraq?

STAMMERMAN: There was nothing... it just happened all of a sudden. The main problem as many of us, as I saw it, that led to the invasion was oil. OPEC. The Kuwaitis

were cheating, so called cheating. They were producing over quota. Everybody knew it. So the effect of this was, first of all, the Kuwaitis got a bigger market share than they had pledged to take within OPEC; second, their overproduction kept the price of oil down. By keeping the price of oil down meant that Iraq then could not afford its rebuilding, and Saddam's socialist schemes through its own income but had to keep borrowing from the Kuwaitis and the Saudis, who always lent with strings attached. So, in July, the Iraqis demanded that the Kuwaitis quit overproducing. You know the Kuwaitis never admitted that they were overproducing.

And the Iraqis rattled a few sabers so the Saudis called a conference in Jeddah. They would mediate between the Iraqis and the Kuwaitis. And they held the conference. I'm told what happened was that the Saudis said, presented the issues and said we really should work this out. The Iraqis, by the way, had pressured Kuwait on a number of fronts, not only the money but also there were a couple islands strategically placed. And the Kuwaitis felt backed into a corner, so they apparently, I'm told, told the Iraqis, you owe us $35 million and we think you better start making payments on that. At that point, the Iraqis stormed out. They were not going to be talked to by the Kuwaitis like that. Saddam lost his temper and brought up this issue of the border, whether the Kuwaitis were really drilling into the Iraqi oil fields from right across the border, who knows. In the end it wasn't that important because there's enough oil to go around. Then the Iraqis started rattling sabers a little more loudly. And most of the Saudis thought, this has happened before, the Kuwaitis would find a way of buying the Iraqis off, for that's what the Kuwaitis always did, and everything would be solved peacefully. There were no alerts, no Saudi businessmen, military, anybody, ever said a word to me that they were worried about Iraq. Just here we go again, the Kuwaitis would get pushed around and they'll probably have to pay off, this will cost them a few billion dollars, but they can afford it. And then, you know, the invasion happened. Shocked everybody, shocked. In fact the Saudis were in denial, they would not even admit that it happened.

Q: Had there been any talk in Saudi circles prior to this about Saddam Hussein, about his personality and concerns about him?

STAMMERMAN: I didn't hear any. The Saudis were very careful not to talk about Iraqis. They'd talk about Kuwaitis because they are cousins, and they'd talk about Bahrainis, but they would be reluctant even to talk about Iraq, other to say that they made them nervous, they generally would not talk about Saddam. Generally not.

Q: By this time you had a new ambassador. Can you talk about that?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, we had a new ambassador who arrived... When I arrived, David Dunford had been chargé for most of his time there. We had a couple of ambassadors who came and went. One went very quickly. I never did understand that one.

Q: Hume Horan?

STAMMERMAN: Hume Horan

Q: Yes, I'm interviewing him next week.

STAMMERMAN: Good. I never heard. One heard only rumors, so fine, you don't talk about what really happened. So, David Dunford had been DCM and chargé a good part of his tenure. Chas Freeman, who was a new ambassador, had been working on UN matters, came out not an Arabist. The Saudis in fact, I heard this I was in Dhahran, but I'd heard this from embassy people in Riyadh, that the Saudis were really did not want another Arabist. They were concerned about people who really had training and insight into their culture. That bothered them. They preferred a political appointee in the first place, feeling that this gave them a tie in the White House.

Q: Morocco felt the same way.

STAMMERMAN: Okay. They had the feeling that a political appointee was better because he would be closer to the President, just as their ambassador was there because the king respected him. Not because the foreign ministry had anything to do with it, so they felt both things. They wanted the political appointee because of the White House, and second that they did not want an Arabist, they'd take a professional as long as he was not an Arabist. So Chas Freeman had just worked out the Namibia compromise, and his background was in Asia...

Q: He was a Chinese language officer.

STAMMERMAN: Chinese language officer. He accompanied Nixon on the trip, as an interpreter. Had quite a success in Asia. So the Saudis said fine, that's fine, he'll be a professional and not an Arabist. Chas arrived and we had a very good meeting, myself and the CG in Jeddah, had a very good relationship with Chas. To this day I do. He immediately summoned us to Riyadh. We worked an arrangement where we would visit there once every month. This sort of carried over from before, but he formalized it. We'd visit for a country team meeting, it would be country-wide, including the CG from Jeddah and me, once a month, and we would discuss with him and the DCM everything going on in our provinces. The four of us together, sort of a little executive committee. Any reporting we did would be vetted through Riyadh. I didn't have any big problem with that since what we were doing was mostly economic reporting. David Dunford is one of our better economic officers, he's a well trained economist. Where we had some friction between our reporting and that of petroleum officers in Riyadh was not I would say of that nature. We would just differ on policy matters. That is, on the analysis of what would be the optimal Saudi oil policy. Kind of a basic argument because it was a long-running argument. So Chas moved in and I thought he ran a very good ship, established his authority early on and really set out to learn about Saudi Arabia. He came down to visit us a number of times, got to know the local business community, called on the prince. He established himself in Riyadh pretty quickly, smart guy. Very, very smart.

Q: Very smart, yes.

STAMMERMAN: Very, very smart, so it's one of those things where you realize you are dealing with somebody who really, who doesn't know the region very well, he's listening, he's learning very, very quickly. He picked up some Arabic also very quickly.

Q: Well then how did things develop with the first of August?

STAMMERMAN: The second of August, 1990.

Q: Were there any other developments that we haven't covered in the year before?

STAMMERMAN: No, it was a quiet place. Again, one of my concerns was the... that the staff knew little about Saudi Arabia and I was trying to do some cultural things, bringing them to gatherings, majlis, eid calls, and so on. And I'd work with the junior officers especially. I was concerned, but it was a quiet post. The other officers, admin, whatever, my deputy, I figured well they could do their tours, but it's not hectic, it's a quiet place.

Q: Was there a plan for evacuating the Americans, having had the Iran-Iraq war I imagine there must have been some concern or planning or something of that nature?

STAMMERMAN: There was a plan, but it was a plan that had been worked out some years previously. The assumption was that the threat was Iran, not Iraq, and that we would have sufficient notice. Because if Iran, probably if there was trouble with Iran you'd have Bahrain first of all, or else, the other possibility, if the Iraqi forces were not held at Basrah, the Iranian forces would probably turn into Kuwait, so there would be fallback from Kuwait, with the remnants of the Iraqi army and the Kuwaiti army and the Saudis picking up a battle somewhere in the middle. So you had time. And Dhahran air base was massive, so we could move people out by airlift. There was a getaway plan that we all kept in the file cabinet and review once a year. Somebody asked from Washington, and you said, well, yes, if things work out according to plan and you can probably move everybody out. But at that point, we figured if anything happened we have lots of time.

Q: [laughter] So Okay then, how did "you know what" happened [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: [laughter] As I was saying, you always wanted to review the evacuation plan. None of that was considered realistic at the time. So what happened is that on the morning of August 2, I would typically listen to the BBC world service, and indeed turned on the radio and oops it said that the Iraqi forces were that they'd crossed the border into Kuwait. Hm. The first thing I did was pick up the phone and call the political officer in Kuwait. His home is near the Embassy, he's a friend of mine. Turns out he was on home leave. But his maid answered. So I said is so and so there and she said no. She was very nervous. She said, "What are we going to do? What are we going to do? There are troops in the streets." "Well, maybe you better call the embassy," I told her. So I called the embassy and I got not much out of them. It was an open line, just we are

very busy, call back. Interestingly enough, that day we were having work done on the consulate grounds, it was quiet, summer, and although I had an outside line, the phone line to the consulate wasn't working because the workers had cut the line. Now, Riyadh was trying to call us. When they could get no answer, they got very nervous. What is going on in Dhahran? They finally made a connection through the military side. They called the military who was there and said "What's going on?" "Nothing's going on." The military, at least the guys at the phone, didn't hear that anything was happening at all. So they then linked to us and said... this wasn't that long afterwards, say 7 o'clock in the morning... I then spoke with the DCM. Our concern was that American citizens would be fleeing Kuwait, and furthermore the Saudis who were sticklers on admitting people into their country might be sticklers at the border. We think they would, but just to make sure, we wanted an American presence at the Kuwaiti-Saudi border. So I woke up my head of the consular section...

Q: Who was that?

STAMMERMAN: Les Hickman. I told him, "Les, the Iraqis have invaded Kuwait, we need someone at the border to make sure that the Americans who show up at the border are taken care of. I know the governor in Khafji, here's his name, I will try to call him and find if there is a way. And he will take care of you. I'm sure he will take care of you, just use his name to get to the border." So Les, and for a while the deputy CG who went for a short while, were up there. Les stayed there for a month. He left that morning with just a change of clothes and stayed there for a month, at the border, with Saudi border guards. Basically, the crossing north of Khafji was just a Saudi border station, Saudis just treated it as a border station, with offices, border guards drinking tea, and the American consul and refugees just pouring across the border. There was a no-man's land of a kilometer or so between the Kuwaiti exit station and the Saudi border post, so they could see the Iraqis when they eventually arrived at the Kuwaiti border post and took up positions. If any Americans were picked up by the Saudi patrols, and some were, they'd be escaping through the desert, not on the main road for fear of Iraqis, the Saudis wouldn't hold them at the main gate. The Saudis would bring them over to our consul. The Consul would arrange through the governor to have them taken by car down to the consulate at Dhahran. We would repatriate them to the United States, which got to be a good system after awhile. Anyway, the day of the invasion then, we had the American consul there by 11 o'clock in the morning.

Q: Well, that was a very fast reaction. What about the British and others who had a lot of citizens up there? Were they...

STAMMERMAN: The British unofficially had two diplomats who lived in Dhahran. That was because of the British airplane deal, they had all these British citizens in the province, they needed a consular backup. Even though the British had somebody there, there was really no official British diplomatic mission. The two officers were assigned to Riyadh and detailed to the Eastern Province. We had the only accredited mission in the Province. Otherwise there were no other foreign diplomats in the Eastern Province. So it

took a lot longer for the rest of them to respond. They had to come from Riyadh, plus they didn't know the situation and they didn't have the contacts that we had. We had Les up there and he got on the phone later that day to me and he told me that the senior Kuwaitis had gotten out. The Kuwaiti Emir and senior Kuwaiti family members had all gotten out, made it to the Saudi border. I'll tell you later how that all happened, which we can go into. The Saudis had put them on helicopters and gotten them away from the border as quickly as possible. Apparently the Saudis were worried hot pursuit. They might be inviting Iraqi invasion if they kept the Kuwaitis right at the border. So the Kuwaitis then were evacuated out of the border area. Meanwhile I heard also that day from the air base that Kuwaiti planes were landing, asking to be refueled, and the Saudis were refusing permission to refuel. The Saudis were just saying, if a Kuwaiti plane landed, it would just stay on the ground. In turn, then, they would just...

Q: These are Kuwaiti what? Military?

STAMMERMAN: Kuwaiti military. No, not civilian. Kuwait military who were fleeing, who apparently had fought. There was this airbase in Southern Kuwait that had held out for a couple of days, they'd done strafing runs against the advancing Iraqi troops. They couldn't get any fuel supplies. The Iraqi units eventually advanced on the base and as the base guard was collapsing, what remaining planes that had any fuel took off and landed in Saudi Arabia, one after another, and as they landed the Saudis disarmed them. The Kuwaitis wanted to be re-armed, they wanted to go back and fight. But the Saudis said, "No we are not at war we can't do that." That day was the first day we started hearing about the Kuwaiti aircraft arriving. The consulate general is just a few hundred meters off the end of the runway, so we'd see military activity, we'd see planes flying around, we didn't know what it was, necessarily. So we heard during that day that this was going on and my consul Les Hickman stayed up there and said he'd just stay there for the duration. In a couple days the British and Japanese showed up, and I think French. And they got hotel rooms or whatever, and they stayed up there for another month, pretty much.

Q: At the beginning, was there concern that this was going to be a rolling thing or was this pretty much an Iraq-Kuwait thing?

STAMMERMAN: That's a very important question, and opinions differed. Opinions differed in the American government, opinions differed among the Saudis, definitely among Saudis. The Saudi reaction in the Eastern Province was first of all denial. No newspaper said anything about the invasion. This happened for about 4 or 5 days. Just nothing appeared in the newspapers. As far as you knew, nothing has gone wrong. Everybody knew it because it was on BBC, on whatever. But the Saudis simply refused to acknowledge that anything had happened. Meanwhile, all these people were crossing the border and being put into camps. Third country nationals were put into refugee camps. The Americans were being sent down to us, the British and other foreigners went wherever their consular people took them.

It turns out, I found this out later from Saudis, that the Saudi National Guard had moved

forces. The Saudi military, that is the army and air force as opposed to the National Guard (haras watani in Arabic) did not, as far as I know to this day. I do know that the Saudi National Guard moved its forces from west of Dhahran, that is toward Riyadh where they are permanently stationed, to a blocking position north of Dhahran. The National Guard leadership was very concerned that the Iraqis would keep going because there was nothing other than lightly armed border guards and a few national guard units between the Kuwaiti border and Dhahran. There were no Saudi military. The military had a big concentration near Yemen because that's where there's some real border problems and there was a certain airbase and support units up in the north toward Jordan and Israel but there was nothing much other than national guard in the Eastern Province other than the airbase. There was a little outpost near the Iraqi border to the west I guess. But these were minimally manned border posts, so the national guard moved their units to a blocking position. These were lightly armed Bedouin fighters.

I have since then talked to senior commanders in the Saudi national guard. They said that because of the configuration... there's only one road south from the Kuwaiti border, and there's a lot of sand dunes on either side of the Kuwait-Dhahran road, they figured that if the Iraqis rolled south in force, they could probably hold them for a matter of hours, maybe 10 hours, but that would accomplish two things. First, that they would have defended the honor of the Al-Saud family, and second that the Americans would have to fight. They thought that if the Saudis put up a fight, as opposed to the Kuwaitis who did not, that the Americans would somehow see that their interests would be threatened at Dhahran, the oil fields, ARAMCO and all that. So there was a national guard force, but that was it. The commanders were sure that the National Guard units would fight if ordered to do so. I agree.

Q: Was there an influx of American military officers, intelligence people and all that to see what the hell was happening, where I would imagine they would have been mainly up in Riyadh around the embassy.

STAMMERMAN: As far as I know, no. Remember that there were no U.S. military forces stationed in Saudi Arabia at the time, other than training units.

Q: What were you doing?

STAMMERMAN: We were busy. We were doing several things. What we had our hands full with was ARAMCO Americans. The first thing we were doing, it's funny, we had a port call scheduled. There was an American ship that came to port. It was some little ship. We had these port calls every once in a while.

Q: A port call. But it's a military ship.

STAMMERMAN: Military ship. A U.S. Navy ship. And we had a big... there was a small fleet based out in Bahrain. But it was regularly scheduled, there would be a port call by a U.S. Navy ship in Dhahran. Every few months. Well we happened to have a small ship, I

don't know what it was, a mine sweeper, or something, that had arrived, so I used the occasion... this was about two days after the invasion, to have a big reception for the American business community, including as many ARAMCO Americans as I could find, bringing the U.S. Navy captain to speak to everybody to say, hey the American Navy has this big presence in the Gulf, and American military's strong in the region. Our concern was that the American community in Dhahran wanted to leave. Most Americans I heard from wanted to go, and senior ARAMCO executives, both Americans and Saudis, confirmed that Americans wanted out, and soon. Since a lot of the dependents were gone from ARAMCO for the summer, we had probably 9,000 Americans in ARAMCO. We had another 8-10,000, the numbers were never very good on this, people didn't register with consulate, who with all the others, McDonald Douglas, Bechtel, we probably didn't have that many, but you never know... we had dual citizen children and we had lots of other people. And it seemed everybody wanted to leave. They were afraid. Many Americans who had been there for years were contemptuous of the Saudi military. And they really thought the Iraqis had a strong military. They were afraid the Iraqis would invade and the Saudis would do nothing to stop it. And furthermore they had no confidence that the American government thought anything of them... that we thought more of oil than of their safety. Because after all ARAMCO was producing 5 million barrels of oil a day and if the Americans left, they would be producing zero.

Q: That was probably the most, along with the troops we put in, was the most important thing keeping those people in place.

STAMMERMAN: Keeping those people in place. Absolutely.

Q: But was that apparent to you at the time? I'm talking about within the first couple of days.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. The reason I say yes so quickly was that we had a crisis in that ARAMCO called. First of all we had calls from the Americans saying what's going on. If they were reading Saudi newspapers of course nothing was going on. And yet they saw that the Saudis were denying, in complete denial. At Saudi ARAMCO, as with many Saudi organizations, if you went to work there as a foreigner, you turned your passport in to your employer. Your employer had your passports. And we told people it's not terribly important because we can get you out of here without a passport. We can get you into America, although we can't get you out of here without Saudi cooperation. We can get you into America. You don't need a passport to get into American if you have other proof of being American, don't worry we're not going to keep you out. It's not a big deal. You are registered, we know who you are, if you want to turn in your passport as a condition of employment, that's between you and your employer. It's not against American law.

So a lot of Americans stormed the ARAMCO passport office, demanding their passports because they thought they needed their passports. In fact, they did if they wanted to leave and ever come back, they had to get a Saudi exit stamp or the Saudis would never let them back in. So a couple days after the invasion, there was a near riot at the ARAMCO

personnel office with people demanding their passports. And the Saudi leadership of ARAMCO said, "You want your passports? Take your passports. We don't care. Because we assume you are not leaving. If it will make you feel better here's your passports." I talked with some of the Saudis who were working there, I talked with some of the senior people, executive vice president, the man in charge of personnel, and they were just having a terrible time because these things were filed alphabetically in Arabic and how do you spell these names, and here are these people pressing and pushing and fighting and shouting, and near riots.

The Americans would call and say, "These incompetent Saudis can't give us our passports. What are we going to do? We hear rumors that the Iraqis are invading. What's happening?" [I'd say] "Calm down. If we have to evacuate you, you don't need your passports. We'll get you out of here." And from the Saudi point of view, I said, "Look, find more Saudis speaking English, give them their passports, please. Because these people have this idea that you're holding them hostage and you're not." This all happened with the other countries' citizens as well. And rumors were rife because the Saudis were silent over the invasion. I got a call from a senior executive at McDonald Douglas one night about 3 days after the invasion who said, "Ken, our information is that the Iraqi units have moved across the border." I said, "First I heard, but then I might not know. So I'll check." So I called both the embassy and senior military people. "No, everything's quiet. Quiet enough." There was some trouble. What I think happened is that there was a Kuwaiti unit that fought itself south from near Kuwait City and fought its way all down to the border with Iraqi units in hot pursuit, and as they crossed the border the Saudi units fell in and let the Iraqis know they had to stop advancing. So there was a little confrontation. It did not turn into an armed conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iraqi, it was a near thing, but rumors might have gotten around. Anyway, the McDonnell Douglass people had heard that and similar things I suspect from lower-level U.S. military contacts who also were nervous about the Iraqis moving south. A lot of the McDonald-Douglas personnel were ex-military, so once word got around of what the situation was, that there was no invasion then they stayed where they were.

Q: What were you getting from the embassy, was somebody from the embassy saying, Ken, It's really important to keep these Americans here, or was this just something you knew?

STAMMERMAN: Something I knew. It was more the reverse. I was telling them, the embassy was being swamped by calls from Americans in the United States. "Get my daughter out of there." And they were saying, "What's going on?" And I said, "A lot of people want to go, but if all these people go we're shutting down ARAMCO, you know that." The Saudis are good, but there's just people down the line who are going to need those Americans there. The senior guys were okay, but as you go farther down the line there are key Americans being scattered throughout. It was kind of a mixture. I think, again, the senior leadership in the embassy understood right away. We sort of talked it out what the issue was. The ambassador's attitude was if Dhahran became unsafe, we should get everybody out. Unquestionably. We were not going to sacrifice Americans. That was

clear from the beginning. Even later on when we talked about poison gas and threats like that, if it appears that Americans were under direct threat, get them out. End of story. And there were ways and means. So I would go and see... I remember talking to Saudi ARAMCO leadership and trying to figure out how to handle this. We'd stress if it's time to get out, we want to work with you to get Americans out of here as quickly as possible. On the other hand, we want to minimize any panic or any unnecessary problem. It came out that the Americans meanwhile were having community meetings inside ARAMCO, at least I heard about these. Some of our consular officers would go over there and say our information is the Iraqis were stopped at the border. This is in the first week or two. And we don't see an immediate threat of invasion.

The Saudi ARAMCO authorities eventually said to ARAMCO Americans, "We have your passport, we'll give it to you, that's no problem, and we will let you go. We will give an exit stamp, exit proof, you need an exit visa or such... for anybody who wants to go, dependents included. Here's the ticket, we'll pay for the dependents' flight home. They will be gone for the duration until this crisis has passed. But if dependents want to go, that's it. If you are a worker and you leave now, you will never again work for Saudi ARAMCO and if we have anything to say about it you will never work anywhere in the Gulf for oil companies or their governments. You have nice salaries out here, you have lived very well out here for the past 20 or 30 years. We expect you to stay on now." So, the Saudis were very clear about it.

The Americans then came to us and said, "The Saudis are holding us hostage. We were being threatened of being killed by the Iraqis, and if we leave, we lose our jobs." We said, "Okay, if you leave you lose your jobs. That's a private contract between you and your employer. Fine. If you have a problem getting a ticket out, we'll help you. But we're not going to change that contract between you and your employer, we're not going to try to." Meanwhile the embassy was under all kinds of pressure from the congressionals, you had all these people saying, "They are holding my daughter hostage." This is not that long after Iran, so using this word "hostage" had a lot of emotional power.

Then one of the American oil companies, I can no longer remember which one, one of the partners, former partners... remember some of these people were not working for ARAMCO, they were employees of Exxon, Texaco, and all those. They flew a plane into Dhahran to evacuate their people without Saudi permission. I mean there should be Saudi permission to land or their planes could get shot down. What were the Saudis going to do? So they just flew this stupid plane into Saudi air space and landed. And guess what, essentially they took out the dependents, which was less of a problem, they didn't lose all their people. But they felt they didn't want Teheran, and Iranian-type crisis, to happen again, where Americans got left behind. So they unilaterally sent the plane back to evacuate the dependents. I had two consular officers there once I heard about it, since the airport is a short drive from the Consulate General. I should mention by that time I had already borrowed one consular officer from Riyadh. We were a small post. We had a consul, and two consular officers.

Q: And you had one officer up on the border.

STAMMERMAN: Had a congen officer, the Consul, who ran the Consular section, up on the border. So we had essentially two junior officers left at the consular section. The week of the invasion, this one lady, a first tour FSO, had been visiting the female vice consul on my staff. She walked by my office late in the day of the invasion, she just kind of walked in the hall, and I said, "Hey you're working for me." I called up the DCM, I said "I need bodies, she's it." And he said, "Sure." So they were both out at the airport helping to process Americans who had escaped from Kuwait when suddenly they had like 200 American dependents show up, immediately trying to get on this plane that had arrived on half-hour's notice. The American oil company employing their husbands had called from the United States and said, "Better get out to the airport because we've got a plane landing in half and hour. Get on it." So it was a mad scramble and they went up there.

But the problem was they needed exit visas. Saudi border control doesn't let anybody out without exit visas. The concern there is you might have dual citizens, you might have children, this might be smuggling people out, who knows. So I got on the phone, this was at night, they were already starting to have a mini riot out at the airport. I called the governor's office, and actually the governor controls everything, but he doesn't control exits. That's the Saudi frontier force. So I finally found some general and said, "You really don't have a choice in this, you've got to give those people visas." And he went, "Well, I will have to check." I said, "Do it quick. Because you'll have the American press on this, you'll have American congressmen. This will be messy if those dependents don't get out." Then shortly afterwards, suddenly the visas appeared, passports got stamped, off they went. So it was hectic those first few days, crises one after another, all involving consular work. Well the next major, let me move on, the next thing that happens after that we get a call from NEA, sort of a conference call, or whatever it was, or they called the embassy first. The assistant secretary of state is coming out to visit. He wants to see the Kuwaitis. This was...

Q: Kelly.

STAMMERMAN: Kelly. John Kelly. And I said, "That's fine. And we will establish contact with the Kuwaitis if we can find them." So I went to the Saudis and they said fine. It turns out the Kuwaitis were cooped up in a Saudi palace. It's called the Gulf Palace, near Dhahran, it's one of the big palaces the Saudis built to host official visitors and hold conferences. I called over there and got in contact with the Kuwaiti Minister of Planning, whom I knew from my Kuwaiti days. I sent my deputy over to talk with him and we set up some meetings. So Kelly came out. That would have been about August 15, mid-August, before the deployment of forces began in any numbers. A/S Kelly first went to Jeddah and Riyadh and then Dhahran. I got a call from one of my contacts in Jeddah who said, this man is in a bad mood. Let's say his reception in Jeddah wasn't the greatest. I have no idea what it was all about, but he lost his temper at some American officer, I'm told. Anyway, he arrived in Dhahran, along with an embassy political officer, note taker. I had set up the meetings, and we went over and talked to the Kuwaitis.

Part of what I felt good about, because we'd just had time to brief the secretary on the way over. He was not going to stay overnight. Throughout the crisis, whenever you had visitors, from the embassy or anywhere else, they would not stay overnight. People were still very concerned that the Iraqis, even if they didn't invade, might still have people in the area at that time, infiltrators.

So, I briefed him on the way. I told him first of all, we'll probably be met by the oil minister, Sheikh Ali Khalifa al-Sabah. He was the American connection for the Kuwaiti Government during the Iran-Iraq War. Very smart man, American educated, very used to dealing with Americans. So the family usually puts him up front because he's more prepared, when it's very serious, he'll be the guy up front. The Kuwaiti foreign minister had made a career out of being anti-American. He was the head of the sort of Third World anti-American Bloc over the Palestine question. The Kuwaitis had been very pro-Palestinian. And the Emir was a financial genius who liked to garden, that was his hobby. Turns out A/Secretary Kelly was a gardener as well, which I'd had heard from somebody, so I told him, if you want to break the ice, talk about gardening, he loves to putter. That's the Emir's hobby. So I briefed him very quickly in the car on who else he might see and what their concerns were. A/S Kelly had his agenda of course. So we went over, and sure enough, Sheikh Ali Khalifa met us and we did the rounds.

Again, many of the Kuwaitis I knew, they recognized me, so we talked about how they'd gotten out. They all had their stories. Very interesting stuff. The story I heard was as follows: The Emir had been at home in his palace... The Kuwaiti Emir's home, by Saudi standards, is modest, maybe a businessman's home. The Kuwaiti Emir does not live in a palace in the Saudi style. A very modest, large house, as does the Crown Prince, very large house, but modest by Saudi standards. Anyway, he'd been at home when the Crown Prince came in with his bodyguards, and said the Iraqis are in town. Iraqi invaders are in town. There was some gunfire and the Crown Prince went out and said, "An Iraqi unit is out in front of the palace right now, fighting some Emiri guards." Those are the Kuwaiti special forces troops assigned to guard the Emir. The Crown Prince took the Emir out the back door and over the back garden wall, they walked around front on the next block over where some of the Emir's cars were parked, and the two of them hopped in their Mercedes and drove to the Saudi border. Nobody saw them. The Iraqis did not close the gate at the norder crossing until late in the following afternoon. That's what I heard from one of the Crown Prince's aides. That's also where one of the Kuwaiti Emir's brothers was killed, at the Emir's palace, apparently because he, the story the Kuwaitis told me, he grabbed a gun from one of the Emiri guards and said, "I'm going to go out and kill some Iraqis." And he did, and he got killed. Kelly expressed his condolences over the death of the brother.

