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

WILLIAM WANLUND

Interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy
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[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Wanlund.]

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with William Wanlund. Today is July 23, 2009. This interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm Stu Kennedy. Bill let's start with some background. Wanlund sounds Norwegian, so let's take your father's side first; what do you know about your family?

WANLUND: The name is Swedish. Well, Wanlund is actually a made up name. The story in my family goes, and I am not sure how accurate this is, but it is too good to check the facts too deeply. The story goes that my great grandparents came to the United States from Sweden in 1870s, somewhere thereabouts, and settled in northern Missouri and the family name at the time actually was Lindbergh, like Charles Lindbergh. As it happened there were two or three, I guess three,, different Lindbergh families that had settled in that part of Missouri. They all had sort of adjacent farms and it wasn't much of a problem except that they would occasionally get each other's mail or they would get each other's visitors. The families got together and decided that two of them were going to have to change their names and so they drew straws and my father's family was one of the short straw drawers so they had to change their name. They chose as a name the part of Sweden that they came from which was Värmland [Ed: province in the central Svealand region], I believe it is pronounced. It is a big agricultural area in Sweden. Of course when it came down to changing your name officially in a courthouse, the name got corrupted and changed and finally came down in writing as 'Wanlund'.

Q: Your great grandparents came over in the 1870s? How long did they farm?

WANLUND: The farming didn't last too long, at least back in that part of the world although I guess some of my father's relatives kept on doing that for a couple of generations. My grandfather, eventually that family moved to the Chicago area, the south side of Chicago, where my grandfather was born. He was also William Wanlund and he worked in a factory. I actually never knew him. He had worked in a factory in Chicago and he and his wife both died in the 1930s. I never knew them well; my father didn't talk about them much. I don't think there was any animosity; he was just a taciturn guy himself.

My father and my mother too, both grew up in Southside of Chicago in the town of Harvey. My dad became a draftsman. He was not quite an engineer. He was a draftsman and worked for the Chicago Northwestern Railroad, mostly designing railroad cars and more specifically parts of railroad cars and did that for a number of years, got laid off in the late 1950s but managed to catch on with a company called Vapor Heating Corporation, which did boilers, air conditioning, that kind of stuff and was a draftsman for them and learned a different type of drafting but it was designing machines and parts of machines and actually holds part of a patent for the, at least what used to be the door car openers on some lines of the New York city subway.

Q: On your mother's side, what was her background?

WANLUND: Her family was also Swedish. They were Carlsons and she and her father both grew up on the south side of Chicago near Harvey. Her father, Henry Carlson had been a laborer and had worked on, I guess at one time had been a foreman on a project which eventually became the sanitary district canal in Chicago. He lived in Chicago most of his life but by the time I had come to know him, he had actually retired and had moved to a farm in Ganges, Michigan, where he and his wife lived for a while. She died, my grandmother died when I was probably five or six years old. I remember when it happened. In fact I was up there because my mother knew the end was coming so she was up there with her family. It didn't make much of an impression on me.

She died in her sleep and somehow I was told that in my mind that she died of sleeping sickness. That wasn't the case at all; she had cancer. For years I thought it was sleeping sickness. Anyway, my grandfather, typical of a lot of guys in that generation wasn't really able to get by on his own so he came back down to the Chicago area where my family was living, lived in a hotel for a few years and eventually came to live with my family when they moved to a house big enough they could accommodate him. He worked as a night watchman for a while. He finally died in the 1970s.

Q: How did your mother and father meet?

WANLUND: My father is ten years older than my mother but my father's sister was dating a guy who had been a good friend of my mother's brother. It was that connection. My father's sister and my uncle's friend, somehow they got together and they were married right before World War II.

Q: What was your father doing?

WANLUND: He was drafting at that time. As I said, he was working for the Chicago Northwestern Railroad and that actually got him a draft deferment during World War II so he never served in the military. He was working in a vital skills industry.

Q: Did your mother and father go to college?

WANLUND: No, neither one did. I was the first in my family.

Q: It's interesting that I'm interviewing people in these oral histories whose parents for the most part were not college graduates. I am sure that will change as we move up a few generations. Where were you born?

WANLUND: By the time I was born, my parents had moved to the north side of Chicago and I was born in Evanston and so that's where I grew up and really spent my life there until I went away to college and came here to Washington. I went to Evanston Township High School, great rivalry with New Trier.

Q: I was actually born in Chicago but we lived in Winnetka. New Trier is a well-known high school in that part.

As a kid, did you go out the door and explore Evanston on your own? What was Evanston like then?

WANLUND: It was kind of a sleepy little community. It was the first suburb north of Chicago on the north shore so it was a bedroom community primarily for Chicago but it had its own character. Northwestern University there was the major institution there. Evanston was also the hometown of the Women's Christian Temperance Union so Evanston, partly because of the university which had its roots in the Methodist church but also because the WCTU was a dry town so it wasn't a particularly lively place to be despite the university.

It is a town bounded by on the east side by the lake and on the northwest and south by other communities so it didn't have any place to grow so the population was always, I guess when I was growing up it was 63 or 64,000. I don't think it is more than 80,000 now. It is a very stable kind of community. When I was going to school, I think there was a black population of about 10% and that would be mirrored pretty well in the classes I was going to. In elementary school there were probably two black kids in every class that I had.

When I went on in school the African-American population in Evanston grew and by the time I got to high school, there were a lot more African-American kids, still representing maybe 10 to 12, maybe 15% of the school population. That community has continued to grow and I would say thrive through the years.

Q: Win a university in the area was there a significant Jewish population there?

WANLUND: There was although, it's an interesting question because yes, there were a number of Jews in Evanston but Skokie was actually the place with the larger Jewish population in that particular area. That was the suburb just to the west of Evanston.

Q: Isn't Evanston the home of the Baha'i religion?

WANLUND: Wilmette is actually. That's the first suburb north of Chicago and there's a large Baha'i temple there. I don't know how large the community is.

The temple was a stunningly beautiful building. When I was a kid I used to play a lot of golf and there was a community golf course that actually started in Evanston, you teed off in Evanston but you actually eventually wound found your way through parts of Wilmette and actually played around the Baha'i temple.

Q: What about home life? In the first place was your family a religious family and what religion? Was it Lutheran?

WANLUND: They were Lutherans, being good Swedes. Actually my mother grew up a Methodist but she converted to the Lutheran church after she married my dad who was Lutheran. They were, I wouldn't call it a particularly religious, a strictly religious family. My father had a fairly strong faith; my mother not so much. They certainly when to church every Sunday and I went to Sunday school and eventually went to church. But it wasn't a deeply religious family. I guess we said grace at meals for a few years but that fell off. The church was an important part of my parents' social life. My dad was on a bowling team that the church sponsored and he was a Sunday school teacher and a deacon in the church. I never felt particularly compelled to pursue it.

Q: Where on the political spectrum did the family fall?

WANLUND: They were Republicans, conservative, not conservative Republicans but they were proud of the Republican Party and being the party of Lincoln and that's how they, they didn't have much use for Democrats and that's how I grew up.

Q: What would be described today as 'Eisenhower Republicans'?

WANLUND: Yes, very much so. Ike was a big political factor in their lives and Truman, they didn't much like Truman because of the way he treated MacArthur. They thought that just wasn't fair.

I can remember when I was a kid MacArthur actually, I guess he was probably angling for the presidential nomination at one point and he came through Evanston and actually spoke and there's a monument down there, where he spoke and my mother, darn it, brought me there to see that.

Q: How about at home? How many, were you a single child?

WANLUND: In many ways for much of my childhood I was. I did have a brother but I was seven years old by the time he was born so we, obviously we were close but we didn't play together, we had a different circle of friends.

Q: How about family life? Sit around the table at night and were world events discussed or local events?

WANLUND: Yes, we had family meals together. When I started reading and I could read the papers, I was probably five or six and I would, this was during the Korean War and I was fascinated by those war stories. The Chicago Tribune was a our paper of choice; a very conservative paper at that time, although my dad brought home the Daily News, which is the evening paper and somewhat more liberal than the Trib was. I would read about what was going on in Korea and I would ask about it and we would talk about it. I doubt if they knew any more about it than I did but we had some lively conversations about it. That would lend itself, that led eventually to talking about politics, the presidential elections of 1956 and Eisenhower. Eventually when I became more politically aware, probably in the later 1950s, I actually became a closet Democrat in 1960 during the Kennedy campaign. Well, here's a guy I can really get behind but I never squared myself with my parents.

Q: How about reading? Do you recall any books, authors and particularly let's talk about before you got to high school. Any books that really stick in your mind?

WANLUND: I read a lot of science fiction, very elementary stuff in those days but I also read historical novels. There was a series of Civil War novels by an author I will never forget; Joseph A. Altsheler and he wrote Civil War and Revolutionary War themes. Do you know the name?

Q: Oh, yes. In fact an interview I did with Lawrence Silverman, an appellate judge here in Washington. He said he read these books as a child.

WANLUND: I would read those over and over again. I never bought them; I always took them out of the school library. My folks actually enrolled me in an early book club. It was the Landmark books. It was sort of a book of the month concept and they would send, Landmark books were very simply written histories of broad or sometimes very narrow topics. I had quite a collection of those and still have those. My wife would love to get rid of them.

Q: When you were growing up was this still in the era where after school you went out and played with the other kids or was it the soccer mom era?

WANLUND: No, up until the time I was maybe ten years old my family was actually living in an apartment in Evanston, a small place. In fact my parents, I had the bedroom and my parents had a Murphy bed, fold down in the living room. That's a very dim part of my memory but I do recall. It was I guess you would call it today a high density population area, a lot of apartments around there so I had a lot of friends in that area. It was safe enough I could just go outside and hang out with my friends and we'd ride our bicycles or play ball or just sit around. I don't know whatever you do, throw stones or make up stories.

The family got a little upscale and so we were able to move to another part of Evanston where we lived in a single family house, $35,000 in 1956, December. It was a nice

neighborhood, very comfortable, very friendly place but there weren't many kids around so I didn't I have a lot of playmates in that area.

I was still in sixth grade and they allowed me to continue to commute to my old sixth grade school by public bus. All my friends were in the Southside and that's where I grew up and that's where I hung out.

When I went to junior high or middle school, that was closer by and drew from a larger catchment area but that's where my friends came from at that time.

Q: In elementary school, how did you relate to school?

WANLUND: I was a good student. I liked school OK and I just sort of took it as it came. Looking back on it I can see I had some teachers were better than others but I just accepted things that came along in school as the way it ought to be. I think as a result of that I wasn't a particular standout student, in either a good way or a bad way. There wasn't much of a disciplinary problem. I didn't ask the kind of probing, intellectual questions.

Q: Were you a movie fan, a TV fan, a radio fan?

WANLUND: Yes, of course TV was just coming on the scene in the 1950s. I can remember when our next door neighbor got a TV. That was quite the thing but I don't think we really had a TV worth talking about until about 1956. Then we got a big 21 inch Muntz TV and that was the bee's knees, I tell you. Yes, I watched a lot of television, the old Westerns, and the old soap operas and again, my taste in TV shows reflected my taste in reading. There was an old program called Science Fiction Theater, which I remember quite well, a very exciting show. The Westerns, Maverick and Have Gun, Will Travel.

And movies too but that was, in my family that was a financial investment so to go to a movie, that was big stuff.

Q: You were in high school from when to when?

WANLUND: 1960 to 1964.

Q: Again, where was this?

WANLUND: This was in Evanston, Illinois, going to Evanston Township High School, a public school.

Q: Evanston was a relatively affluent community, was it?

WANLUND: It was. It wasn't the richest place on the North Shore. It didn't rank up there with Winnetka or Glencoe but it was a prosperous place.

Q: How big was your high school?

WANLUND: High school was big. When I got there it was about 4,000 kids.

Q: How did you find that level of your education?

WANLUND: I actually liked high school for the most part. I had some very stimulating teachers and they were, I was able to focus on things I found more interesting. The school itself was very big. They had divided it into quarters which, four different schools within a school that made it a lot more manageable, administratively. It was a little awkward sometimes.

Q: Was it divided according to scholastics; general, academic bound or just sort of arbitrarily chopped up?

WANLUND: We always suspected there was some academic ranking but division but actually I don't believe so. I believe it was truly by random. Of course, high school kids being competitive the way they are; this school is smarter than that school.

Q: What courses really grabbed you?

WANLUND: I actually enjoyed English most of all. I had some very, what I thought at the time, some very gifted teachers in English. I liked history and some of the oddball courses. We had a sort of an introductory course in philosophy which I found very interesting.

Q: I take it the sciences and math didn't particularly attract you?

WANLUND: I wasn't particularly good in them, no.

Q: That shows you were getting yourself ready to be qualified to be a Foreign Service officer. By the time you got to high school, what type of reading were you doing on your own?

WANLUND: Very pretentious reading. I was reading a lot of, some Russian literature, I read some classics, Dickens and Shakespeare and all. I was much too sophisticated to read fiction at that point and so I was reading Plato's Dialogues and stuff like that which of course what I really didn't realize at the time was doing a disservice to myself because I really didn't have the intellectual background to fully understand that yet. As I got older and developed that background, I said, "Oh, I don't need to read that stuff. I've already read it." I regret that, actually.

Q: What about school activities?

WANLUND: I played some sports; I played football when I was a freshman in high school. It didn't really go anywhere. I was big for a freshman but I really didn't grow much after that.

I got involved it turned out to be the audio visual club, running the PA systems and stuff like that for school events. It was a job and I got paid for it but it was really, at the time I was interested in broadcast and communications and this just seemed like a natural.

Q: Did they have a high school studio or not?

WANLUND: They actually had a TV studio which was very unusual for high school in those days. The high school didn't do any broadcasting but they would videotape things and give kids a chance to do production practice and do camera work and sound correction for so to speak on the air talent.

We had a radio studio. We didn't have a station but we did record a weekly high school news, events program for one of the Evanston radio stations. That was fun.

Q: What did you do after school time?

WANLUND: Work actually took up a lot of my after school hours because a lot of the school events I was working on, events, sporting events I was doing technical work on the school plays, musicals and stuff like that so I managed to stay at school pretty much.

After that, just the usual stuff; libraries and home work and just hanging out with friends.

Q: I am curious. What was the sort of the dating practices in those days?

WANLUND: It was nerve-wracking asking somebody to go out because that was a serious commitment. I didn't date much but I dated some to school events, to dances and that sort of thing, occasionally going out to movies.

Q: You were pointed towards college. Was this an accepted thing?

WANLUND: That was pretty much understood. Although the school I went to was a public school, it had a fairly high academic reputation and my parents, although neither of them had gone to college, expected me to. That was just sort of a given, that I was going to college.

On the other hand, the family had taken a vacation to here in Washington DC and I thought that was just great. I thought that's what I'd like to do and it sort of got me interested in politics. We did calls on our congressmen. It was much easier to do that in those days and got to sit in the peanut gallery and watch Congress in session. I guess I was probably a sophomore or junior in high school and that's what really got me interested.

So when it came time to talk to my high school guidance counselor about college plans I said I was interested in political science and I wanted to go to Washington to study. He pulled out a book and said, "George Washington (University) is the place for you." I said, "Oh, OK."

I said earlier I was a fairly compliant high school student so I applied to GW, they accepted me and off I went.

Q: So you went to George Washington from when to when?

WANLUND: I was there from 1964 to 1969. It took me five years to get through.

Q: What was George Washington like in the mid-1960s?

WANLUND: It was a city campus. There wasn't a whole lot of campus life. I think most of the students were commuter students, although I lived in a dorm and later in a fraternity house.

The school itself, although it was in Washington in the early and mid-1960s was really quite a quiet place, politically. Although the antiwar movement was beginning, it didn't really take hold in Washington. The students there were much too serious to get involved. That changed over the years but at the time I was there it was not a hot bed of student activity.

It was a wonderful place to be in college just because of the cultural and educational, outside of the university opportunities.

Q: One of the things that struck me about George Washington as opposed to Georgetown is that George Washington is really sort of the government's college and it draws an awfully lot of part time teachers who are working in government and teaching on the side. Georgetown seems to have full time professors and is more traditional college.

WANLUND: I don't know how GW is now, but that was certainly the case when I was there. I started out majoring in political science and one of my professors had been a Foreign Service Officer and recently retired, a guy named Parcell. There certainly were a lot of teachers who were working in the government or maybe for a lobbying organization, or some sort of Washington connected organization.

Q: During the rather short term when President Kennedy was president, he did particularly engage youth in government work and all. Did that affect you?

WANLUND: Oh, yes. Kennedy's campaign was really sort of the time I was becoming of age, politically. I was just becoming sort of aware of what was going on in the world and I was really right for the Kennedy message and my parents were Republicans so I had to be kind of a closet Kennedy supporter for a while. I think the way Obama appeals to many of the young people today, there as the same sort of feeling that I and certainly a

lot of my compatriots had about Kennedy, about government and about service. It was really quite a motivator and I suppose for that reason Peace Corps was something in my mind although I never really took steps to pursue that until much later. I think Kennedy gave a shine to government service that for me never really went away.

Q: What courses particularly struck you at George Washington?

WANLUND: I started out pursuing political science. I think my introduction to political science was a good one. It was taught by a former FSO but although I found him interesting, I never really felt particularly motivated by those.

I did, however, have a course taught by a Georgetown professor. GW was part of a consortium of universities here in DC and he was a Jesuit priest who taught a class on urban society, I think. His name was Schwolf. He was a very stimulating professor. I was never able to take another course from him but for some reason that course really stood out in my mind.

Q: Did foreign affairs become a focus, or was it only one in a number of course?

WANLUND: It did, but only gradually. I took a basic foreign affairs course when I was a sophomore. Shortly after that, I changed my major. There was sort of a mold of political science students at GW that I would see I wasn't going to be part of, very intense, very smart, but very focused people, mostly pointed toward law school. It just didn't interest me. I sort of drifted into journalism as a real major and that was where in fact, I encountered an awful lot of, I think at the time GW had one, possibly two full time faculty members in the journalism school and the rest were working professionals. There was a city editor from the Star, the old Washington Star and taught a class on city editing. There was a guy who was an editor from the old Washington Daily News. There was a Reuter's reporter who came in and although the department was very small, the kind of learning we got in the journalism school was fascinating. These weren't necessarily gifted educators but they knew what they were talking about, the classes were small and there was a lot of full time attention paid to, that they would pay to the students. They would often use their contacts to bring in speakers. I remember Ralph Nader came in and talked to a little class of seven or eight people in investigative journalism. It was that kind of thing that really made it worthwhile.

I always looked at journalism school as more like a trade school; you could learn some basics about journalism.

Q: You really could as opposed to most other disciplines that tend to be terribly theoretic.

WANLUND: There's room for journalism theory and history. We learned about the history of journalism; John Peterson and we got a pretty good dose of journalism ethics and that was very useful. The rest of it was sit down and write. We had a class in city editing and the editor from the Star would come in and a tear sheet from the early edition, the Star, the evening paper and he would say, "OK, there are unfinished stories on 1, 2, 4

and 6. Here's a telephone, here's a phone book, here's the front page of the Metro section. Go finish these stories up." We would have actually call news sources and get comment and write up the story. That's as close to practical experience as you could get in a classroom.

Q: During that time, which was a time of increasing ferment on two fields; one was the antiwar movement and the other the civil rights movement and Washington being a southern town was feeling the civil rights. Were you getting much of this?

WANLUND: Not a lot on campus, although it was certainly not part of the curriculum but obviously something you could not ignore and most of us, and many of us did not want to ignore. I remember I did, it wasn't exactly a thesis but sort of an extended report when I was in a senior in journalism school and doing something on education in the inner city in D.C. I spent a lot of time in southeast and northeast going to schools, talking to kids, talking to teachers, administrators and getting a different view. I am not sure how well I wrote that but it was a terrific experience.

Q: What were you getting from these schools?

WANLUND: I was getting a picture of a lot of teachers who really didn't care very much about what they were doing. They were burned out. Some were actually physically afraid in the classrooms. I met a number who were just absolute inspiration in terms of their dedication and commitment to their students. The students were pretty much the same way. I talked to kids who had better things to do than go to school and then saw some kids who were really suffering to try to get the most out of their high school education.

It was a dim picture then. It hadn't been that long before that the District court had forbidden the track system, which you know I think there are a lot of good arguments against it but really helped a lot of kids who otherwise might have been lost in the kind of mixer of D.C. schools to really rise to the top and really shine. They had gotten rid of that and they really hadn't really figured a way to deal with that.

Q: Were you coming out of this with a sense of outrage or out of concern or interest? How would you describe? You are probably looking more closely at a social issue than most people do when you are a student.

WANLUND: Yes, but you are still pretty well insulated as you a student. Yes, that's true. I think I was inclined that way anyway by that point in my life. I took those kinds of issues very seriously and at that time I saw journalism as a way to pursue it. I don't think that is an uncommon attitude in kids. In fact, I talked to young people overseas with the same kind of attitude; they all want to be journalists because they can right the wrongs of society. I had just kind of assumed I would be pursuing that as a career but then I got drafted as soon as I graduated.

Q: During your college time, did you take summer jobs?

WANLUND: Between my freshman and sophomore years I worked for an insurance company downtown. That was enough to turn me off of insurance companies. Then I found myself able to get some journalism jobs. I did a, I was an editor for a couple of specialty publications in Washington; one in the food, drugs and cosmetics industries and another in the broadcast industry, just doing copy editing, not much serious writing.

Then thanks to a friend of mine who sort of blazed the trail for me, I took on with a small news bureau on Capitol Hill. We had radio, TV newspaper clients in the southeast U.S., in Florida, the Carolinas and Georgia and we would do a, phone beeper reports down to our clients every day. We essentially covered the congressional delegations. None of those media outlets had enough money to support a full time correspondent but together they could pitch in and pay for us and later, just me.

It was a real low budget operation. We didn't have a news ticker or anything like that. The main source of outside news was the WTOP all news radio station and then essentially we just walked the halls of Congress.

Q: Did you get any feel one way or the other for Congressional affairs?

WANLUND: Yes, and it wasn't all completely cynical as you might expect. There is a certain element of phoniness to it but when you got to talking to people, members and more particularly their staff, you got a real sense of how things got done in terms of personal and professional relationships on the Hill. I built up a certain tolerance for the public show that I think elected officials feel they have to maintain in order to stay in office but then how the real hard work is actually done by folks working at the staff level who are feeding it back to the boss who has to be smart enough to digest it because it is his or her name that goes on it.

Q: What were your proclivities?

WANLUND: I was a pretty progressive liberal by that time. It was an easy time to do that. The antiwar movement was quite active. In 1968, for example, when there was the march on the Pentagon and joined hands and tried to levitate the Pentagon. That was fun.

Q: How did you feel about the Vietnam War?

WANLUND: Well, I think it was de rigor to be against it in my generation, in my peer group. Of course, I covered a lot of the antiwar protests in town at that time. Then I would go on my own time to sit-ins and teachings and all that stuff and the haranguing that went on in DuPont Circle and all that stuff. I was against the war. By the same token, I wasn't willing to go to Canada. I wasn't willing to put my ethics on the line that far. I wasn't willing to go to Canada to avoid the draft so I did get drafted and so went to work for the war machine.

Q: When were you drafted?

WANLUND: I was drafted in 1969. I was one of the last draftees. They had already announced the draft lottery and I had a draft number. Had it been left to the lottery, I would not have gone into service but it was too late for that.

Q: So you were in the military, Army, from when to when?

WANLUND: 1969 to 1971. Yes, I was in the army.

Q: What did you do?

WANLUND: My first year after I finished basic training in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri I was actually called back to the Pentagon to work and I went to work for the Peers Committee which in those days investigated My Lai massacre. [Ed: The My Lai Massacre occurred on March 16, 1968 and became public knowledge in November 1969. It was committed by U.S. Army soldiers from the Company C of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 11th Brigade of the 23rd (Americal) Infantry Division led by Lieutenant William Calley Jr.] I was doing basically clerical work for most of the time I was there, being on the support staff for the investigation of the massacre and some transcribing, some basic office work. We were down in the bowels of the Pentagon, in the army war room which was a secure area. That was as close to the war as I got.

I think about that frequently because although it didn't change my attitude about the war, it certainly changed my attitude about the people who were in senior positions in the military. I gained a terrific respect for a lot of these people, starting with General Pierce who had basically, you know, he dedicated his entire life to the army, was a true believer, of course, but I think was just as, I can't speak for him. We never had any heart to heart talks about it but I certainly got the feeling he felt damaged by what had gone on in My Lai and by God, he was going to do what he could to fix it.

Q: My Lai was an incident during the Vietnam War in which our troops, led by a lieutenant essentially wiped out a village.

WANLUND: Yes, they ran wild and I don't think there is any doubt that it was just wanton murder. These guys were coming off a very, very difficult, stressful exercise and very frustrating for them in terms of them being able to have an engagement with the enemy and they were just ripe for the tragedy that happened. The massacre, I am not sure we have ever had an accurate count; I have heard as many as 500 to 600 civilians were just killed. The leadership was weak; Lt. Calley himself was fresh out of officer candidate school, didn't have any experience in the field and relied heavily on his senior enlisted personnel. They brought their own set of problems.

Q: The awful part was the cover-up that came at the higher level who were aware of it but wanted to protect the army or protect the chain of command or what have you.

WANLUND: That's right. It went from Lieutenant Calley up to Captain Medina and higher and higher in the command structure. I could find nothing to respect in that

episode because I think the Army did a serious soul searching effort to get, the way the Army will. They have very dedicated people. Once they have an assignment they will be very effective in carrying it out. Even in that episode, the My Lai incidents itself, there were signs of heroism. The helicopter pilot who landed his helicopter between a group of advancing U.S. military and some villagers who were trying to get away and he actually had his gunner train his machine gun on the Americans to get them to back off. That kind of thing did happen. It wasn't a clearly black and white situation.

Q: Was that what you did during your military experience?

WANLUND: I did that for a year and then my assignment there wound up and I got another Washington assignment. I was bureaucratically assigned to be adjunct general's office which is basically the clerical corps in the military and I got another job in Washington, this time working in the Army's sports office. They had a fairly extensive program which had a couple of functions. One of them was to maintain service sporting activities on bases overseas as a morale issue. The military also because the draft was still in effect, the army had managed to vacuum up quite a number of high caliber athletes, including professional basketball players, some Davis Cup level tennis players and some Olympic athletes. It was army policy to give these athletes time to train and to pursue their sports. They figured it was a morale building exercise on their part. They did that so there was sort of a sub culture of army athletes who really saw little of what you and I would consider normal army duty.

One of the athletes in that program was a guy named Stan Smith. Stan was a first class tennis player and a heck of a nice guy and he spent much of his career training for the Davis Cup and Wimbledon. When he wasn't doing that, he would be giving workshops, tennis seminars on U.S. military bases. It was what the military asked him to do.

Q: So you were pretty well settled in Washington, weren't you?

WANLUND: Yes, I was. I had been at GW and then stayed in Washington in the military.

Q: Did you give much to thought to what after the military?

WANLUND: Yes. By the time I had been drafted, although I had been in school I had also been working. I needed to get a couple more credit hours out of the way so I had been actually at that time working as a writer for the American Hospital Association and under the law, they were required to give me my job back when I returned from my military career and so they did. They hired me back in the old job. I was looking around for something else so I ended up doing editorial work and later public relations for another trade association in Washington, this one the National Society of Professional Engineers. It wasn't a technical organization; it was a professional kind of lobbying group for the engineering profession promoting higher standards and the code of ethics for professional engineers.

Q: So how long did you do that?

WANLUND: I did that for about four years.

Q: Did you feel this is the profession for you or what you wanted to do?

WANLUND: I enjoyed parts of the job. I had obviously gotten away from my idealistic inclinations. I was enjoying parts of it. I was traveling around the country really doing, seeing a lot of things I wouldn't have done ordinarily. I was very pleased to be working in the office. I had good coworkers and I ended up as director of public relations of that organization. That was kind of slick but I was getting kind of anxious to find something else to do so one day I was looking through the Washington Post want ads and there was a little ad for the Peace Corps and I thought, "Well, that sounds kind of interesting. I had thought about this" and so the next Monday I went down to the Peace Corps recruiting office downtown and filled out all the papers and a year later, they signed me up.

Q: Were you signing up for the Peace Corps as a cadre or to go to the Peace Corps per se?

WANLUND: To be a volunteer in the Peace Corps. I was one of a big group of generalists that the Peace Corps attracted and so they sent me off as an English teacher to Morocco, although I had been recruited to go to Bahrain. I thought going to the Arab world would be kind of interesting. I was waiting and waiting for my assignment to come through and came home one day and there was a big, fat envelope from Peace Corps. This must be my invitation to Bahrain so I opened it and it said, 'Congratulations. We are pleased to invite you to Morocco.' I was all set to say no but then I thought about it. Fortunately I had a weekend to think about it. I went off to training.

Q: Bahrain is a rather small place. Back in the 1950s I was a vice consul in Dhahran and we covered Bahrain and Bahrain didn't have an awful lot of space to putter around in.

WANLUND: No, that's what I gathered. Of course, I had been learning as much as I could about Bahrain before I went. Still, I had myself psyched up and ready to go. In a way, Morocco was kind of a letdown. I could have rejected it but I was, things worked out better. Morocco was a fascinating place to go.

Q: Where did you serve?

WANLUND: I served in a place called Nador which is on the Mediterranean coast. It's a provincial capital on the Mediterranean coast in the far north of the country and just teaching in a public high school.

Q: You were there from when to when?

WANLUND: I was there from 1977 to 1979.

Q: How did you find that? I would have thought most of the students were at least, their foreign language was basically French, wasn't it?

WANLUND: French was the dominant colonial language in Morocco. They did teach us Arabic, the Moroccan dialect of Arabic and at one point I spoke that better than I spoke any other foreign language but then where they sent me was actually a Berber town and although they certainly understood Moroccan Arabic, to the folks up there, it was described to me anyway that Moroccan Arabic was as much a colonial language as, or more appropriate in that part of the world, Spanish. It had been a Spanish protectorate. In fact, that is where Franco launched his civil war.

Q: What was the town like?