Also, I heard the story while waiting with Kelly that there was a cabinet meeting going on when the Iraqis invaded, and the foreign minister was chairing for the prime minister. The Crown Prince, who serves as Prime Minister, wasn't there at the time. And he heard what was happening, this was shortly after midnight when the Iraqis came across, and the

foreign minister said, “My friends, this meeting is adjourned, let’s get the hell out of here.” And he and the interior minister, another al-Sabah, just walked out the front door, got in their Mercedes, headed for the border. Sheikh Ali Khalifa (by the way, the ‘Sheikh’ title for Kuwaitis applies to all males of the al-Sabah family, it has no religious significance) actually, the following morning, he saw Iraqi helicopters flying along the coastline where he was living and said, this is not right. And he grabbed his family and headed south. For some reason, the Iraqis did not close the gate. There’s only one road out, but they did not close the gate until later the next day.

So we heard all these stories, Kelly and I. He spoke to the Kuwaitis, who were generally were in a state of shock, especially the Emir. He was just shocked. I had seen him many times before, but never like this. He just kept shaking his head, how could this have happened? Anyway, we had a round of conversation, met all the Kuwaiti leadership. I’d said, you’ll probably see the oil minister first, then the Crown Prince, then the Emir, and probably the interior minister will sit in on the meeting because the Kuwaiti defense minister was irrelevant. He was made defense minister, as the Kuwaitis said, because he was probably the least talented of the brothers, and the mother wanted him to be taken care of, not to be treated as a poor relation. So he was made defense minister, which was not very important in Kuwait. The really important jobs in Kuwait were finance minister, foreign minister, and interior minister. Defense? Pshh... The way Kuwaitis for 200 years they’d kept their existence by playing off their neighbors, or by buying them off. So he was defense minister. So I said this is not important, he may sit in, but... Kelly asked me, what about the defense minister? I said it’s not important, it’s truly not important.

So the important meeting was with others, and we’d ask them to do the necessary requests if they wanted our help... and this eventually became public because the next day Secretary Baker made it public... the Kuwaitis asked us for support under the Self-Defense Article of the UN Charter. They asked us for support formally in a diplomatic note that they handed to me the day afterwards. Which took a day to write only because somebody had to find an Arabic typewriter. the Kuwaitis themselves wanted to type it up. They didn’t want to depend on the Saudis. So they said, search through the Dhahran Suq for a manual typewriter. Such little incidents, but these things happened. So I went over the following day and the Kuwaitis were packing up. The Saudis had told the Kuwaitis that they would be moving to the other side of the peninsula, hundreds of miles away.

Q: What was Kelly saying? Was he giving you any intimation on how we might respond?

STAMMERMAN: No. Nothing. I could hear what he was telling the Kuwaitis, which was, in broad terms, we do not accept the permanent annexation of Kuwait by Iraq.

Q: I mean, our President George Bush had said rather early on, this will not stand.

STAMMERMAN: Right, exactly.

Q: Was anyone coming around and looking and saying, Alright, if we land our

paratroops here or if we do this...

STAMMERMAN: Not yet. Not yet. What happened... that happened after Cheney. Secretary of Defense Chancy and the senior military leadership, General Schwarzkopf arrived in Riyadh, that was after the Kelly visit. The Kelly visit result was the Kuwaitis by unilaterally asking us, giving me a note the following day, were asking for our intervention.

Q: Because the Kuwaitis had always been very standoffish about the United States.

STAMMERMAN: Right.

Q: They had really said, we don't need you and...

STAMMERMAN: That's not exactly the way it worked. By then, we had, remember we had worked together with them on the ship escort issue.

Q: Right.

STAMMERMAN: But that was by a private company. The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation dealing with the American embassy and the U.S. Navy. I mentioned that previously. That's why I suspected strongly that the person meeting us would be the oil minister, or the former oil minister who had had that American connection, because the Kuwaiti foreign minister indeed was on the record as saying, we don't need the Americans, we'll call the Arab League if we have trouble. The signal we got from the oil minister was this is now bilateral American-Kuwaiti. The foreign minister was there but he didn't speak, so we had the Emir and the Crown Prince saying we respect and appreciate your support, and then us telling them what we need you to do is ask us. We want it in writing, under the UN Charter, you are asking us for assistance in self defense. And they asked us formally. I took it back to the Consulate General and sent it up, and the following day, Secretary Baker said the Kuwaiti government has asked us for assistance under the UN Charter, the Charter Provisions for Self-Defense. Interestingly, one of the senior Kuwaitis pulled me aside and said, "Ken, you remember so and so?" This was a senior Kuwaiti official, he didn't get out. "We want him out, can you help us?" I said, "I'll see what I can do." Essentially, I sent word back through channels, they want to get somebody out, somebody very important to them – can we do it? And in the end we did... I'm still not sure to this day how we did it, but he showed up on our doorstep in Dhahran a bit later, which was nice.

Q: How about your wife? You had kids at that time?

STAMMERMAN: My wife... no; my son was at the University of Virginia. We'll get on to what happens after the Cheney business, things changed completely. No, my wife Patty had... we'd been in Kuwait together, but she was concerned as I was about our consulate general staff in the not being attuned to the local culture. So she made a project of helping

spouses and junior officers, trying to teach them about Arab culture and inviting Arab ladies over to talk. In many ways, consular families, like almost all the military families, had very little contact with the surrounding culture, other than ARAMCO which was really an American culture. So she had done that a lot. She helped set up that dinner where we had the American Navy people come and meet with the American business community. She thought, as I did, that the Iraqis would not advance farther, we sort of knew the region, and we had not thought that Iraq would invade Kuwait. So we were wrong on that score, but also we didn't think they would come farther south.

But in any case, panicking wouldn't help anything. So Patty's attitude was... she was in contact with the ARAMCO wives... we're not going anywhere. And also with our local employees, who were all third country nationals, she took a big role in dealing with them. Because their attitude was, as one of our drivers told her, you're going to leave. She said, "I'm not going to leave." He said, "Yes you are. A big helicopter will arrive and take you and the consul general away and leave us behind. This happened in Somalia. All our FSNs were left behind." So she said, "No I'm not going anywhere." So as long as she stayed, the FSNs believed us. She stayed for the duration. The State Department immediately put out a voluntary evacuation plan. Any dependent could leave, but you'd be gone for the duration. Patty and I said, "she's not going to leave," and she didn't. That really helped with the FSNs. They were very nervous, and were essential to keeping the Consulate General operating.

Q: So, what happened then? You've had your meeting with Kelly and the Emir, they'd gone back, and then what happened?

STAMMERMAN: The senior Kuwaitis then went away. The Saudis did not want them in the province. They were worried that it might draw, if not the Iraqi army, Iraqi infiltrators. Security would be kind of tough. So they shipped the Kuwaitis off to the other end of the peninsula. South of Jeddah. We then had the Cheney visit to Riyadh. The following day, the U.S. military arrived. I heard first from our military training mission liaison, who told me that we've got lots of people moving in. Then the embassy told me the American military is deploying, you're going to have a few hundred thousand soldiers real quick. That morning, the day after I heard that, the 82nd Airborne showed up at the consulate, a couple of intelligence officers wanted to talk to me. The general said, "Here's where we're going, here's the Shia, is that going to cause us a problem." "No, they're not. The Shia are our friends, they love us. Don't worry about the Shia. They'd love to have American soldiers around to protect them from the Sunnis." I'll say right now, there never was any trouble at all, none, between the Shia and the American Army.

Q: Prior to the actual arrival of the 82nd Airborne, were Saudis coming up to you, acquaintance and others, saying why aren't you doing something...

STAMMERMAN: No, they were not saying anything along those lines. A lot of people were leaving. This is what made the Americans nervous, was that the Saudi business people were sending their families out of the province. One of the positive outcomes was

that within a week of the invasion, the Mutawwa, the religious police mostly left, the religious police and their families and anybody connected with the Mutawwa left. They thought they would be better off in Mecca, praying I guess, but they all left. They were worried both that the Iraqis might invade, or the Americans would take over the Province, or something. Whatever was going to happen would not be good for them. So they left.

Q: Well, that was handy.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: It kept that particular fly out of the ointment.

STAMMERMAN: Yes it did. So, they left, in general. I said fine. Some of the American military as they deployed were worried about that. They said, "They're gone, they're not here. Finally, we did something." But the Saudis were evacuating the families, but they were not talking about why. There was a lot of concern. In Saudi Arabia, you don't want to appear disloyal. If the Prince, the King's son, governor of the Province, was staying, which he was, you didn't want to look like you are leaving. So they started staying with the program. They would ask, "Well, Ken what do you think is going to happen?" But it was never, "Hey, I'm really worried." So business got less. I have to say this... One American company with a major contract fled. Their Saudi sponsor, he actually did not live in the Eastern Province, he lived in Jeddah. This American company's personnel all left. We had a consular phone net, a warden setup, where we call the American business community, and we couldn't find them. We finally talked to their landlord and he said, "They left the morning of the invasion." "So where are they?" We called around and called around, and found they were in Jeddah, they drove all the way across the peninsula right after the invasion, and they didn't come back until months later. These guys had a billion dollar contract, and I said this is insane. I looked them up and said, "This is not smart, walking out on a billion dollar contract because you are worried about Iraqis," I said, "Don't." And most of the American businessmen understood that. And the Shia could not leave after all. They stayed. But a lot of Saudi businessmen sent families away. A lot of Americans by then took ARAMCO up on their offer and sent their spouses and children out. Saudi ARAMCO paid their fare, but their offer after that was the standard, if you leave you're gone, don't come back, we'll never see you again. But as for dependents, they said, fine, no problem. We'll send them out. And that calmed a lot of the problem. But the people who lived there, the Sunnis, the establishment, they had a lot of money there. They realized that if they left, showed disloyalty to the regime, that was it. They'd send out children and so forth, but all the senior businessmen stayed.

Q: Were you seeing any change in the Saudi regular military? Were they beginning to make moves and do things?

STAMMERMAN: Not that I saw. Again, the Saudi military, they were out in the encampments in the desert. There was no increased military presence or what have you in the Dhahran areas. If you drove around nearby, no roadblocks. I drove up the border,

probably not the first week, but after the first couple weeks, you'd run into roadblocks, but you didn't see tanks on the roads or trucks with troops or anything. Wasn't there. I started seeing Saudi military more after the U.S. military had deployed.

Q: How about on the Arab side? Were there more flights?

STAMMERMAN: Lots. Yes. Sure. The Saudi air force by then was launching aircraft a lot, presumably running patrols along the border. The Saudis had air supremacy. That was a given. Against either Iraq or Iran. Now that the focus was on Iraq nobody would talk about it, but you saw a lot of flights going. But I did not deal with the Saudi military. Our training group would deal with them.

Q: When the 82nd Airborne, I assume their liaison officers were going to call when arrived. That was before the full deployment, right?

STAMMERMAN: Before the full deployment. The first two people deployed were General Pagonis of the 22nd Support Command, who was a logistics man, and his deputy. As soon as the Riyadh meeting broke up with Cheney and Schwarzkopf and so on, Pagonis moved to Dhahran. He was living out of a jeep for about a week, just driving around, looking at the port, looking at the airbase, looking at the other airport which was semi-finished out in the desert, and trying to find how do you supply... you know, we'll have a hundred thousand men here in a couple weeks... where are we going to get food? Do we have to ship it all in? There's a port, how much support can we have? And I made contact with him fairly early on, or he made contact with me, we got to talking, and then the 82nd arrived.

I should say that an incident that happened around then was a senator from New Jersey showed up...

Q: Brighton or Torecelli?

STAMMERMAN: No, the other one, the one that's just retiring just now. Lautenberg. He showed up around August 18, or so. He was in Cairo. It's interesting how the State Department works. He was in Cairo and sent a message saying he was going to visit Dhahran. The Today Show was already there... no I take that back... this would have been after the deployment had started, that would have been probably around the 20th or so. Anyway, the Today Show was already there starting to interview the 82nd that had just arrived, and he said he's coming to Dhahran to see how deployment is going. The State Department said this visit is not supported because the U.S. Senate leadership wants to visit first. So the embassy is not to welcome this visit. And Chas Freeman and I both laughed at that.

Q: Yes, ho ho ho.

STAMMERMAN: Ho ho. We laughed. Both of us... I called somebody up and Chas sent

some messages back, “Do you really want us to tell a U.S. senator NOT to come? Are you out of your minds?” So I sent a cable to Cairo saying hotels are full but the senator is certainly welcome to stay at the consul general’s residence. Chas did the same. So he showed up, just took a commercial flight in and we met him. He met with General Pagonis, we talked about what the military was going to do. It was good meeting, this is what we were going to need. We fed the good Senator some MREs, at his request. This is what our troops will be eating. He said, “Euww, this is awful.”

Q: Yes, MREs are...

STAMMERMAN: Meals Ready to Eat.

Q: They’re strictly emergency rations.

STAMMERMAN: Emergency rations. Some units ended up living off of them for months. You know, they were way out in the desert. If you put Tabasco sauce on them, they are edible, so Tabasco sauce got to be a hot commodity. Anyway, that first visit was kind of funny just in the way the State Department does these things, trying to tell a U.S. senator that he’s not welcome. I said this is silly.

So when the Saudi families were contacted by military logistics, I recommended one to the logistics people and can we get 10,000 breakfasts tomorrow morning, and they said sure. And they did. One orange, some kind of breakfast roll, and, I don’t know, but they had enough for a decent breakfast. Eggs, enough to form chow lines... So then the 82nd showed up and then their liaison officers came over...

Q: They all came by what... air transport?

STAMMERMAN: Oh, yes, everybody landed at Dhahran airbase. So the 82nd guys came over and I gave them a little briefing and they said there’s a lot more people coming in. We didn’t know how many, but they said, thousands of people in the next few days. So I said, “That’s fine, there’s lots of space in Saudi Arabia.” We then saw these big C-5s flying over the one end of the consulate general compound, we’d see just a constant stream of these things for the next several weeks. And I met the various commanders, invited them to the house, and we all had meals and talked with them about the liaison arrangements.

The senior guy in Dhahran, actually IN Dhahran as opposed to out in the field, out in the desert where the forces deployed, was General Pagonis, who was then a 2-star Army officer. He and I worked out a very good working relationship. Very good. Early on, we agreed that if any of his people had trouble with the consulate, he would tell me, and if any of my people had any trouble with one of his soldiers, I’d tell him. Let’s keep Riyadh out of it. I don’t want an argument with General Schwarzkopf, and you don’t want an argument with Chas Freeman, and it worked very well. One of my officers would attend his staff meetings. He had a standup staff meeting every day. And two of his officers

would attend my weekly staff meetings. So we always kept close touch on what was happening.

We also worked out an arrangement early on and that involved... General Pagonis had already established his own ties with the various Saudi commanders, which was what he should do, it was appropriate. He also took over our training mission facilities. The trainers were immediately moved out. They shipped them all off to Riyadh. So our usual contact with the military weren't there anymore. We had to set up new arrangements with support commands. The 82nd Airborne had their own group out in the desert, the 101st had their group, and the Marines landed and they had their group. So we were all very busily trying to keep up with all this. Washington kept augmenting my staff, which was good. I'd started off with maybe 10 American officers, maybe fewer. By the time it all ended, I had 35 Americans. We had people sleeping in the rec center, we had a little rec center, sleeping on floors, doubling up in the various officers' houses. The military actually wanted to deploy a unit at the consulate grounds, and I told them, "No we can't do that. It was a diplomatic establishment. No guns on this place, except for the Marine guards. So we didn't allow any military placements." We didn't want that. We did have a problem. We were very concerned about our outside perimeter security, because the consulate had walls, which were mainly to keep camels out, I guess. To keep out wandering herdsmen or whatever. They really were not very secure. They weren't very high, they had barbed wire on them, but they really wouldn't keep anybody who was very determined from scaling them. So we were very concerned about our security. After all, it's the American diplomatic establishment and we had all these military outside Dhahran who were very well capable of defending themselves, and we had Marine guards who were very good, but not enough of them, and their job was very specific. Our outside perimeter security was unarmed Indian rent-a-cops, who were good, but all they did was search automobiles. We had one armed Saudi post at the compound entrance, manned by a couple Saudi National Guardsmen.

So I asked the RSO, I asked Washington, I said, "We need bodies, we need security, we need something. We're vulnerable." We were vulnerable anyway. I thought the security arrangements were not good anyway. But we need help. Of course, the Washington response was, "No, we can't spare anybody, and we have no budget, do what you can." So I called up the National Guard commander, the Prince, and said, "I need some help. How about it?" So he said fine, and he deployed a couple units, meaning dozens of National Guardsmen, and he supervised, he built a double ditch around our entire perimeter, enough to stop a tank, with an earthen escarpment on the side of the ditch, and he set up four watchtowers in our four corners. He put up a barbed wire fence so there's a place for a jeep to drive between the barbed wire fence and the consulate fence. His National Guardsmen would run their jeep along that and man the guard posts. I figured if our government would not provide security, theirs will. They did very good. They responded very well to that, and I'm still very grateful to the Saudis for doing that.

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

STAMMERMAN: Okay, good.

Q: And we'll put down we have just covered the arrival of the 82nd Airborne, and we've talked about your consulate security using the National Guard to do this, and we'll pick it up from there.

STAMMERMAN: Okay, very good.

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Q: It's the 17th of December, 2001. Ken, you've heard where we are, but I'm not sure you talked about the visit of John Kelly, who was the assistant secretary for near eastern affairs, so we'll talk about it, just in case.

STAMMERMAN: Okay. Assistant Secretary Kelly showed up and I can't be sure of the dates, but it's mid-August of 1990. That is to say, the Kuwait ruling family had arrived in Dhahran. The Saudis had admitted publicly that there was, indeed, an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which they had simply been silent on for the first week after the invasion. We still had two consular officers up at the border watching what was going on and helping American citizens who were crossing, who were walking across the border. At this point, there was a notice that came out to the consulate via the embassy, via Chas Freeman's office, that Assistant Secretary Kelly was coming out from Washington to meet the Kuwaiti Emir. He flew first into Jeddah where he met the consul general there, Phil Griffin, and then went to Riyadh where one of the political officers, head of the political section, latched on to him, and the two of them came to Dhahran.

Meanwhile, I established contact with the Kuwaitis via the Saudis because the Saudis were keeping them secreted away in a palace near Dhahran. The Saudis were wanting the Kuwaitis to keep a very low profile because they were afraid the Iraqis, I found out later, they were afraid the Iraqis in sort of hot pursuit would go after the Kuwaiti ruling family all the way to Dhahran. So they had them in a guest palace, so called. Assistant Secretary Kelly first arrived in Jeddah, and then flew to Dhahran. As an aside, I had a phone call from the CG in Jeddah saying, watch out for Mr. Kelly, that he had a very bad temper and that he was in a terrible mood. Because apparently the administrative arrangements in Jeddah had really fallen through. A lot of small stuff that apparently he really got angry at the CG.

Nevertheless, the two of the arrived, that is Assistant Secretary Kelly and a political officer from Riyadh. I met them, having already established contact with the Kuwaitis through the Kuwaiti planning minister who I knew, not well, but I knew him from my days in Kuwait. So, when the Assistant Secretary arrived, we wanted to get him in in the morning, and get him out before nightfall. We didn't want to do an overnight, just for security reasons. Those were directions from Riyadh. He arrived, and as we drove from the airport to the palace, which is 20 minutes, half an hour, I briefed the Assistant Secretary on whom he probably see. The Kuwaitis hadn't briefed me, they just said they'd

make the Emir available, and the Saudis of course. We'd worked it out with the Saudis so that the Saudi security was all over the place when Kelly arrived. So we drove in my car, and we knew where we were going, so the Saudis just told us to go there. As we went along in the car, I told the assistant secretary that we'd probably be met by Sheikh Ali Khalifa al-Sabah, who was the oil minister. He was our main contact at the embassy in Kuwait with the ruling family. He has an advanced degree from an American university, speaks perfect English, was the author of Kuwait's OPEC strategy for many years. A trusted man, a very trusted man within the family by the Emir, and he was sort of the Emir's man to deal with the Americans. I briefed the Assistant Secretary on the other members who were in the family, including the Emir. I mentioned that the Emir's favorite hobby, besides marrying dozens of young ladies (only four at any one time), was gardening. And since Mr. Kelly apparently also was a gardener, he said, "Well good, we'll have something to talk about." I'd mentioned a couple of other members of the ruling members who would probably be there and gave him a very brief bio on each one of them. He apparently had some bios, but I sort of gave him just a little gossip about each one of them. For example, the defense minister, who was a sad case, he was made defense minister, word had it within the family, because he was a brother of the Emir and apparently the mother made the brothers say they would take care of him because he was very slow, he was slow and didn't seem to have much future, but they'd all said they'd take care of him. So they made him defense minister, but he had no power within the family, had no responsibility really. It was other members of the family that took care of defense policy and defense purchases. But that he might call on him. But the real power, the real people to be concerned about were the Emir, the Crown Prince, who was the Emir's cousin, and the interior minister and the oil minister.

So we got in the car and drove out to the palace, and doors opened, we were waived into the parking lot, all the guards just waved us through, they were expecting us. I don't recall if I had the flag on the car or not, but the Saudi guards knew who we were. Got us in. We got out of the car, and sure enough, Sheikh Ali Khalifa was there, which was nice. He's a very engaging man. He said, "You'll have meetings. You will see the Emir, first you will see the Crown Prince and then the Emir."

Q: He was called the Black Prince.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. That is, he's dark skinned. That is because by rumor, his mother was a black concubine of his father. His background was that he was trained in police work in Britain.

Q: A capable man.

STAMMERMAN: A very capable man. He always wore sunglasses because of an eye ailment. Some people thought he was just putting on airs, but he has something wrong with his eyes. Anyway, yes, he's dark. He's very competent. The Emir is very strong on finance. He's a financial genius. The Crown Prince is very strong on security, police work, that sort of thing. They are from different sides of the family. They alternate being

Emir, one side of the family and the other side of the family, since they are cousins. So, the first two people we saw were the Crown Prince and the Emir. It could have been opposite. The assistant secretary talked with the Emir and he's very engaging. They hit it off and they talked about gardening. The Emir really likes to garden, when he's not on official duties. That's one of his two joys in life. And they talked for a while about gardening and sort of broke the ice. The Emir used an interpreter. It was an interpreter he always used in Kuwait, and they apparently got him out. So, they talked for a while, just breaking the ice, and then the assistant secretary told the Emir what he wanted, which was a formal request from the government of Kuwait under the United Nations Charter for American assistance in self-defense. The Emir sort of nodded, and then we just went off, that was the end of the meeting. Everybody was in a hurry and they're all in makeshift quarters. Then we saw then in sequence, after we saw the two of them, the Emir and the Crown Prince. The Crown Prince meeting wasn't terribly substantive, it's just that they appreciate our being there, and looked to us for assistance. We talked to the interior minister, Sheik Salman, who is a tough guy and told us what he was doing. He was going to other Arab countries to round up support for the Kuwait position. We also called upon the foreign minister who was polite, but not much else. The foreign minister had a long history of being anti-American. We had avoided him during the whole tanker war. We worked, he was a foreign minister and deputy prime minister, sometimes prime minister, acting prime minister sometimes. We'd made a practice of avoiding him because he had a policy of aggressive neutrality, which meant in the U.N., he always voted with the Soviet Union. So we did the whole oil tanker thing, just as an aside, working with the oil ministry, not with the foreign ministry, and not with the defense ministry.

We saw a couple other members of the ruling family and as we went through the sequence, we saw the defense minister, which was simply a hello, shake, welcome, hello, shake hands and leave. He was really non-substantive, and the Kuwaitis made no pretense that he was. We left... there were some side conversations going on all the while, which I will mention one with the Kuwaiti oil minister who pulled me aside and said, Ken, did I remember a certain man, his name was Abdel Fatah al-Badr, did I remember him. A hard man to forget, he was about 350 pounds, a huge man. He was the head of the Kuwait oil tanker company. He would be a target in Kuwait of the Iraqis who hated him, and he said, "Ken, we didn't get him out, can you get him out?" I said, "Well we'll see what we can do."

Other than that, at the end we got back in the car. The arrangement was made with the planning minister that he would get the document to me that Assistant Secretary Kelly had asked for, that is the formal request from the government of Kuwait. Of course, we had, Assistant Secretary Kelly had reiterated to the Kuwaitis that we recognized them as the government of Kuwait, and that we did not accept the occupation. We then left, headed for the airport, and off went our two visitors.

Q: Question.

STAMMERMAN: Sure.

Q: I've been told that when dealing particularly with the Saudis and people in that part of the world, that if somebody nods after you make a proposal or something like that, that it's essentially an acknowledgment, I've heard your question, and you want to make sure you get some... In a case like this, I would think force majeur would take over, it was assumed that they would, but did you have any disquiet about that you... nobody... did you get a definite commitment?

STAMMERMAN: We had a definite commitment as I recall.

Q: From who?

STAMMERMAN: From the Emir. He was the only one who could have made that commitment. It's the same way as what I've heard what happened in Riyadh about the King making the commitment. Normally, the Emir would nod and then consult. Normally, but they didn't have time for consultations, so I'm fairly sure it was the Emir who said yes, but by the time we walked out of those meetings we had a commitment from the planning minister. We had a commitment from the Kuwaitis with our being told that the planning minister, who was my contact, would get me the document as soon as possible. No later than tomorrow, the next day. So, they left, and I was satisfied, and I assumed they were, that the Kuwaitis were going to make the formal request.

The next morning, I think it was, I got a phone call from the Kuwaitis, from the planning minister, saying, Ken, I've got your document. I went over and it was indeed a document in Arabic and English, because we'd given them a suggested text after all. And the planning minister said, "We're sorry it took so long, but we didn't have a typewriter." The planning minister himself, it's one of these little incidents, he went to the suq in Khobar, looking for an Arabic typewriter. He had to just buy one because the Saudis hadn't given them anything, no paper, no typewriter. It was simply a palace where they were living. So he had gone to the suq and had found an Arabic typewriter and had typed the thing up himself. It was signed by the Emir, as appropriate.

As I got there, it was weird. Because the Kuwaitis were clearing out. As I drove in, you had people in Mercedes Benz', in all manner of cars, people with guns out the windows, all roaring out of the palace, with this planning minister staying behind to talk to me, and a couple of the other Kuwaitis I knew, who were friends of mine. And they told me, we're out of here. The Saudis have told us they want to get us to the other side of the peninsula, and the Emir is already gone, they are leaving for Taiz, which is way the other end of Saudi Arabia. Because they were worried about Dhahran. They did not want him to be a target.

Q: Well, just get in the feeling, there's still concern that there might be suddenly something launched at Dhahran?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, very much so. The Kuwaitis were very worried about it. The

Saudis were worried about it. And they were worried that the Kuwaiti Emir being there, and word was sort of getting out among some people...

Q: Would be an attraction.

STAMMERMAN: Would be sort of a hot pursuit reason, that it would give the Iraqis a reason to go after him, to go after Dhahran just to get the Kuwaitis, and in the process they'd take the oil fields. [laughter]

Q: Yes. [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: So the Kuwaitis were spirited away, on the orders of the Saudis. This was not their choice. They were happy to leave and would go wherever the Saudis gave them a place to stay, but the Kuwaitis told me the Saudis want us to move to the other side of the peninsula, so we're gone. A couple of them stayed behind to talk to me. The planning minister told me the story about getting the typewriter and handed me the paper. I took it, shook his hand, said good luck, then headed for the consulate where I called the op center and said, "I've got the document. I'm pouching the originals. Here's the English version." Sent a very restricted cable. That was that for a short while. Then the next day, Secretary Baker was on television saying we have this request from the government of Kuwait for self-defense under the United Nations Charter. I thought, cool. [laughter] Hey, this gives us an excuse to go to war. I'm part of it. Hey. The story of things going on. Glad to see it.

Q: This is in August.

STAMMERMAN: This is in August. Mid-August. Early on. Again, at this point we were concerned about a lot of things. We were concerned that the Iraqis would still come, just for the oil. I mentioned earlier about the arrangements that we made with the Saudis over security, the Department not being responsive at all, but the Saudis really coming through for us, setting up... I should mention that the Saudi National Guard chief, a prince, one of the bin Saud... he not only supplied dozens of soldiers for us, built watch towers, he also dug a trench completely around the compound, except for the one road, the setback we had.

An amusing incident, I have to mention this. Not long after that, my deputy at the consulate general came into my office and said, "Ken, do you know what the Saudis have done?" I said, "No, what now?" He said, "They've arrested two of the American professors at the university." The University of Petroleum and Minerals, which was right next to the consulate. I said, "What in the world for?" He said, "They were jogging around the warning track, that the Saudis had established along our perimeter. You've got to do something, call somebody in protest." I said, "Are you kidding? They're lucky they didn't get shot." There's sort of the attitude of the American community, and a good many of my staff for that matter, about security. I was very worried about this and said we've got to be very strict. And people were kind of... It was kind of strange sometimes.

Meanwhile, the American community was still in full-fledged panic, in Dhahran. They were watching CNN, more importantly, their families were watching CNN, all showing arrows pointing to Dhahran, and so everybody in the States was calling up to say, get my daughter out of there. That is, calling the sons to get their daughters home, and get everybody out of there. The Saudi-ARAMCO policy was that if the American embassy and the consulate general called for the evacuation of American citizens, they of course would cooperate. Short of that, if you left their employ, and flew back in panic, you lost your job. As far as they were concerned, you would be unemployable in the Gulf if they had any say in the matter for the rest of your life. This left a lot of the American community, the oil guys, torn between fear and greed, and they were very angry at me personally, and at the embassy, for not evacuating them, because they kept hearing on TV that Dhahran was in danger of being overrun. As soon as the 82nd Airborne deployed, though, I was confident that there would not be an invasion. I was sure of this because having been in Kuwait, knowing how the Iraqi army fights, I thought they would not dare to take on the American army in any way, shape, or form. I was very confident. None of my staff were, or very few of my staff.

Q: Where did the 82nd Airborne go? North of Dhahran?

STAMMERMAN: The 82nd deployed north and west. In the west, they occupied the oil processing area, where you separate the natural gas from oil, at Abqaiq. They covered Abqaiq and that area. The first thing they did though was set up a blocking force north of Dhahran where the Saudis...

Q: North of Ras Tanura.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, it would north of there, north of the Shiite area, which is near Ras Tanura. They also deployed near where the Marines were to land. That was part of what they were doing. Essentially, there was a Saudi blocking force that was up there on the initiative of the Saudi National Guard commander. Until the 82nd arrived, we simply had that small blocking force of National Guardsmen that were up there. Then we had the deployment, large numbers of forces deployed. My main contact after the first week of deployment... Again, the deployment starts in mid-August. By the third week in August, I suppose, I'd contact with General Pagonis, who was the head of the 22nd support command. That was his vehicle..., he was the head of logistics, became known as the logistics genius behind Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. He and his second in command colonel arrived and were living out of an Army vehicle for about a week until we made contact. I invited him over, and they were always having good reason to come by the house because they get served good American food at the house. This is before they had their units deployed. Anyway, I worked with them very closely and put them in contact with the Saudi merchant families, who could supply, who were good at the logistics supply.

Q: Al Gusabis...

STAMMERMAN: Yes, the Al Gusabis, the Al Zamils. The incident there with the Al Zamils, the Al Zamils were one of the major families of the Eastern Province. They were asked by General Pagonis, as soon as he arrived he said, I've got thousands of troops arriving in the next couple of days, can you supply 10,000 breakfasts tomorrow morning? They said yes we can, and they did. Which really surprised the General. He said, he was worried that he was getting into a third world country. I said, "No these guys are good. They really know their stuff." There was another family who had the local Sears franchise. They had a local manager who was Pakistani, whose job was on the line because on his own authority he had ordered a big shipment of sledgehammers for the local Sears outlet. Saudis don't use sledgehammers for anything, well I guess they can for tent pegs. Anyway, these things were just sitting on the shelf. They'd just opened 2 months earlier, and nothing was moving. And then the 82nd Airborne arrived and said we need sledgehammers. [laughter]

Q: [laughter] I assume there was an "Allah be praised."

STAMMERMAN: There was an "Allah be praised." A helicopter lands in the parking lot and a guy walks in and says, I need sledgehammers. All these buyers, all these logistics guys, they all had authority to spend $20,000 out of their pockets, and he walked in and said, "I'll take every sledgehammer you have." [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: Allah be praised. The Saudi owners told me about this later on and said this is unbelievable how this came out of the sky to rescue this guy's job, because they thought it was the height of foolishness to have ordered all these American sledgehammers. The Saudis wouldn't use them. As they arrived, General Pagonis was the contact with the local Saudis on the military side. I would go with him on some meetings, others he arranged on his own because of ARAMCO, the king, the royal family did not want the Al Saud messing around with ARAMCO. They did not want corruption in the Saudi ARAMCO arrangement. There were only 5 princes in the entire province. Among them, though, were Prince Turki bin Nasser, who was head of the airbase. He owned the airbase, essentially. And he answered to no one except I guess the king, the Crown Prince, or the defense minister. Within that airbase, his word was law. The governor, Prince Mohammed bin Fahd, governed outside the airbase. So General Pagonis made his arrangements with Prince Turki and kept me informed of what was going on. I said fine. I advised him when asked what to do.

Part of the arrangement was, he told Prince Turki, that over half of his personnel were female, and that they had to be able to drive in order to perform their duties. And he understood of course what the local arrangements were about women not driving, and about women being alone in a car and all these sorts of things. And Prince Turki and Prince Mohammed bin Fahd said the same thing, we were off base when we saw him. I saw Prince Mohammed with the General, I took him over to introduce him to Prince

Mohammed, set up so that they would have their own contacts and arrangements. The Princes, Prince Mohammed and Prince Turki both said, "American women who are military personnel can drive in the Eastern Province as long as they are on a mission. To signify they are on a mission, they have to wear their hats. American females in uniform wearing a hat will not be disturbed. If anyone disturbs them, they will have to answer to Prince Turki or Prince Mohammed." After those commands were issued and word got around, no American females were bothered. Nobody wants to mess with either of those two gentlemen. They had a way of making people disappear if they wanted to. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: There were rumors, I should mention, all during the deployment, that American female military personnel had beaten up Mutawwa, religious police. I've heard this from any number of Saudis, from ARAMCO Americans, same story. Turned out to be an urban legend. Near as we could understand the legend, a Mutawwa had accosted a female soldier who then beat him up... used judo on him or somehow embarrassed him and kicked him around. Which all the Saudis loved to hear because Eastern Province Saudis really don't like the Mutawwa.

Q: No. No. [laughter] These are sort of the equivalent of the Taliban to the Eastern Province.

STAMMERMAN: Exactly. In fact, shortly after the deployment, I'd say within a month of the deployment of the U.S. forces, as far as we know, all the Mutawwa disappeared. All the sheiks, the religious scholars, all the ones with the scraggly beards, we called them the bearded ones, they all left figuring their efforts would be better appreciated in Mecca. So they moved out to the Jeddah area to pray for victory or something. But they disappeared. So we had no trouble as far as I know with any of our military personnel in the Eastern Province.

Q: Was there any concern about Iraqi sympathizers or spies or saboteurs or that sort of thing?

STAMMERMAN: Yes. I was certainly concerned because between us and the Kuwaiti border was just a lot of sand, and the borders were very porous. The Saudis did not seem concerned. I was not concerned about major... I did not think we would have major units slipping in under cover of darkness, but we were worried about terrorism, as were the Saudis. The Saudis not as seriously, I think. They were fairly confident about their internal security. They were more concerned over the years about Shia, the Iranian sympathizers than Iraqi sympathizers. Our soldiers were primed... There were a couple of incidents, a couple of close things... For example, at the airport, not long after the deployment after we set up our guard force out at the airbase. Our forces deployed on the Saudi airbase. We had both Saudi security and American security in various places. We had an American security checkpoint on the public highway as you go towards the airport. At the airport where there was an American security presence, U.S. soldiers in

uniform, there was an incident where a drunken Saudi walked in like he always did, just lurched through the security checkpoint, and I heard this second hand, that the American officer said, "This guy's guns went up, but our guys didn't fire because they figured this guy might well be drunk." And indeed he was. So it's one of these lucky things. We didn't want a dead Saudi. But we were concerned. I think I was more concerned probably than most of the people on my staff. People on my staff and the ARAMCO Americans sort of shared a fear that the Iraqi military would arrive, that the Iraqi airplanes would bomb us and Iraqi tanks would appear over the horizon. I wasn't concerned about that at all.

Q: Well with the arrival of the 82nd Airborne and the logistics command, did this begin to change perceptions in the ARAMCO community or was this still a nervous group?

STAMMERMAN: It was a very nervous group. They became more nervous as time went on. They'd heard... Again, it's not universal because there were, I thought, some level-headed people among the bunch, but they'd heard from the U.S. military guys, lower ranks. We had a 'take a soldier home for dinner' program, and they would hear from them all these tales, you know the Iraqis have poison gas, you know the Iraqis have weapons of mass destruction. We're prepared to go to war next week. And so on…I got one call, and I would get calls occasionally, fewer... the first week after the invasion I got several, but from senior executive among not ARAMCO but ARAMCO contractors, American citizens, that we have word from the military that the Iraqis are coming over the border tonight. What do you know? Nothing I've heard. [laughter] We're here.

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: We heard you guys are bailing out. That sort of thing. [laughter] No, we're here, we're staying. We had an around the clock op center, operations center, the rumor control mill sort of thing. I should mention here that, not long after the Iraqi invasion, a special assistant to the governor, the Emir, Emir Mohammed bin Fahd, a special assistant to the Emir... I knew he existed. I'd called his telephone number a couple of times. He'd never returned my calls. I was sure, because I had asked, he had no other contact with anybody in the U.S. mission either. He was sort of this internal security guy, special projects, contact with the secret police. That sort of thing. Not long after the invasion, he called me and said, "Ken, we can talk now." [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: And he came over that day and called on me. This is a man who lived in the United States for a long time, spoke perfect English. Was a member of an old family in Saudi Arabia. He said if I need to talk to him, if you need to get a message to the Emir, any hour, day or night, call me. Here's my number. And likewise, if the Emir needs to talk to you, we can talk. There's the problem that if the Emir himself, Mohammed bin Fahd, talks to me, it's a matter of diplomatic record, a matter of government conversations. This is all, as far as I'm concerned, off the record. I said fine.

It can be off the written record. We can talk about it. So throughout this entire event then, I had a back channel to the Emir which worked very well. It turns out, I gathered indirectly, that he was also talking to some of our senior military people. Which was useful.

Q: You must have had somebody designated to be the soother, somebody who would take calls to the Americans, talk nicely to them, or meet them or something.

STAMMERMAN: What we did was have this 24-hour operations center. We always had somebody at the phone. The consul was Les Hickman, who was to my point of view, a very capable officer. Unfortunately I had him at the Kuwaiti border for the first month and a half. Just across the border from the Iraqi tanks. Welcoming Americans, making sure the Saudis treated them right and put them on transport to Dhahran and evacuate to the States. We were not a very large staff. I had a consular officer who was then sending Americans out on empty U.S. military planes on the reverse flight. There was one young female officer from Riyadh who was visiting us on the day of the invasion, who I saw walking by my office that first week, and I said, you're working for me. I called up the DCM and said, "I need bodies, she's on my staff, right?" He said, "Okay, as long as you need her." So, I grabbed anybody I could and put them to work on that late shift because we had people calling at all hours of the night.

We just didn't have enough people to have anybody to designate as chief hand holder until my consul, Les Hickman, got back, which was maybe a month and a half after the invasion. The concern by the Americans, and it got worse as time went on, was they would... every time there was a story on CNN about Iraqi capabilities and intentions, we would get a wave of calls from the American community. CNN showed over and over... By the way, I should say AFRTS, Air Force Radio TV Service... once the 101st Airborne, which is sort of the senior group over the 82nd, once they arrived en masse, the U.S. military went live on U.S. TV, so we were broadcasting American television in the Eastern Province, in the clear, which was really quite a cultural experience for the Saudis.

Q: Well, actually, it wasn't, because when I was there in the late '50s, the airbase, which had an American TV station, was doing it and apparently the Emir loved to watch wrestling. [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: [laughter]

Q: So, then it died away after...

STAMMERMAN: Well, actually, there was still an arrangement of sorts. It could only be received by certain Saudis. Our training mission had set up an arrangement where American TV was going to them would be piped to certain Saudi people like the Emir. I'm not sure it was the Emir this time, but it was people like that. But this was just broadcasting in the clear so that everybody could see CNN and CNN kept running the sequence of showing our soldiers training for germ warfare and chemical warfare. They

would show an American soldier in uniform having a fit, as it were, shaking all over, and by all accounts dying on the sand. This is what it looks like if you are caught in the open by poison gas without a gas mask. So from that moment on, a) they wanted out, and b) if not, they wanted gas masks from us. Our response was, if you want to get out, talk to the Saudis. We're not going anywhere. Second, you don't need gas masks, the Iraqis would never gas against American civilians, we were sure of it. I was sure of it. I remained sure.

I should say that the ambassador and DCM still were talking to me, we would meet at least once a month, I would go to Riyadh, with the Consul General from Jeddah. There was an understanding. Ambassador Chas Freeman had said to me early on, do I think we ought to bail out? And I'd originally said no, and that was the last we talked about it. The understanding was that if I thought we should bail out I would tell him. I didn't think we should bail out. Never did. Whenever I would talk to the American community, and I'd talk to small groups occasionally. They would be at the consulate for various things, I would call meetings of the American business community at least once a month and have a speaker. I had General Pagonis speak to them early on. I would tell them the latest travel advisories. I would say, we're staying, informally. Formally I would say we have no reason to evacuate. They of course didn't really believe us and thought we were playing up to the Saudis, because if the Americans pulled out it meant 5 million, no by that time 7 million barrels of oil would go off the world market. Because without the American workers at ARAMCO, ARAMCO shuts down. We knew it, the Saudis knew it, the American workers knew it. The American workers felt that we were downplaying the danger in order to keep them on the job to keep the 7 million barrels flowing.

Q: Well, in a way you were. The point being, we were trying to keep this thing together, and there was a risk involved.

STAMMERMAN: There was a risk, but I was personally convinced that there was no risk to American personnel, either to my staff or American citizens, except through a very, very random chance that if the Iraqi ever fired SCUDS they might by chance hit something. I'd been briefed by the military on SCUDS about how they tend to have a target radius of 3 miles, in those days. I'm sure characteristics are different now. But in those days, the Iraqis would be lucky to hit Dhahran, Khobar, very unlikely to even hit all of the entire ARAMCO compound if they aimed at it. So, I'd tell them, "There's a random chance that something might happen, but unlikely. So the risk is not worth it for us to get out. So, if the risk bothers you, you are always welcome to leave." That made me very unpopular, comments about holding them hostage were very typical. When we did have open meetings, there were some very angry people around.

Q: Was it a matter of sort of well, it's your decision, you can leave.

STAMMERMAN: This is what we told them. The Saudi ARAMCO management had a standing offer that any dependent, wives and children normally, who wanted to leave could leave. They would give them a free ticket back. Okay, but if you are a worker... at first there was a big, long thing about getting a passport. ARAMCO, like most Saudi

employers, kept their employees' passports. But eventually they gave them out their passports. There was no reason under law that they had to have passports. Even though there's no reason under law the Americans had to have their passports to get back into the United States. We told them, no big deal, if we have to get you out of here, we'll put you on planes and believe me, they will let you into the United States. They were convinced, though, that they had to have their passports to enter the United States. I told them not to worry about it. But they were again... during the deployment, there were some very angry people.

Q: Was there any response? Would you say, well then get out?

STAMMERMAN: We would say, "If you can't take it, well, the Saudis will let you go." And then they'd scream, "Yes but then we'll lose our jobs." Oh, okay. They wanted us to help them have it both ways. "You are just playing down the risk." "No we are not." Very confident what the risk is. Then they started... "Well, give us some gas masks." I said, "I don't have any gas masks." They were convinced that we had a store of gas masks, and such, at the consulate, which we didn't.

Q: Well, Chas Freeman found out, as did Bill Brown in Tel Aviv, that Defense and the CIA, the defense attachés had stores of gas masks. But nobody else did and they told them to get rid of the damn things.

STAMMERMAN: [laughter]

Q: Either everybody has them or they don't.

STAMMERMAN: That's interesting. We didn't have any defense attaché personnel, as such. There was the training group, but the training group immediately redeployed to Riyadh when the 82nd Airborne arrived, because the 82nd Airborne and General Pagonis, who outranked the JUSMAAG, or whatever we called them, the training group, ordered the training group out. He needed their offices. And so he got them, which was good because he was much more attuned to local conditions after a few weeks than the JUSMAAG officers were after a year. He was a genius. A good man. Of course, they had gas masks, they had lots of gas masks. The deployed U.S. military did. CIA personnel is an interesting question. My understanding was that they had arrangements to evacuate if needed. That was their business. I said to other agency folk that with my staff I know what I am doing, and I'll thank you to shut up. Unfortunately, I do have to say that there was more than one incident where other agency personnel had told State personnel working for me that they thought I was underplaying the risk. That they were convinced that I was playing with their lives. And this made at least one young officer, two young officers do things they shouldn't have done. One sent his family home, which made him very unhappy the rest of the deployment, because he had been told by somebody in another agency that I was downplaying the risk and this other agency knew that we were in great and imminent danger. And there was another officer, was a young vice consul, did the same thing, was told that both I and Les Hickman, the consul, was playing with

their lives, that we knew that the danger was much greater, or that we were ignorant. Either we knew it or if we didn't knew it we were ignorant. And they, the other agency people, knew, by gosh, what was going to happen.

Q: And so what did he do or she do?

STAMMERMAN: She was unhappy and engaged in sort of bureaucratic guerilla warfare the rest of the deployment. Just complaining about her boss. I think it turned her against him, unfortunately. She worked well. She did, under instruction, she worked long hours, but it made her morale plummet. Absolutely destroyed, because all the while she thought we were ignoring the reality, either intentionally or through ignorance.

Q: But it does show, there's this feeling that people are rallying around and some don't quite rally quite as much as other people.

STAMMERMAN: Some don't rally.

Q: Chas Freeman said he had some people, a few that he asked, just had to let them go.

STAMMERMAN: I did ask his permission to send one of my state officers, who also had gotten this attitude from I think from other agency people. I don't know. But he had this attitude. I had a staffing problem. I may have mentioned earlier. None of the officers on my staff when the Iraqis invaded Kuwait had ever served in an Arab country. They were there mainly because of the high differential. They lived there, lived behind the compound walls, didn't meet the Saudis, didn't know the customs, certainly didn't know Iraq. They didn't know Iraq from Iran, most of them. This officer, he's the one officer I asked Chas, one more time, I've got to put him on a plane. While we were evacuating Americans, he threw a temper tantrum, what I consider a temper tantrum, in front of American civilians who were waiting to be evacuated, and in front of U.S. military personnel who were trying to evacuate them. He absolutely exploded and said that I didn't know what I was doing. I told him, "Look, calm down, and go home. Just go home." I sent him home for the day. We never talked about it afterwards. I'd say he was under a lot of pressure. But there were a lot of people like that. This was the only one who absolutely exploded and said you're doing a... you're wrong, you'll get us all killed, kind of thing. The situation when he exploded was, I've got a better way of doing this, and you're endangering us all by this ineffective way of getting people out. Oh, well. That jumps ahead, though.

Q: One last thing, we were talking off mike, you said there were two schools on the consulate compound, one British and one American. And these continued during the time...?

STAMMERMAN: Yes, the schools remained open. We had the international school there, we had a British stream and an American stream, with an American headmaster and a British headmaster. They remained open the whole time. The superintendent would

come over and see me fairly often. Patty, my wife, would have the teachers over occasionally. Of course they lost a lot of their students because of an unfortunate incident early in the deployment with Bryant Gumble doing a show on the runway as American troops arrived. He mentioned...

Q: Bryant Gumble being...

STAMMERMAN: The NBC anchor at the time, the Today Show. Said, in passing, "Oh, the American community is leaving here and the American school is closed." The headmaster and the superintendent said, "Oh we're not closed." And they did contact NBC, which would just not retract it. It made the headmasters very upset. They lost a lot, the school stayed open, even with a lot fewer students than they would otherwise have had. Their students remained the international students... no Saudis go to school there...the international contractors' children who were non-ARAMCO. ARAMCO has its own schools.

Q: When you move into, from August to September and October, what was happening?

STAMMERMAN: We were having of course the deployment of U.S. forces and material. And our compound is a couple hundred meters from the end of the airbase runway. The airbase, I should say, is King Abdulaziz airbase at Dhahran. Dhahran airbase they call it, is dual purpose, it's both military and civilian. So that when the C-5s, these huge, American transport planes were arriving, they would fly right over the end of our compound. So we saw a steady sky train of these massive airplanes arriving day and night. We also had F-15s and F-16s constantly taking off and circling the... flying cover over Dhahran. The Saudis meanwhile had opened up, for our use, the other airbase that they had been constructing. There was another civilian airport under construction in the Eastern Province. It had been under construction for years, under Bechtel management. Bechtel was the contractor. Subject to much scandal because, while Dhahran airport has capacity for couple million passengers a year, this would have more than doubled the capacity of passengers, this was going to be a civilian airport, it was about 20 miles north of Dhahran and out in the desert area. There was no reason in the world to build this airport following the downturn in the oil economy in the mid-'80s. Yet, it kept going, and the assumption was that members of the Al Saud were getting their pocket lined by continuing to build the airport.

General Turki took General Pagonis and some of air force commanders out to the airport. When our logistics general and the Air Force commanders saw this airbase, they were overjoyed. It was usable. The control tower was up. The runways were finished. The passenger terminal was not finished. Who needs a passenger terminal? So, the Saudis, through Prince Turki, and the Saudi military commander of the Eastern Province, who was a non- al-Saud, by the way, both said, "You want the airbase? Take it." Bechtel would stay there to manage, because Bechtel, the contractor, was an American company, knew what needed to still be done, and what was in shape and what wasn't.

And so that became our other deployment airbase. We couldn't see things arriving there, but essentially that's where we put all our helicopters. All the Apaches came in there, and a lot of the deployed units, the C-5s were diverted to there as well. All civilian aircraft continued to come into Dhahran. That's one thing that went on. So we had massive numbers of troops deploying. We had Pagonis putting together... hiring people, setting contracts up, military making contacts throughout the Saudi society. I was setting up a lot of officer meeting merchant family dinners, like every other week if I could. I had a Saudi merchant family who had agreed to host a dinner for American officers. And the Saudis were lining up to do it.

The deployment of American forces was welcomed by the Saudi community. We're talking the Sunni merchant community. The Shia kind of laid low. I'll mention here that I did have some concern by various units as they deployed, they were deploying near Shia areas. The units were quite concerned about security, because remember not long before, in the late '70s and mid-'80s, there had been Shia uprisings which were put down brutally by the Saudis, and they were concerned that we, the Americans, were identified with the Saudi regime, and that therefore the Shia, who were pro-Iranian to a point, almost by default, since nobody else except the Americans ever took notice of them, that the Shia might act against the American forces, might somehow sabotage, or engage in violence or something. I told the American commanders that there was no concern because as far as the Shia were concerned, we were their only friends in the entire world. They loved Americans, because if we were in the area, the Saudis wouldn't beat up on them so much. I did make some contacts with the Shia community and explained what we were doing, and they said fine they weren't going to cause any trouble.

Anyway, the American officers would go to these dinners hosted by the merchant families. This happened all the way up to when the war started. One of the funny things going on was, General Schwarzkopf had issued general order number one, to the American forces, which was the American military is dry. There will be no alcohol, and any officer, any man, anyone caught drinking would get an Article 16, which was sort of a summary, not quite a court martial, but it's a summary punishment. For any officer it means he's on a plane back to the States. It would effectively end his career. So the American Army was dry. We'd go to these gatherings, and alcohol is illegal in Saudi Arabia, and there would be whiskey on the tables, invariably. Because the Saudis had it. The Saudis had, what I always considered a constructive hypocrisy about alcohol, that it's illegal, you can't sell it, and it doesn't appear, but it's there, once you are inside the walls. This is the Eastern Province; now I've heard things are different in Riyadh, but as for the Eastern Province, once you are inside the walls of someone's house, or inside the compound, then the Mutawwa are forbidden to enter. So if you want to drink under your own roof, that's your business, just don't have it in the car, don't go anywhere with it. Don't sell it on the street.

So we go into these dinners and there's alcohol on the table. The American officers couldn't drink because if any one of them had admitted it, then they would all get Article 16 and they would all go home. None of them wanted that. So it was funny, I might drink

a beer, but never have been much to drink whiskey anyway. The Saudis and maybe myself or another American officer might drink a beer, where the American Army was dry. These turned out to be very constructive gatherings.

The American officers by and large didn't know a lot about the Saudis other than what they had heard. These were officers from the deploying units like the 82nd Airborne. You mentioned the Al-Gosaibi family. One day an al-Gosaibi, the son-in-law of the old man, called me up and said, "Ken, we'd like to invite the 82nd Airborne." I said, "The 82nd Airborne." He said, "Yes, as many as you can get, we'd like to have them over." They've got this vast compound, several compounds, this vast compound in al-Khobar (the town next to Dhahran), and I replied, okay. Then I called up my contact with the 82nd Airborne. The deputy commander of the 82nd Airborne, I would see him probably once a week. I had good contacts inside the deployed forces. And I said, as many as you can get. He said fine, we'll deliver however many... This was probably October, so it wasn't like we were on the front lines, ready to attack and all that. As many guys as we can pull off the line, we'll get them down there. There were busloads and busloads of 82nd Airborne, showed up at this family place, the al-Gosaibi compound. We tried to keep track of how many were expected. I kept telling him, hundreds. He said, great, the more the merrier. And they were invited and had this massive feast with long tables, as many of the 82nd Airborne as we could get onto the compound had a wonderful day. The general Saudi attitude was, we love these guys, we had no problem at all.

Q: Were you following the politics back home, whether, you know there was a big debate going on about whether or not we would attack. One was a defensive, that decision had already been made, Desert Shield. But Desert Storm, the attack on Kuwait, it was a big debate and it was rather close in the Senate. Was this being followed by you all?

STAMMERMAN: We were following closely, yes. As the deployment went on... there were a couple of incidents that we want to get back to, but as the deployment went on, I would also, as invited, brief American military units. General Pagonis would ask me over to brief his staff, especially as new people arrived I briefed more of them. But there were others, for example, one of the secretaries in the consulate, excellent person, had arrived not long before the deployment. Her son was deployed to a front line unit. He was in a tank unit. The first deployment was the airborne units and the Marines. But then, the President deployed our heavy armor from Europe.

Q: Fifth Corps or something.

STAMMERMAN: Fifth Corps... it was an armored corps under General Franks. It was General Franks organization. She was scared stiff about her son. She wasn't worried about Dhahran, she was nervous about her son. I kept reassuring her, and she believed me, but she was nervous because she kept hearing about this argument going on in the Senate. We were told about all the body bags that the Army was bringing over, that we had expected thousands of casualties. Since her son was going in the first wave, this made her very nervous. So I briefed his unit, not at the general officer level as usual, but they

were in Dhahran on leave, and I briefed them. I told them their main problem was going to be taking care of prisoners. That the Iraqis will consider that you guys beat the Red Army. The Red Army didn't want to fight you, and your main problem will be how to care for the prisoners you take. I don't know if they believed me or not, but that's what I told them. My attitude insofar as I made it known was typically when I mentioned at our weekly staff meetings that the sooner we went to war the better. Because I had a lot of sympathy for the Kuwaitis; I would care about what was going on in Kuwait, these were my friends. I hoped we kicked the Iraqis out of Kuwait, the sooner the better. I did not know the details of how we would do it, but I was fairly sure that whatever we did, that it would be a walkover. The secretary was the only person, by the way, after the victory, who said, "Ken, you were right." The rest of my staff never did come back and say that. But she did. Her name is Barbara. Quite a lady.