WANLUND: It was a town of 40 or 50,000. It was on the coast, there was some fishing. It was primarily an agricultural town. By that I mean it was a place where people in the surrounding farms would come in to get supplies and equipment and things like that. It was not a particularly industrial place. It wasn't what you would call bustling. It was a kind of a small, dusty place. There were a couple of paved streets, roads in the city but it was pretty basic. I and the other Peace Corps volunteers there were very well received. People were extremely friendly.

It's funny. We got there shortly around the time the hostages were taken in Iran [Ed: November 4, 1979] and we were all a little nervous about this, wondering how this might affect us.

As it turned out, not at all. The students, people I had most contact with would were sympathetic to us. It was actually a very good opportunity to talk to them about that version of Islamic fundamentalism that was just catching hold in Iran. Those folks when we were talking didn't want anything to do with that. They thought that was crazy.

Q: How did the Berbers fit in? I know going somewhat east along the coast, you run across a Berber area in Algeria where there have been conflicts. It hasn't worked well at all. How about in the Moroccan context?

WANLUND: There was a lot of bad feeling between the Berbers and the Arab Moroccans. It wasn't like having State Department contacts up there. I knew the people in the marketplace, I knew my students and I knew some of their parents, I knew my fellow teachers but you certainly didn't have contacts. For example, the people at the school administration, this was sort of a punishment tour for them. This wasn't something they looked forward to, in terms of their career development. They didn't like it there, they didn't feel comfortable there, and they didn't speak the Berber dialect very well. It was hard for them. They found it difficult. Not a friendly place.

Q: What were the students after with English?

WANLUND: English was a requirement for them to work; a language other than French was a requirement to pass the baccalaureate. This wasn't an elite high school by any means. This was a technical school. These were kids, they had the French system. These kids were going to go on to a vocational track. There were some who really wanted to get the baccalaureate and they worked very hard but the rest of the kids were doing it because they had to. You see it everywhere and these kids were no different. They were genial and they tried. Some of these kids were 19, 20, and 21 years old and they were just doing it because they had to.

Q: Were you sort of using your newspaper skills that you picked up to ask questions to try to find out what was going on?

WANLUND: There was some of that. We had a curriculum that we had to follow, were expected to follow. Peace Corps was very good about, most of us hadn't done any real teaching before so they taught us some pretty valuable techniques and how to fit into the Moroccan educational system. They loaded us down with textbooks and teachers' guides and lesson plans and that sort of thing but it became very clear we were on our own.

That's a good question. I never thought about it that way but yes, I suppose in order to illicit conversation with the kids, the students you had to do a lot of open questions and try to find out what they were doing, what motivated them to try to get them to respond to you.

We did stuff with music. Some of my advanced students, we did the lyrics to a Bob Dylan song that was popular at the time. That was fun for me and sort of fun for the kids, I think. About halfway through it I wished I hadn't gotten into it because there was a lot of slang, a lot of poetry that these kids weren't ready for.

Q: Did the outside world intrude? The embassy in Rabat is far away. Casablanca, was that your nearest official U.S. diplomatic post?

WANLUND: Casa was even farther further away than Rabat was. We were up in the northeastern part of Morocco, closer to Algeria than to most of the major cities in Morocco. However, what Nador had was proximity to Spain. We were actually about 12 kilometers down the road from one of the Spanish cities on the south side of the Mediterranean, Melilla. Melilla is one of these Spanish garrison towns that was founded in 1492 when Isabelle and Ferdinand pushed the Moors back across the Mediterranean they established these two beach heads in North Africa and they still hold them.

It was an odd situation for a Peace Corps volunteer, being that close to Western Europe. All we needed to cross the border was our green cards. We'd leave the donkeys and the unpaved streets behind and cross over into essentially 20th century Western Europe. That gave us access to Western news media in a way we would not have had elsewhere in Morocco.

Q: Did you feel you were preparing the students for anything or was this an exercise?

WANLUND: I think in large part it was an exercise. We were sort of going through the motions. Many of us became sort of cynical of our jobs as sort of cheap labor for the education ministry but I think anybody who has done any serious teaching will recognize that there are a couple of kids you click with and you really feel committed to those kids and you tend to work with them and you tend to think that somehow you have kind of helped them get along in a way that they wouldn't have otherwise.

I think more as a Peace Corps volunteer you are not a representative of the U.S. government and you mentioned our sort of distance from the capital and the embassy. I think a lot of volunteers take that for granted. You don't market yourself as a part of the U.S. foreign policy establishment. You are proud of your independence. It is probably safer for you in the long run to stay distinct from the embassy.

By the same token, you are very conscience of the fact that you are an American representing, whether you want to or not, the United States and I think I went over there, as most of my colleagues did, Peace Corps colleagues did, feeling sort of anti establishment, although we were certainly part of it, a part of the bureaucracy and not having very kind feelings toward official American policy.

I remember distinctly finding myself in a conversation with a guy. His bad English and my bad Arabic and Spanish and French, probably just getting drunker and drunker and I found myself defending an American establishment that I had felt very alienated from when I first came overseas. I guess we were talking about stuff like human rights and capital punishment and I found myself arguing, the best I could things that I probably would agree with him six months before. In a way I think that sort of helped guide me into the Foreign Service.

Our Peace Corps director in Morocco at the time was an unusually for the Peace Corps was a State Department officer detailed to the Peace Corps and was doing an excursion tour for a couple of years. Because I was somewhat older and by becoming somewhat more interested in foreign affairs, I would seek him out and he and I just got to be kind of friendly.

I don't know if you have come across Paul Moffat? I guess he was DCM and had done some work in Tel Aviv. He had been an ambassador in Southern Africa.

Q: He was the son of an ambassador. [Ed: Ambassador Moffat his been interviewed for this Foreign Service Oral History program.]

WANLUND: He could have been. That never came up in our conversation but he and I became friendly and he set me up, for example, with the PAO (Public Affairs Officer, the senior US Information Agency officer at post) in Rabat at the time and so we met in his office. I don't remember the guy's name but he made a very good impression on me. He was cynical, he was candid, he was forthright and I thought, gee, I could get to like this.

That was just one little step on the way that encouraged me to apply for the Foreign Service.

Q: While you were in Morocco teaching, were you instructed by the Peace Corps, to handle the subject of King Hassan very gingerly?

WANLUND: Now that you mention it, I don't recall any specific instruction about that. I think just in the course of the regular cross cultural education that Peace Corps gave us; I think we just automatically became sensitized to that. I don't recall anybody saying, "Stay out of political discussions." I think it just came naturally to us, if we did at all.

But because I didn't know very much about him, I think our conversations were mostly my asking questions about the royalty and the kingdom and how it all worked. I don't remember hearing a whole lot of hostility even up there in the Berber area from folks. I think they kind of liked him and a lot of them had gone on to the green march to colonize the southern, the Moroccan Sahara.

Q: Were you planning to try for the Foreign Service by this time?

WANLUND: Yes, I was. I was beginning to talk to Paul and getting to meet some people at the embassy. I decided I liked living overseas, I liked the kind of work I think they do and I like doing it for money so I took the written exam while I was in Morocco and passed it and then took the orals when I came back after my Peace Corps tour.

I stayed on for a couple of months in Morocco after my teaching gig had expired and actually worked for Peace Corps in Rabat on a volunteer basis for a few months.

Q: You were unencumbered, no wife?

WANLUND: No, no wife.

Q: I would assume in Morocco classes were either all female or all male, weren't they?

WANLUND: You would think that but they weren't. There were girls in all of my classes. Again this was kind of a vocational school so there weren't many. I think there were two in each of my younger classes and maybe four or six in my older ones. I was never aware of any tension between the boys and girls in those classes. Just because of the shortage of desks, the kids had to share desks and of course, the girls always sat with the girls and the boys sat with boys; that didn't seem unusual. The girls also were not very outspoken in the class.

Q: You stayed there for a while afterwards and then what?

WANLUND: I thought I would like to live in Rabat for a while but also I had a girlfriend there and I wanted to stay while she finished up her Peace Corps tour. Then I came back to Washington and I can't remember the exact sequence but I needed to find work so it

was a lot easier to find jobs in those days than it is now. I started out working for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and of all things, I was underscoring to you about my modest ability in math but I ended working as an accountant, real minor league addition and subtraction stuff. Actually it was a most interesting introduction to that part of work.

Q: Before we move on, while you were in Morocco did you run across, this is still the height of the hippie generation. I was in Greece about that time and we were getting the ones going through and getting arrested for hashish and they were all over the place and Morocco was one of the places the kids would go. Did you run across that much?

WANLUND: Sure, especially up in our area. We were up north of in the Atlas Mountains where a lot of the reef and hashish was coming from out of Morocco. There were a lot of world travelers that came through at that time on motorcycles and coming through on busses.

Q: There was quite a migration of young folks, not just Americans but Europeans and Australians and Japanese were going through and getting their hippie experience.

WANLUND: They would come through because we weren't on a train line but were on a bus line. We were a bus terminus and so you'd see a lot of them, just being American, being comfortable in Morocco but still being very starved for Western companionship. We would tend to seek these folks out. That was educational.

Q: And then from that you become an accountant.

WANLUND: Sort of an accountant. For about three months. I guess I should back up because I had managed to get Peace Corps Morocco to nominate me for a Peace Corps fellowship which would have allowed me to continue my Peace Corps career, not a cadre, but on the staff overseas. I wasn't chosen for that but in the course of my interviews for that I met one of the deputy Peace Corps directors who said, "We have a job for an editor here. Would you be interested? I think you've got a nice background for that, not only as a Volunteer but as a journalist." So I said, "Sure", so I applied and they hired me and I did that for a year after I had taken the Foreign Service orals but before they had actually laid me on. So I was the editor of the bi-monthly newspaper for Peace Corps volunteers for about a year. I was a staff of one and then I had a consultant who came in and did the layout and design for me for the paper but I did most of the writing.

Q: How did you find the Peace Corps atmosphere?

WANLUND: In Washington? I liked working there because most of the staff was former volunteers and it was a real comfortable kind of place. Folks would come in in clothes that they had picked up when they were overseas and they would periodically get together and cook lunch with southern African or South American kind of cuisine and it was a lot of fun and people with common interests and common backgrounds and in many cases, common motivations who were working for the government. Because of the

five year rule, meaning at that time you weren't allowed to work for the Peace Corps for more than five years at a time and then you had to sit out for five years, you could come back it you wanted, there was constant refreshment of people coming through.

In my case I was working up on the eighth floor, which was the director's floor and I was working directly for the director.

Q: Who was the director?

WANLUND: Dick Celeste, a very nice guy. [Ed: Celeste was Director of the Peace Corps, 1979-1981; Governor of Ohio, 1983-1991; and Ambassador to India November 1998-April 2001.] I got along with him extremely well but very political, a very political guy. He was committed to the Peace Corps, he liked what they did, although he had political ambitions and he found a number of opportunities to go on Peace Corps recruiting trips back to Cleveland and Cincinnati and Columbus to do his pitch and kind of keep his profile up. People were aware of it and nobody minded it. Dick was a very decent person. He was not particularly involved in what I did but supportive.

Q: You mentioned you had taken the Foreign Service exam. You took the written and passed it?

WANLUND: I took that and passed it in Morocco, went to the embassy and took it.

Q: You took the oral exam?

WANLUND: I took the orals in Washington shortly after I came back so that would have been, I can't remember when I did it but it was in 1980 sometime.

Q: Do you remember any of the oral exam that you were asked?

WANLUND: Yes, I do. It's a much different system now but when I was, when I took the written exam I was given the opportunity to compete for State or USIA and I chose USIA. It sort of fit my interests and my background.

In the orals, it was all USIA folks who were doing that and I remember we had a sort of a negotiating section of the exam where the hypothesis was we were kind of divvying up the ambassador's special fund and we each had a project. No single project was as much as the ambassador's special fund but any two together were more than, sort of a negotiation that had to go back and forth and compromising and that. There was the in box test. We were breezing through town, two hours to come into the office and look at our in box and prioritize the stuff and delegate the stuff, decisions and take action to different folks on the staff. I can't remember what else offhand but there was a written component to that. I remember the written question was, the premise was the movie Star Wars has an effect on kids growing up today as World War II fighter pilot movies had on kinds growing up in that era. Attack or defend this statement. It was something totally

obscure. I remember writing four pages on that. I think I defended it but that's about all I recall.

It was really an entire year before they accepted me into the Foreign Service.

Q: You came in in 1981?

WANLUND: In 1981, yes. We were first class let in under the…, Reagan had frozen government components as his first act as president and I remember calling up USIA training coordinator and asking saying, "How does this affect us? And her saying, "Oh, don't worry about it. This doesn't affect us at all; it's just for the civil service." I said, "OK" and then a couple of days later she called me back and said, "Well, you know, actually it does turn out it does affect the Foreign Service. Foreign Service entries are frozen as well."

That was fine for me, I had a job, I was in Washington, and I was all set. Peace Corps was happy to keep me working there until I was ready to begin but it did have an effect on my cohort, some of whom had given up their jobs in San Francisco and were driving across country with their families to start the process. So they showed up in Washington and of course had no jobs. USIA took care of them, put them on per diem for two months and then finally in March of that year the process moved on and we were inducted.

Q: How big was your class?

WANLUND: It was 17 people, I think.

Q: How did you find the composition?

WANLUND: It was really very variegated. There were a couple of lawyers, a couple of university professors, and one or two people right out of college. I think I was the only one who had been a journalist. Some had come out of industry. It was really quite varied, much more varied than I'd expected.

Q: Did you train with State Department people?

WANLUND: We had I think a week or two with the State Department A-100 class and that was it. That was our only exposure and I think the stuff we were exposed to was protocol, protocol in the sense of where you put the salad fork and just how to behave yourself in an embassy. Stand up when the ambassador comes into the room, that sort of stuff. There was no, there may have been some introduction into what a political counselor does, what a PAO does but that was essentially it. We may have gone off site for some sort of a bonding session but I am not even sure about that. There was very, very little direct contact with our A-100 colleagues.

Q: Did the introductory training cover specific jobs - the press, cultural affairs, publications - what we call public diplomacy today, or was it sort of general?

WANLUND: It was pretty general. We got, as I recall the training was about eight weeks and we really got the basic exposure to the kind of work USIA did. You remember in those days, we were very stove piped; we were very compartmentalized, at least in Washington. We learned about what the cultural side of USIA did, what the press side did. Not much in the way of trade craft. As I recall there wasn't very much of that at all. We learned about exchange programs and knew what those people and we knew who to contact in exchanges. We knew who to contact in the speakers program. We learned about press and publications, which was a huge program in those days. The posters that they would send around. We learned about the performing arts programs. We learned about the work of the press attaché, or the information officer.

In those days USIA had the world's greatest address in Washington. It was 1776 Pennsylvania Avenue and that's where USIA was headquartered. Up on the top of that floor they had a room that looked like it was designed by Peter Max, in fact it may have been. It was all psychedelic, surrealistic colors and swirls and sort of fantastic, fabulous art. We had some of our classes up there but it was actually, I do recall them telling us that this was designed as a reentry room for people living out in the field in the last five or ten years to come back and to ease them into 1980s American society. It was sort of the end of the hippie generation and there were a lot of changes that had gone on since some of these folks had gone out. At least that was the theory that was in play at the time.

Q: Who was the USIA director?

WANLUND: Charlie Wick.

Q: How was Wick seen? What were you getting about him at the time?

WANLUND: Wick was very close to Reagan personally and I think that counted a lot. Yet, I think, Wick was not deeply liked by most USIA people. He didn't seem to have, I don't think I ever met the man personally, so this is all second hand but the rap on him was he didn't know what we did overseas, he didn't have any interest, didn't really care very much, didn't travel but what he did have was clout, influence with the Reagan administration and he got a lot of money for technology for USIA and it, for better or for worse, really immersed USIA into television. We had a satellite TV, WorldNet kind of program. There were a lot of problems, probably philosophical as well as technical and strategic problems with television but it was, we were just introducing ourselves to using that medium in public affairs. I am not too critical of that. I think we are going to stumble and make mistakes and probably make some ham-handed mistakes along the way but it was sort of a way that USIA got into sort of late 20th century communications, beyond VOA (Voice of America), which at that time was still well respected and still very useful but was sort of technology was overtaking it. It was time to move on to something else. That's what television service at USIA did.

Q: Did you find yourself professionally where you wanted to go or what you wanted to do at that time?

WANLUND: It was all very exciting to me. My first post was Freetown, Sierra Leone. It wasn't my first choice of junior officer assignments. Remember in those days we were doing on-the-job (OJT) training. We would do our introductory junior officer training in Washington, followed by a little bit of language and then they'd send us off to do OJT in a post. So we were sent, I was married by this time, my wife and I, off to Freetown. Although it wasn't our first choice, it wasn't our last choice either. I think it was number four on our list of places. It seemed like urban West Africa was an interesting place to go.

Q: The capital, Freetown, was basically on a river bank.

WANLUND: And the airport was on the other side of the river. At that time the only way to get from Lungi, which was where the airport was to Freetown, was to by ferry and there were stories of, it didn't happen to me, but there were stories about the ferry getting lost in the fog without proper direction finding equipment and just heading up river and up toward the Atlantic before they actually found out where they were. It's too good a story to find out if it's true. It was a bit of a trial in that way.

The embassy did have an expeditor meet us at the airport and then took us there and brought us into the capital. We were prepared for something different. We had no idea what Freetown would be like.

In terms of the job, it was a one officer post and I was over complement there. There was a PAO and it wasn't a particularly busy place. There wasn't a very active speakers program or cultural affairs program. Our press program, although press is what I like to do, that's what the PAO wanted to do more than anything so I ended up doing events. It was in many ways a very sleepy little place. Economically, it was a basket case. I am glad I was there; we made some very good friends there, both among Sierra Leoneans and among the American staff. We left after about nine months and I was happy to leave but happy to have been there.

Q: What was the background of your wife?

WANLUND: My wife, like myself, is from Illinois. She grew up on a farm about 40 miles north of Champagne-Urbana. She went to University of Illinois. Her family, unusually for people in that situation, and unusual for central Illinois farmers, were very progressive. They would take family vacations out west in the Rockies and travel all around. They were very open minded, very broad minded people. I think as a result instead of the next generation growing up to inherit the farm and stay in that area, Martha and her three siblings went to the four winds. She has a sister in Seattle, another in Montana and a brother in Minnesota. She came out to D.C. She, like me, was a liberal arts major. When I met her, she was working for Common Cause and I met her because she had a coworker at Common Cause who was moonlighting as my consultant at the Peace Corps newspaper. Through Arlene, we got together and met daily and actually got married during my junior officer training program in Washington.

Q: Sierra Leone, what sort of government did it have?

WANLUND: It was a sort of a theoretically a democracy. It was really ruled by one person and although there were lots of tribal divisions and tensions in Sierra Leone, the president, Siaka Stevens, was a masterful politician in keeping the tribal interests in balance, in his cabinet and in the favors he gave out and just in the whole structure of things. There was a fair amount of small scale tension at the village and province level that really didn't spill over into national politics.

In the kind of ugliness that happened is Sierra Leone in the 1990s was just not evident when we were there.

Economically, it was an absolute basket case, as I said but there wasn't that kind of wide scale criminality or political tension.

Q: Wasn't the social structure similar to Liberia, where the elite class lived in Freetown and not much contact with the hinterland?

WANLUND: Yes, very much so. The ruling class, to the extent there was one were the Krio. They were the English speaking minority but they tended to be better educated and tended to run most of the public institutions. The business class was Lebanese, that was another issue, they just stayed out of people's ways, just went along with the corruption that was prevalent there.

The Krio were the English speaking minority that tended to be the opinion leaders in that society.

Q: After about nine months you are back. Where did you go?

WANLUND: Yes, we came back for home leave but took off almost immediately for the Philippines. We were in Davao City. USIA at that time had a small cultural center in Davao, which was in the far south of the Philippine archipelago.

Q: What was Davao like?

WANLUND: The residents will proudly tell you they are the largest city in the world and they are, in terms of surface area. It is huge and mostly actually banana and pineapple plantations. It again is a provincial capital. It was a major city in terms of the Philippine government. It had always had the character of the opposition to, at that time, the Marcos government in the Philippines. Consequently, the people who went down to represent government institutions tended to be either young, inexperienced people on the way up or older folks in their last job before retirement.

The institution that the people in that region had, the government institution they had most of their contact with was the military and that was usually pretty unpleasant.

One of the nice things about my job there was because I was the only U.S. government diplomat on the island, the nearest Foreign Service office we had was the consulate in Cebu. The nice part for me was I could pretty much pick my friends and contacts down there. I could identify the sort of emerging opposition as the people who were going to be the prominent ones in whatever happened after Marcos.

Q: You were there from when to when?

WANLUND: I was there from the late summer of 1982 until the spring of 1985.

Q: How stood the Marcos' regime at that time?

WANLUND: For most of those years it was in absolute control. Martial law had been lifted, technically but still it was, Marcos kept pretty good dictatorial control over the country. For what I could tell with the tacit consent of the U.S., we had our two military bases up there in Clark and Subic Bay.

We were willing to use pretty quiet diplomacy working with Marcos to try to get him to ease up a bit and I think with some success. I think at that time it very much appeared to be our policy that we would go along with Marcos.

Q: Was there any sort of insurgency, Islamic or Communist going on?

WANLUND: Yes, very much and I think that's one reason why we were willing to go along with Marcos' excesses in Manila because there was a Communist insurgency, the New Peoples' Army in the south and there was also the Muslim insurgency, the MNLF, the Moro National Liberation Front, also very active on Palawan. In fact, the two insurgencies as it was explained to me, actually agreed that they would parcel out Mindanao as their own separate battle grounds and not get in each other's way in the two regions; the Muslims taking the central Philippines and the NPA, the New People's Army taking the western and coastal areas.

Q: Were there attacks in the Davao area?

WANLUND: Occasionally there were NPA attacks, more or less low scale, low grade terrorist attacks, like a hand grenade in a marketplace. A year or two before we got there, there had been an attack on the cathedral in Davao, a couple of people had been killed, I believe. That was kind of a horrifying event. It was on Easter Sunday and for a predominately Catholic community, that was very hard.

Certainly in the outlying areas there was a lot of NPA attacks on the military and vice versa but there was nothing directed at the Americans. It was pretty much a good time to be an American. I was led to understand that the NPA had made a conscientious political decision not to go after the Americans because Americans were still pretty popular. As you know, at one time there was a pretty active statehood movement in the Philippines.

After I had been in country about a month or so my driver came in one day. This is the guy who did the video tapes and the film shows and drove the car around. He came in and looked a little worried and he said, "Sir, can I talk to you?" I said, "Sure." So I closed the door and he sat down and he said, "I was riding on a jeepney", that was the public transportation method that he got out to his home about 50 kilometers outside of Davao. He said, "I was riding on the jeepney last night and there was a guy sitting across from me and he was staring at me and he came over and sat next to me and said, "You are Cecilia, aren't you?" My friend, Cecilia said, "Yes." He'd never seen his guy, he didn't know him. He said, "You work for the Americans, don't you?" He said, "Yes." No point in denying it. He said, "You can tell your boss that he's OK. He doesn't have anything to worry about. We are not after him." He got off the jeepney.

That was their way of explaining to me that they weren't after me but I should just stay out of their way, which was probably good advice. In a perverse sort of way, that actually made me feel pretty good because I took that at face value. I should have known better, actually because at that time anybody who could get two or three people to follow them around in the jungle could call themselves an insurgent and be an insurgent leader. It didn't necessarily follow that what this guy said was party doctrine. In any case, I took it as such. I just tried to stay out of fire fights.

Q: What were you doing there?

WANLUND: It was in many ways the best job I had professionally because there was almost nothing I couldn't do. We were limited really by our imaginations. I had a staff of a whopping four people and by God, if I just mentioned casually that I was interested in possibly, perhaps doing something, I had to call them back to keep that from happening. I had to explain to them I really needed their guidance on was this a good thing to do in this society at this time and place. They would do anything to get something done; if it took money, they would find money. They weren't extortionists but they were so plugged into that community, they would find a way to get services in kind, they would get on auditorium space, they would get transportation, anything we would need, we could do.

We didn't as you can imagine have much of a budget in a little place like that but Manila was sympathetic to us and we would get speakers down there, and we used our imaginations a lot.

I ran across guy who was a defrocked Lutheran minister down there who lost his flock because he married a local Muslim girl but he continued to teach at a predominately Muslim university there. He came into town one day and I talked to him. It turned out he would be willing to go talk about the U.S. political system. He was somewhat of an expert on that so he and I teamed up and drove around the country and just talked about that to anybody who would listen to us.

We had quite an active media program. There were probably, in that little place, we probably had half a dozen daily or multi weekly newspapers. I took them seriously and worked with the editors and gave them stuff.

We had film showings, TV shows at our cultural center. We had a library open to the public.

I traveled around the island a lot and made a lot of contacts among the politicians and the political establishment. I had good contacts with the military there. They were kind of thuggish but they were decent to me.

Q: We had 100,000 troops there fighting the Japanese during World War II. Was there much residue?

WANLUND: Yes, in fact, I met a lot of Filipinos who had worked for the U.S. when they were trying to get the Japanese out during the war and a lot of them, that's where their English came from and a lot of them just continued to have very strong fondness for the United States. Even though, I have to say, we didn't treat them particularly well after the war. We sort of discounted all their service to us so I think individually they we got along with them just fine. I think as a government, we sort of turned our backs on them for years until just recently, just a couple of months ago I think Congress voted to put in the budget reparations for Filipino war veterans.

I remember one episode there. A guy came into my office and I didn't speak Filipino so through my secretary he told me he was a farmer, he worked on a farm out by the airport and he was working with in his fields and was plowing away and he plowed, first he plowed up I guess some U.S. military dog tags and dug a little further and he came up with, found a helmet and pretty soon, he dug up the whole skeleton on his farm. He said that he could tell that this had been the remains of an American soldier. I went out to his place to visit him. It was right at the end of one of the runways at Davao International Airport and he had set up a little shelter that had this guy's helmet, dog tags and the bones and a candle burning and a cross. It was like a little shrine to this guy.

I looked at the dog tags and thanked him. I took this information back and contacted the embassy and they put me in touch with graves registry in Honolulu and darned if they didn't send a team out to recover this guy's remains and took him back. They identified him as a guy who had crashed. It turned out the story was the Japanese had shot him down; he had been rescued by Filipinos and hidden. He died eventually two days later of his wounds.

I was so touched by this shrine that this farmer had set up for this guy which not only a cross but a little paper American flag that he put there. It was just so, I can't say typical but it was indicative of the kind of attitude that people had, a lot of folks had toward the Americans even then.

Q: Were you tasked or were you doing it sort of on your own to try to take a sounding of the survivability or the popularity of the Marcos' government?

WANLUND: I never felt any of that from Manila, never. It wasn't a part of my brief, of course. I was doing American stuff. I was doing American cultural stuff and had big election programs and talked to the Rotary Clubs. That never really came up except in personal conversations I would have. I mentioned I hung out with human rights lawyers and political oppositionists and they. Have you worked with Filipinos? They are the greatest people in the world. They are not direct. They wouldn't come to me and say, "Why is your government doing this?" They would say to me rather, "You might suggest to people in Manila and in Washington that they consider approaching the Marcos government in such and such a way." They would never confront me directly and I never felt obliged to come to them to gratuitously stand up for Marcos and what he stood for.

We had frequent visitors from the embassy, political section, and military, others who would come down. Paul Milband was a frequent visitor. Their interest was coming down and talking to the organized opposition, so they weren't interested so much in trumpeting the virtues of Marcos so much as talking to the opposition and making it clear we were happy to work with them when the time came, although the time wasn't on anybody's horizon in those days.

Q: You were the only sole American representative in Davao on Mindanao, which had a huge population, didn't it?

WANLUND: It did. It wasn't a densely populated place but there were several but Davao was maybe a couple hundred thousand within enormous city limits. There were a couple of other population centers; Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga, Catabato City, and a couple of other places that I would go regularly just to give talks or talk to the city officials and make contacts.

The problem there was not so much unwillingness of people to see me as transportation. There might be one flight to Zamboanga a day in each direction so I'd have to go and hang out there. I actually got to know the mayor of Zamboanga quite well. His name was Cesar Climaco and he was a staunch opposition politician to Marcos, a very smart guy, very plugged into the political environment there. When I met him, he had hair down to his shoulders but the story on Cesar was that his hair at one point had reached halfway down his back. He had white hair, very striking guy. He had made the comment that he wasn't going to cut his hair until Marcos lifted martial law which I guess he did officially around January 1981. So Cesar cut his hair down to his shoulders. "But you said you were going to cut your hair when he lifted martial law." He said, "But he only halfway lifted it."

Cesar Climaco had a tree house in his back yard and he said that was where he had been going to get away from his wife. He had a little extension cord out there and he had electricity and he would go out there and read and listen to the radio. He took me up to his tree house and we just sat there and talked. Some sort of a fruit, jack fruit or something was hanging and he said that was his ornament in his tree house.

Climaco was shot, shot dead on the street [Ed; November 14, 1984]. It was actually a Muslim soldier in the Philippine Army. It was actually a Muslim soldier, a Muslim guy who shot him, not for political reasons but it had to do with his cracking down on corruption in the free port area of Zamboanga. He was shot dead on the street. I had seen Climaco the day before. We came in on the plane from Manila together and we talked and made plans to meet later. I got off in Davao and the plane continued to Zamboanga and the next day he was shot.

Q: Had American culture penetrated in that area pretty heavily?

WANLUND: Oh, yes. Certainly American music and American films, not in a way the American government would approve. There were a lot of pirated video tapes that were making the rounds, some of them pretty crude. You could actually see where somebody had taken a camera, sat in the theater. You could see heads bobbing up and down on the screen but people were happy to get that.

Because of a long history of American presence there, diplomatic although we had a very small post we actually had had an American culture center there since 1949. English of course, was widely spoken because of the American occupation after the Spanish American War. American missionaries, nuns and priests and also Protestants were common, quite a few of them in the Philippines.

I would say the American cultural presence was strong. As I said, people liked Americans. A lot of those better off, would send their kids to the States to go to college, something that was sought after.

Q: Did you get involved in recommendations for visas and that sort of thing, even though that wasn't your job?