Back though, to what happened those first few months. There was an incident, unfortunate incident involving CBS TV. One of my USIS junior officers who normally were there for education liaison, our educational shop telling Saudis how to go to school in the States. He by default became the press officer for the American embassy in the Eastern Province. The ARAMCO civilians had a theater group, and they wanted to put on a USO-type show for the American military. The only auditorium that could handle them was at the American school, which is on our compound. So I said, that's all very nice. Take care of it. And they did, they practiced. They put on a USO-type show. I attended one of the rehearsals.

Q: Sort of a variety show.

STAMMERMAN: A variety show, featured a standup comic. And it featured dancers, dancers who did a can-can, which was modest. By American standards, quite modest. The women had their arms covered by sort of frilly things, went from shoulder to elbow, and the skirts went to just above their knees. And they danced. There was singing, it was a variety show. My USIS guy, unbeknownst to me, invited CBS TV in. This was not smart. This was not smart at all, because the CBS guy, a real jerk, he's still around, but he was one of the Middle East guys. He eventually was captured by the Iraqis. That might give somebody a hint as to who he was. He was a jerk. He filmed this. There was not supposed to be cameras on the compound for security reasons without my permission. He either smuggled one on or my USIS guy invited him and didn't caution him about cameras. But somehow he got in that auditorium with a camera. And filmed the show, at least parts of it, and then did a voice-over which appeared on CBS TV. And the voice-over showed the women dancing from their shoulders up, which showed of course only bare skin, and from the knees down which showed only bare skin, and showed pictures of the 82nd Airborne in the audience jumping and shouting and cheering. His voice-over was: you might not think this Saudi Arabia (snicker snicker, leering) but it is. It was a clip on TV. The Saudi ambassador saw it, of course, in the USA. Which meant the Saudi defense minister heard about it, which meant Prince Mohammed bin Fahd, the governor, heard about it [laughter] and so I got a call from my back channel contact with the governor who said the governor wanted to see me pronto. I'd also heard about it that morning from

David Dunford, the DCM, he said, “Ken, what in the world is going on down there?” I said, “Beats me, Dave. I’ll try to find out.”

So I called my USIS guy who told me, well, it seemed like a good idea at the time, to show that ARAMCO people... his purpose in letting this guy on the compound was to show that the American community in the Eastern Province was being nice to the American troops. So he showed an appalling lack of discretion by not getting the right to review this film or something, or by just making sure they had no film at all. I’d rather they had none at all. Anyway, I called him, and said, “What in the world did you do?” He said, “Well it seemed like a good idea at the time,” was essentially his reaction. I said, “Oh well.”

So anyway, my back channel guy said, “The Emir will see you at 10 o’clock this morning.” Didn’t even say, “Ken please come.” He said the Emir WILL see you at 10 o’clock this morning. So I got the car, got the driver, went over, got into the Emir’s waiting room, and sitting in the waiting room with me was the president of Saudi ARAMCO who is by the way right now the Saudi oil minister. This is an oil industry veteran, educated by the Americans, joined ARAMCO at the age of 12 or something, he’s an oil executive who can stand with any oil executive in the world. Excellent man, educated through graduate school by the Americans. Speaks perfect English. As far as I know, not used to wearing Saudi dress (thobes), he always works wearing Western clothes, has for most of his life. Anyway, I saw him in the waiting room and he was unaware of why he was being called. And we walked into the Emir’s office and the Emir was livid. This was Mohammad bin Fahd. Like I say, he could make people disappear if he wants. He was livid. Red face, absolutely blowing his top. And he’d never before, we always were on good terms, I’d never seen him lose his composure. He lost his composure. He said, “I’ve received a call from the defense minister. The King hasn’t heard about this, but everybody else has, and what in the world are you people doing?” He turned to the head of ARAMCO and just started going after him. I should say there were 3 people in the room besides the Emir. Me, the head of Saudi ARAMCO, and this is very interesting, the head of Saudi ARAMCO had an Arab affairs advisor, I’m sorry... government affairs advisor. Essentially an Arab consultant. The westernized Saudi management of ARAMCO never really dealt directly with the local Saudi government. They dealt with them through other Saudis. This may be one of the few times that these guys ever had a face-off. He starts off speaking English to the head of ARAMCO. I should say the Emir has a degree from an American University, the University of California, Santa Barbara, and speaks perfect English of course. Anyway, he started going into the head of ARAMCO, “You know what happened, this is terrible. I’m hearing all these things from the defense minister, everybody is angry.” Of course the head of ARAMCO had no idea what was going on. Zero. He had no idea about the TV show, he had no idea what had happened. Nobody on his staff had told him. I guess they didn’t want to admit it or they didn’t know that the Saudi government had heard about it. One thing the governor said, as he was livid, he said, “I know what goes on behind those walls. For example, I know you had church services. I don’t care. None of us care. But

you've got to keep things behind the walls." Which is a wonderful exposition of the way the Saudi hypocrisy works. You've got to keep that behind the walls. I interrupted and said, "Excuse me, Your Royal Highness, excuse me. He doesn't know what's happened. Obviously. I know what happened. Please let me interrupt and tell you what happened." So I explained. I said, "This was done by a lower-ranking member of my staff. I didn't know what was going on, the American generals did not know what was going on. We would never have let this happen had we known it was going to be on American TV. It will not happen again, and there will be no more USO shows. You can be sure of that." At that point he kind of calmed down a bit. And then I explained what happened, and he said, "Well it better not happen again." I said, "Okay." So we walked out of the room, and the head of ARAMCO says, Ken, thank you. And later that day I got a call from the senior American on the ARAMCO staff. He said, "Ken, you rescued our guy and we'll remember that." I said, "I take responsibility for that, it shouldn't have happened, it won't happen again." It was quite an incident.

Q: Oh, boy. Yes.

STAMMERMAN: Schwarzkopf of course heard about it. I got a call from Pagonis. "Hey that was quite a flap, you guys." I said, "Yes that's a flap but it's over." Incident ended, with no more USO shows, nothing. Agreed. I said, "That's it, there won't be any more." So we had no more shows at all until after the war was over, and the shows we did have after that were male only, male country music stars, no females. Zip. Because of that. Unfortunately. It was quite an incident.

Q: This also points out the irresponsibility of the people on TV and the press. They are out for a quick fun story and they don't give a damn about the repercussions.

STAMMERMAN: Exactly.

Q: And then they complain about that the military and government people mistrust them.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. There's another incident... we were talking earlier... You asked about the American Congress, the Senate. We, of course, had lots of congressional visitors, well over half the Senate, and at least a third, maybe half of the House came to visit during Desert Shield. The routine was that General Schwarzkopf, whose command center was in Riyadh, would always fly to Dhahran, with the Senators and Congressmen. They would all arrive in Riyadh in military aircraft which would take them further to Dhahran. We would do briefing at Dhahran airbase. The briefing would be General Schwarzkopf, Ambassador Freeman...

Q: Now, Chas Freeman said sometimes he made three trips a day to Dhahran.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, it was incredible. We were just flooded with these Congressmen. They all wanted pictures. They all had to get out to see the forces. And there was a routine that the Army always found constituents of any congressman, would somehow

end up having meals with them, eating MREs, Meals Ready to Eat, deployed. They would do a briefing, at Dhahran airbase, where General Schwarzkopf and Ambassador Freeman would do the briefing. I would sit up there at the table, but just be available for any specific questions which hardly ever came up. There was one incident which sort of illustrates again the press and some of the congressional attitudes. We had the foreign relations, which was then called the House Foreign Affairs Committee, group came out. There must have been 12, 13, 14 congressmen. And quite a large number of their staff. There was a policy that no one could stay overnight in the Eastern Province. We were worried about security. You just never know... if the Iraqis ever did do some sort of sabotage, we didn't want to have a Senator or Congressman involved.

We did the briefing, and at the end of the briefing, a young lady who was on the staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee came up to badger Chas Freeman, very aggressively, that she had seen on TV a very upset American couple who were evacuated from Kuwait, who'd gone through the American Consulate in Dhahran for assistance and were given an interview back in Detroit, or somewhere, that they were very upset with the State Department with the way they were treated. And she wanted to know what the details were. Chas, looks at me and says, "Beats me. We've evacuated a lot of people. And if they weren't happy, I don't know, I'll try to find out. Give me their names, do you know their names?" No idea. "When was it on TV?" She said, "I don't know, but I remember seeing it though and they were upset. I want all the details." I said, "I'll do what I can." She said, "Look, I want a written report, by you, before I leave this country, and I want it in 24 hours." At this point Chas was kind of backing away. This lady was on the majority side too, apparently a good friend of the chairman. I'm not implying anything, but she was sponsored by the chairman. So I said, "I'll do what I can." So instead of immediately leaving with Chas and going and making the rounds as I usually did, I made a quick call to the embassy. We didn't have cell phones in those days. I called up the consular officer, I think that was still the first month and a half, so the consul was still out on the Kuwaiti border. So I had no idea and I said, "Please search the files, and figure out what this was." She said, "I bet I know which one it was. There was a couple we had real trouble with." Turned out this was an American couple who had been evacuated from Kuwait. They had been in Kuwait for years. He was contractor with the oil company. Been on the staff with a contract with the oil company. When he crossed the border, I don't know all the details, but apparently in conversations with the Saudis, he was glad to get out, he walked out through the desert as many Americans did. You snuck or bribed Iraqis to within a kilometer of the border and then walked out. Apparently the Saudis, and he met the American consular officer who was there, and in some exchange said, oh, yes, they can find a job in Dhahran. Well, he got to Dhahran and ARAMCO did not care to employ him. And we had no way of employing him as an American citizen. He was very angry because he expected to move from a job in Kuwait to a job in Dhahran, seamlessly. Apparently his employer who employed him in Kuwait did not have a presence in Dhahran. So we just said, "Your choices are to go back to the United States by military aircraft or by civilian aircraft. But that's it." He was very upset. When he got back to the States, he continued to being upset, saying he'd been promised a job by the

Saudis, or Americans or somebody. I never did get the whole story. Anyway, I wrote it up, I had the officer write it up. They had said they were leaving via Jeddah, so we've got to get this out by tomorrow. And then I rejoined the group via the military, and I found the lady and said, "Look this is what was going on during deployment." She said, "I don't want to talk to you. I've talked to the ambassador about this and I don't want to hear from you." That's the last I saw of her. So I thought, I'll latch onto a couple of Congressmen. I showed them around as we went to the deployed forces. We went to the briefings by local commanders. I later heard that through her influence on the Foreign Affairs Committee she became a deputy assistant secretary of state. But we'll let that go.

Q: Who was it?

STAMMERMAN: I can't remember her name right now, but I heard she became a DAS. She was just obnoxious. We had little things like that. But I have to say that most of the congressmen and senators who came through, they were all serious, there were a few who were simply getting their pictures taken and that was it. There was only one group, and they were the House Appropriations Subcommittee- (end of tape)

We were talking about [how] the congressional subcommittee shows up and I think they were appropriations or whatever. They were on the money side, in charge of Foreign Service housing, which of course made all the admin people perk up. And they came out with spouses. They were the ONLY subcommittee that came out with spouses. It was a standing rule... no spouses. Military didn't have spouses deployed. Foreign service did, because our rule was... we had voluntary departure... if an American spouse chose to leave, she was gone for the duration of the Desert Shield emergency. If she stayed, she stayed, if she was already there. He or she, but in this case they were all she. No military spouses were allowed in at all. So this bringing spouses along by the congressmen was considered very bad form to say the very least. And they were a pretty useless group. I took them on a bus tour of Dhahran. I took them out to see a unit that had some people from their districts. I'd go around the compound so they could see our housing. They just wanted to see it from the outside. It was very obvious they just wanted an excuse to get to the Eastern Province, get their pictures taken with the soldiers. The rest of the groups were serious, I'd say, in general. They listened, asked good questions. Congressman Hamilton, for example.

Q: Lee Hamilton.

STAMMERMAN: Lee Hamilton, whom I know. I'll say more about him later. After Desert Shield/Desert Storm I met him back in Washington. He's from the district directly opposite Louisville, which is my home town. So I saw him. We had a good chat, sort of privately at the time. We also had the Senator from New Jersey. I'm almost sure I mentioned earlier, showed up in Dhahran before the 82nd Airborne showed up. He'd come over despite the State Department's objections. He's a very rich man, he just came on his own. He came back later as part of a group of senate leadership visit, and introduced me to the various other senators. He introduced me to the senator who later became the

Democratic Party Vice Presidential nominee, from Connecticut.

Q: Lieberman.

STAMMERMAN: He introduced me to Senator Lieberman when they arrived. They arrived on military aircraft and I met them out on the tarmac, and Senator Lautenberg told Senator Lieberman, Oh, Ken served in Israel, and he speaks Hebrew. And of course, Senator Lieberman speaks Hebrew. So we had a little chat in Hebrew on the tarmac of the Saudi airbase, which I thought was a first. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: But they were all, and Senator Dole and their group, were all very serious people. This was sort of interrupting, but it served a good purpose, it was very educational.

Q: Yes, it's one of those things that is often overlooked. The Foreign Service gripes about congressional delegations, but in the long run, it's the one chance you really get to educate people about the complexities of what we are dealing with. It's a splendid opportunity.

STAMMERMAN: Splendid opportunity. And I think we did some good, especially this time. I will also say as an aside, after all this was over, after I retired from the Foreign Service, there was a major debate within AFSA, the American Foreign Service Association, over CODELs, over what our association should say on the subject of congressional delegations. This was when CODELs became very unpopular, were considered to be junkets. There was an anti-junket movement in the U.S. Senate for a while. Many people in AFSA were, unfortunately, I think, talking to the press and saying that CODELs were nothing but junkets. Where Ambassador Atherton, as part of his discussion online, this was a computer online discussion, and I both said, "Hey, these are great educational opportunities, and we don't have a constituency so we ought to make one among the Congress." But that's, as you say, you get different opinions within the Foreign Service.

Back to what was happening there. As the deployment went on, you saw more and more American soldiers in public around in the Eastern Province. We had originally an arrangement with the U.S. military, some ground rules. The U.S. soldiers would not carry weapons in Saudi urban areas. By December, that had fallen by the wayside. So we had American soldiers heavily armed, just going to restaurants. But the Saudis okayed it. They understood. So I can say that throughout the deployment, in the Eastern Province, we had no incidents that I am aware of, of any trouble between American service people and Saudis. On the contrary, the Saudis went out of their way to make them feel at home. ARAMCO's attitude... ARAMCO had this Take-A-Soldier-to-Dinner program that went on and on. Our main problem with them was alcohol. We eventually laid down a rule... a soldier has to be returned to his unit in the same condition he was delivered: sober. We

had American soldiers, the stevedore unit, at Dhahran port. Fascinating bunch of people, mostly women. Mostly women who were moving these large cargoes off of U.S. ships. Weapons... Their main complaint, and we would hear this because again, at these monthly businessmen's meetings we would always make sure various units were invited. And I got to know a lot of rec associations and try to put on outings. Their main complaint was showers, they had these outdoor showers that were just ramshackle things the military would put together. It was awful hot besides. So, Patty would have these evenings where she would invite people over, especially these women from the stevedore unit, and they would get in our bathroom and close the door and just stay, until somebody knocked, banged on the door and said, "Please let us in, we're missing the luxury of an American bathroom." Communal showers and all that, out on the docks, were not their thing.

Well, this whole deployment was a great educational opportunity, we had lots of things going on. My staff built up. I mentioned earlier that we were trying to get more security personnel from the State Department with no success. Finally I did get somebody who was attached to my staff, from the State Department's SY, who was a former Special Forces officer. He volunteered to come out, over the objections of his immediate superior, which I understand cost him later with his career development. He joined my staff to be political-military liaison officer. He would go to General Pagonis' staff meetings, and any other military staff meetings, like the 82nd Airborne staff meetings. He made contacts.

Q: Who was this?

STAMMERMAN: I don't remember his name. He didn't last long, it turned out. General Schwarzkopf was invited in October to visit the Saudi military headquarters in the Eastern Province. He had not called on the Emir yet, Prince Mohammad bin Fahd. So, we took the occasion, we, the embassy military command, to have General Schwarzkopf call on the Emir Mohammad, Prince Mohammed. Which he did. It was a nice meeting. The way it worked, though, the military showed up at the consulate compound and we formed one of these long caravans of cars, all secured of course.

When Schwarzkopf showed up, he showed up with lots of people. This may have been the first time he showed up in Dhahran outside the airbase. Of course, General Pagonis knew his way around, we called the head of the Saudi military, a general officer, of the Eastern Province, and the internal security of the Saudis, we all went out to the airbase to meet General Schwarzkopf. He was supposed to arrive at say, 10 o'clock, at 9:30 a light plane arrives, U.S. Air Force type light plane, which is the kind General Schwarzkopf would be on, arrives, and General Pagonis and I look at each other and say, is he early? Because the Saudis had not all shown up. Well, it wasn't, it was his advance security. Guys wearing what we always called Banana Republic outfits. In civilian, really. They'd wear an Army hat, but they'd wear these vests, heavy vests, with all kinds of weaponry attached, with a big gun. He got out beside his plane and just stood there.

So the General and I kind of looked at each other and walked over to the guy and said,

"Who are you?" He just muttered, "I'm General Schwarzkopf's security." "Okay, we are going to meet him." "Oh, okay." We just stood there and the guy just stood there the whole time. We thought it strange, since around the airbase, you are inside the perimeter, so what do you need a bodyguard for? We didn't have bodyguards. I never did have a bodyguard, by the way. Nor did General Pagonis. So General Schwarzkopf showed up and then his armored car showed up. We went over to see the Prince. We had a lead car who knew the way, supposedly, a car full of guards, then General Schwarzkopf's armored vehicle, and then a follow car for General Schwarzkopf, and there was another car, staffers or something, and then us, in my car, which was armored. Oh, I got an armored car out of the process. I have to say this. My car, which I'd been complaining about for years, it was always tearing out the clutch and wearing out the transmission and everything else, we got a new armored car. Mine was several years older, due for being replaced. We got one that was supposed to go to the consul general in Marseilles, and they diverted it to Dhahran. It's a nice thing, we got a new car out of it. Anyway, back to the procession, then there was somebody behind us.

So we all went tearing off from the consulate general, they came by the consulate general to pick me up. We all went tearing off through Khobar through Dammam, to the Prince's palace, which is at the other end of Dammam. All this at 60 miles an hour. The Saudis knew we were coming, so they cleared the streets and they'd worked this out... they had motorcycle cops with sirens. My SY guy helped me out as a military liaison, was sitting in the front seat. My little Yemeni driver was driving. He was a wonderful driver, took wonderful care of the car. He'd been trained, of course, in security driving, and I trusted that. But he knew the car by then, and he did not like this idea of driving 10 feet behind the car in front of you at 60 miles an hour, as the military do, this high-speed security stuff. Besides, we are going through Khobar and Dammam, which are safe. So, he gave, of course, two car lengths, which meant we were not a tight unit like security likes.

So, we went over and saw the Emir. The meeting went fine. There was introductions, everybody shook hands, said nice words, the usual drill. We got back in the car, and the American SY guy says, I'm going to drive. This guy who had been attached to my staff as my military liaison from SY. He told my driver, you're not doing it right. I'll show you how to do it. So we went tearing off into the desert, I'm in the back seat, my driver is in the front right seat, and we've got this guy from SY driving, and we are 10 feet behind the car in front of us, or less, driving at 60 miles an hour through the desert. Going out to Saudi military headquarters.

So we arrive at Saudi military quarters and we slow down because it's a little village way out in the middle of nowhere. And we slow down, thank goodness, until we come to... We were going to have a luncheon, given by the Saudis, Saudi general staff. So we slowed down, which is good. Well the lead car unfortunately misses the turn to the banquet hall. It's a little U in front of the building, a U-shaped driveway. He misses it. So he stops. This is not smart when you are doing 30 miles an hour in heavily armored vehicles. So he stops, the car behind him slammed on its brakes, stops. General Schwarzkopf's car slammed on his brakes, stops. Skids a little then stops. The car behind

him slammed on his brakes, stops. We didn't stop. We slammed our brakes of course, but being 10 feet behind the car in front of us and going 30 miles an hour, you don't stop terribly suddenly when you've got an armored car. So we hit the car in front of us, which hit the car in front of them, which hit General Schwarzkopf, which hit the car in front of them. The car behind us hit us. Nobody got hurt. We are all heavily armored anyway. Tap tap tap tap tap.

The Saudi general staff, meanwhile, was lined up watching this. [laughter] I'm trying to look ahead, and General Schwarzkopf gets out of his car. He is red faced. General Schwarzkopf has a temper that is legendary. He gets out of his car, he's red-faced, he's obviously ready to hang whoever hit the car. Meanwhile, he looks up and sees the Saudi general staff. They are bent over double laughing. They think this is the funniest thing they've ever seen. This is Saudi humor, really, Saudi humor is very slapstick humor. They are bent over double laughing and pointing. General Pagonis who had driven ahead during the meeting with the Emir and is standing up with them, he turns and walks away with his face red, because I can tell he's about ready to burst out laughing as well. General Schwarzkopf then sort of bites his lip and says nothing. I got out of the car, hey, I wasn't driving, and went over to the Saudis and melded into the general population. My driver, who is again a former Special Forces guy, disappears. Never seen again that day. [laughter] My driver then became my driver for the rest of the day. And the Special Forces guy shortly thereafter left the country, I suppose because he was unwelcome by anybody in the military. Nice guy. We chatted together after he left. It was none of my doing, he just decided he better leave. He was replaced by an officer who had been on our staff in Iraq, who helped evacuate the American Embassy from Kuwait. The officer was named Melvin Ang, who turned out... he was a first-rate officer. He was a great help. He became my liaison to the deployed military units. That was one incident.

The other major incident at the time, there were several incidents that may come to mind. I'll mention this one and then one having to do with the Marines. President Bush came out to visit the forces for Thanksgiving dinner. This was a major event, of course. It meant pulling resources from all over Saudi Arabia. The White House sent out an advance team. The U.S. military essentially staffed the operation, provided staffing in terms of vehicles, facilities, helicopters, whatever the White House advance staff wanted, they got from the military. General Schwarzkopf designated a two-star general to be in charge of the visit. A good man, he knew his stuff.

I went out to meet the advance team with my admin officer. There were two team leaders, this guy in charge, and his deputy. They were thoroughly obnoxious people. They were private sector executives, detailed to the White House staff is what they were. And they made themselves obnoxious immediately by berating my admin officer about why didn't he have what essentially would have been a full-fledged White House staffing office ready for them on arrival. They need this, they need that, they need this many typewriters, this many whatevers. My guy said, we don't have it, we don't have it. Well, you should, you should. It's a managerial technique to belittle the man. Eventually, we agreed that we would detail a Foreign Service secretary to their staff. The rest of their staff would be

White House people coming out. They'd be out there the next day anyway, and the U.S. military would back them up. We went to the same palace complex that the Kuwaitis had been in. This is also where the congressional people had been put up, had been using as a rest stop during the day, so I knew the guy that ran it. And this White House guy made himself further obnoxious by demanding things from the Saudis. He wanted to be treated like a prince. He wanted the best suite in the place. The Saudis went along with it, they said, it's White House after all.

We were then asked to come back the next day for a security briefing. The RSO from embassy Riyadh showed up to brief the White House staff who had come out. These two team leaders and a couple of their staffers who had shown up by then. They wanted a briefing about the current security situation in the Eastern Province. The RSO gave the brief, and I followed with a few words. And they said, tell us the real story. And we said, we've told you the real story. The deputy on the White House staff said, "Well look, we've had THE briefing." I said "Yes, well, you got another briefing." He said, "By the AGENCY," I said, "Okay." He said "Well, we've heard about the threat of poison gas, we've heard about the threat of SCUDS, we've heard about all these threats." I said, "Okay, well, we've told you what our threat analysis is. You really don't have a lot to worry about now. And certainly not you. And when the President deploys, I'm sure he will be secure, but what the RSO has said is our assessment."

And this deputy persisted, and he was shaking. He was frightened, he was truly frightened. He said "Look, our lives are threatened out here. I want to know where is the helicopter that will get us out of here. I want to know my place on the helicopter. Show me your evacuation scheme." The RSO just laughed, and said, "Oh, come on. If we have to bug out, we've got hundreds of thousands of military personnel here. We've got helicopters by the ton. If for some reason we have to bug out, we just hop on a helicopter and get out of here." And again, this guy says, "Well, again, where do I go, which helipad do I go to on the compound?" At that, the RSO laughed and said, "You got to be kidding." The deputy stormed out and said, "I'm putting you on report. I'm calling the White House right now."

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: And this guy persisted, until the President came and went. Every time I'd see him, he was shaking, he was frightened. But it was an ambition thing for him, he didn't want to leave. He was convinced...

Q: What was his position?

STAMMERMAN: He was deputy head of the advance team for the President's visit. So we had the one guy, the head of the advance team who was simply obnoxious. And the second guy was nervous.

Q: Coward.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. [laughter]

Q: [laughter] To use diplomatic language.

STAMMERMAN: Diplomatic language. Coward. I don't know if that affected the RSO or not. I simply don't know. The White House man was angry. Another incident along that line happened. As I mentioned earlier, the secretary, I suggested the Foreign Service secretary, Barbara, on my staff, be the one detailed to work with these people because she was super efficient. She was an excellent secretary. The other Foreign Service secretary was quite good but had some health problems. So I didn't want to have her over there if, she had asthma, you never know if something would happen. So Barbara was over there working, and she was quite good. I had no complaints at all about her. I went over there one evening, shortly before the President's arrival. We'd been working out the President's schedule, and David Dunford and I had gone out with the team. We'd flown around in helicopters all throughout the Eastern desert about getting good photo ops [opportunities] where the President would be, and setting up the President's minute-by-minute schedule. And this one evening, there was this argument going among the White House staff. We weren't part of it, but were present for it. The military members of the White House staff, these were not military deployed member, just somebody on the White House staff, military, and civilian members were arguing over how much time the President would spend with certain military units. Front line, whether he'd spend more time at the Thanksgiving dinner, which was in one place, or with the front line unit, or out to the aircraft carrier. And this military staffer said, and I was sitting there talking to Barbara, the secretary, said, "Look, thousands of these men are going to die. They should have the opportunity to see their commander-in-chief." At that point, my secretary, who had a son who would be in the first wave going in, turned white, and got up and walked out of the room. Of course, I got up and ran after her. She just broke down and cried and cried and cried and cried. I said, "Barbara, this guy does not know what he's talking about. Believe me. I know the Iraqis. Nothing's going to happen to your son." This took a while, I talked to her and finally calmed her down. She was a real trooper, and after a while she went back in and got back to work. After a while, somebody told the guy, "Hey, by the way...," and he apologized. It was one of those unfortunate things.

Q: White House support staff are trying to prove their way, and they create so much ill will. It's unfortunate.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. The White House secretary was quite good. They deployed a secretary who was very good. She worked very closely with Barbara and I would go over and chat. But the White House aides were not, or worse. Anyway, the visit went off okay, as it turned out. One of the interesting side events was that there was a discussion about what Mrs. Bush would wear. We worked it out at the embassy, I had asked Chas Freeman and he said, "She should just wear BDUs." Battle Dress Uniforms. Because the problem would be an American civilian woman in the Eastern Province, what should she wear. How much attention to American customs, or Saudi modesty codes or whatever. Well,

the easy way to trump the whole thing was to have her come in uniform. And it worked. The Saudis were quite happy. They said, "Good, it gets rid of the problem."