WANLUND: Quite often we would do that and we would have to have an arrangement worked out with the consulate in Cebu because that's where the folks had to go. I obviously, couldn't issue visas so we had a referral process. We had referral "ones" and referral "A"s. I can't remember which was which now but people got referral "ones" were real referrals, perhaps and referral "A"s were courtesy referrals. It was an important way to do business because it helped people save face. If you knew they were not going to get a visa or were pretty sure they wouldn't, you would gently try to counsel them away from it. If people wanted to go to the time and expense to go up to the next island and apply for a visa, then that's what they would do.

Q: You left there when?

WANLUND: I left there in 1985. The political changes were in the wind. Marcos was actually responsible for starting the revolution. The opposition leader, Benigno Aquino who had been in exile in the States for a long time, taught at Harvard had just come back to the Philippines. I don't know if you remember this, but Aquino was assassinated upon his return at the airport [Ed: August 21, 1983].

Q: And that happened before you left?

WANLUND: That happened before I left. In fact, I was having a film show, it was on a Sunday, and I was having a film showing in my library for a few of my contacts. We were watching something that Charlie Wick was pushing and I was in the office, which was odd for me on a Sunday and I got a call, which is even odder. It was a friend of mine, the head of a local paper and he said, "Ninoy just got shot." I said, "Oh, no. Come on." He said, "No, no, really."

Sure enough there was live coverage of the airport scene, so we, of course, turned off the video tape I was watching. Here I was with five human rights lawyers, watching this video tape and just watching this incredible scene unfolding on live Philippine television.

These guys all knew Aquino or ran in his circles and it was fascinating to watch their reaction to that, which was disbelief and just outrage.

Q: As you left did you have any feeling that the Marcos regime was on its way out?

WANLUND: It's funny you say that. I think I left just before the elections that Corazon Aquino and Marcos had contested [Ed: the snap election of February 7, 1986]. The popular conception was that Marcos had stolen the election and looked it like he was going to continue on in power. I had gotten a letter from a friend of mine, a director of one of the universities in Mindanao and I wrote him back. He was bemoaning this and I said, "Well, don't worry. My theory is Marcos is going to, he can't keep in power indefinitely but I think he is going to stay in power for a year and he is going to step down for reasons of health or family or something and then they are going to have another election and there will be an opposition in power." Well, two weeks later [Ed: February 25, 1986], Marcos was out of there. So much for my reputation for predictions.

Q: Where did you go next?

WANLUND: My next assignment was to the Consulate General in Hamburg, West Germany, Federal Republic of Germany, so I came back to FSI for language, in Rosslyn. I was in Hamburg from 1985 to 1989.

Q: What was your assignment?

WANLUND: I was the deputy branch public affairs officer.

Q: At one point we had a huge information program, but what was the USIA presence in German in the late 1980s?

WANLUND: You are right. I think at one time, shortly after the war in the 1950s we had somewhere close to 60 Amerika Haus around Germany and of course these were cultural, information centers.

Q: It was sort of part of the reformation program.

WANLUND: Exactly, kind of a re-education approach. By the time I served in Germany in the late 1980s, I think we were down to six or seven Amerika Haus around the country. That was just sort of a natural attrition, both because it was perceived the need wasn't there to have such an extensive operation in Germany and also for reasons of cost and expense so we had Amerika Haus in the major population, industrial and other centers of Germany.

Hamburg was important to the United States. It was certainly important for German capital but also from USIA's standpoint, it was a major media capital. Germany had decentralized largely after the war. Much of the financial industry being in Frankfurt, the judiciary was someplace else and Hamburg managed to get the media and so that was important to us. Media like national media, in fact, internet media with an international reach, like Die Zeit and Der Spiegel had their headquarters in Hamburg.

Q: Who was the consul general when you were there?

WANLUND: Pierre Shostal was the consul general when I got there. He was a very experienced, very interesting guy and after Pierre left, Jim Whitlock came as CG.

Q: As the deputy branch public affairs officer what was your piece of the action?

WANLUND: My piece of the action was primarily to maintain the cultural activities. My boss, Donald Hauger, was the branch public affairs officer, but now deceased. He preferred to handle the press and thought it was more important. I did the cultural stuff; the speakers, the exchanges and our library to the extent when they needed supervision. They were very much a self contained unit and very capable people.

It was also at that time that USIA was introducing the its world net system of international television broadcasting, satellite TV and so Don asked me to sort of oversee the establishment of that in Hamburg, which was interesting and a lot of fun. We put in the big, huge satellite dish in our parking lot. It was quite an undertaking to try to introduce that to a very sophisticated media already in Germany.

Q: Let's take bits and pieces and put them together. During the mid-1980s when you were there, how would you describe Germany, the role of the public, the, people you were working on, their attitude toward the United States?

WANLUND: I think bifurcated. There were, I think the older generation were generally inclined to look favorably on the U.S. I think any distress that had built up during the Second World War was pretty much dissipated by that time by American actions. The United States was certainly perceived as Germany's protector from the Soviet empire, just across the river.

By the same token the younger generation not untypically of course, was very skeptical of the United States. We used to try to think of all sorts of excuses for that; one was those who were teaching the younger generation, people who were college students in the 1980s had been university students in the late 1960s when much of the younger part of the world was sort of getting its back up against the United States in Vietnam and other real and perceived problems so the college generation in the 1980s were being taught by those who had sort of cut their political teeth on anti-American feelings of the late 1960s. The 1968ers were a defined generation back then. They were very influential. The younger generation, who were our principal audience in terms of trying some of our messages, whatever they were tended to be very skeptical of the United States.

Q: How old were you about then?

WANLUND: When I got there in 1985 I was 38.

Q: Were you sort of tasked with connecting to this new generation? What were we doing with this new group coming up?

WANLUND: The Amerika Haus in Hamburg was our cultural center and that was a very nice facility and it happened to be on the campus of the University of Hamburg, in fact, in a building owned by the university, which let us use the facilities for free, which certainly was an important gesture to us. So we could have programs at the Amerika Haus that were convenient for students to get to, the students and faculty. It was our challenge to try to get programs in there that might attract the student audience so we would occasionally have lectures there, we would have performance artists, and we would have occasionally concerts there. We had a small display space for art exhibits in the lobby. We were doing what we could, not in a very sophisticated way to find a way to connect with these student audiences. For example, for issues that lent themselves to intellectual discussion or for example, arms control, we would frequently bring in a speaker from the State Department, the Pentagon or a think tank and actually bring them into a classroom for a seminar type discussion, something we thought would be better communicated in a smaller setting rather than in a large group.

We sort of tailored our approach to fit the audience and fit the message we were trying to get across.

Q: What sort of messages were you trying to get across?

WANLUND: That was certainly the darker days of the Cold War or the end of the Cold War. I think our typical message that the United States offered a positive alternative to Soviet-style government was the key to it. There were certainly practical issues. At that time I guess we were pulling out the Pershing Missiles we had stationed in West Germany and that caused some political upheaval in Germany. The U.S. defensive posture in Germany was important.

We were also, I think trying to counter the perception that the U.S. was culturally intolerant, that we didn't practice the human rights virtues that we preached to other countries. We were trying to overcome those kinds of negative stereotypes.

Q: How would you characterize the University of Hamburg, the campus, the spirit there because in some countries the universities tended to be sort of hotbeds of leftist leanings where students graduated and immediately became diehard conservatives. What were some of the trends going on at the university?

WANLUND: I think generally the students in Hamburg tended to be left of center. I think that's sort of a given in college students most places. They were the ones that tended to be very skeptical of our message.

I was thinking about that the other day. I remember there was an episode in Hamburg in the late 1980s, I forget when it was but it was a time when we were, the United States was active in Central America in supporting anti-communist movements in Central America. I got a call from the consulate embassy's duty officer saying that there was a protest and the Amerika Haus was being occupied by leftist students.

I called my boss, informed him, and got on my bicycle and rode down to Amerika Haus to see what was going on. Well, it was true; there was a group of 15 or 20 students up, or student age people, up on the roof of the Amerika Haus and they had unfurled a banner about justice in El Salvador or something like that. They were all very peaceful. The police were there; I think the police probably outnumbered the folks on the roof of the America house. I am not sure how they got in but the demonstration was peaceful and I remember thinking at the time this was a very considered group because they had waited until an American holiday, I think it was Labor Day. They knew the building wasn't going to be occupied, at least not by the Americans so there was no danger of anybody getting hurt, intentionally or inadvertently. That wasn't an issue. They were just making a statement. I guess they were there for a couple of hours and then they came down.

The police, the ones in riot gear, were a pretty scruffy looking lot and they were kind of rough on these kids when they came down; it wasn't pretty. There were a couple of arrests. We obviously never pursued it. It was a peaceful protest that we couldn't in good conscience object to.

Q: Was anyone, not only at the university but sort of on the left or something you might say holding the case of the Soviet Union and East Germany and all?

WANLUND: There was some of that on campus. It was noticeable, but not particularly large or influential movement as far as I could tell. They wouldn't seek me out by and large. I certainly found other programs to do, other than seeking out the Spartacus movement or the young Communists. They didn't want much to do with me anyway. You would see graffiti on campus. It didn't touch the Amerika Haus or individuals that worked there.

I talked to the foreign nationals that worked there and they never felt any particular menace from students or anywhere else in Hamburg. It was pretty much self-contained. I don't know how many went on to become rock ridge conservatives but as far as I could tell in my four years in Hamburg it didn't have lasting staying power.

Q: How about the library? Was there any controversy within the Amerika Haus, which the library was the guts of the thing, wasn't it? Did they have any problem with books? You know from the left or the right, particularly from the right within the United States or not? You didn't have any of this almost censorship type issues?

WANLUND: No, we never felt any of that. That was certainly an issue back in the 1950s which was I think one of the reasons USIA got established in the first place, to take our cultural activities out of the State Department and there were laws and things that were established to sort of keep propaganda away from the American public. Certainly, by the mid-1980s I never saw any overt pressure on us to limit or restrict the kind of materials that we put in our libraries.

What I honestly can't tell you is whether there was a sort of a substance issue involved. We would look at the library materials that came in. We consciously or unconsciously chose what we felt were responsible, middle of the road kinds of magazines and newspapers for the library. I think the books available to the public represented a fairly good cross section of the political spectrum from left to right.

Q: Let's talk a little about this 'WorldNet'. What was this and how did it operate in your area?

WANLUND: For a while they were actually putting on daily newscasts, five days a week that looked very much like news you might see on a U.S. television network in terms of having a well-dressed, handsome moderator, a good looking woman, very well coiffed and presentable and I think to a good extent, they tried to pattern their news presentation on the Voice of America. That is, they tried to be very objective; they would produce positive and negative news about the U.S. This was intended to be made available so that broadcasting entities around the world could actually just take this and put it on the air themselves as if it were happening right in their own studio. I am not aware that that ever happened, anywhere, certainly it didn't happen in Germany. We didn't really even try to promote that. It wasn't going to fly in a media savvy place like that.

They also would occasionally show films to which we had broadcast rights. Every year they used to put on <u>It's a Wonderful Life</u> around Christmas time, again for possible broadcast. We usually didn't have much of an audience.

Where we did use it thought was that they also had a, they allowed a, I shouldn't say allowed in the sense of giving permission. They arranged satellite TV interviews between audiences overseas, journalists overseas or specialty audiences like academics with American connections, generally in Washington but not always that had a message to give either on a matter of U.S. policy, or promotion of U.S. culture and that sort of thing.

Those occasionally were quite interesting. Those were, they were a little awkward and cumbersome but they occasionally produced 30 second or minute long segments of an interview that would make their way on to German television, the newscasts. We felt quite proud of ourselves when we accomplished that.

Q: Actually it is quite a good idea of communication. Where did Hamburg fall within the German political spectrum?

WANLUND: Hamburg is traditionally a left of center city, politically in the European sense. It has always been a Social Democratic government in the city.

Q: What's the paper?

WANLUND: Die Welt tended to be more conservative in the American sense. It was actually published by the Axel Springer publishing group in Berlin.

Q: How would you characterize the faculty at the university because I think things were changing at the time but I have heard so many European faculties were sort of very dusty and Herr Professor would appear, read yellowed notes and then disappear and the students would take notes or maybe show up to pass the final exam. There wasn't much dialogue back and forth. I think times were changing.

WANLUND: That's true but what you are describing though was something that when I talked with American exchange students they always found very puzzling how the professor would always walk in 15 minutes late, it was known as the academic quarter hour, the period of grace that the professor always took advantage of, stood up at his lectern, read his notes and then left; no discussion with the professor. Students took notes. The actual learning and education took place was in seminars where the students would discuss with each other or maybe the teaching assistant and very rarely, but occasionally with the professor.

Yes, you are right. The times were changing and frequently we worked with professors who had had experience teaching in the U.S. or experience with the U.S. educational system and had seen the value of that kind of what we would consider the freer academic style in the classroom. We were very I think very effectively able to work with professors like that. We could bring in speakers, experts from the United States in political science or economics or business or whatever the topic was and actually have discussions. Sometimes it was harder for the students to get used to that kind of being able to interact directly with an authority figure that was brought in from the outside but they generally got over that very easily. That was really quite rewarding and I think that is where we had our biggest impact in the classrooms.

Q: Were there other aspects? Were you able to get out to the smaller towns, villages and all? It was Hanover, wasn't it?

WANLUND: Hanover actually had its own Amerika Haus so we didn't tread.

To answer your question, we got out as much as we could, and that was certainly part of the job I enjoyed the most, getting out to the other university and media centers or sub centers in our area of responsibility, for example Schleswig-Holstein.

Q: During this time, Reagan was president had the changes with Reagan and Gorbachev were beginning to get along rather well, weren't they?

WANLUND: Yes.

Q: Was that having any resonance in Germany where you were?

WANLUND: The people I would talk to and the media accounts I would read tended, as I recall, to play up the notion that this was sort of an odd couple; you know Reagan coming from the right end of the political spectrum seeming to get along quite well with Gorbachev. They practically had the breakthrough in Iceland that was walked back by advisers on both sides. That was certainly remarked on in Germany. I don't believe it led Germans, at least the ones I was familiar with, didn't lead them to think more positively or more kindly toward Reagan. They had the impression of a guy who was not fully in control of his faculties and was more of a showman than a statesman.

Q: I assume that Central America had a great deal of our actions there and particularly on the left had aroused a great deal of anti-Americanism. Was this sort of mainly the focus, would you say?

WANLUND: Yes, I think so. I think that was where the left tended to demonize the U.S. in terms of our support for the Contras and the perceived actions of the U.S.; the CIA, Kissinger in Latin America in general.

Q: I assume that all of you were aware that Germany was going to unite within a few years.

WANLUND: Oh, yes. We all knew that. Actually, after I left Hamburg and I was home, I was about to get on to my next assignment. I was home on a weekend washing the car and I was taking a break, looking at the Washington Post and there on the back page of the front section was an AP interview, a tiny, maybe six or seven paragraphs. AP had done it with then Ambassador Vernon Walters. In it Walters was quoted as saying that yes, he could see Germany probably uniting within the next five years. This was 1989, probably September and I looked at that and said, "Gee, poor old guy. He is believing his own propaganda." And I thought, "He's got to say that." Of course, two months later everything had turned upside down.