I will say another interesting event involved a marine. I would have this senior Marine general, General Boomer, head of their expeditionary force, to dinner every so often. He would come down to my house. And I mentioned that I occasionally would go up to the border to talk to the Kuwaitis. The Kuwaitis had a listening station at the border. They'd interview Kuwaitis who were in the border region, either escaping or running people across the border. The Saudis simply had a border police unit at the border, and there was a no man's land just about a kilometer between the Saudi unit and the former Kuwaiti unit now occupied by the Iraqis. I said, "I go up there occasionally." He said, "Really! I'd really like to see that." Because the Marines were not deployed near the border. The Saudis occupied that area. But the Marines would eventually have to invade through that area if they were going to go North. So I said, "If you want to come visit sometime, be my guest." He said, "Great." So I called him next time I was going to the border with one of the political officers from the embassy. We picked him up inside his fortress. The Marines had occupied a port north of Dhahran called Jubail. I went in through all manner of security, guards and Marines in battle uniform. And got in to see him. He was dressed in civilian clothes. I'd said, "You have to be dressed in civilian because you are going in our car. If you go by military you can make the arrangements with Saudi military; if you go with me, you are civilian." He said, "Fine." I got to his office and his bodyguard driver was with him. And his driver said, "Can I carry my weapon?" I said, "No. Not in my car you can't."

I should say, as an aside, much earlier General Pagonis had asked could he station military units inside the consulate general. I said, "No, we're a diplomatic property, we do not have deployed U.S. forces, we have Marine guards for security, but deployed forces are not within diplomatic property." We didn't want to compromise diplomatic status. Which he understood perfectly well once I explained it.

But I said to the bodyguard, "No weapons, but you can come along, fine." So it turned out that the general and I got in the back seat, and his bodyguard, without arms, extremely nervous man was up front, because again, it's his responsibility. The general's safety is his responsibility. We all went up and went right through the Saudi lines, through Saudi security. They saw me, saw the flag, and waived us through. Went up and we had a long talk with the Kuwaiti people who were listening, and we walked right up to the Saudi border and had tea with Saudi border guards who, they would still process refugees. The Iraqis were encouraging Kuwaitis to flee, so that road was being used. The Saudi border guards would just process them in. So we walked up and had tea with them, and had an American Marine two-star or 3-star with me right there looking across the kilometer at Iraqi tanks. I'm sure if they knew we had a general there they'd WOW, but we just watched them and he took notes. That was fun. So that all went off well. It was just an interesting little experience of doing so. Later on, as we got closer to the American invasion of Kuwait and Iraq, that same CBS journalist that I'd mentioned earlier, disregarded, I'm told by the U.S. generals involved, disregarded their warnings to stay

away from the border. He thought that meant the American military had something to hide. He went to the border and was captured by the Iraqis.

Q: His name is Simon or something like that.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: I can remember talking to somebody who was saying, somebody in Kuwait, our ambassador in Kuwait, was saying he was asked to contact to see if they could get him out, and he said he did it with the greatest of reluctance. He was a son of a bitch to...

STAMMERMAN: He may have been in Baghdad by then, because we had already evacuated Kuwait by then. I would have said the same thing. You probably would have heard it from me. He had been warned by the military. First he disappeared. I told the military, I hope we were not endangering any American soldiers looking for him while he was missing. The guy just thought the American military was lying to him and that there was something to be found up there. So he got captured by the Iraqis who were running patrols just like we were. The border's very ill-defined, so the Iraqis were running patrols.

Other adventures along the way... We had an American military unit called Civil Affairs Unit, which was then operating out of Fort Bragg, it's now a part of Special Forces. In those days it was attached to the 82nd Airborne. They were our main working contact between all the U.S. units. I had a working relationship with Pagonis. We met each other at least once a week, or more often. The 82nd Airborne deputy commander would come over and he liked our cheeseburgers at our lunchroom, so I'd see the deputy commander of the 82nd Airborne, and we'd discuss what was happening. But for all the rest of the units, we had the Civil Affairs Unit. I would see them every once in a while. They'd take me out to see deployed units in the field. So I got to see know where a lot of our units were. I was not briefed about Desert Storm. Which leads to an interesting story.

Q: I was wondering, just to capture the spirit of the times. Was it your feeling and the others that we were going to go in and that something was going to happen.

STAMMERMAN: We didn't know. Our hope, certainly any time I had a chance to talk to anybody within the State Department... of course, I always let the ambassador talk to the senators and congressmen... our hope was, the sooner the better. I should mention another incident that just came to mind.

Q: Wait a minute. [break in tape] You were saying...

STAMMERMAN: I was talking about the Kuwaitis. A favorite theme of the American press was that the Kuwaitis were living high on the hog were happy to have the Americans come in and fight for them but were living in the fleshpots of Cairo and the United States, while the Americans were out there to liberate their homeland, and that therefore why should we endanger our boys' lives for these fatcats as it were. In the first

place, I was in contact with Kuwaiti units. Their military is a very small group. There aren't very many Kuwaitis. There are 600,000 Kuwaitis in all the world. And they weren't well trained at all. But they were there.

They eventually ended up as advisors to our armed forces. They went in as interpreters. Plus, some of their air force escaped, fought their way out. There was an armored unit that fought its way out of Kuwait, just ahead of an Iraqi column that chased them across the border. That, by the way, was another reason why we...a lot of people were concerned about hot pursuit, because the Kuwaitis military personnel were still fleeing after all this, so there was a lot of concern about hot pursuit.

It must have been November or so, one of my main contacts within the Kuwaiti ruling family came to see me with a story. This man was a son-in-law of the Emir and an official of the oil company. I knew him well from my days in Kuwait. He was a young man, being a son-in-law of the Emir and a son of one of the major families. He's a Sabah, though not a part of the ruling branch. It's an interesting story. He had been in Kuwait. In Saudi Arabia some time earlier, he had been to the Emir in Taiz and said, "We need to find more about what's really going on." They were getting word out from their intelligence services and such, but they wanted someone from the family to see what was happening. So he, himself, had gone into Kuwait. The Diwaniyyas, that is the Kuwaiti extended family meetings were still going on, the Iraqis had not shut them down at that point. He went in and attended some of the Diwaniyyas of the families that were close to the Al Sabah to find out what was going on. What is the gossip? What are the Iraqis doing? He had been told by his family, by Kuwaiti intelligence, don't be in touch with the resistance, because if he went in like this and got caught, they might consider, hey, he couldn't tell them anything, that he was simply some hot shot kid off on a mission or something. But he did go to the families, and also wouldn't get to any of the families involved in resistance activities. So he went in and he came out and gave me a briefing on what was going on with the families and what the Iraqis were doing. He said the only time he felt he was in danger was he saw his car, his own personal car, being driven by a Palestinian. He went over and told the guy, hey that's my car. Then he realized, oops. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: Oops. Then he realized what he'd said and disappeared as quickly as he could. But his impression was the Palestinians were collaborating with the Iraqis, and that really bothered him and bothered the ruling family. It was not long after that that I told...Chas I assume also told the military because I passed this through Chas, Freeman, and David Dunford. We were hearing rumblings from the Kuwaitis, things like that and after Yasser Arafat showed up in Baghdad to embrace Saddam Hussein not long before the war, we passed the word to the U.S. military to make sure that Kuwaiti units did not liberate Palestinian neighborhoods. We were worried about retaliation, massacres, so when liberation happened, it was American military and Egyptians who liberated Palestinian neighborhoods.

Q: Oh.

STAMMERMAN: The Kuwaitis then expelled the Palestinians en masse, there were something like 300,000 Palestinians in that country. They deported them by lifting their work permits, all but a few. But there were no massacres. We were worried that there would be. We did not want another Tel-a-Zaatar (in Beirut, where Christian militia massacred Palestinians) or Sabra/Chetilla. We didn't want anything like that. So the Kuwaitis did not liberate those neighborhoods. The American military made sure they didn't. Anyway, this Kuwaiti debriefed me and I reported it all. It was very helpful for him to do this for me, to brief me. He had ways in and ways out. It confirmed everything we were hearing about the Iraqis, that they were having a very brutal occupation.

Q: Were you getting anything from your American military contacts or anything about the Iraqi army and Iraqi military system, which turned out under intensive bombing and all, to be a paper tiger. Were you getting any of that?

STAMMERMAN: Sure. Every time we'd take the senators and congressmen around, and even when I'd talk to the local commanders or whatever, that when they'd do the briefing, they always showed these Iraqi forces at full strength. I would tell General Pagonis, I'm not a military man, but I would tell anybody I knew, including the 82nd Airborne when they first showed up, that these guys even at full strength they ain't much. As Melvin Ang who got out with, eventually got on my staff, helping Embassy Baghdad evacuate Embassy Kuwait. We just said, these guys are terrible fighters, and your main problem is going to be POW camps. Except for the Republican Guards, we always said be cautious, the Republican Guard will fight because they have to. If Saddam goes, they're all dead, they'll be lynched, en masse, if they are in Shia territory. But anybody else, all these poor Shia fighters in the Iraqi army, they're cannon fodder. Sad, we're going to have to kill a bunch of them. They'll be shot if they try to defect, and if they're in front of us we'll have to kill them. That's too bad.

Then, after Thanksgiving, we were all inspired by the American military good people. The American press was obnoxious, the press would accompany the senators and congressmen which always gave the press the opportunities to grill American military personnel, at the lieutenant, captain, colonel level. There were always questions... There was something in "Doonesbury" about this... it was a caricature of what was going on, things almost to the point of "What is it the Iraqis should know to shoot this plane down that which we're worried they might find out? What are the vulnerabilities, what are you worried, colonel, what are your vulnerabilities?" And he'd turn to the press liaison with him, and "Well can I..." "Don't talk to him, you're interfering with us." It was that blatant. "How's your morale? Are you worried you are going to get wiped out by poison gas?" "Well..." And soon the military press liaison would interrupt, "Look," then the press would say, "You're interfering with us. Shut up." It was silly. They were aggressive. They were not... they don't have to be with the program, but they shouldn't... the journalists were all trying to make a name for themselves after screwing up the press role in Vietnam. They wanted to be THE reporter who cautioned them that we were going to

get wiped out, and were shut up by the American military. So they were generally obnoxious all around.

There were a few that... were some American press people... I would brief them off the record, so there were a lot of things that would be a diplomatic source in the Eastern Province, and that was always me, because there are only two diplomatic groups in the Eastern Province, the Americans and Brits. So I would say, I would brief them mostly on oil, and on the al-Saud family, or the Kuwaitis, if they wanted to know that. I couldn't brief them on the military because I didn't know anything about it. But I would brief them on that and occasionally, people like Christiane Amanpour would show up. I did have one brief by a CBS guy. Funniest thing. He was a CBS news guy... he was the CBS News White House guy, then with ABC. I can't think of his name right now, he later became ABC Sunday with Kuralt and the lady. Balding guy from Arizona or New Mexico. He had been very aggressive when Nixon was in the White House. He was the very aggressive CBS reporter trying to nail Nixon. Good man. He'd gone up near the border right before the war began. The Iraqis shelled some Saudi installations. They shelled something called the Arabian Oil Company and started a fire. The Arabian Oil Company, as it turns out, was a Japanese managed firm just inside the Saudi border. They are property that is jointly owned by the Kuwaitis and Saudi Arabian... so called neutral zone. Well the Iraqis shelled this thing, and it was burning. This guy did a standup up there, saying, "This is what the war is all about. This is a Saudi ARAMCO installation burning as Saudis flee." And he came down to my consulate general and came in to see me, and I briefed him. I said, "You got it wrong. I'd seen this on TV, and said you got it wrong. A) it's not a Saudi installation, it's a Japanese installation; and in second place, those weren't Saudis running, those were Japanese." He laughed and said, "Oh, no I'm wrong." He said, "Would you like to go on camera? I'll make you famous." [laughter]

Q: [laughter] (end of tape)

STAMMERMAN: So we were talking about deployment of U.S. forces and what's going on during Desert Shield. There were various events. I'd meet various military officers and we'd brief them. My staff was of course meeting military people all the time. There was a lot of feedback... again I had problems within the consulate, a lot of feedback with concern over chemical warfare. Because the U.S. military by and large were saying that they were briefed that there will be chemical weapons used against American forces. Therefore, my staff wanted to know why we didn't have gas masks. My understanding with the embassy was, at the time, that if we really truly believed there would be chemical weapons, or bio weapons, but chemical weapons were the ones were about here, if we really truly believed that there would be chemical weapons used against American civilians in Eastern Province, we would get out. We would simply shut down. We would call for evacuation. Gas masks do not work. They would not be enough to defend us against nerve gas, skin contact. I remained convinced, even though the military by this point, by my friend General Pagonis, when I'd say this around him he would raise his eyebrows and shook his head. He really was worried that Dhahran would get hit with SCUDS, with chemical weapon warheads. I was saying they wouldn't dare. Saddam

wouldn't dare.

Q: What would possibly cause him to be concerned?

STAMMERMAN: I was convinced, and this was from my days in Kuwait where I watched the Iran-Iraq war go on and on and on until it finally ended when by accident the Americans shot down an Iranian airplane, and the Iranians said the Americans will stop at nothing. The Iraqis know that if they used weapons of mass destruction against us that we would kill anybody. We would not stop. They believe it, we would not stop. I was convinced, and I said, "Look if Saddam uses nerve gas against American citizens we will kill him. The man has no morals, no conscience. He does have a lot of interest in self-preservation. He will not kill American civilians." I was convinced of it. I was not worried about my life, but the other Americans said "You are betting our lives too." But I said, "Yes but I know more about it than you do."

So that was a running source of tension within the consulate. I should also mention along the way, this led to what I thought was unprincipled guerilla warfare by another agency against one of my officers who was backing me up. Unprincipled as in, they accused him of essentially criminal behavior involving visas.

Q: Who was...

STAMMERMAN: They accused him.

Q: Who accused him?

STAMMERMAN: Another agency person accused an American officer of criminal behavior involving visas. I'm convinced it was a personality conflict that led to that. Because their source, it was not something they knew, it was indirect through Americans who really didn't like us. I'd said, when I was told of this by the ambassador, it's not true. I was convinced it wasn't true. I knew the guy, full confidence in his character. Later he was interrogated intensively by SY and the State Department, and they never did find anything. I was convinced there was nothing there. I'm convinced there were American civilians in Dhahran, non-government people, who were unhappy with us who passed word through their contacts to somebody inside another agency, who then passed it on as if it were known. I don't know. One never knows what's behind those...

Q: The accusation was what exactly?

STAMMERMAN: Was providing the visas in exchange for sexual favors.

Q: Oh. I can't think of Saudi Arabia being a particularly good grounds, good area to play that game.

STAMMERMAN: No, it's not. But we had third country nationals who'd come through.

That would happen. And there were third country nationals who were maids and so on in Saudi homes. Anyway, I knew it wasn't true and it wasn't. He's gone on to have an excellent career in the State Department.

Q: As a professional consular officer myself, I know this is always a problem. That when in doubt you can levy this charge for cash, either one. And it's very hard to disprove, and it feeds a natural suspicion of somebody who has the power of judgment.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. This accusation was relayed to me.

Q: I take it that you weren't particularly happy with the other agency at your consulate. Is this correct?

STAMMERMAN: That is correct. We had very little to do with each other at a certain point. When I was in Riyadh, I would talk to the head of that agency. We had an excellent relationship, it turned out. He would ask me in great detail about Kuwait, about the government, how it works, and about the Eastern Province. He seemed to be very well informed. He's the only other person I knew from that agency. After this thing came up, I said, "Don't ever do that without telling me. Don't go to... have somebody tell me. Don't have the ambassador spring this on me." After that, that's the last I heard of it. Anyway, the guy has gone on to have an excellent career. I didn't believe it was true anyway.

There were a lot of tensions going on, and I understood why people were behaving strangely, they were under a lot of pressure.

Q: How was your wife doing during this?

STAMMERMAN: Oh, Patty. She ended up with an award for volunteering, by the way. She was hanging on, she was doing very well. She hung on very well, she was very supportive, but she was organizing community events. She was hosting things like the American Women's Group, which dissolved as most spouses left. We ended up keeping their records, all their records of many, many years were moved to the consulate. In terms of school liaison, she would go to the school a lot, and then she started serving dinners. As we got closer to the war, we had to have 24-hour presence at the consulate, and we did at first after the invasion, but then it sort of faded back to on-call after the midnight hours. But then we started going on 18-hour shifts almost, and somebody would cover the other 6. And she would have the household staff cook meals and bring them down so we would stay on the job and eat. So, Patty was extremely supportive, and everybody thought she was a very lovable person. She passed away last year, by the way, I don't know if that's on my previous tape... Everybody who knew her loved her and still do. When I've gone back to Dhahran in the years since, they always asked about her. She really lifted morale, and eventually she got this award from the Secretary of State for volunteering. It was very nice.

As we got toward the time of Desert Storm, we updated our evacuation procedures. Now,

this was always an ongoing thing. If we have to bug out, how do we get out. As the profiles of the American military units in the neighborhood changed, we got to keep changing our procedures. So I had it worked out with ARAMCO where the Americans who wanted to be evacuated would deploy on the ARAMCO compound. We had another assembly spot inside Khobar for the Americans living in that area. The Americans would assemble at the school at ARAMCO, the Americans would assemble at an auditorium in Khobar, and we would have trucks and helicopters to get them out. The main concern then was not that we would have large numbers of Iraqis invading, but that we might have air strikes. We might have heavy SCUD bombardment. Who knows. But you've got to keep it updated.

So we would have meetings with ARAMCO management, Saudis and Americans, and with the American military. There's one wonderful meeting that I remember to this day. We had it after my staff meeting at the Consulate General. This sort of illustrates certain points of view. We had the 82nd Airborne guys there, we had people from the Civilian Affairs Unit of the U.S. military, we had people from the 22nd Support Command general's staff, because he's logistics but he's also the senior American military commander in the Dhahran district. And we were all sitting around this table talking about evacuation procedures and what happens if the war starts. This would have been probably December and the air war started in January. My admin officer raises a question, because he's been in East Asia before and there are a lot of Asians who live in the Dhahran area, the Khobar area, Dammam. In other evacuations, from other countries, you'd have non-Americans, that is third country nationals who were not on our staff who would rush, come into the American compound, would come to the evacuation area and try to get on American helicopters, try to get on American trucks to escape. At some point in evacuations, we'd often bring everybody into the American consulate or embassy compound where you could then air lift them out. That's how it was in those days. I assume now everything's changed.

And he said, "Well what happens if we're in there and we've got American civilians in our compound being evacuated, and all these south or east Asians decided to rush, run onto the compound?" I said, "Oh, the Saudi National Guard will shoot them." And the U.S. military is sitting around the table nodding, yes, yes, that's what they will do. And my administrative officer turned to me and said, "Ken, you wouldn't let that happen, would you?" I said, "Watch me. Of course we would. That's between the Saudis and the third country nationals. I'm worried about what happens inside my compound. Whatever force the Saudis need to do to keep it orderly, that's fine by me." And he just shook his head like, "Ken you wouldn't let them do this." I said, "Of course I would." That was a funny exchange. Our military agreed with me, but some on my staff just did not understand.

Anyway, as we proceed then... your question was about Saddam. Why was I convinced that Saddam was not going to use poison gas, nerve gas, whatever. As we got near the start of the war around January the the 6th or so, January 6th, 7th, that last week. The war started January 15th, the air war, actually more on the 16th. The defense secretary, now

Vice President Cheney, came out to the Eastern Province. Came with, General, now Secretary, Powell. The two of them came and went around to visit all the forces. I went with them, as did Melvin Ang, Chas wasn't on that visit... because they were going out to see the units. So we went along. First thing, Cheney arrived to do a press conference. Somebody asked the question, I don't know if it was planned, "Are you worried about Saddam using weapons of mass destruction against Dhahran?" And his reply was, "If the enemy uses weapons of mass destruction against civilians, against population centers..." I don't know the exact words, but along those lines... "We will hold them personally responsible. We will respond in kind."

Now, the assumption throughout the Eastern Province was we were threatening nuclear retaliation. Because that's the only weapons of mass destruction we have and have used in the past. And the Iraqis I'm sure were nervous about that. And he said, and we will hold Saddam personally responsible. At that point, I was sure Saddam would not use weapons of mass destruction.

Q: You know, in interviewing Bill Brown, who was our ambassador in Israel, when things heated up, was saying that they were convinced that if the Iraqis had ever used chemical weapons that Baghdad would still be glowing now.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. I was convinced that the Israelis would nuke them if provoked. I had lived in Israel, I was sure the Israelis were willing and able to use nukes, if that happened. If you start gassing Jews in Tel Aviv... But at the same time, our threat, which Cheney said very clearly, was enough that I was convinced Iraq was not going to use them. But there was a very interesting incident - and then I want to get to gas masks - in the Eastern Province at that time. As we went around with now Vice President Dick Cheney, then secretary Cheney, and General Powell, we went to the various units and they did their dog and pony show and pulled out the charts and tap tap tap. And I'd seen these with the congressmen and senators... We got up to one of the units, it may well have been the 101st Airborne... I'm not sure. I know there were 82nd Airborne personnel around, so it was either the 101st or the 82nd. Art Hughes was there, he was on the trip of course. I don't know if General Schwarzkopf was there. Marine General Boomer was there.

Q: Art Hughes being...

STAMMERMAN: Being the CENTCOM political advisor a senior State Department guy attached to CENTCOM. And we got in to get the brief. We had chairs and we were sitting there. And I'd made myself noticed as we went along, I'd met the secretary of defense and I'd seen General Powell before. And they did their stand-ups and really revved up the troops, especially Powell. He was a very inspiring speaker. Usually he comes across very diplomatic and such. But in front of the troops, he just, "You're going to go out there and kill these units all the way to Baghdad." He was good. Cheney though was very soft spoken. So we are in this meeting and the officer who was giving the briefing starts to brief Desert Storm. I'm not cleared for Desert Storm. I'm State Department, not even an

ambassador, and I've got a middle grade State Department officer with me. And this is military plans, which a) we're not cleared for, and b) we certainly shouldn't know about it. And I'm standing there until it dawns on me what we're seeing. And that point, Cheney looks a little uncomfortable and he sees me. And he calls Hughes over, whispers in his ear and points to me, makes a thumb movement, out of here. And Hughes walks over and says to me, "Ken you better leave." [laughter] So I grabbed Melvin and the two of us walked out. So I said, "We better watch out for these 82nd Airborne guys, they're liable to lock us up for the next several days." I told Melvin, "Don't tell anybody about this. This is really, really stuff we're not supposed to know." We didn't get that much, but we got enough to have a general idea of what was in store. Or sort of what the general idea was. So we walked out and waited until everybody showed up, got out of the meeting. Art walked over and said, "Ken, do you know what's going on?" I said, "Yes, I know what's going on." [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: I said, "I went in there, but nobody told me not to go in. I just walked in with the group." He said, "Okay." There's no effect of it after that. I didn't tell anybody. But it was a funny incident. I can say I was the only... it was the only episode I personally got thrown out of a meeting by Dick Cheney during Desert Shield.

Q: Well, after the summit voted rather closely on yes, we would go all the way, what was the feeling, particularly with the civilians, your own feeling and the staff and ARAMCO.

STAMMERMAN: Here's what happened. The real key was the meeting in Geneva. We all figured, the military, we all, civilians, everybody figured the Iraqis had their last chance. Secretary Baker was going to meet them in Geneva. The deadline's already set by the Americans and the Security Council, the 15th we're going to war. They had a last meeting in early January or sometime, and we were all watching that very closely. Now some of us, like me, like Mel, some of the others, were hoping, please don't let the Iraqis compromise. What if they offered to withdraw from the northern third of Kuwait. Aw, that would be it. We would not go to war. I'm convinced to this day that if they had offered to just take the oil fields and evacuate Kuwait City, that would have been it. That would have been terrible if that had happened because that would have left the army alive and threatening Saudi Arabia and would have put Iraq in charge as far as OPEC is concerned. But the Iraqis true to their stupidity refused to compromise at all. So, we're going to war. I thought, that's great.

Q: Was there concern, we were picking up that... putting the American army, I mean it was a huge army, a half a million men...

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: In Saudi Arabia, this couldn't last very long. We had to really do something, or we'd have to evacuate.

STAMMERMAN: All manner of problems. It was not so much the Saudi civilians, at least not in the Eastern Province. They didn't mind. Quite happy. But in Riyadh, a lot of tension about it. We would hear rumblings out of Riyadh, but in addition the American military.

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: They deployed as units. It wasn't like Vietnam where individuals came out back and forth. We had the entire unit, and we called up families and people left their kids behind, and the reserves were called up, and it was very hard to keep them deployed. Morale would have been declining.. they were all primed to fight. But they wanted to get there and do their job, and this is something they all told the press. "Well, what are you here for?" "I'm here to do my job. I want to go home. You bet I want to go home. But I'm going to do my job." The press wanted to hear something else. And so we all knew that these guys wanted to go home. Fine. We all, some of us anyway, said, "It's terrible what's going on in Kuwait." We've got to get the Iraqis out of there. So, yes, we wanted it to start soon. I'm told that, again, if you read the books, a lot of the military did not want to fight. And by the way, in the general scheme of things, it was State Department people, in my experience through this whole episode, who wanted the war to start. They wanted the war to start sooner rather than later. They definitely wanted to start it. The American generals did not want to fight. They were worried they didn't have enough forces. They were convinced they would take heavy losses, in terms of thousands of men, people killed. We were arguing...

Q: I've been interviewing Joe Wilson, who's our chargé in Baghdad at the time, who still feels very bitter about the testimony that the former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, Admiral Crowe, made testimony in front of the Senate in the fall period. Stating that we should let sanctions do their job and all that. He felt that that strengthened Saddam Hussein's resolve that these Americans are not going to fight.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, and if one report in the book called, by the Washington Post reporter, Ju-

Q: The Generals?

STAMMERMAN: The Generals or something. It wasn't Generals, it was something like that. The Commanders

Q: Something like that, it was a joint work, but it was by Woodward.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, if one is to believe that book, Colin Powell was on the side of people who did not want to go to war immediately. He wanted to give sanctions another six months. In another six months, I think we would have been lost. Morale would have plummeted, being out in the desert, the Saudi religious nuts might have gotten some

leverage against us. As it was, in the Eastern Province, we had no trouble with the Saudis, they were behind us all the way. All the families, all the commercial people, everybody.

As we got closer to the war though, we... Within the consulate, we had some problems. A few of us, myself, Ang, the USIS guy, there weren't that many that were still there that I'd inherited, that were still there when deployment started. We were all saying that the important thing is we go to war and liberate Kuwait. It will be over soon, and we aren't in any particular danger. We should be prepared to evacuate Americans, because the war is going to happen. Others on the staff continued to be upset because they thought we were putting them in harm's way for no good reason. I'm talking about the State Department employees. There got to be this whole big thing about gas masks, which we kept arguing to the ARAMCO Americans, you don't need them. We don't have them. They thought we were lying. Many people thought we were lying. Maybe somebody on the staff did have gas masks, but we certainly didn't.

So then the Saudis started distributing gas masks to anybody who wanted them. We told the ARAMCO guys, "You want them? Take them. The consulate doesn't have any." But they didn't trust them. It was funny, somebody got me one of them... no they didn't get me a gas mask. They got me the kit that comes with it... the instructions are in Swedish. I thought it was hilarious. It serves them right. David Dunford came down from Riyadh, along with the senior army guy on biochemical weapons defense to brief the ARAMCO civilians, at their request. They wanted David to come down and wanted a briefing. We knew a lot of this because we had these regular monthly meetings with the American business community, so David Dunford, the DCM or else Chas would be there almost every month. And he'd brief them and said in general how you're not in much danger from incoming SCUDs. Even if they're loaded with chemical weapons, unless they land on your head, the topography and geography of the Eastern Province is such that the small weight that the SCUD could throw, in those days, would just blow away in the desert. And would be so diluted before it hit any of us that we wouldn't have to worry. Of course, they didn't believe that either. They thought the U.S. Army, and I and Dunford were lying to them.

Q: But the calculation was always there, that we wanted to keep the Americans... if risk wasn't too great, we wanted to keep the Americans there in order to keep the oil flowing. If the Americans went, the oil wouldn't flow.

STAMMERMAN: That was my calculation. I don't know how explicit it was. I don't recall, for example, Chas Freeman ever saying that in so many words.

Q: Well, I believe he said this...

STAMMERMAN: I would say that to him in a staff meeting. But I don't know if we ever said that in any formal sense

Q: No, it's not the sort of thing... Because it does begin to sound like, not a hostage

situation, but of putting... people are in danger. But at the same time, if there is a situation, why not? It's a terrible thing to say. After all, everything's not just what can they do for me, but what can I do for them?

STAMMERMAN: The Saudi management was very disappointed. They'd paid these people well. Princely sums, over years and years. And the Americans were ready to cut and run. The Saudis knew they were. So I kept good contact with the Saudi Arab management who, again, that was a source of concern among American employees of ARAMCO that I was playing games with the Saudis. As we move toward Desert Storm, there some interesting diplomatic and consular events going on. One was that the Irish came to see us. Yes. Remember, there were only two diplomatic groups in the Eastern Province. There was only one Consulate General, and one diplomatic presence. We had the Consulate General and there were the British. The Irish came in and said, look, if you are going to be evacuating people by American military transport, we'd like you to take our citizens as well. I said, really? Because, in general, the rule is we would take NATO and sort of divvy up with the British. We were in contact with the British diplomatic principal officer. The British would take the Aussies, we would take the Canadians. These are people working for ARAMCO. So the Irish came to me and I replied... well in the first place, my mother's name was O'Leary, in the second place, I'll pass the request up the line. So I called the ops [operations] center, I called the embassy and talked to the head of the consular section, I called the ops center to check with them, then CA, Consular Affairs in the State Department, and said, "Can we do it?" And they came back, "Sure, but we need one of their officers on our staff because we don't know what Irish passports look like. We don't want to be evacuating people that don't belong." So I called the Irish consul and said, "Okay, we can do it but you have to detail somebody to my staff." Which he did, along around January 15.

Q: How many Irish were there, do you figure?

STAMMERMAN: A couple hundred.

Q: Oh, boy.

STAMMERMAN: The nurses were all Irish.

Q: Oh.

STAMMERMAN: And some of the secretaries for ARAMCO. But the nurses were all Irish. They were always getting in trouble. Some of them were getting arrested for immoral behavior. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: Always when somebody got arrested, it was an Irish nurse. So I eventually had this Irish consular officer on my staff. And the same thing happened with

the Canadians. Would we take the Canadians? Yes we would. Of course, after Teheran, sure we'd take Canadians. But I need a staffer, I don't know what a Canadian passport looks like. We did the same with the Japanese. We didn't need to with Japanese because what happened is, after the failure of the meeting in Geneva, the Japanese told their people to leave. So they left.

Q: Well, they were right on the border anyway.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. The ones up on the border left. There were a few others, sort of contractor types for ARAMCO and they just left.

Q: How about the Filipinos?

STAMMERMAN: Ah, it varied. Actually their ambassador came down to talk to them. I met him because I'd been in Manila once upon a time. And they didn't offer their people any help. Sink or swim. That was it, it was too bad for them. And they didn't ask us, because the rule is, you pay your way out, and our flights are too expensive for Filipino laborers. We weren't flying anybody out for free. Even American citizens had to pay their way out. That's another sore spot by the way.

Also in early January, Pan Am, which was still in existence, announced that it was no longer flying to Saudi Arabia. Which made us rather unhappy, all the subsidies the U.S. government had given them over the years. And they backed out even before the war started. So at that point we knew we'd have to run an evacuation to get women and children out who wanted to get out. So we said, that's when we started working very seriously with ARAMCO on how to bring people on the compound, and setting up teams and everything. We also kept... There was this whole mess with the gas masks. Whole problem. Diplomatic exchange with the department, DOD, and everybody else about the gas masks.

The war started... I should keep going forward. I found out the war starts because I was called by the DCM, the 15th happens, and I was told I would get a message that would say when it starts because we wanted to make sure I was at the consulate in case people started calling in, instead of being at the residence. I got a phone call at 2 o'clock in the morning or whenever it was on the 15th, because it was the 16th in Saudi Arabia when the war started, the 15th in the U.S.A. Of course, at that point, we kind of know something was up since every aircraft at Dhahran airbase had taken off and the place smelled of airplane fuel, kerosene, just everywhere. And I went up to the consulate. Nothing much happens, the war starts, everybody's watching TV, nothing happens at Dhahran.

Then, within the next few days, the Iraqi ambassador to Belgium says, we will react. At this point we were bombing the Iraqi positions, killing a lot of people, all on TV. Within a few days after the start of the air war, around the 19th, somewhere along there, of January, the Iraqis starting firing their SCUDs. One of the first ones went into Tel Aviv, actually Ramat Gan near Tel Aviv, and we had drills. The Saudis had set up sirens and

everything. One came in to the Dhahran area. SCUD came in, met by Patriot missiles, after the SCUD had reentered the atmosphere.

One of my officers was out that the airbase, and she ran, so I hear… This is the strangest experience. She and one of the military press guys she was with ran toward the Dhahran airport hotel because there was a basement there. It was a shelter. They got there first, and there was a revolving door, and he was kind of making order and pushing people through. And two Saudi military ran up with their guns leveled at them, "Get out of the way." So he said they thought better of that and decided they better get inside. And they did. And the Saudis military apparently just broke the door in so people could walk through without revolving. Which was a good thing... they thought they were going to get shot though. So they went in and the sirens are going on and the Patriot missiles fired and they went down in the basement, and it was very weird because everybody else is wearing gas masks and she's not, because the American consulate doesn't have gas masks. She came back. She was pretty upset, arguing "What do you mean? Can't we get gas masks?"

What finally did it... we were holding off. We were fighting it. We said, "It's not going to get to the point that we need gas masks; this is crazy, if we need gas masks, we should evacuate." And then as I remember the sequence, the American ambassador to Bahrain somehow had access to American military stores. And he was under tremendous pressure same as we all were. So when the first SCUDs landed, he told the American civilian community in Bahrain that they could have U.S. military gas masks. And that left us in an impossible situation in Dhahran and in Riyadh.

So at that point, we went to the military and said we better get them. The State Department then went to DOD. The Defense Department sent out bunches of gas masks to us with the Political/Military part of State being the intermediaries. In the end, I thought the entire episode was amusing, since I knew, despite all the CNN-driven hysteria, that the Iraqis were not going to use chemical weapons against American civilians. I thought it was hilarious. Because I wasn't worried, I truly wasn't worried. Neither was Patty. We both... if something happens it happens. But I was not worried. I was convinced that I was God honest sure that there was not going to be any gas attack. I thought it was a silly, stupid, media-driven game going on, which, since nobody in the U.S. Government ever does a lessons-learned exercise, was played out again in the Gulf War of 2003. All this panic over weapons of mass destruction when the Iraqis, even if they had them in 1990/1 or 2003, would not use them. But, to carry on the charade, the U.S. military in January 1991, then sent out a shipment of gas masks, care of the U.S. Consulate General in Dhahran. It was a big shipment of gas masks, hundreds of them. Enough to take care of American civilians who wanted them. We had an estimate that there were maybe 7,000 Americans still there... somewhere between 7,000 and 10,000 Americans still there. There were 13,000 in the summer and we knew a lot of them had left.

Two days later, a senior guy at PM, a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Political/Military Bureau in the State Department, called me and said "Do you have your gas masks?" And

I said, “I don’t have any gas masks.” He said, “Oh, we sent them.” I said, “Where’d you send them?” He said, “We sent them to Dhahran to the Consulate General.” I said, “How did you send them?” He said, “We sent them via the military transport system.” I said, “Ahhh, you sent them via the military transport system. And where did you send them?” “To Dhahran airport.” I said, “Ah.” So I called up General Pagonis and said “What’s the backup up out there in the unloading area?” He said, “Oh we’ve got a couple square miles of stuff stacked that’s supposed to go to various units.” Remember Desert Storm hadn’t happened yet, only the air war. They were getting war materiel by the ton and deploying them to forward units. I said, “Somewhere out there, there is a shipment of gas masks for the American civilian population of the Eastern Province. Think you could find it?” He said, “I have no idea.” [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: He said, “I’ll detail somebody.” So he sent out a lieutenant, to look at every shipment that had arrived in the last couple days trying to find these stupid gas masks. And it took a while. I called the guy from PM back and said, “We don’t have the gas masks.” He said, “What? You don’t have the gas masks? We’re under all kinds of pressure. Congressmen are calling, people are telling them to get gas masks out there.” I said, “Let me tell you what the inventory looks like out at Dhahran airbase. We have square miles of stuff out there.” He said, “Oh, no.” [laughter] See, I was laughing, which really upset the DAS (generally, this is NOT a good career move, by the way). Because I wasn’t that worried. I called up Chas Freeman and David Dunford. I said “You got a guy back at PM who is really upset. He started shouting at me, so I shouted back at him. He’s some DAS, I don’t know, I don’t know who. So I shouted back, there’s no way in the world I’d know where this stuff is.” I called David Dunford who thought it was amusing. David was also fed up... my impression was that he was so completely fed up with American civilian population of the Eastern Province, that he shared my feeling that it sort of served them right in a way that their unneeded gas masks got lost.

So things went on for several days more with people screaming and panicking and finally I got a call from the airbase. They found our shipment. Not only did we have gas masks, we had capes, which you then make into a little tent to put over you if nerve gas falls on you. And so they shipped it over to us. I called ARAMCO and I also got hold of the military from the Civil Affairs Group to instruct civilians on how to put the masks on. I believed they had to set up a school, because of course you have to brief people on how to fit the masks; these are World War II vintage stuff. You got to put them together, they have little buttons, you got to fit them. Because if you don’t fit them right, you’d suffocate. You got to be able to blow the filters out. Also you can’t give them to kids. Kids will suffocate. As we found out. As the Israelis found out. Children died out there. That’s another thing we were worried about: people would die from the gas masks because it’s not a riskless thing. It’s like talking shots, a certain number of people are going to die because they can’t blow the mask filter through.

So we set up a little school. A funny incident the night that this woman driver, God love

her, she was an American military sergeant, delivered the masks and the capes. We were supposed to have two people in a truck if a U.S. military woman is driving, but she was driving herself, because they were really under tremendous personnel pressure in logistics, since their major push was to supply the front line units secretly deploying far to the west of the Iraqi army positions. She drove this big U.S. military truck to the consulate with crates of gas masks. Two of the crates for us. Gas masks and various other gear. They'd been bringing MREs to us all the while, by the way, we stored a LOT of MREs on the Consulate grounds just in case. When the driver arrived with her truck, we had people there, we had some of our FSNs in. We unloaded the crates. She had other crates. When she had her invoice out and I was signing off for our crates, she said, "You get those two crates." She's at the American Consulate General in Dhahran and she says, "This next crate's for the American Embassy in Qatar." Her next question was, "Where's that?" [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: She had planned to drive all the way to Qatar with her truck full of gas masks. She had her orders and she would have driven... If it had been ammunition, she would have driven up to the front lines. She was a very determined lady. [laughter] She was a wonderful lady. So I suggested that she better go back to her commanding officer and get directions. And she went back to the airbase.

Q: Was there sort of a long panic line to get this?

STAMMERMAN: Well, we announced it to ARAMCO, we said you could show up after you called in, we'd have these telephones manned on a 24-hour basis, and you'd get this appointment for a class. Because you had to take a class; we weren't handing them out unless you had a class. The odd thing was these guys all had gas masks by now, because they'd all gotten the Swedish stuff that ARAMCO was handing out. But they wanted, by gosh, American gas masks. The Swedish ones were these new-fangled kind with two filters in front and such. The American kind was very old, World War II things, that fit around your face, that you had to get adjusted, and punch buttons through the leather to make it tight, air tight. Then you had to screw the filter in and blow it out. Some of them were dirty as they'd been in storage for, maybe since World War II for all I knew. Mark II model which was really antiquated.

Once the masks arrived, we were ordered, the embassy said, "You will do it, you will carry gas masks. The State Department is now saying U.S. Foreign Service personnel will have gas masks at all times." I said, "Okay, we got orders." So we also had ours. At first there was this huge mob. Everybody wanted to be in the first class. Okay. Then after they got them and brought them back to ARAMCO and people were saying "Is THIS what you got?" And the numbers dropped off tremendously. They had to sign for them, though. And with a pledge that when the emergency was over that they'd give them back to the U.S. government. I've still got mine. As a souvenir. Never did turn it back in. After the Department issued orders, I carried it around like I was supposed to.

Q: During World War II, you could always tell which way the troops had been, because as soon as combat came, all the gas masks were thrown on the ground as they went in. They used for carrying...

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: Well, rations and such.

STAMMERMAN: Because they were convinced the other side was not going to use gas... In World War I, they didn't throw away their gas masks because the other side used it. Anyway, the air war starts. At this point the SCUDs start. Then we start evacuating American civilians. That is to say, we had it arranged, and we set the plan in motion. The plan was to evacuate dependents. Anybody who called in and said they wanted to go, anybody eligible for evacuation, and this would have included any American citizens, employee or not, we didn't turn them away. Or Canadians or Irish that showed up. And the evacuation assembly point was on our American Consulate General compound. The evacuees would assemble, in the end not at ARAMCO. They all assembled at the American Congen. If there were large numbers, we would have had different assembly points. Since there weren't, there were never more, the number of people we could get, in those days, on the kinds of American military transport we had, was around 100 daily. So as the planes would arrive with munitions, they'd be unloaded, and then the crew would turn them into passenger transports. (End of tape)

Okay, we're talking about the modalities, how we evacuated people from Dhahran. The military transport aircraft would arrive in the morning, we're talking about C-5As, C-140s, would arrive in the mornings. The munitions would be taken off, arms and munitions, materiel, whatever they were carrying, would be taken off. Then during the day, the U.S. military and Air Force would reconfigure the aircraft to take passengers out. Each plane could take about 100 people and we would have groups of one hundred. Never more than we could get out in a day. We never had to carry over anybody. They would arrive in the morning. The MPs, that was a unit deployed from General Pagonis' outfit, would search all their luggage. They were each allowed one bag, no pets. One lady came with a pet, that great line... the soldier said, "Lady, it's my way or the highway. The pet's got to go." So she gave the pet to somebody to take back to ARAMCO. The MPs searched the one bag allowed outside the compound, in our parking lot, before they passed the gate to get inside the grounds.

They would then come inside our compound and go into a gymnasium where they had Air Force personnel who would fill out the roster. Got to have a roster, got to know who's on the plane. They'd give us their U.S. documents, their passports. The consular officer was there to make sure there was indeed a U.S. passport. A Canadian was there to see if it was a Canadian passport, and an Irishman to see about the Irish passports. Whoever showed up, we would take their documents. We had one Saudi national on the staff, a Sunni by the way. We had one Saudi Sunni on the staff, and several Shia, GSO and

drivers, but one Sunni who was a good contact with the Emir's office. All the while, by the way, I'd kept my contact with the Emir's office, my back channel, fully informed of what we were up to. The Saudi FSN would take all the passports, and with an American consular officer, sometimes me... at this point, I worked as a consular officer... we didn't have many consular bodies, so we were all working all the time. One of us, me or somebody else, would go with the Saudi FSN to the Saudi immigration authority, a general who ran the Saudi immigration.

This was kind of sensitive. So, one of the American officers had to be there and get exit stamps. Because if you'd been in Saudi Arabia, you got to get an exit stamp or you can never come back again. After the war is over, it's not going to be an emergency situation, and we had to make sure the paperwork's right. And we had to make sure the Saudis understood that we were not smuggling out American/Saudi dual citizens. We had a large number of dual citizen cases, after all... Saudis married to American women and their children, many of whom had always been trying to get out of Saudi Arabia over their husbands' objections. The Saudis didn't want any of that going on. Luckily nothing ever came to push and shove. We never found one where we would have to contest getting an American woman out with her Saudi/American kids under evacuation procedures. But the Saudis were nervous about that, I think... because everybody knew the Saudis were carefully watching what was going on... maybe that's why the Americans who were in these contested cases did not attempt to flee via the evacuation planes.

So we would go, get the exit stamps... we would then bring the documents back to the school, line everybody up, have the rosters prepared. Meanwhile, by the way, my wife Patty and several of the ARAMCO ladies had set up a child care facility. They were keeping the children entertained while everybody's in this gymnasium, worried about nightfall. Because at nightfall, the Iraqis would fire the SCUDs. They did this many nights after the 19th of January. They were firing at the airbase, we were convinced, because the airbase was flat as a table, and even though there's not much of a SCUD payload at that distance, a full-loaded C-5 has got nothing but fuel at that point, to go back. If you just had a little shrapnel hit it, it would blow up. Some of our planes were within these so-called revetments, the fighter aircraft. But the transport aircraft were simply loaded with fuel out there on a runway. So if a SCUD hit near any one of them, they would go up in flames. We figured that's what the Iraqis were shooting at. They never did hit one, it turns out. And they fired lots of SCUDs. It's a matter of odds. And maybe the Patriots knocked some of them off course, nobody knows. Anyway, it's getting toward sundown.

Q: Patriots being an anti-missile missile...

STAMMERMAN: Anti-missile missile of somewhat doubtful providence. There's still some dispute as to what effect they had, if any. Anyway, as it got darker, we all got very nervous. We wanted to get these people on the planes and off the ground. It was a matter of you've got to do certain procedures, and that plane's got to be ready to take people. So once the plane was ready, once all the documents were done, we would get on the buses.

Each bus would have an MP with a rifle, an automatic weapon, an Air Force officer, and a U.S. consulate officer. And it happened that all of us with consular commissions had to get involved. If there were four buses... we had political military people, we had admin people, we had this and that... but I think at the end we only had four true consular officers.. consuls and vice consuls, that's all we had. So one of us would be on each bus. Oh, yes, we had a lady, an FSO from CA (Consular Affairs at State) who had been sent out from Washington..

Q: Bureau of Consular Affairs...

STAMMERMAN: Sent out a female FSO. With a new-fangled device called a cellular phone. [laughter] A satellite phone, not a cellular phone... that when the war started that we could somehow keep in contact with the department in case all other communications failed. Also could be out in the field. So she could go too, although she knew nothing about Saudi Arabia, she was really a trooper. You needed a body, you need an American body with a consular commission on each of the busses.

So we would go out there. You'd drive right up on the tarmac, through Saudi and American lines, guard lines, since we had Saudi okay, they'd breeze us through. And we'd get the evacuees on the aircraft and hope that aircraft got off the ground before sundown, and we'd head back towards the consulate. By and large, it worked. But one of the early nights, my consul was out at the airport with a busload. There weren't a lot of them, so we weren't all out there, but he was out there, with a busload of American women and children.

When you got on the bus, they'd turned in their gas masks. The American Air Force officer wouldn't have his gas mask, I wouldn't have my gas mask with me, because they're traveling back to the States, you don't take gas masks. You take only, they want only the luggage, that was the Air Force rule, no gas masks, no weapons, no nothing. Again, a lot of people turned in their gas masks as they left. Night fell, the SCUDs starting coming in. They were already on the plane. The plane couldn't roll because it had not started rolling down the runway, had not gotten to a go/no-go point, when the SCUD alert went off. So everybody had to pile off.

They had 5 minutes warning, by the way. We'd get a phone call from somewhere in the United States, out in Colorado they'd call the op center who'd call me. At the same time they called the U.S. military and the Saudis and said you have five minutes because they'd spot the launch. You have five minutes from the launch of a SCUD near Basrah until it hits Dhahran. I think Tel Aviv had a longer notice, but we had about 5 minutes. They'd tell us and we'd say five minutes, great. The alarms would go off and flashing lights on the TV, put on your gas masks, get against the wall.

So everybody piled off the airplane out at the airbase and went to a shelter. They got in a U.S. military bus or truck or something and got to a shelter. Where of course they didn't any gas masks, but they all sat there with their backs against the wall. SCUDs hit. Of

course the SCUDs missed. Then they said, “Okay, let’s try this again.” Got on the plane again. Got ready to roll again. Again, incoming SCUDs. Back to the shelter. People were crying, people were getting sick. The consul called and in the end I said, “Get them back to the consulate general.” One of our floors is underground in the main building, it’s safe, so unless something actually falls on top of you, you aren’t going to get hit by shrapnel or anything. If you’re out at the airbase, you’re liable to get hit by shrapnel, if one of those planes went due to a SCUD hit or near-miss, we’d have a lot of people dead out there, if they were anywhere near that plane or that fuel. So, bring them back.

They came back to the consulate, and everybody’s upset. Kids are crying, people are sick. We got them into our underground floor, that long aisle in one building that’s underground. We all went to the consulate building. Sure enough, another SCUD alert. The MPs were with them of course. Very interesting what happened. The MPs sort of looked around at each other, and their sergeant indicated to them, don’t put on your gas masks, because the American civilians didn’t have any. And they didn’t. Even though they were trained to, their orders were, they stood there and didn’t put their gas masks on. Afterwards, I wrote them up a commendation for their unit, to their commanding officer. They all got awards for that. Which I heard back through the system, which I was very happy to hear. Then after the third one, we waited a while, there were no more SCUDs. They got out and got going.

The only other incoming SCUD of interest was one afternoon when I was out there at the airbase. We had four busloads of evacuees. We got everybody on the C-5s, the sun was setting. I remember the scene, this sort of red sun is setting over the airbase, and I said, “Oh, no. Here we go,” so I said, “Let’s get back to the consulate, pronto.” We waited until the plane started rolling, because we didn’t want them getting offloaded. Once a plane started rolling to the go/no-go point, they’re going to take off. We didn’t want them to get offloaded. So, until a plane starts rolling, our orders were to stand and wait. They started rolling, I said let’s get out of here. The consulate is about a five minute bus ride since there was no traffic. Got back to the consulate. As we’re rolling in to the entrance of the consulate, going through the concrete barriers, I see our local guards start running. So, I told the driver, open the door, and you could hear the SCUD-alert siren. Oh, boy. I said, “Let’s go.” It would take too long to go through the barriers, so we piled off, four of us on one bus and started running for the consulate building. Including the lady from the State Department.

There’s a plaza in front of the Congen; we were running across an open plaza, and before we started running across that plaza, the SCUD reentered the atmosphere, the Patriots fired, there were explosions overhead, and the plane had just taken off. The plane was taking off near us. It was one of these thing, bombs bursting in air things, you can imagine the poor people on the plane, SCUDs and Patriots are not heat-seekers, so the odds of them hitting a plane are very low, but nevertheless… Explosions in mid-air near their plane are going to shake people up.

Plus, by the time we were running across the open plaza, you could hear click click click

click click, things falling. Pieces of SCUD, pieces of Patriots falling. Some windows got broken that day on the consulate compound, cars, pieces of SCUD fell and hit cars. We made it across... we got into the doorway of the consulate. I walked in, the Marine was still there, because the Marine stayed at his station, guarding the sort of the airlock security entrance at the main building. We looked back and the lady FSO had tripped, she was in low heels, her shoe broke or something. I said, "Oh, no." So I went back out and sort of carried her in. Put my arm around her and pulled her into the consulate. And then together, we got into our shelter. I got on the phone to the op center and said, "I'm too old for this. I can't take this running." I was out of breath. I'm too old for this stuff. It was nice... they wrote me up for that later on, for going back to get her. She'd wrote up something nice and it later went into my EER.

Q: Now, when the SCUDs started falling, how did this affect the ARAMCO community? What happened?

STAMMERMAN: Oddly enough, except they wanted to get their wives out... oddly enough, once it started falling, they went out and started taking pictures, not much panic at all once they saw what SCUDS were really like. In the daytime, they'd go out on the roof. They did a film with music in the background showing SCUDs coming in at night. And we heard very little after that at the consulate. When the spouses got out, but very few of the workers at that point... They were busy, and ARAMCO sent them up North to man oil installations in the north of Saudi Arabia. They wanted to make sure no damage was there. I should mention, that reminds me... Just before the war, like January 10, the American Secretary of Energy came to Dhahran, along with his staff. They set up a channel in which ARAMCO would report directly to DOE, and to us, if there was any damage to any ARAMCO facilities once the war started. He set this up with the senior people in ARAMCO. I went around with him too to meetings and all.

So as soon as the war started, we were also reporting... DOE make an announcement the day after the SCUDs, no the day after the air strikes, the day after the Americans started flying the air strikes, and then after the SCUDs started, we kept a steady flow, the DOE was making announcements, there has been no damage to Saudi oil facilities. And after the SCUDs, there has been no damage to American assets or to ARAMCO oil facilities, and the price of oil in two days fell from $38 a barrel to $22 a barrel, which dismayed a lot of Saudis, since the Saudi government of course saw their income drop precipitously. But the Saudi oil minister, who was, in fact it wasn't the Saudi oil minister who did it, it was the senior Al Saud within the oil ministry who agreed to it, it was a prince who agreed to it. He thought he did the right thing, probably to this day, he thinks he did the right thing, trying to prevent panic. But in terms of the price effect in fact it did the reverse of what the Saudis as sellers of oil would have preferred. It made pretty clear that the SCUDs were not that big a deal, that the Iraqis were not going to fire chemical weapons, that the payloads were small, so that there was no way the Iraqis, short of invading Saudi Arabia, could hurt Saudi oil production.

Q: And by this time, the idea of the Iraqis doing anything offensive was completely out of

the question, wasn't it?

STAMMERMAN: Almost. There was still some concern I'd say for the first week or two weeks that there might be some Iraqi suicide attacks on Dhahran by what was left of the Iraqi air force. But shortly after that, people started figuring that that wasn't going to happen, that they wouldn't have an air force left. That's when the Iraqi air force fled to Iran, what was left of it. At that, people said, well the oil market's calmed down, the oil prices fell, the ARAMCO Americans went to work. And that was it.

Q: It must have been hard, because back here again in the States, everybody was watching, in fact around the world with CNN, were watching this war, with essentially the American briefings of the war and watching these smart weapons and all that, which were somewhat exaggerated, considerably exaggerated, but at that time. But it became sort of the great worldwide show, and there you were in the middle of it. You didn't have time to look around.

STAMMERMAN: No... But interestingly, one event still sticks in my mind. We had TV, AFRTS, Armed Forces Radio and TV Service, was on. This is real time. There's this guy, a CNN reporter, he was always called the SCUD Stud, I think, a handsome guy-

Q: With a leather jacket on...

STAMMERMAN: Yes, leather jacket, whole bit. He was at the Dhahran airbase, the civilian side, that's how he got there. And he was on the roof, out there watching the things come in. We were watching, he was watching, we could see out the windows, we could hear the sirens and everything. And he would say, "Here comes a SCUD." And you'd look up and see this, because they light up as they reenter the atmosphere. And he'd say, "There's a SCUD and it's just fallen to the west of us." And we were screaming, "He's spotting for the Iraqis, the Iraqis know they just missed to the west." Next thing, they'd fire a little bit to the east. So, naturally, we all and the military and everybody said, "Shut that guy up. Or put him on half hour delay or do something, or don't let him say where." We said, "Hey you're spotting for those guys."

Which reminds me, just a week or two before the actual air war started, we had a delightful visit by the rest of the NBC news staff. I met them, and remember we had earlier on had a visit to Dhahran airbase by Bryant Gumble who was not helpful in the early parts of the deployment. Katie Curic who was then the Pentagon correspondent showed up with the weatherman, they showed up at Dhahran. I went over at one point to see the military information guy who I would see occasionally, and Patty was with me. She saw Katie Curic who we'd seen on TV and she said, Oh, where's the weather guy? And she said oh, let me show you. She took us and introduced us and Patty said, I remember when you were one of the Joy Boys on radio here in Washington, DC. He said, really. So he said where are you from, and she said she's the wife of the consul general. Well, we're going to do a radio show for AM630 in DC, so come on. So Patty went live with him on radio. The drive time was set for drive time Washington, DC. So we got

some phone calls, hey I heard Patty on the radio. Which is nice, he's a very nice guy.

And they were very sympathetic to the U.S. military. They played by the rules. He went out to all the units and did weather shows. They were friendly, everybody liked their performance.