Q: He was about the only one, of figures who were in responsible positions, I won't say he didn't call it because he was thinking a much more gradual process, but things were moving so fast.

WANLUND: Yes, and you are absolutely right, he nailed it. He had it. Sure, he was a little conservative in his estimate but he was way ahead of the rest of us.

It was fascinating. I remember when the Wall came down and having had a fresh experience even in the West and then coming home and just hearing that and seeing it on live television and just pandemonium, just the joy.

Q: Did you get a chance to go into East Germany?

WANLUND: Not on that tour. My wife and I and our kids drove up to the border but not at a place where we could cross and just looked at it. We thought we would never see a day when we could.

Q: I did the same with my wife. This was back in 1956 and 1957. How did you find German society? You know, people you met? Did you find there was much mixing?

WANLUND: Hamburg is a very wealthy city, a well-to-do city. My second daughter was born there in a little German clinic. My first daughter was born in the Philippines in a Philippine hospital and so as a parent your friendship and relationships both within the diplomatic community and outside tend to revolve around kids; you meet people at playgrounds or school functions and you sort of bond in that way. The people we would come across socially in that sense, I am not talking about embassy representation events, and we had something in common with them. It wasn't really political sense. We found Hamburgers, contrary to their reputation, at least in Germany, very friendly, very forthcoming, warm, correct, proper, but certainly not cold and aloof. We still have good friends in Hamburg.

Q: How was the German situation as you prepared to depart?

WANLUND: Well, we were on the summer transfer cycle; June, July. The protests were certainly underway in East Germany but this was sort of a periodic thing and we just assumed it was the Soviet backed regime was letting them blow off steam.

Q: The summer thing, so many East Germans went to Czechoslovakia and hoping over the wall of the West German embassy but this was a summertime affair.

WANLUND: I certainly didn't think it was going farther than that.

Q: Where did you go next?

WANLUND: I came back to Washington for two years. First, I had a brief tour in our international exchanges office, but then moved to USIA's Office of European Affairs where I was a USIA desk officer for Benelux, Italy, the Vatican, and Malta. Sort of a Holy Roman Empire desk.

Q: In my interviewing I have found State Department Foreign Service officers when they get a desk job, it's got a lot of policy meat to it, at least around the periphery. But when USIA officers come back it was more a nuts and bolts type operation with not as much responsibility as when they went out to the field. In a way it just seemed sort of an interlude before you got back in the action. Did you have that feeling?

WANLUND: Yes, I think that's fair, at least in my case. I had very safe, wealthy and stable countries in my particular portfolio. I saw my job as making sure they had the information from Washington they needed and that included gossip as well as policy stuff to help the PAO (Public affairs Officers) and other officers at post sort of keep in touch with what's going on back here in Washington and also making sure they had the money they needed to carry out the programs.

In the case of a couple of my posts, Italy in particular, and the bilateral post in Brussels, very experienced officers, also in the Netherlands, very experienced officers who knew certainly far better than I how to get, how to squeeze money out of USIA. I was seen as the person to help them get through things.

My contact with my State Department colleagues was very limited. I would go to the meetings, the EUR meetings, for example once in a while and I would drop by the various desks once in a while but it wasn't a regular contact. When we had to clear stuff, we would do that through cables and memos. It was a very fleeting contact.

By the same token, colleagues working in Eastern European affairs, the Soviet Union at the time, the former Soviet Union, they were a lot more involved in policy things than I was on western European affairs.

Q: Were there any sort of issues, particularly with Italy? You were dealing with a time all of a sudden the world we know was falling apart. Although Italy wasn't directly affected, it certainly Communism which had always been a, you know, 25 or 30% of the vote was no longer, I mean it was a European, it was a different communism but still, there was no longer the great attraction from the East. Did you see a change in how we dealt with Italy?

WANLUND: Not from my perch in Washington. I know my colleagues in Rome and in the consulates were much more directly involved. My recollection of that period and it certainly is not foolproof was that I think they were, my sense was the problems they were facing were much like those that the U.S. foreign policy establishment was facing as a whole, that is trying to make sense of these changes, how they would affect us in terms of our bilateral and regional relationships and how we could best take advantage of it. What were our new goals? What were our objectives?

Q: There was a real kind of rethinking there.

WANLUND: I got the sense that we were marking time. Not that people weren't busy, just working like crazy. I have a lot of respect for what they were doing but it was very hard to determine what the real message was going to be.

Q: East, West, nobody knew.

WANLUND: I think there is some virtue not knocking ourselves out to get across a message that wasn't particularly comprehensive.

Q: I think too we were lucky George Bush; H. W. Bush was president who was squelching any triumphalism aspect which I think was a very sound policy. We weren't spending a lot of time crowing about how great we are but trying to give the Soviets, at that time sort of a dignified way of dealing with their crisis.

Any discussion, I realize by this time you were mid-career officer, but were people sitting around the lunch table and saying "Where are we going", or "What does this mean?"

WANLUND: Yes, there was. There weren't a lot of answers coming out. There was a lot of discussion among my peers about what this all meant for us, both in personal terms, what's our career going to look like after this, not in the sense of apprehension but just, it's just going to be so different than what we thought our career was taking. Also just in terms of policy, there was certainly that euphoria that I think was affecting most, many Americans at the time. It's a bold new world out there. The possibilities and potential is just endless. This is really a chance for the world, not just for the United States but the whole world to really take stock and move onto a into a very positive territory that we never even imagined just a few years before.

Q: So after your time in Washington, where did you go?

WANLUND: I went to Berlin, I went back to Germany. It was my first trip to Berlin so I hadn't had the benefit of seeing it before the Wall came down. This was 1991 and I was stationed there until 1995.

Q: What was your first impression of Berlin when you got there?

WANLUND: I think two things: first of all, even in West Berlin there was still visible damage from World War II, bullet pock marks in the building facades and even rubble that hadn't been cleared away. It was out of sight but for example, there might be the façade of a building standing but behind it, it was still rubble that hadn't been cleaned up since 1945, since the battle for Berlin.

I think the more overpowering image, not an original thought, was just the enormous difference that existed even then between the relative opulence of West Berlin and the fairly rundown and shabby side of East Berlin. It was beginning to change, of course, but still the East still gave the impression of still being sooty, dark, these are just impressions but that's what came through to me.

I remember going up to a large park in East Germany and this huge stature of a Russian soldier there and even that was oppressive. Part of this was the intellectual historical baggage I was bringing with me but there was the, my mental image of that part of Germany was dark, sort of hazy, foggy.

Things were changing. I remember standing on Friedrich Strasse, right really near, in East Berlin but close to the West and I counted the building cranes and construction cranes and there were 20 of them in 360 degrees so you could see that work was being done all over the place. It was progress, but slow progress.

Q: What was your job?

WANLUND: I was the press officer for the embassy office in Berlin.

Q: By that time when you got there in 1991 was Berlin the capital of Germany?

WANLUND: Berlin was the capital but the seat of government was still in Bonn so the government and therefore the embassy was still in Bonn. We had a, I guess they couldn't really decide what to call it. It was something more than a consulate but it wasn't the embassy so they called it the 'U.S. embassy Office, Berlin'. Our headquarters was in the former embassy of the German Democratic Republic in East Berlin, eastern Berlin by that time.

By that time the Amerika Haus which was our cultural center was in West Berlin. When I got there and I think for almost a year afterwards, when I wanted to call my colleagues in the cultural section it was an international call, even though I was only about two or three miles away.

Q: Because the Amerika Haus program had been a great success, I would have thought we would have put an Amerika Haus in East Berlin. Was there a sense of moving our operations from West to East or not?

WANLUND: Yes. In terms of Berlin because by that time the city was united, there was no thought given as far as I know to relocating the Amerika Haus to East Berlin. I think now we would probably set up something like an American Corner where a virtual Amerika Haus in eastern Berlin to make it more accessible to folks over there. That wasn't a consideration in those days.

While I was there we were establishing an Amerika Haus in Leipzig and in fact, we had an Amerika Haus director who was based in Berlin because we had no physical structure for her to work out of in Leipzig and so she just basically worked out of her car. She and her German colleague would travel all over their area of responsibility which was Leipzig and points south and doing university programs, bring in speakers, doing what a cultural officer does, a press and cultural officer does just without the benefit of having an office in her area to work out of. She was peripatetic, to say the least.

Q: You had your office in East Berlin. Was there a problem or were you integrating the East and West German Foreign Service nationals?

WANLUND: That was an issue. I think the culling of the FSNs had, that is those who had been considered not necessarily reliable employees had taken place fortunately before I got there. I didn't have to live through that. I do remember my predecessor, shortly after I got the assignment to go to Berlin but before I had gone out, had called me and we were talking about the job and he said, "You know, one of the things you are really going to like about Berlin is working with this one foreign national. He's just great, he knows everybody in town. He's a talented speechwriter, he's totally bilingual. He's outgoing, he's connected. You are really going to like this guy." A couple of months later he was busted for being a KGB agent [Ed: translated in English as Committee for State Security, this was the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its break-up in 1991], this FSN. As a result I think there was very little carry over from the operation in East Berlin to the unified office.

Q: Did you get any feel in your work about dealing with East Germans versus West Germans?

WANLUND: Yes, I did, in a way that I really hadn't expected. First of all, the rule of thumb was if you met someone who had been working in the old East Germany and if that person spoke good English, you'd assume they probably had some political connections with the old regime and you couldn't or shouldn't necessarily trust them. That was probably an overstatement but that was certainly perceived at the time.

What I found, my work was primarily with journalists in print and broadcast, was that there was a great curiosity about the United States. The people who had risen or migrated to the ranks of editor for example in an East German newspaper, these were the people generally who had headed up in the old regime, had headed up a non controversial, non political part of the newspaper; they might be the society editor or the sports editor, someone without any political flavor but not someone who ran the economic section or the political section because they were probably party hacks. These were folks who were chosen, these new editors were chosen by the rank and file of the newspaper so these people knew who was doing what so they knew who they wanted to be in charge. They didn't want someone related to the old style of doing things. These were generally very smart people who were not necessarily steeped in politics and economics but they were, I found them very curious about the United States, very open to what we had to say. You know, they had certainly heard all the propaganda about the United States but were smart enough to know nothing could be that bad. I felt very well received and people were interested in what we had to say, which meant for me, the pressure was on. I had to be very factual, informative in the kinds of things we provided.

Q: Were we able to cough up extra money to get the East Germans who had been cut off to go to the United States on visitors program?

WANLUND: To a certain extent but not so much as those that were coming out of the other Warsaw Pact states like Czechoslovakia and Poland. The perception in Washington and probably with good reason was that East Germany was being pretty well taken care of by West Germany. They didn't need our money; we could put our money better elsewhere and good reason for thinking that. Within the budget we had to work with in Germany, I think the East Germans got more than equal treatment but the clear recognition that we needed to reach out to these folks who hadn't had any friendly contact with Americans for 50 years, since before the war.

You might recall USIA used to run a series we called NATO tours. These would bring journalists from different countries to Brussels for three days or a week to get a firsthand look at what was going on in NATO. In terms of western Germany we had pretty much given those up, but we still did that in eastern Germany so I ran a lot of programs running east German journalists to bring them to Brussels for three days of exposure to what the U.S. Mission was doing there, what the German Mission was doing there, how the politics on the military side worked together. It was actually very useful. When we talked to journalists afterwards, they almost always remarked on the fact that they had always assume that NATO worked the way the Warsaw Pact had; that is, Russia called the shots and the other countries went along with it. They were surprised to learn what a consensus organization really did and how the U.S. was influential but not the dictatorial force in NATO. I think if nothing else that was a very valuable lesson to learn, how we conducted our overseas business.

Q: Was there debate in our embassy or our offshoot of the embassy, if you want to call it that, about whither NATO? Or was it too early days?

WANLUND: There was certainly a lot of debate in NATO over NATO. Just talking to political colleagues in Berlin there was a certain amount of scoffing when NATO would sort of experimenting with taking on environmental protection, or things that were definitely outside the traditional scope of NATO's activities. The perception was on the part of many was that NATO was looking for a new job.

I wouldn't put it quite so harshly; I felt NATO was just trying to figure out where its challenges were coming from and where it could be most useful. I had a lot of chance to talk with NATO officials and I could sort of see they were seriously looking at their own destiny, the organization's destiny.

No, there was serious thought, at least in my little part of the U.S. diplomatic world that maybe NATO was just going to go away. It had done its job and it didn't have a job anymore and it was going to go away. Maybe replaced by something else, maybe some EU version of that.

Q: The Soviets were pulling their troops while you were there.

WANLUND: Yes.

Q: How did that play? Was it something you watched from the sidelines or did it involve us or not?

WANLUND: It probably involved our military quite a bit and the intelligence folks. It was something I was aware of but you passed by a Soviet military instillation in East Germany or you would see Soviet troops on the street and the impression I had was just sad. These are sort of sad sack looking guys, just on the roaming around without much to keep him busy. They were still pretty much confined to base.

Where I really felt it was one of my early trips out of Berlin I was calling on media, newspaper and a radio station up in Schwerin, up in the north on the Baltic coast. At that time I had an office and a car so I could drive myself up and it was a couple hours away. I was listening to the news and the Soviets, this would have been 1991 or early 1992, and it was the Soviet military revolt against Gorbachev. They had essentially put him under house arrest in his dacha in the Crimea and which brought Yeltsin to prominence and later to power. There was a lot of concern on the German radio station, what does this mean for the Russian troops in Germany? Are they going to rise up? Are they going to backing their chain of command back in Moscow? What does all this mean? Listening to this I have the feeling I am not going to have any lack of conversation topics when I get up to Schwerin.

So I got to the newspaper office, went in and sat down with the editor. He was a very serious looking guy; I had never met him before. He was quite nervous. He had his political editor, he had his business editor, and he had a city editor there. He was doing all the talking but they were very guarded and very cautious in what they were saying.

He got off the topic of the military development because they didn't have any information on what was going on in the Soviet base there. and in the, I guess about half an hour into our conversation his secretary came in and said, "You've got a phone call" and so he said, "Well, I am talking" and she said, "No, I think you should take this." So he said, "Excuse me" and he went out and took the phone call in the outer office.

He came back in and he looked visibly relieved. He said, "It was the Soviet military commander calling just to say, "I want you to know we are not going to do anything here at our base. We are not supporting this military operation in Moscow. We are not planning to occupy the city so everything is going to be quiet here in Schwerin. It was clearly something that had played on his mind and was very important to him.

Q: Had Yugoslavia started to break up while you were in Berlin?

WANLUND: Yes, it had. I think it was breaking up. I think the NATO bombings were going on while we were there. In fact I remember thinking, yes, because Clinton, to my way of thinking Clinton had sort of gone reluctantly into this. As I recall, his reasoning was this is really something the Europeans can take care of. You don't need the United States in on this.

Q: Well, the Europeans said this is a European matter and we will take care of it and we were delighted.

WANLUND: Yes but then they we didn't do anything. Finally we motivated NATO and as I recall very little objection on the part of the Europeans to this.

Q: It is a sad commentary on sort of the West that the horrors that came out of this that we were all basically indecisive and nobody wanted to get involved.

WANLUND: I think it was a transition we were going through that affected us in so many ways. But you are right; but my impression of many of the people who were critical of the United States for getting involved in political disputes in other countries were also the ones who were leading us and encouraging us to get involved.