Then there was a SCUD hit just before the end of the war that hit American military.

Q: Hit the barracks...

STAMMERMAN: Hit the barracks, which was about a mile from the consulate general. It was just incredibly bad luck. If it had happened on the first day of the SCUDs, who knows what would have happened with ARAMCO, but it happened as the war was almost over. It was just one of these things, it was a barracks that had 50 yards of sand on every side. It was bad luck. Metal fell out of the sky and hit them. The hero of the encounter was the mayor of Dhahran, a Saudi. There is a mayor of Dhahran itself, which is a small town. Not al-Khobar, not Dammam, but Dhahran. He's a Saudi, and later, after the war, the American military gave him a medal. One of these commander's medal, and a plaque for his work in organizing the rescue effort. He came in and took charge and made sure our people got to the right hospitals, that all the medical personnel were called in. Great organizer, a good man.

Q: As the air war went on, was it becoming pretty obvious that this was a pretty passive enemy?

STAMMERMAN: I don't know if that was the feeling. Again, Dhahran, a lot of the information that people in general were getting was through TV, through AFRTS radio and TV. Passive in the sense we were... I never was worried about attacks. People became more convinced, I think, that we were not in danger of attacks. But people were still worried about what would happen when the American military goes to war. They were very worried that we would lose enormous numbers of people...

Q: This is the conventional wisdom, too, which tends to exaggerate, which we've seen in Afghanistan as we speak.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: Playing it through again...

STAMMERMAN: Yes, playing it through again...

Q: Playing back the commentary of our so-called experts...military... it would sound laughable today, but these are the people who two months ago who were pronouncing doom and disaster...

STAMMERMAN: And there was this man, I forget his name...Heckworth or something like that, the most decorated officer in Vietnam or some... who was excellent on that war but was completely out-of-date when it came to Desert Storm. And he was predicting, he was writing for Newsweek I think, he was predicting we're going to lose a lot of people. And all these guys, all these former generals, who were saying, "You can't take the territory until the grunt gets down there with his bayonet, and face-to-face kills the other guy." They were fighting World War II.

Q: Absolutely.

STAMMERMAN: And I knew about some of these weapons, I went through all the briefings. I went with every the congressional delegation. They were describing what these fuel air explosives do, and I'd tell, I didn't talk to the military guys or correspondents, but I'd talk to the ARAMCO guys and said, "It takes the air out of everybody's lungs for two football fields and burns an inch and a half in the ground. You've got a poor little Iraqi Shia out there at the front lines for the Iraqis. They don't want to fight. These poor guys were almost sure to killed. I hope they surrender." But they couldn't surrender. This whole poison gas thing, the American civilians would say, "Well what are you doing with gas masks then?" I said, "Look, even though I have orders to carry the mask, I'm still convinced there will be no poison nerve gas or chemical weapons used against Dhahran. The American troops have to have gas masks because we are destroying Iraqi command and control and there may be stocks deployed near front line units that some colonel or major will use as his unit goes under. So yes our troops should have gas masks. I'm still convinced we don't need them." And we never did. So I knew forces were moving up north, I didn't know about the big end run General Schwarzkopf was doing. The war starts... One of the things that bothered me, I knew what was happening, these poor Iraqis, these guys in front, we killed... I don't know what the body count was, nobody ever told me officially.

Q: It hasn't been played out, I don't think.

STAMMERMAN: It had to be tens of thousands of dead up there. I heard what happened, I heard from unit commanders, we bulldozed trenches. We just buried people up there. We were killing people with those fuel air explosives. It's flat. Southern Kuwait is flat, so it's not like in Afghanistan where an explosive gets bottled up in a cave or canyon. It just takes away entire football-field-sized groups of people. I don't know how many people got killed. I am sure lots were killed.

Q: Did the 3 or 4 days of ground invasion make much of a change in what you were doing?

STAMMERMAN: Well as soon as the invasion started, there was hardly anybody wanting to be evacuated. We had evacuations up to probably close to when they had the invasion. As long as we had SCUDs people were nervous and were sending their families out. So we were focused on evacuations, focused on rumor control. There continued to be

rumors about Iraqi sabotage. At foreigners' compounds in the Dhahran area, we heard that water's been poisoned. Stuff like that. All false rumors. Otherwise, our staff we kept on doing what we were doing. We really didn't have that many people. I think at maximum strength there were 34 people on the staff, up from maybe 18 or 19, and a lot of those were commo, support staff. We did end up, by the way with an MP unit on the compound. We'd let them sleep on the compound so they'd be there the next morning...

Q: Well, for evacuation.

STAMMERMAN: For evacuation. They were not considered to be defending the compound. I did find out later from one of the generals, that they had... again, the military is concerned about worst case scenarios. They've got the resources, and we don't. And one of the generals had a squad set up whose mission was to protect the consulate general in case the Iraqis sent a squad through to attack the consulate general and somehow overwhelmed the Saudis, that you'd have an American Army reaction squad ready to go in and protect the consulate. It would have helped the Marines.

Q: Did you have a problem with the Marines, the Marine guard? Because I would have thought that they would have been so itching to get into this rather than standing around at the consulate?

STAMMERMAN: Actually no. We had a very strong gunny sergeant, which is what you absolutely need. And luckily, we'd had one very errant corporal who'd been transferred just before the deployments. This guy did things like goof off on guard. He'd make phone calls he wasn't supposed to make, use long-distance phones, stuff that got him into trouble with the admin officer, disciplinary stuff. The funny thing was, the Marine guards at the consulate general became the only military unit in the entire area with access to alcohol. Of course, they weren't under General Order Number 1. Because they weren't deployed forces, they answered only to the MSG deployment commander in Marine security, their detachment commander in Morocco, I think. That was their chain of command. They didn't answer to the Marine general deployed up the coast. Although when he showed up, they of course snapped to, you betcha. But early on they invited some of their friends over and I early on caught wind of it and said, "No can do. That is, you can't invite military personnel to your TGIFs. You'd get them in trouble."

Q: TGIFs Thank God It's Friday, which is essentially low-cost drinks to Marines.

STAMMERMAN: The Marines raise money for the annual Marine Ball, it's done everywhere. But no can do in that case. I should say there was one other incident, I think after Desert Storm... I think after the invasion, while the forces were still deployed. I think it was at least after the air war started. There was an incident where an American spouse of a Saudi, who had been divorced from the Saudi, but in those situations, it's very sad, the children are dual nationals. The Saudi court gives custody to the father, but they are in the mother's actual custody until the children become of age. So as long as the American spouse agrees to remain, then she will be there in a Saudi home, her mother-in-law's

home, with the children, but she can't leave the country.

Now, we could not get her out through evacuation because the Saudis would see the papers, every passport. They didn't push it. The American spouses figured out this would not be a good way out. But this one American spouse befriended two U.S. military sergeants who had a pass to cross the bridge to, there's a bridge between Dhahran and Bahrain. She befriended them somehow and they agreed to smuggle her and her kids out. And they did, in an ammunition truck, which the Saudis would not inspect because it was American military ammunition. We found out about it when she turned up on Sally Jesse Raphael in the United States saying in effect, "Thanks to the U.S. Army, we escaped a life of slavery and wife abuse and child abuse in Saudi Arabia."

It's another one of those moments. She was one of our long-standing cases. She got out and of course that meant that every other spouse in that situation was put under close watch. It meant that the Saudis were unlikely to be flexible on other child-custody cases for a long time. These cases continue to be a major problem in Saudi-American relations

Another event, interesting... I know of one other sort of interesting... this is before the war started. I mentioned drinking, well there was a case in which an American colonel or major escorted some ARAMCO spouses, civilians, I think it was men and women, certainly some spouses were there, in Bahrain. The officers were deployed with U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. It was one of these get to know a soldier thing, you know, take a soldier home for dinner; in return, the officers took some of them out to see U.S. Navy facilities in Bahrain.

One of the officers was drinking. Apparently became quite inebriated, which upset some of the ARAMCO spouses. Word got back to his commander in Saudi Arabia and he was out of theater the next day. I don't know if it was a major or a colonel who got an Article 16, which effectively ended his career, just for taking a drink, more than one, it was stupid, but he did it. So that's the only incident I know about drinking. You hear rumors of others.

Q: Well, Ken, I'm looking at the time. I think this might be a good place to... Your voice is beginning to go down. I think I've plumbed the depths... we've been going at this for about 4 hours now.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: We'll pick this up the next time when you're in town, it would be when our troops have successfully ousted... the end of the war, and you might talk about reaction about how the war ended and then what you were up to and all that. We'll pick that up at that point. You were going to mention an incident. You can just say what it was and then you can embellish it when the time comes.

STAMMERMAN: Yes, the incident was just after the war is over. American forces

liberated Kuwait. Defense Secretary Cheney comes out to visit the forces. He's out at the American air base. He's seeing where we're now doing showers, washing off the American tanks. General Franks joins the scene. By this time there was quite a bit of gossip about General Franks actions during the war. The book was Commanders, by the way. In the Commanders, it describes how he was nearly relieved of his duty, of his station, during the war. General Schwarzkopf was on the verge of giving an order, of sending someone else to do his job. And it's interesting that then Franks showed up, somebody went and said it's okay for Franks now. And that point, he went over and said hello to Cheney. But people were pointing out, that by the way that's General Franks. I recognized him anyway. His role at the end of the war is the subject of some controversy. The Shia who know about it, some Shia really don't like the guy. We'll go into it.

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Q: It is the 8th of July, 2002. Ken, we're picking this up. Immediately after the war, what was your overall reaction, and sort of the peace, and what was happening in the Eastern Province?

STAMMERMAN: Our overall reaction was a great relief. The Kuwaitis were very, very happy, of course. The Kuwaitis in Dhahran had a spontaneous celebration when the TV pictures were showing American troops being mobbed in Kuwait with welcome open arms. The Kuwaitis had a spontaneous demonstration in downtown al-Khobar, which the Saudis broke up, because the Saudis do not permit parades on any occasion, for any reason. They always worry when people gather in large numbers. So, the Kuwaiti demonstration was broken up. I heard about that from some of my Kuwaiti friends who were just shaking their heads about the Saudis, saying how that was so typically Saudi. They were overjoyed, couldn't wait to leave Saudi Arabia and get back home.

At the embassy and consulate general, of course, we were all relieved. It was not really at the time a case of thinking what comes next, but more, just relieved that it was over. We didn't have to worry any more about SCUDs, about evacuations, we could get our breath a while. I'd have to say that the secretary in the consulate who'd been very concerned about her son, who was on the front lines, did come to me and say, Ken you were right. The Iraqis were not going to fight our people. They were no match. Earlier I'd mentioned that she'd become very upset when working with the White House visitors who told her that thousands of U.S. soldiers would be lost in the first assault. And I'd told her not to worry, that the main problem the American army would have would be to collect the prisoners.

Beyond that, the rest of us were just kind of happy it was over. Then shortly after that, we became focused on reopening Embassy Kuwait. Skip Gnehm, our Ambassador to Kuwait, was over on the other side of the Saudi peninsula with the Kuwaiti government. The Kuwaitis flew back immediately after the liberation. Our embassy though, wasn't immediately open because the Army Rangers had to clear it first. Skip Gnehm and his people left, over on the Jeddah side, came to Dhahran, we're at the airport, I went out to

see him. Skip was our ambassador to Kuwait, had been staying with Kuwaiti government in exile, meeting with them over in exile in Saudi Arabia. So Skip and his senior team came to Dhahran expecting to just change planes at the airport and go on into Kuwait. But they got a message that the embassy was not yet secure, even though Kuwait City was secure, that is, our troops had entered. The Army military command had not yet liberated the embassy and did not want him up there yet.

So Skip and his people came with me over to the consulate. I called Patty, my wife and asked her if we had any food left in the place. She'd been feeding our people around the clock. And she did have some food left in the freezer. So Skip came over with his country team, with some military people who were to go with him and be setting up some... to work with the Kuwaiti government in Kuwait to help reestablish some of their functions like the central bank and so on. So Skip came over to the house with his group of fifteen to twenty people. We ate a while, and I asked Skip if he brought along any music, any tapes. I knew that he would have a hard time with finding any music... Kuwait radio and TV wouldn't be back up for a while. He might want to go out and buy some tapes. So, he said, "That's a good idea. We ought to go out and buy some cassettes." So, I said, "Let's go," and we sort of walk out to the car. At which point, several of his security people ran after us and said, "You can't do that." We said, "Dhahran, we don't worry, just driving around." They said, "No, no," they insisted. It seems that elsewhere in Saudi Arabia, even on the other side of the Peninsula from Iraq, our SY people insisted on heavy protection for senior officers. I suppose Dhahran had different rules, especially since SY, State's Security Bureau, would not deploy any of their resources at our post. Fortunately, we had the Saudis covering our security needs, which did not include bodyguards.

So we ended up getting a follow car. Walked into a local cassette shop. Very cheap there because a lot of the music was pirated. So we walked in and the store was jammed with American soldiers also buying a lot of cheap cassettes. Pirated. Heavily armed American soldiers. So, we had nothing to worry about. I was telling him this place is one of the safest places in the Gulf. We've got all these American soldiers here all the time, including the women, well armed. So Skip stayed over, and the next day went out to the airport and flew up in a C-130.

Q: Did he say anything while he was with you about dealing with the Kuwaitis back in Riyadh...?

STAMMERMAN: He had not said... no... he did not talk to me about them. One other small incident while we were there... We were watching the TV as the TV was showing the Army Rangers entering the American Embassy in Kuwait. The helicopters, and climbing down off of ladder onto the embassy roof where they blasted their way in. Of course, Skip was saying, that's my embassy. They blew a hole in the roof. As Rangers do. It turned out that when they... I'll get to that because I visited that embassy a couple weeks later, but when they- (end of tape)

Q: You were saying Skip called his mother...

STAMMERMAN: Yes, Skip called his mother, his mother says, "Skip, I see you. I see they're showing the film of how you entered the embassy." He said, "No, no. [laughter] I'm in Dhahran. Those are the Rangers going in."

So the next morning, we put everybody up, and by then we had so many people in the consulate general compound, the congen personnel, the residents, the rec building at the consulate, we had some military, MPs as I mentioned, on the compound. People were sleeping on the floors, wherever we could stack them, essentially. So the next morning, I took them all out to the air base and the Air Force flew them in a C-130 up to Kuwait.

Got back to the consulate... a couple of incidents immediately following that. Again, you were asking about the reaction how did we feel... we were still busy. Not quite the hectic kind of thing like before because we weren't worried about SCUDs and evacuating any more American dependents. But there was always what to do. Right after that plane left, a military officer showed up at the consulate, I was over at the office. A military officer showed up at the congen from the Special Forces, and he said he had to see Ambassador Gnehm. He'd heard that he was at the consulate. I said, "He just left." He said, "Oh, no." And he walked in, I'd walked out to talk to him, and he was a locksmith. And I said, "I think the Rangers have already done your job anyway." [laughter] Because they were worried that the Iraqis... See, we didn't know, from what Skip had told me, we didn't know whether the Iraqis had gone into the American Embassy compound in Kuwait City when Kuwait was under occupation. For all we knew they had occupied the building. We just didn't know. So they were worried that the Iraqis had gone in and booby-trapped it, changed locks, who knows what. And he was the guy who could do locks. So I told him since he'd missed the plane, to hitch a ride with civil affairs guys... they were already going up there fairly regularly.

Then I was in touch with the Saudis and the Kuwaitis, of course, they were all overjoyed and very happy. Prince Mohammed's people all decided they were all just going to relax for a couple of weeks. They'd had a hard time too. The governor's office... they were very happy, of course. We, my wife Patty and I, thought it would be nice to have some kind of commemoration, some kind of celebration. I'd been talking to the U.S. military and knew that the Saudis were not going to allow a victory parade in Saudi Arabia. So, we decided to have our own parade inside the consulate general compound for the U.S. military, and for our people, who had been working very hard. We decided to call it the Peace in the Gulf Parade. I called up the U.S. military, called up the Air Force commander in the area, called the Army commander in the area, and said, "If you'd like to send some detachments over, give us some flags, give us some unit banners, we're going to do a parade, and you're welcome." And the Air Force and Army showed up... not the senior commanders, but colonel level. We had people from the Air Force, from the Army Civil Affairs command, mainly. I think we had some from the 82nd, but almost all the 82nd was off on forward, so we may have had a few of their people who were liaison. Mostly U.S. Army Civil Affairs guys and Air Force, plus all of the consulate staff, American and FSNs. We had them decorate all the consulate vehicles as floats. They were so happy, our

FSNs, because they really thought they were goners. They were the most stressed out of anybody, I think, aside from certain Americans. [laughter]

Q: [laughter]

STAMMERMAN: So we had this nice little parade. We had music, we had the CONGEN car in front, the consul general's car in front with a siren and the flashing lights. We had music blaring from loud speakers, and did a little parade all around the compound, and anyone who wanted to join in the parade or watch could come in. The school children who were in the international school on the compound, were let out of their classes, these were all international children... Americans, British, Indians, other foreigners. Primary grades, no high school. There was a British and American school there. The children were all allowed to sit out on the curb by the street, and they were waving American and British and Saudi flags, which the headmaster had passed out. Which was very nice. It was a nice touch.

And we all walked along. By then, I may have mentioned earlier, it was always cloudy because of the oil fires, had already started that pall over the Eastern Province. It was gray, it was always a gray day for months thereafter. But we had a good time. Everybody had fun. People dressed as they wanted and had big banners. One guy had an Ohio University flag that he was waving. It was great fun. And then afterwards, we had a big feast, what we called a goat grab. It's where they kill a sheep and we all had a big communal meal.

The next morning, I got a call from my friend on the provincial governor's staff. As I'd mentioned earlier, I had direct contact with him so we wouldn't have to go through protocol, I would just call the governor's assistant or he would call me. We got a call from the confidential assistant the next morning, "Ken, I hear you had a parade." "Yes, we had a parade...Peace in the Gulf." "Oh. Were any Saudis there?" "No, no Saudis." "I heard there were a lot of children watching..." "Well none of them were Saudis." "Oh. Okay. Bye." That's all they were concerned about. It was obvious they were letting us know that they knew everything that went on in the compound. And their only concerns were that there were no Saudi children or Saudi adults, but especially no Saudi children there, and there weren't.

Q: Well, did you have any Saudi employees at the embassy?

STAMMERMAN: We had one Saudi Sunni employee who I had to let go. I had to let him go just after the war, actually. The problem was the following. It's a side digression, but it's worth noting, because people should know about all these different things. For many years we had a Saudi employee who worked in the consulate section, worked with American citizen services, that side of things. And he was well connected and comes from a family that's got ties, and he had some ties with the governor's office as well. He would come in handy especially when American citizens were in trouble. He had access to just about everybody. He kept Saudi hours, but I'd always figured, counting the time he

spent sitting, which I counted as a good investment, sitting in the governor's majlis, things like that, that was fine. However, not long before the Gulf war due to exchange of rotation of personnel, we had a junior officer and we also had an admin officer who became sticklers for time and attendance, and this caused us some serious problems. This man's attendance was not according to U.S. government specs. I was quite happy with his performance. During the Gulf War, I used him to get some passports run through of the American dependents who were evacuated; they had to get exit stamps on their passports or they could never get back in. And he arranged that and various other sundry things like that. After the war, I had to let him go. Which is too bad. It's one of those people filing... notes to the inspector general how this was all highly irregular...

Q: Yes, this is the trouble when you try to mix cultures sometimes, because as we know, contact and actually sitting around the governor's palace and all this, or keep contacts, this is part of the job.

STAMMERMAN: It all got mixed in with attitudes of some people that I thought were unhappy about being there under a lot of pressure. I think a lot of it spilled over into management issues in particular. Why do we treat the Saudi employee different from other employees? There was backbiting among the FSNs for the same reason...

Q: Where were the FSNs from, mainly?

STAMMERMAN: The FSNs were from all over, South Asia, we had a couple of Ethiopians... actually... not Ethiopians, what's the northern part of Ethiopia that broke off...

Q: Eritreans...

STAMMERMAN: Eritreans. Muslims.

Q: I remember the consul general when I was there, '58 to '60, driver was Muhammad Noor was from Tigre.

STAMMERMAN: Yes. Well Muhammad Noor left just before I or as I got there he was leaving. And his son is still there, who was a senior FSN in the consular section. We had one Bangladeshi. He was the only one that bailed out during the war even though I had promised the FSNs that you know, I'm not leaving, I hope you guys all stay, and they all stayed. There were Pakistanis, Indians, some Yemenis. Not many. But by and large, I'd say, South Asians.

Q: Well, it shows what's happened in the Gulf area where essentially Saudis just would not do equivalent to clerical work.

STAMMERMAN: Oh wait, I'm mixing this up. We did have some Saudis... we had Shia employees, I mean Saudi in the sense of Sunni, we had only the one. We also had some

Shia who were laborers. We'd throw a Spring gathering every year, not an Easter party, but a Spring gathering, where one of the FSNs would dress up as an Easter bunny and the Shia would show up with their children. And of course, they had large numbers. These little Saudi kids, and the girls, the Shia children in the Eastern Province, the girls start covering up probably [around] nine or ten. With Sunni it's usually later, you know, puberty, but the Shia start covering girls up in abayas up at 8 or 9 or 10. So you had little girls running around covered up and their mothers would show up. Multiple wives, of course. We'd have a great time, all these little Saudi kids. Yes, we did have some Shia employees.

Q: When you were there was there an adjustment of some of the people, both in the consulate and at ARAMCO, those who left and were starting to come back, or wanted to come back...

STAMMERMAN: The way it worked with ARAMCO, it was very interesting, with ARAMCO, for the dependents who left. That was sort of all understood. They could come back, because there was a lot of family pressure on everybody to leave. It was sort of understood. People were calling up, "Get my daughter out of there." At the consulate general, our spouses stayed. We had... mostly singles there, or else there was the admin officer's spouse who was my secretary, so we didn't have people who left in the consulate staff, particularly. We had people who had to go out for a short while, just to get away from the pressure, but nobody really evacuated from our staff. The FSNs, as I say, all except one stayed. But I wouldn't say there was this big thing about people leaving and coming back. For the employees of ARAMCO, if you left, you were fired. That was very easy. The Saudis made it very clear. You are welcome to go, don't think you'll ever come back, not here and anywhere else where we can have a say in your getting a job.

I don't know if I mentioned in a previous tape, but when I went back to Saudi Arabia in 1996 or so and went to the CONGEN'S home, he had a social gathering, ARAMCO people were there, and one of them recognized them and said, yes, you're the guy that kept us hostage... because they saw me as cooperating with the Saudis in not letting them go, at the risk of losing their jobs. They wanted us to weigh in and say, "That's not fair." I said, "Hey, that's your contract, and we were not going to call an evacuation because we didn't think the employees were in danger." And they weren't. In the end.

Q: In a way, it was happy in your turf, but it wasn't your direct responsibility, but there must have been a feeling, ok the war is over now what are we going to do about all these troops here? I mean, before everybody wanted the troops, but once the war is over, ok fellas, back to the... the local people would get kind of...

STAMMERMAN: Here's what happened. Let me do this a little chronologically. Immediately after, I was talking to the U.S. Army guys, logistics and so on. They told me early on, we're getting out of here. Our chief objective now is to move people and things home. And they told the Saudis that, and I also told the Saudis, "We're leaving." Because that was a big concern, as the buildup was going on, I didn't hear this from the governor's

office, but there were Saudis who would say when the Americans come they aren't going. The military made it clear that they were leaving, except for a few stay-behinds that they'd worked out with the Saudis. Everybody wanted to go home as quickly as possible.

I'm not sure if it's a week and a half, maybe a little past that... we went up to Kuwait. Patty and I went with U.S. Army Civil Affairs personnel, we took some care packages, because Embassy Kuwait was living off of MREs for the first couple of weeks. Meals Ready to Eat. Yes. Meals Rejected by Everybody, they had any number of acronyms for that. MREs. We drove up, the drive up was fascinating, because as you got towards the boarder... We went to Khafji first. I know the governor at Khafji. Patty was with me and we called on the governor. He's a very modest man. His office was modest by Saudi standards. He received us and he showed us the damage that had been done to his office and compound by the Iraqis. The Iraqis had occupied that part of Khafji in one of the early fights of the war. He was certainly happy to see us. They were all very grateful for the American presence and what the American Army had done.

As you got close to the Saudi-Kuwaiti border, it started getting very dark because of the oil fires. And not far north of the border, it was just dark, pitch-black. It looked like a darkness at noon as they said. You might see the outline of the sun through the clouds overhead, but mainly it was just dark. Worse than a dust storm. We were in a small convoy that went north, Civil Affairs people, and we'd bought lots of food, fast food, canned food, all kinds of stuff. We had a little convoy, so we stopped at various places, and the military told us you have to stay on a hard surface because there was all kinds of unexploded munitions anywhere along either side of the road since the American military had been shooting Iraqi troops, tanks, anything on that road was getting hit by cluster bombs. They'd cleared the hard surface, but they had no idea what was off the road, so stay on the road.

We did stop to pose with one Iraqi tank; there was a burned out Iraqi tank right beside the road, in the dark. We pulled over and we all took pictures. It had American military written graffiti written all over it of course. We all took some pictures. I should say there was an American officer from CA, Consular Affairs, who was with us as well. We then went on into Kuwait City, and the smoke cleared as you got just south of Kuwait City, outside the last ring road in Kuwait City. The smoke cleared. It was just the atmospherics of the whole thing. We went up the embassy, brought lots of food, everybody was very happy to see us. People were staying either in the embassy rooms, or sacking out in the Hilton across the street. Skip put us up at the embassy, in the residence. I went around with Skip who was making his calls on the diwaniyyas, the majlises, especially some families I knew. Shia families. They were very, very happy to see us. They were already telling us, we were getting information. They were in contact with the Iranians and already via these extended family ties, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, they were all talking to each other about the new situation. The Shia were telling us immediately how we should re-establish ties with Iran, that this was a good occasion... I thought it was strange in Dhahran when we heard some of the perceived wisdom out of Washington was that some of our troops had to be worried as they were attacking Iraq, be worried about an Iranian

attack on our troops. Which I thought was ludicrous as did anybody who knew the Iranians in the area. Afterwards, yes, Iran and Saudi Arabia have had a lot of problems, but the Iranians would love for us to rip up Saddam. They still would.

Anyway, so we saw all the families. I went around with Skip. Skip had unbelievable security, and he had American guards, Kuwaiti guards, he'd moved in this massive entourage. It's like I've heard of our people moving around Beirut. They were worried about Iraqi stay-behinds. The Kuwaitis loved us. Still do. So we called on various diwaniyyas. And then we went back to Dhahran. The Saudis were watching the U.S. Army leave by then. As I drove back, again this was a couple of weeks after the war... the roads were jammed with American military equipment. Bumper to bumper. APCs, tanks on trucks, as far as the eye could see. Getting back was very difficult because from Khafji til you get to the first major intersection south, it's just one lane on each side. So it was kind of dangerous, people were traveling in both directions with the military equipment moving very, very slowly of course everybody's passing and there are no shoulders.

We eventually made it back. All over Dhahran there were tanks and APCs parked all over the place waiting for their turn to go through the world's largest car wash. The military had put together a "shipments home..." an area where the returning troops would dock out. They had a barrel as they went through the checkout line where they'd dump any weapons they'd seized, especially if they were live. They had quite a few Iraqi grenades. The only incident that happened on the way out... some American military officer got caught... he broke the law somehow. He was embezzling or something. It involved a Saudi, so we had to deal with the Saudis on that one. The Saudis weren't shocked at all. They'd expected a lot of this, and as far as I knew this was the only case that we had of an officer getting involved in something. Afterwards, the relationship, everybody was very cheery and happy to see what we were doing. We had a few more congressional and senatorial visits, but we were just closing everything down.

Q: I can't remember if we asked on the last tape when we covered, because you'd mentioned off mike, could you talk about during the war was there anything that came up about how to end the war? Was this a topic of conversation? And then we'll talk about after the end of the war, what was the feeling?