Q: Oh, yes. In a way it showed the primacy of the United States. The Europeans just couldn't get their act together. First they said it was their responsibility which made very good sense and they had the power to do it but they just couldn't.

WANLUND: (Marion) Gräfin Dönhoff, who was the publisher of Die Zeit, said something I thought remarkably prescient; she said, Germans' concern over an issue and I am paraphrasing her badly, is inversely proportionate with their proximity to it. That is, they could get outraged about apartheid in South Africa, they could get enraged about what the United States is doing at home but the closer it got to German soil, she went on to say that the more nuances they could see and the less militant they would be about the problem.

Q: During the time you were in Berlin were there sort of demonstrations against the United States?

WANLUND: No, not while I was there. The United States, the biggest American visibility there was our military presence of course and we had already started to withdraw the troops from there. Our military wasn't the kind of irritant to, well, again, it was sort of schizophrenic. Many Berliners all through the Cold War certainly valued the American presence there even though we even described ourselves as 'speed bump'. If the Soviets really had decided to invade Germany, the Berlin brigade wouldn't be much of a deterrent but they appreciated the symbolism and the American commitment there that the Berlin brigade represented.

There were irritants like tanks went in through town doing their exercises, running over curbs and destroying sidewalks and that was a problem but you know, I think most Berliners put up with that. When I was there, there wasn't a particularly organized protest against the United States.

George H.W. Bush was seen as a, in comparison to Clinton, a much more benign presence. He wasn't the kind of president that generated outrage even among the German left, at least not very publicly. In 1992 Clinton was elected and he was seen as a very

positive alternative by the same people. There wasn't any major protest against the U.S. on that quarter either.

There had been bombings of the nightclub and disco in the 1980s but those were just bad memories by that time.

Q: The Baader-Meinhof gang wasn't going in Germany at the time? Tape 3 1:22:53

WANLUND: No, they had been pretty mopped up by the Germans.

Q: Were we looking sort of from an American point of view with concern about the Turks or others in Germany and the fact that they didn't seem to be getting assimilated and all? Was this a problem?

WANLUND: Probably not to the extent that it should have been in hind sight. I don't recall we making a major political issue of Turkish assimilation in the German society. I think we saw it as a way for ethnic Germans to look at some of the things they were critical of in the United States. For example, the racial tensions in the U.S. We saw the problems that the Germans were seeing with the non assimilation of Turks as something instructive, something they could look at on the home front that would cause them to look with, if not sympathy, at least with understanding of the complexity of the issues that we were dealing with domestically in the States.

To the extent that we would direct our cultural programming, for example, to Turkish audiences, there wasn't much of that.

Q: Were there any, you weren't there during the repulse of the Iraqis in Kuwait but were there any, was there any particular comment of that while you were there? Was that playing at all?

WANLUND: No. I would talk about it with journalists and others and I think there was general agreement that Saddam Hussein was a bad actor, just someone that there needed to be a leash on the guy. Bush had done, and Secretary Baker had done a very good job of building a political international coalition to, if nothing else served as a fig leaf to just buy us a little bit of credibility in that military episode. The fact that we didn't go in and obliterate Saddam Hussein and his government, although that was seen as a sign of weakness of the U.S., it was seen as a fairly rational reaction by Germans in the center and the left. The right wing probably wished we had gone in and squelched them. I think most Germans thought it was a fairly rational way of ending the hostilities.

Q: What was your impression of the unification process?

WANLUND: By the time I got there, most of the euphoria and joy had run up. The Germans like to talk; it was popular to talk of the Mauer im Kopf, the Wall in the head. That is the physical wall and the separation between east and west and there as the notion on the part of West Germans that East Germans were lazy, that they were undereducated,

that they were used to having the state provide everything for them and that it was going to be hard for them to adjust to the new world order.

Easterners tended to look at the Westerners as carpetbaggers, the smart aleck, the know-it-all West German coming in to take the administrative management jobs in eastern Germany because they perceived the easterners as being unable and untrained to take over these jobs. There was resentment on the part of many westerners who were given jobs in the East; the wanted to go back in their comfortable West German homes. There was resentment on the part of the Westerners on the part of the tax money, their tax money that was going to support the rebuilding and modernization of the east.

I remember seeing a very perceptive article in a magazine that was published in eastern Germany by a West German editor, I suppose. He cooked the books in a sense. He took an example of a West German town and he compared it to an East German town of roughly equal size. He said, "OK, this town is losing so many million Euros in taxes, one and a half million dollars in taxes that normally had gone back to the West German community and they would have used it to upgrade the facilities in their park. They would have put state of the art radios in their ambulances" and something else, all useful things. He said, "OK, this one point whatever million is going to this east German town and this is what they are going to do; they are going to put, they are going to buy ambulances for the town, they are going to put toilet seats in their schools", very basic, elementary things and without editorializing, he drew the comparison between what an affluent community, an affluent, comfortable community in West Germany was going to do without in order to bring very elementary standards up in this East German town. It was a nice little cautionary tale.

Q: Were you able to get into substantive discussions with East Germans about their problems?

WANLUND: Yes. I thought they were substantive. I am not sure if they really were. East Germans, many of them that I talked to thought that although they were grateful for the largess that was coming out of Bonn at the time, they thought that the West German government was putting too many restrictions on foreign investment in the east, that there were limitations being put on investments in the east that were favorable to West German companies but would keep out innovative and maybe even more lucrative investments from the United States or France or from Great Britain, for example, that might have done more good for the community.

I never talked to any born and bred East German who was nostalgic for the old days. There was a concept of _____, a play on words of nostalgia meaning nostalgic for the old days. There was a market for example for consumer goods, jams and jelly or beer. There was an advertising campaign for example for an East German beer as I recall wasn't very good but the billboard had a picture of this bottle of beer and it said 'The beer from here'. It had a certain appeal to people.

Q: I think the more you get away from the old regime the more popular it is.

WANLUND: Of course, we saw it politically when westernization, when capitalism really set in, it meant that a lot of people lost their jobs. There was early retirement and there was a lot of retirement at age 50 and even 45. Although the West German government I think tried to be generous with the pensions, there was still a feeling of well, at least in the old regime we had jobs. An even older joke about we pretend to work and you pretend to pay us.

Q: But the old system provided you a house and food, you had a place.

WANLUND: I think that did account for the eventual growing popularity of the PDS, the Communist Party, the old, revitalized Communist Party, renovated Communist Party in East German. There was a certain amount of nostalgia for that. And the thought that well, I guess it is better than we had it before, but they could have done it even better.

Q: I realize this wasn't within your pay grade but was there talk among your colleagues and all about the role of Germany and the European Union? One had the feeling for some time that France seemed to be calling the shots and Germany followed along.

WANLUND: There was that feeling but you know, I am not certain if it is still true today, but certainly it was true when I was there. Germans still felt very sensitive about their experience with the Weimar Republic and a result, the post-war, with massive inflation and wheelbarrows of money to buy a loaf of bread, as a result the German economy unarguably, as successful as it has been, is also very conservative. The notion of inflation is just a nightmare for German economic planners and bankers and business leaders. As a result, they played a very, very cautiously. They have a strong enough economy that, with their domestic consumption and their very lucrative exports they were perfectly comfortable, as I understand it, with just going along with things. They had one of the strongest economies in the EU and they were perfectly happy to let things go along without necessarily trying to dictate the course of things.

Q: Did you sense a feeling of relief in Germany from both the Americans and the Germans that Germany was no longer the crisis center, or was the realization almost a disappointment?

WANLUND: On interesting question. What I sensed was an interest certainly on the part of the Berlin authorities and perhaps reflecting the American officials at the embassy office there that although Berlin's strategic importance had or its strategic centrality had disappeared, it was now being seen and if marketing isn't too strong a word, being marketed as Germany's and perhaps Western Europe's gateway to Eastern Europe; 60 miles from Poland. The former Soviet bloc was still an emerging entity. The Germans, the western Germans in particular, wanted to, like the rest of Europe, wanted to get a foothold in the former Warsaw Pact countries and Berlin was seen as a logical jumping off place.

So yes, I think there may have been a little nostalgia but I think that also led to a kind of rebranding, we would probably say today.

Q: What were you doing there?

WANLUND: I was the information officer for the Embassy Office in Berlin, the press officer.

Q: Was Berlin the center of the press at that time or was it in Hamburg or Frankfurt or what?

WANLUND: Hamburg is the traditional center of the western German press and I think it still is. The major news magazines are published there, Der Spiegel, Stern, Die Zeit, the intellectual, widely read weekly newspaper is there, and the Springer publishing house and broadcasting center are there so Hamburg I think remains the center.

Berlin actually in the time I was there was actually more of a place where the American correspondents resided: Washington Post, New York Times, Newsweek, Time magazine, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Philadelphia Enquirer, and ABC. They all had full time correspondents in Berlin and in fact, I spent a lot of my time working with the American press there, which is unusual with public diplomacy. You normally focus on the local national media.

Q: Why were they all there because during that time I can't recall a lot of articles about Germany per se? Was this just where they were camped or had they moved out? Were developments in Germany filling our newspapers here?

WANLUND: Not much. That was kind of a constant lament among the American journalists that I had contact with. There wasn't really that much interest in the papers they were working for, the media they were working for. It was hard for them to get space or airtime for a German story unless it was something kind of quirky or unusual.

The political situation was I think being judged by the editors back here in the States as too complicated to cover in the media although it was available to their correspondents. A number of these correspondents did have regional responsibilities. They traveled elsewhere in Europe and at that time I am thinking of the Balkans. A lot of these guys spent at least half their time in the Serbia and the breakaway states.

Q: I have to say, sitting back here as a retired Foreign Service officer doing oral history and trying to keep up with things, it was far easier to keep up with political developments internally in France than in Germany. France used to be sort of like the cookie, a lot more interesting.

WANLUND: The journalists kind of liked going to France too.

Q: How did we feel about the atmosphere about Hans Dietrich Genscher, the Foreign Minister for years, but particularly with the Balkan situation where he seemed to have taken the lead for the breakup? How did you all look upon him?

WANLUND: My assessment at the time and to be quite honest, I didn't give it a whole lot of thought, but Genscher was a power to be reckoned with. As it happened, he was from eastern Germany and so he liked to take American ambassadors and other senior visitors to Germany to his home town, which I believe is Halle. I never sensed any special tension or negative feelings from our representatives toward Foreign Minister Genscher.

Q: Did you have a particular thrust of your contacts with the press and others as an information officer about this opening period when things really started to go sour in the Balkans? Were you pushing an American disengagement line and yes, this is a European problem and not ours and that sort of thing?

WANLUND: That was going on. I think our engagement in the Balkans started about the time I got to Berlin and I do remember we had kept sort of a hands off, or arms length relationship to the defense of the Balkans and I believe it was the policy, certainly of the Clinton administration, to regard this as a European issue; sort of the perfect opportunity for the Europeans to step up and do what many Europeans had said they should be doing; that is, they should be responsible for the strategic events in Europe and the Americans can sit this out. Again from our prospective, it was pretty clear that that wasn't happening. The Europeans were far from united on it. So finally the United States, through NATO did get involved.

Q: How engaged did you find yourself with Germans on this issue?

WANLUND: Personally, not very much. It just was not a topic of conversation with the people I was in contact with. The thrust of my work was to get to know the media in our area of responsibility in eastern Germany, Berlin, Brandenburg, in that part of the region. I think their own local concerns were more on their minds than international geopolitical ones and those were questions that just didn't come up in their conversations.

Q: Was there still a sense of euphoria or was the bloom sort of off the rose?

WANLUND: Yes, it had started a little bit by that time and certainly accelerated while I was there. There was the attitude that the East Germans had toward the westerners, sort of carpetbagger mentality coming in to scoop up the spoils of what was left over and pick the more low hanging economic fruit, take all the good jobs, etcetera. On the other hand when the westerners looked at the easterners, they saw sort of a bunch of underachievers, smart enough, spoke the right language, but probably didn't have the education they needed to compete in Western Europe. So there was that kind of bad feeling that was going on, although the other impression I had was among the East Germans there were those who just worked and worked and worked and would have risen to the top in any society. They had the brains; all they needed was the opportunity to advance. There was

no question that they were absolutely qualified, extra qualified to take over and that's clearly what's happening. I think the "Mauer im Kopf," the wall in the head, I think had dwindled quite a bit. That's my impression anyway.

What I did find in eastern Germany in particular was that I was personally and institutionally very well received whenever I traveled. There was certainly a lot of curiosity about the United States and I think we said before east Germany was a place the U.S. had not had a presence at that time well over 50 years, since before the war. The people who were in positions of authority, talking about the field I was working in, the media, they were smart enough to realize all the propaganda they had heard about the United States, it couldn't be that bad. I think they were very curious to meet an American and to form an impression based on empirical evidence, first hand conversations, which was personally gratifying to have that kind of contact at that particular time, and also I think professionally useful to get to know people who were I guess the pioneers in the democratization of the western and eastern.

Q: I guess it wasn't your particular province but as part of the information field, were we putting greater emphasis on getting exchange visitors from East Germany rather than from West Germany?

WANLUND: Yes. There was a big appetite in Washington for people coming from eastern Germany for the exchange programs and the international visitors' programs and that sort of thing, which was certainly good for us.

Q: Was Angela Markel a figure while you were there?

WANLUND: Hers was a name I knew. I certainly hadn't pegged her as having an international destination.

Q: It was really sort of a surprise development out of East Germany. She has been chancellor for some time and seems she will be for some time.

WANLUND: I think there were a number like her but she just had the combination of whatever it took to become a leader in the Conservative Party in Germany.

Q: What was your impression of the parties that counted; the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and the SPD (Social Democratic Party) and I guess the Greens and the Free Democrats? Did you get any feel for these parties?

WANLUND: Certainly while I was there, they were really trying and with a great deal of success in the early years, to establish a foothold in the east. I think eastern German voters were looking for a way to break away from something to an alternative to the Communist Party that was there. They were quite active, trying to court members for their parties. CDU and the SPD, especially and the Greens at that time I didn't see them as being so active nor did I see the FDP which was sort of a swing liberal, middle road party but they were quite busy.

Even in those days there was some residual loyalty to the PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism), the successor to the Communist Party in East Germany. They certainly had name recognition among the party leaders and although they were disdained by the majority of voters they managed to keep through a combination I think of reform and aggressive marketing they were able to keep a profile.

Q: Did we shun them or did we go after them along with the other parties?

WANLUND: I personally didn't have a lot of activity involvement at all with the political parties except to get to know the spokespersons. Now that you mention it, no, I didn't try to get to know say the press spokesman for the PDS, although I did get to know those from other parties, from the parties that came in from the West. It wasn't conscious on my part; it probably would have been a good idea but it just never came up. It just seemed to me there was just so much, and they never talked about it with anybody in our embassy about it. It just seemed so natural to me that the parties coming in from the West were going to be the dominant ones and to the extent that I got involved with them at all, that was where I was going to focus my energy.

Q: This is during the Clinton administration? How did you feel the German press was playing it? How did the Clinton administration play in the German press?