STAMMERMAN: Sure. Very interesting. Before the ground war started, after the air war started... Remember there was some arguing of how the war would be waged. The American military really did think we would take heavy casualties. They were worried about chemical warfare, but also just worried about battle hardened troops and the fourth largest tank army in the world and so on.

Q: They'd been waging a war so these were supposedly trained troops.

STAMMERMAN: The Iraqis had fought a war since 1980 against Iran, so... a lot of the thinking was very short term. How do we win the war? Where do we stop if we have to fight our way into Kuwait City? What constitutes victory? There was a lot of talk that

went on. The only message that I saw that talked about after the war was a message that Chas Freeman sent out, with some thoughts of his own on what the region would look like after the war, and some speculation. He invited comments from all the other posts. Now, I didn't see all the other comments. The one place that I differed with Chas was on the stability of the Kuwaiti regime. Having been in Kuwait I saw the Al Sabah as being national symbols, that yes, the Emir, even though... The Kuwaitis, to outsiders, the Kuwaiti leadership was seen has having done poorly. I didn't get that feeling from Kuwaitis that I knew, and then the fact that they fled. The Kuwaitis were very happy that the senior Al Sabah got out so that they could not be used as hostages or captured symbols or whatever.

And I figured that things would return more or less to the same structure in Kuwait which would be the Emir in charge, national figure, a Parliament dominated by the Sunni merchant families who were not Sabahis, and the other families of the elite. You have the Nejdi Sunnis, you have the other Sunnis, you have the Shia, and the people without citizenship in Kuwait. I thought they'd more or less all return to where they'd been, but that was not a major difference to Chas' analysis. The question was what happens in Iraq? Would there be changes in Saudi Arabia? Having people seeing, especially the Eastern Province, all these American women driving about, lot of interchange between American soldiers and Saudis. Maybe there would be social change. We might see some changes inside Saudi Arabia in the region... how would things fall out? Jordan, Palestinians? What would happen to the Palestinian population of Kuwait after the war? My thoughts were they'd be kicked out, and they were.

This thing...

Q: I was wondering what was making that noise...

STAMMERMAN: That was feedback on my, sorry about that, I just turned it off. I just realized that. Sorry, we just had a little feedback on the cell phone. Just came up.

So there was a lot of speculation. And as far as I know, Chas was the first one to raise that question. I don't know if back in Washington anybody ever really got around to addressing that issue.

Q: After, were you picking up any signs of disquiet? There was this suppression of the Shia wasn't it, in the south of Iraq?

STAMMERMAN: You mean after the war?

Q: Yes.

STAMMERMAN: Immediately after the war? That came a little bit later. And I should say a little bit more about Saudi Arabia. There had been concern, remember, you had the Saudi women who demonstrated in Riyadh by driving. A number of them were from the

Eastern Province. They all lost their jobs, those who had jobs, in the Eastern Province some Saudi women had jobs. They all lost their jobs, and the Saudi regime essentially called the patriarchs of their families and told them keep these women quiet. And they did. Essentially, they rescued them, they made sure they didn't go to jail and security forces wouldn't deal with them on condition that the families took them out of circulation. But you didn't have any groundswell of democratic feeling in Saudi Arabia.

I did have a conversation with some senior Saudis in the Eastern Province who were concerned about Kuwait that they were worried that Kuwait might become more democratic as it was liberated. With the American troops there, with the family not being in charge when they went back, all this, that Kuwait might become more democratic. That bothered the Saudis a lot. They did not want a truly democratic state up there. It would be too much of an example they thought. So they were happy for the Americans to leave Kuwait.

Then not long after that, there was the Shia uprising in the south of Iraq. The U.S. government assessment at the time, and I'd say this was anybody I knew, anything I read, was that Saddam did not have long, would not be long in power. That the collapse of his forces, with the few remaining forces he had would not be enough to preserve him against unrest in the south, the north, and even among his Tikriti clansmen whom he had led into disaster. The Shia uprising, I'm not sure of the dates there, the Shia uprising took place not long after the end of the war. We were pulling out, so we were not involved. Our troops were getting out as quickly as we could.

I didn't mention, when I'd been in Kuwait after the war, I'd been asked by Skip and his econ guy if I wanted to see the oil fires. It might be a good idea. After all that was my background, oil economics. I said yes, so the American military flew me and a couple of the other embassy people up to the northern oil fields which were then still burning. It was an unbelievable sight to see these oil fires. Remember at that time, people thought those oil fires would burn for years. So we flew over them, low over them, unbelievable what the Iraqis had done. They just blew out every 'Christmas tree,' a kind of oil cap. And we were flying up there and the aircraft needed to refuel, so he headed north. Interesting.

We landed at a U.S.-occupied Iraqi air field. We waited around there for a little while, there was a little village next to it. I don't think it was Safwan, but it was up near Safwan. We stayed there a while, took a few pictures, and flew back. When I got back, I called Riyadh and gave my report about where we had been, and said, "Oh, by the way, we flew into Iraq, and got some pictures and do you want to see them?" The DCM said, "Oh, no, you didn't do that." I said, "Yes. He said, "Well forget that, don't put that in any reports. You aren't supposed to go there."

But the Shia in that region... we were pulling out. We pulled our troops out of Iraq as quickly as we could. We had no intention of occupying the place. As we pulled out, and this is what I'd heard from various Shia afterwards, as we pulled out, the Shia, lot of Shia

soldiers and students decided that enough was enough, they now could take the south if they wanted. So they launched their rebellion, they took Basrah, they took the Shia holy cities, and killed every Baath Party (Saddam's political base) man they could find. There was a bloodbath against the Baath Party. There were very few Iraqi senior military commanders in the area, so the military wasn't hurt that much, but the Baath Party apparatus was destroyed. They killed them all. But the Shia were not terribly well organized. Students and low ranking soldiers, there were no senior Shia commanders.

They weren't terribly well organized and when the Republican Guard that had survived the American assault, the ones who we let escape, got themselves organized after the Shia had gone through their bloodletting... they came back in force, with armor, which the Shia didn't have. And killed everybody in sight. They killed all the fighters, of course, who they could find. I heard this from some of the Shia who got out. They went into the Shia holy places, the mosque of the Imams, and hanged people in the mosques, and then turned their attention to the Shia villages in the south, just north of the Saudi border. They were very careful to stay away from our forces and to stay away from Kuwait. And just drove straight through those villages, killing women, children, everybody. Those who could escape, fled...the Shia who were on that drive that track that the Iraqis took. Those who could escape did, they went across the Saudi border. The only place they had to run. Our forces watched. They knew it was happening, and we watched. So we would get reports back of what was happening, but that's it. The refugees fled across the Saudi border by the thousands. The Saudis put up a camp, due north of Riyadh, up by the border, and kept them there, since they were Shia, they were not going to let them into Saudi Arabia proper. I've heard that we leaned on the Saudis to allow the Shia to cross the border. If up to the Saudis, they would have left them on the other side of the border, many Saudis would have anyway. So, we watched it happen, and there was TV of course, we heard what was happening, saw the reports, and it was over fairly soon.

The interesting incident at the time... Saddam arrested the head of the Iraqi Shia in the south, an Ayatollah. A Shia, they have the same setup as Iranian Shia. He was an Ayatollah, I can't remember his name any more. I was doing one of my regular soundings in the Shia villages north of Dhahran and I talked to a community leader there. We did the usual talking about what was going with the Shia community in Saudi Arabia and the usual complaints about discrimination and so on. And he said, "Ken, Saddam has arrested our Ayatollah." The Saudi Shia were very close to the Iraqi Shia, same kind of Shia. There had always been some contact across the border because of the Shia holy places. He said, "We have a request." We, I guess was the Saudi Shia. "We would like the Americans to get our Ayatollah out of Saddam's custody." I said, "Well, we don't have a lot of influence in Baghdad, to say the least." He said, "Ken, Ken, you must understand, Saddam does not fear God, he does not fear man. He fears the Americans. If you make it a point of insisting on this man's release, Saddam will release him." Well, I reported the conversation. That's all I could do. Eventually, Saddam executed this guy. If we did anything, it was nothing much.

Essentially, for the Shia rebellion, we watched it happen. The Saudis were not too

disturbed. The Saudis would have been very upset about a Shia state north of Kuwait, so they didn't say...

Q: Pulling out, was there any second thoughts about the mess we left behind?

STAMMERMAN: I would say no. Whenever there were any questions, the general comeback was we could have done things differently, but it would have cost the lives of American soldiers and it wasn't worth it. At the time, everybody, military, any State Department people I knew, we all figured Saddam would last another three months at most. So the fact that Saddam survived was not that big a thing because we figured he could only survive through a repressive government, and he didn't have that many people left, that if the opposition would be organized at all, they could overthrow him. We were wrong.

Q: Were the people who were knowledgeable about the area concerned too that Iraq in a way is, unlike almost any of the other states around there, such a divided, it's not really a state... it's a glued together entity that has fractures that have not healed since the end of World War I. Was there any concern that if that place really fell apart it would be quite destabilizing to the area?

STAMMERMAN: On the American side, the only person I knew who serious addressed that issue was Chas Freeman. Perhaps other people did, but I didn't see it and I didn't hear it. But the military wasn't that much concerned about it. That wasn't their mission. Again, they were happy to leave. The Saudis were very concerned, but they thought essentially that Iraq would hold together. They were just worried that the Shia might succeed, and it concerned them. At the time, everybody's top priority on their minds, as well as ours, was that Saddam should go. Among the people who were dealing with the war, sort of the everyday tactical, it was all tactical, there was very little strategic thinking as near as I could tell. There was not a big sense of history. I had people in the State Department Near East bureau who really thought Kuwait was once part of Iraq or who thought Iraq existed before World War I, that sort of thing. There was no feeling of how fragile the Iraqi state might be, so they had not thought of the consequences of breaking up. I didn't see much strategic thinking at all.

Q: How long were you there after the war was over?

STAMMERMAN: I stayed until the summer of '92. I was there a whole year afterwards and saw the American drawdown. The major part of the troops got out right away. Then the stay-behinds took a while. The Marines were pulling out of a port north of Port Jubail, north of Dhahran. Slowly, slowly. A lot of the things we'd get involved in were because of Saudi businessmen and contractors, and winding up the last supply contracts and the last commercial disputes. I remember going up there. When I'd been up there before, this would probably have been summer of '91, it was a base port with troops everywhere, and jeeps going everywhere, and tanks being moved out on trucks. In 1992, I drove in and all you had was one small building occupied by Marine officers. The last Marine colonel was

there and he was trying to finish off some commercial disputes, of claims essentially. The big parking lot at the port had trash blowing across it. The Saudis had not reoccupied it yet. It was kind of sad really, sad and empty.

So, I saw all this drawdown happening everywhere. Except the one place that stayed busy was Dhahran Towers. That's the place where the U.S. military quartered their troops, right next to Dhahran airbase. Within a few months of the end of the war, we established a policy that we'd have U.S. Air Force personnel quartered there, but they would only have six-month tours. That makes them temporary. The Saudis were very insistent on that. They did not want a permanent U.S. presence in the Eastern Province. So it was a rolling six-month redeployment. It wasn't the same personnel, they'd move people in and out. So the Saudis could say that they were training personnel, support personnel for Southern Watch, we were watching the Southern No-Fly Zone, southern Iraq.

One of the nicer events after the war was an awards ceremony given by the American military command to the Emir of Dhahran. There really is an Emir of Dhahran, who I had only met once before. He's a very junior official because Dhahran itself is really a small town. Dammam is the city where Prince Mohammed bin Fahd the governor resides. Dhahran is simply ARAMCO and the consulate general, and a small residential suburb. The governor of Dhahran had played a key role in helping when our troops were killed and wounded in the SCUD attack in Dhahran, which was the largest loss of life in the Gulf War for the American military. He had played a key role in getting the survivors to hospital. The U.S. Army gave him an award, which was very, very nice. And shortly afterwards, we had a ceremony at the consulate general where he and I together planted a tree. I'm glad to say that as of 1997, that tree was still there. I'd also put up another monument before I left. I had talked to the head of the logistics command. I remember how VFW halls in the United States always had a cannon out front. I wanted a howitzer, or the equivalent, on the consulate general grounds. We put up some kind of a plaque, Gulf War Memorial, or something. We got one. It was a Chinese made Iraqi howitzer, and kids loved to play on these things. Kids climb over them, and we made sure it was plugged with concrete and all the usual. It was nice, and the Saudis thought it was fine. And nobody had a problem, we all thought it was fine. And when I arrived back, I visited Dhahran twice since then, once in '95, and once in '96 or '97... and the last time I arrived back there, the cannon was gone. It seems one of my successors as consul general thought it was inappropriate to have a weapon like that on the consulate grounds.

Q: Ah, yes.

STAMMERMAN: What a jerk. What can I say? The Saudis didn't care, and I thought it was appropriate, and fun for the kids.

Q: Was there anything else that you were dealing with before you left?

STAMMERMAN: Well, let's think. After the war a lot of it had to do with the drawdown and the stay-behind American forces. We went back to doing a lot of ordinary things like

issuing visas and reporting on the oil economy, rebuilding the contracts. Very interesting, there was one occasion where I went over and visited a senior Saudi family that one of the in-laws was a Kuwaiti, a friend of mine. By this time, I'd heard that the Kuwaitis were sort of getting overwhelmed with our insistence on buying American, especially our defense contractors. So, it was getting more and more difficult for the Embassy to access the Kuwaiti defense minister, or so I was told at the time. After the war, the defense minister was replaced, and the new one had real power, was a sharp man. I think he was just tired of being asked to buy this and that American weapon system, or whatever. I went over to one of these afternoon gatherings, business people, and my Kuwaiti friend, Kuwaiti-Saudi... married into a Saudi family. And we were good friends, and he said, "Ken, stay around after the party's over." I said, "Okay, fine." I did. There were a couple of consulate people there and I told them, "You guys can go home."

I stayed around. He said, "Come on back." They had a desert camp out there. The occasion had been a cocktail party, with the usual drinks and everything else. And this was more than your typical big Saudi mansion, it had acres of, it's not a backyard it's grounds, and he had a desert encampment set up out there, Bedouin tents. He said, "Ken, come on out, I've got somebody you've got to meet." I walked out and the Kuwaiti defense minister was out there. I know the man because he'd been a watcher up at the Kuwait border. He was in charge of the Kuwait, I may have mentioned this earlier, he was in charge of the Kuwait watching station at Khafji, so when I visited Khafji I'd called on him. I'd known him before very slightly in Kuwait, and during Desert Shield, I had called on him near the border.

So I walked out and saw him. We did the usual embraces, and "long time no see" and we had a long talk about what was going on in Kuwait. Sort of informally, I mean I wasn't after info on Kuwait government policy, but how was so-and-so, and what's happened to so-and-so because already there were some rumblings, as the families took a larger position in Kuwait, rumblings against the people in charge of the Kuwaiti oil ministry especially. That's where the money was, and the major Kuwaiti families wanted to get back into influencing where the money was. That's so important in Kuwait. Kuwait runs on money. So we had a lot of discussions. We talked about people we both knew and how everybody was, and how people survived the war. So that was nice. I remember that incident. A little affair. After that, the following year was just constant drawdown and working our way out.

Another nice event before we left for the States…I paid a farewell call in Kuwait, went up to see Ambassador Skip Gnehm and some Kuwaitis after all we had gone through. The Kuwaitis gave me a plaque, a sort of trophy-shaped token. They inscribed 'we shall never forget' on it. We found it touching…

Q: So, you left there in '92, is that right?

STAMMERMAN: Left in '92.

Q: Whither?

STAMMERMAN: We knew we'd go back to the States. I find it interesting, this was a year after the war ended. I'm not sure it was NEA policy or it just turned out this way, but almost everyone assigned in a senior position to a Gulf post moved out of the region. Almost no memory of the Gulf War after about a year or two. I remember later, David Dunford became our ambassador to Oman. But he's one of the few, I think, who went through the war who was then posted to the region afterwards. I'm not quite sure why. Maybe by choice or by happenstance or by personnel policy.

So, it was time to go back to the States. I should mention before that, that I did go back on leave, the summer after the war. I was back in Washington for the Gulf War parade. All that was wonderful. Saw a lot of my military friends there. It was great. They deserved it.

Q: Oh, yes.

STAMMERMAN: It was a good time.

Q: Oh, yes, particularly it was sort of taking care of the Vietnam Syndrome

STAMMERMAN: It was. It was also interesting, that summer, and when I went back anytime since then, I cannot think of one State Department officer in Washington who wanted to talk to me about the war, or lessons learned.

Q: Unfortunately, as I do these interviews, I find it incredible how we do not try to pass on the information experiences. I mean in a way, this program is the only one that does it. And it does it as a private enterprise. We'll try to push it back into the system, but yes, it's very unfortunate.

STAMMERMAN: It is. And the only other time I had given anybody any feedback, I'd stopped in at FSI's and NFATC's Middle East courses. I just stopped by like after our talk today, and I know somebody and he might ask me to come into a class and talk and reminisce, but other than that... I always thought it was odd. I was back there for the parade and all, and nobody really was interested.

Q: I don't know. I have to say that the Department of State and the Foreign Service is really a non historical organization.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: It's hard charging, it moves ahead, and it doesn't want to look back. Which, you know, the old saying, those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it.

STAMMERMAN: Yes.

Q: And I'm afraid this is something like that...

STAMMERMAN: Yes. One of the things that I did after I came back to the United States... I'll tell you about my whither and so on, but I did get up to the Army War College because I knew somebody up there. For some reason I ended up in Pennsylvania. Oh, some of my late wife Patty's family lives in Pennsylvania and I just decided I'd drop by the War College since I knew somebody on the faculty. And it was interesting; they were talking about the Gulf War. This is among people, faculty and students, who had not been there. And I was surprised that already impressions were being drawn, conclusions reached that were not the way I saw it happen. It was very interesting. People start positing things about the war, causes and so on, sort of big thinkers, trying to fit some classical notions of history, when you've got the militarists, and the realists, and all these academics... We didn't think this way.

Anyway, it got to be time to leave, and we figure it's time to go back to the United States, we'd been out for five years with back to back assignments in Kuwait and Dhahran. I really did not want to go back to Washington, so I looked at possibility of staying overseas, but I'd wanted to stay in the Near East Bureau and there didn't seem to be anything particularly open. I looked at details, and one looked like a fascinating detail for the Department of Energy in Los Alamos, New Mexico. I called out there and talked to the FSO who was there, his name was Bob Carr. I asked him what he did. He said, well, he was doing tech transfer stuff, because Los Alamos, which is our nuclear weapons place, we don't test there, but we design, he was helping transfer a lot of their technology into the civilian sector, after the Lab finished declassifying it. I said that sounds interesting. He said, "Yes, the oil companies are really interested in this stuff." So I put in for it, as one of my items, bid list. I really did not want to go back to NEA in Washington, I'd done that trip. I had no interest. And we did not own property in Washington, and did not care to do the rental thing again, but we would if we had to. I checked out this Los Alamos thing, and thought, worth trying. And of course nobody else had bid on it, nobody else at grade. I got the assignment. Went out to Los Alamos for two years.

Q: So, this would be from '92 to '94...

STAMMERMAN: Summer of '92 to Spring of '94.

Q: How did you find that job?

STAMMERMAN: I found it fascinating. It was a lot of fun. Los Alamos is like a college campus in many ways. They had a think tank, that's what I was assigned to. They'd set up a think tank that did studies about weapons of mass destruction. The theory of weapons of mass destruction. They'd done some studies on the Gulf War, the theory of what could have been done. It was all very theoretical, and academic. When I came out of course, I could help and say what actually went on. It's very much like a college campus. There's an enormous sense of history there. There were people there who knew Oppenheimer attached to the group I was working with, so I could just sit and talk about Oppenheimer

and the wars of the atomic scientists. Wonderful people out there. They had no idea what's going on in the real world, in many cases, in the sense of how do you apply these theories...

The State Department had a spot on this think tank. I'm not sure how they got it or why they got it, but they had it. I thought that my talents would be used fairly well. They had a lot of tech transfer business going on with the oil companies so I helped them in that area. They had the best seismologists in the world. Guys who know how to do underground nuclear testing, and some of the technology is the same technology used to measure the size of oil reservoirs, secondary recovery. They were releasing this technology into the private sector. I was being useful there, and I helped them with their studies in the Gulf War, sort of on the theory of what might happen next time, or that sort of thing. They would have visitors often come out to exchange ideas for the various agencies, CIA, Congressional committees, and I'd sit in on those. It was a good place to be. The culture was very much like around ARAMCO. They are on a mesa out in the middle of New Mexico, surrounded by [local] people who have no idea what they are doing... the Indian pueblos. Los Alamos is a county unto itself, surrounded by pueblos and a town of Spanish-American heritage on another side. They are their own county and they sort of live apart from the rest of the culture, which reminded me so much of ARAMCO. The same sort of thing. Nice people. I had my 50th birthday in the mess hall where Oppenheimer and his friends invented the bomb.

Q: Oh, my gosh.

STAMMERMAN: Which my wife threw as a surprise, and one of Oppenheimer's people was there. So it was fun. It was a real place to depressurize.

Q: So after that, in '94, whither?

STAMMERMAN: In '93, I started looking. It was a two-year assignment. So in the summer of '93, as the usual assignment cycle, I'd turned 50, born in 1943, so I knew in November of '93, I was eligible to retire. So I went back to NEA on consultations. I took the short retirement preview course they give, it's a week of "do you really want to retire?" Took that and went by NEA... "Okay, what's open. I'm eligible to retire, it's been a great career, I can go out again if you have a DCM job or a CG job that's interesting... Patty and I would like to go out again. On the other hand, if there's nothing we want, we'll walk out very happy, no regrets, not going to slam any doors." Had some nice long talks with personnel.

They suggested that a post that I would be likely to get if I asked for it was DCM at Beirut. At the time, they said that's unaccompanied. Patty and I always go places together. But, Patty could not stay in Beirut. When I was in Tel Aviv, I remember, and even part of the time when I was Kuwait, I thought I remembered they had safe havens in Cyprus. We like Cyprus, then I could do Beirut, stay in the embassy and go back to visit her in Cyprus. But nope, all the way back to the States now... nobody stays in Cyprus, no

dependents in Cyprus. I said, “Forget it, we’re not going to do that.” “Okay, well, there doesn’t seem to be anything available now... we’ll keep you in mind.” So, okay, and I would just check every couple weeks to see if anything had turned up, and they’d send out the bid list.

And it came November 30, and nothing turned up. So I sent a note to Washington, “I’m out of here.” Filed my papers shortly after I turned 50. They still had the three-month retirement seminar, so I came back in January and finished all my paperwork and went to the retirement seminar over in Rosslyn, most of which was filled with AID guys who were being terminated. AID had a cutback in those days. They all wanted to go back to work. I said this is silly. We had all this stuff to do, how to do résumés, how to get new jobs. I said I’m going back to Louisville and take some time off. I can exist on my pension in Louisville and if something turns up, it’ll turn up. It was nice, getting depressurized.

Now one good thing, the best part of that entire experience, was that the State Department does a very thorough physical, the exit physical. Normally, Patty and I would not get X-rays. We’re not smokers. They gave us the complete, total physical. And one doctor found a spot on Patty’s lung through an X-ray. Well, we’re not smokers, he thought... he started going down the list of everything it could be. He started testing for everything, fungus, desert fungus, sand flukes, scarring from whatever, TB. Finally, he did a biopsy and found out Patty had lung cancer. Had no idea why. Again, we’re not smokers.

I went to the State Department health guys... I should say, when I was in Dhahran that last year, there was a lot of concern about health. Some military doctors were doing the air quality tests, and the EPA came out after the war. We had people staying at the consulate TDY who were EPA, and were very concerned about air quality.

Q: This is because of the oil fires.

STAMMERMAN: The oil fires. This reminds me of something, which I’ll get back to, what happened to us since we left. Greenpeace came in right after the war.

Q: Which is an activist group with a strong concern for the environment.

STAMMERMAN: Right. I’d always been a contributor to Greenpeace myself. Actually they came in just before the Gulf War, their ship. They seemed to me more concerned about the welfare of the fish and fauna than our soldiers. And I sent a nasty note and resigned from their supporters group at the time. But afterwards, they and other NGOs, non-government organizations and the EPA, and the weather people, NOAA, showed up in Dhahran to do studies of what can happen in ecology and the environment after the war. There was a lot of damage. The fires were out, though, by the end of the war.

Q: And the oil spills...

STAMMERMAN: The fires were out by the end of the year. Instead of five years, it took six months. And we were all, Patty my wife was very concerned. She said, "Where are the TV crews to show the fires going out, the ones who said it would take five years..." and American companies put them out in six months. That's right, there were oil spills in the Gulf, massive oil washups on shore and the desert ecologies were being wiped out. Kuwait was really bad. Big pools of oil, spilled oil burning. Even Saudi Arabia, up near Khafjii, big oil spills. I don't know if that's recovered or not.

Anyway, there were people concerned about the health consequences. People we thought were NGOs who were unfairly, they'd been against the war in the first place, and were then trying to show the health consequences of the war. They were trying to say there were lung diseases after the war out of proportion to what they would have been. But there were no good records is the problem. In the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, there's always been disasters in terms of the ecology. The Saudis never filtered the air, they just…

So, anyway, who knows what caused the cancer? Patty, they found she had lung cancer, it was not the smoker's kind. It was a type usually caused by environmental problems, asbestos or something like that, called non-small cell adenocarcinoma. The State Department doctors told us that, and I remember the lady who was in charge of State's medical clearance staff then, she was almost crying when she told us. She was extremely upset. Patty thought, wars, we've survived SCUDs, we'll survive this one.

They asked us where we were going, they made an appointment for us with the senior surgeon, lung cancer man, in Louisville. Which was very nice of them. And then we retired. We went back to Louisville. And for the next seven years, Patty fought lung cancer. This is a lung cancer where half the people survive six months. One-seventh of them survive three years. She was already diagnosed with an advanced stage, it turned out. Then after five years, we were sort of on the little tail of that normal curve where hardly anybody survives. Patty survived seven years. She was a miracle patient. She had surgery, three rounds of chemotherapy, radiation, and finally, the summer of the year 2000, it came back and spread to her liver and we went to hospice. She died in October of 2000. From '94 to 2000, a lot of the things we did involved cancer.

I signed on with Time Magazine to manage their website message boards. And then Fortune hired me because I was working for Time on contract. A friend of mine, a guy from the Dallas Morning News, he and I became partners in managing Time's message boards, not their entire website, it was their message board part of their website. We had contracts with Time Magazine until Spring 2000. That meant I was online at all hours of the day and night, he covered when I wasn't. We managed their message boards, commenting on current affairs and stuff. So I kept busy with that.

I went back to Saudi Arabia a couple of times in the '90s with a foundation to escort academics. In Louisville, I teach in an elder hostel course, every six months. I give a series of lectures on foreign affairs. In the last summer... Oh, I should say, in Louisville,

there is excellent medical care, good people, my family there. In the summer of the year 2001, I went out to Israel on a dig. That's what former FSOs do, they dig. Went on a dig with an archeologist's team, as a volunteer up to the Sea of Galilee. Went on for a month and stayed on for two more months as a volunteer at a museum. I must have been the only tourist in Israel last fall. I walked around the Old City of Jerusalem a lot. I had friends in the Old City.

Very interesting. When I walked in and saw some of my Palestinian friends, walked in the door and had not been there since 1989. I walked in the door and the guy would look up and say, "Oh, hi, Ken," like I'd been out the door yesterday. We'd have a good long talk. One of my merchant friends was upset because the Consulate General in Jerusalem had forbidden their people to shop in the Old City, for security reasons. He thought this was insane, as I did, because it was perfectly safe. So, I spent last fall in Israel. And this August, I'm going back out and continue the dig, and stay on in Israel a while, up in Jerusalem.

Q: Great. Well, I want to thank you very much.

STAMMERMAN: You are very welcome.

End of interview