WANLUND: I think it fared well. There was a great deal of interest in President Clinton, both in terms of his politics. I think they liked his international policies quite well. As I recall, there was some quarrel with his economic policies. Germany was thriving at the time so it didn't bother them too much. President Clinton came to Berlin in [July 12] 1994 and spent a day, a day and a half there and was quite busy in the city. He and his wife came and their big event was a walk through the Brandenburg Gate to a podium that had been erected where they hoped to get a large crowd of people to hear him speak. This time we put him them in front of the horses.

It was a very popular event. I think there was a lot of curiosity about Clinton and Mrs. Clinton. It was very well received.

Q: What was your impression of the reception toward the gastarbeiter (guest worker)? It's been some time. I mean it has been going on since the 1950s, particularly Turks. You are moving into a couple of generations but were you seeing absorption or were the Germans still unreceptive to foreigners?

WANLUND: I think there was absorption but it was going very slowly. You are right. I think there were even third generation Turks there and so there were a number of people in the community that had been born in Germany and maybe had never seen Turkey, grew up speaking German, but were identifiable as Turks and identified as Turks by many of the Germans. I believe there were one or two Turks on the city council, but not many in Berlin.

In the years that I was there, in the early 1990s, they were still very much a community apart from the rest of Germany, although the younger Germans liked to hang around at the bars and restaurants in the part of Berlin where the Turks were.

Q: Of course, Turkish Islam is different from the Islam that the French are experiencing, which is a North Africa Islam. Were we at all concerned about Islam in Germany?

WANLUND: No, not at that time. We recognized it as a social and economic issue for the Germans and a lot of our public affairs programs did have to do with, integration is such a dated term now, it was how to create a successful multicultural society. It wasn't our telling the Germans this is how to relate to the Turks. It was more saying this is how the United States has been working on our own social problems. Maybe there is something you can profit by observing.

Q: How about the German press, the media and all? Was it sort of more in the American mode or more the British mode? The British mode being a couple of, you might say, serious papers and the rest a pile of sensational nonsense.

WANLUND: The Bild Zeitung was the biggest circulation paper in Germany, had a paid circulation of at least six million when I was there for a country when I was there was quite large, quite a percentage of the population. It was a tabloid, certainly sensational. There were a couple of others in that category but I think by and large most of the papers, certainly the ones I paid most attention to, of course I wasn't a typical reader of course, were the serious papers, such as Die Welt.

Although each of them had an identifiable political philosophy, they all did serious journalism and serious analysis.

Q: Did you find yourself at all sort of having to sort of counter articles or impressions that were coming out through the German media about the United States, ones that were unfavorable? You know particular correspondents?

WANLUND: When we came across factual mistakes, chances are we would correct them but as you may know, there's a reflection of the British sort of British tradition you were talking about. The German papers after World War II were largely developed on a British model. They will tell you that. They've been in business a long time. There is a lot of opinion that pops up in otherwise factual articles and reporters don't have any problems at all in stating their point of view when it comes to a political issue. It's not just a matter of what the Americans are doing; it could be anything. It could be local politics, it could be the school board but when it is a matter of opinion, we tended not to get involved in that, not to react to that because it is opinion and were for nothing if not for free and open discussion of the issues. We took that very seriously when it was an opinion and it was clearly stated or represented as an opinion, how can you fight it?

Q: Were there any newspapers or television stations that were to be ignored, which were beyond the pale?

WANLUND: No, not really. There were some and I am thinking in Berlin of the Die Tageszeitung, which was a predictably left wing paper, very popular in among the counter culture. But we worked hard on those papers because they were influential in a segment of the society that was important to us. So I spent a lot of time just talking to the editors there, not necessarily pushing a particular idea or story but just getting to know them and giving them another viewpoint they might not have otherwise had. I thought it was a good investment to do that.

Q: What about university presses or university media? Were the universities the usual hotbeds of radicalism and all?

WANLUND: There was a lot of student activism on those campuses. On the issue of student papers, there were a lot of them. They tended to be photocopied, maybe even mimeographed in those days. They didn't tend to have a long shelf life. They weren't around for long enough, they would come out with a couple of issues and then they would go away. There wasn't really enough money to keep them going.

The official student papers, there would be controversial articles in them but they were pretty much creatures of the university itself, not particularly rebel rousing. There certainly was student activism there. We were interested in what they were doing. We would invite the major leaders of the student organizations to our public affairs programs, our lectures, film series, and discussions at the Amerika Haus. We were certainly open to having them there.

I think we had a serious interest in trying to reach all segments of the society, the student population included.

Q: You left Germany in 1995, what was your next assignment?
WANLUND: Came back to Washington for Spanish language and then I went off to Caracas, Venezuela from 1996 to 1999.

Q: Who was the ambassador there?

WANLUND: When I got there, for the first two years there was a Chargé, John Keane. The previous ambassador, Jeff Davidow, departed post just before I got there [Ed: Davidow departed May 16, 1996. The new Ambassador John Maisto arrived in March 1997]. I got to know him subsequently when I worked in WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs). In fact, I was the acting Public Affairs Officer for the first year and a half I was there because the PAO had moved up to be the acting DCM.

Q: When you got there in 1996, what was the situation in Venezuela at the time?

WANLUND: The government in power was a fairly conservative one. Like any smart group of South American politicians, they were nationalists but they were in fact friendly

to the United States and accommodating to our interests. Economically, the American oil business was well established in Venezuela. They were well received. They were participants in the active participants and heavy investors in the economy. The major automobile manufacturers each had manufacturing plants in northern Venezuela.

The cultural ties between the U.S. and Venezuela were quite good and quite heavy. During the 1970s during the first real oil shock and oil prices went up so spectacularly all around the world, it certainly affected Venezuelans in a positive way. A lot of Venezuelans spent time in shopping in Miami. It wasn't uncommon for them to go to Miami for a weekend. They used to joke about themselves as the "diana gos" - 'give me two'- generation. They would walk into a store and say, "Oh, I like that. Give me two."

Venezuelans liked to send their kids to America for university. There was quite a bit of tourism and cultural traffic back and forth.

Q: As acting Public Affairs Officer, what was your major concentration?

WANLUND: Interestingly, I think the issue of biggest concern at that time was drug trafficking. Venezuela wasn't a drug producing country but it was a transit country. There was evidence of a lot of drugs coming up from Colombia, from Peru, from Bolivia were passing through Venezuela, largely because there was so much intercourse between Venezuela and the U.S.; a lot of tourist traffic, a lot of private planes going, so DEA was very active down there. We had a military group that was very much involved in countering that traffic. Consequently, a lot of our public affairs efforts were devoted to that too.

Q: What was the media like there?

WANLUND: The press there, like in a lot of places, was very political. As in a lot of places as in Germany you could pretty much tell someone's politics by the newspaper they read so that somewhat affected how we did our press work there. We had good relations with the media. We went out of our way to work with all the media there and we tried not to play favorites. We'd give an interview to one paper and make sure to give its rival, its chief rival the next interview, just to make sure we were playing it straight.

We got along well with the press there. I am not sure how effective it is when you would get an op-ed article placed in the paper and interview, but it looked good.

There were a couple of very serious papers and then there were a couple of what some Venezuelans described as vanity papers that were established and run by politicians, generally well-heeled or well supported politicians who wanted to promulgate a point of view. Again, we took them all seriously.

TV was the important medium in terms of getting news to the public. TV pretty much saturated the country and that was, at least according to the surveys, that was what most,

that was the medium that most people relied on to get the news. We spent a lot of time working with TV.

Q: Were they, I don't want to say malleable, but were they receptive? You were able to have dialogs and that sort of thing?

WANLUND: Sure. They were receptive to what we had to do. When we wanted to encourage an interview with an American speaker or government official down there, they were usually quite interested in talking to them. It wasn't a hard sell.

By the same token, we had to be careful not to throw everything that came our way. We had to make sure we were offering quality; people that could speak to an issue that we assumed Venezuelans were interested in and that was part of our strategic goals in terms of what we wanted to accomplish in Venezuela.

Q: What was Caracas like at that time?

WANLUND: Looking at it one way, it is really hard to imagine what there is not to like about Venezuela, in general and Caracas in particular. For example, where we lived up in the hills was pretty cool. It was tropical but it was very, very pleasant. A day in the 90s Fahrenheit would be very unusual where we were in Caracas. The winters were moderate. It is a very pleasant place to be. Venezuela had beaches, it had mountains, the northern part of the Andes sticks up there into southwestern Venezuela, you had your plains, it had your Amazon jungle; it had something for everybody in terms of tourism. The tourism industry had not been very well developed, so the beaches were dirty, they weren't particularly well cared for. There were nice places to go and we had wonderful experiences there. There were also some obstacles.

The Venezuelan economy was very closely tied to the dollar so the cost of living there was very much the way it was in the United States. We didn't get much of a break. Because of the domination of petroleum in that economy, I had the feeling that Venezuela never really felt it had to develop the rest of its economy. There weren't much of agricultural industries the way you would find in Chile or Argentina or the rest of South America although there was no reason it couldn't. It just didn't. When you'd go to the market or the supermarket, what you would find was vegetables from Columbia or Argentina or Chile. The rest of the economy wasn't particularly well developed either.

In terms of our living situation, the embassy had recently moved before we got there from a downtown location to one of the more secure, inland buildings up in the Caracas suburbs, up in the hills. It was a beautiful place and we lived nearby; I could walk to the embassy which to me was quite a luxury but it wasn't close to anything else. There were no restaurants nearby, shopping was difficult. When we wanted to go to a restaurant or a show or something we had to drive and because of Caracas' traffic and parking, that was always an adventure. Sort of every upper class establishment had a valet parking arrangement and you weren't quite sure you would see your car again when the evening was over but we always did, we were always very well treated.

Our kids absolutely loved going to school there. They had a wonderful time there. It was their first experience with school uniforms and they thought that was just great. They went to one of the international schools there. Caracas had two international schools that were very well regarded. The embassy would send its kids to either one, depending on what they felt the kids needed. One school was small; had a beautiful campus, and the kids got better individual attention. The other school where my kids went was more urban, more confined but better endowed in terms of facilities and equipment. I think the embassy was pretty well evenly split between sending kids to one or the other. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), the Chargé at the time had one kid at each school.

Q: What was the political situation when you arrived there?

WANLUND: There was a conservative president, Raphael Caldera, and he wouldn't be so bold as to call himself pro-American but he had to be a nationalist to be a successful politician there but he was I think generally sympathetic to the United States and our policies. I think our relations with the government were quite good. It wasn't a very dynamic government. The president was an older man by that time and was serving I guess his second term as president. There wasn't any sense of dynamism going on in the society.

The economy was looked as being pretty stagnant. Petroleum was of course very strong but that only went so far. It only permeated so much of the economy. There was a sense that the economy should be stronger.

Q: Was there a tremendous discrepancy between the urban rich and the country poor and all?

WANLUND: Yes, there certainly was. Even between the urban rich and the urban poor. The Caracas slums were very, very unpleasant places to be in. From our house we had a lovely view of the mountains and you could see on the hillside at night these twinkling lights and we thought, "Gee, isn't that romantic?" and it was only later that we realized that it was because the electricity that was being pirated from sources, they were just running extension cords, essentially from power lines into houses, it was just the variations in the power supply that was causing that romantic little twinkling in the lights.

As a result, crime was a factor. There was not murder but there were 'car-nappings' or house break-ins, things like that that really affected the way you looked at what was going on in the country.

Q: How would you describe our view of relations between Venezuela and Columbia?

WANLUND: In 1996 they are always touchy. The border is largely unpatrolled through many of the mountain ranges and through much of the jungle, the Amazon goes through there. There was always the feeling that some of the Colombian leftist guerrilla groups were finding safe haven across the border in Venezuela. The Colombians accused the

Venezuelans of not policing their border. The Venezuelans accused the Colombians of not keeping close enough watch on their guerrillas so there was tension there but I never, it certainly didn't get into a shooting match, shooting contest. It was just something they complained about to each other. There was a lot of border tension, then as now.

The Venezuelan armed forces were just not able to patrol the border very closely so there was a lot of, as I understand it, a lot of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia; Spanish: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), the Colombian guerrillas had crossed over the unprotected border into Venezuela, kind of hide out in the hills and jungles where they had pretty much safe haven and could avoid the Columbian armed forces. There was pressure from the Columbians to the Venezuelans to tighten up the border. The Venezuelans said, clean up your own house, it's not our problem and again, it was difficult for them to police the border.

The Americans got into the picture because a lot of, this was also true of narco-traffickers, the drug dealers, would, they would have their operations based in Columbia but they would quite often fly into Venezuela or through or over Venezuela and take their product further north. The DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) was quite active in helping the Venezuelans down in that part of the country.

Again from the standpoint of trafficking, it was an issue we were concerned about and encouraged the Venezuelans to tighten up their controls on the border.

Q: Was the feeling that the Venezuelans flying patrols, because the trafficking was mostly by air, wasn't it, were ineffective?

WANLUND: Yes, that was our concern that there was air, pretty much unrestricted air traffic coming across the border and I think there is pretty good evidence of that.

Our military colleagues at the embassy had good relations with the armed forces of Venezuela. I think the Venezuelan military was making a good faith effort to keep that border as secure as they could have it. They didn't have the resources. Our military did what they could in terms of material and training. It is still a long, long, long border.

Q: I take it the border with Brazil, that side must have been pretty wild country.

WANLUND: Yes. That's also very, it's pretty open there too although I don't think they have the same concerns. Obviously, it wouldn't be too difficult for someone to fly around the southern tip of Venezuela and come in from the Brazil side. I am not sure how well the Brazilians can patrol that area.

Q: Given what happened later with the Chavez revolution, when you arrived was there a concern about the plight of the poorer people and that sort of thing? That this was a country on the brink of revolution?

WANLUND: Once you visit Caracas it is quite evident, just driving in from the airport that there is a real have/have not situation in that country.

I can't speak for the Embassy's political section but I didn't get the feeling that there was the idea that the Venezuelan underclass could be motivated to be such a powerful political force that they were in 1998 when Chavez was elected. They seemed to be pretty well in the hands of the established, political establishment at the time. I think Chavez was not even on the horizon.

The poor people in Venezuela, they were certainly numerous, but I don't think they were identified as a political force.

Q: What was your impression of the government at the time?

WANLUND: It is interesting in the context of the question you had asked before; personally, I didn't see them as being particularly responsive to the poor. I often thought to myself, there is so much more they can be doing with the money they have in this country, there is so much more they could be doing to develop their economy and that would actually give, just create jobs for these people who didn't have them. They were selling knickknacks to people stuck in traffic jams, teddy bears and flags; junk. There didn't seem to be an effort to develop the agricultural economy or the manufacturing economy. There was no reason they couldn't; they have the same basic resources, educated population, certainly capable of doing skilled work on many different levels. The universities were quite good.

When I talked to Venezuelans about that their explanation was yes, they saw the need for it, from a long-range standpoint, but it had never been such a crisis that they needed to develop the rest of the economy; that oil would always bail them out.

Q: Immense oil reserves are really, you know, it's a mixed blessing in that it does bring in income but it does something to the country. You look at Saudi Arabia where essentially they live off hired labor, but you wonder about when the oil gives out. Eventually, I mean probably other forms of power will probably come in and we may be reaching the acme of its benefits. Was anybody that you were talking to looking at the long term effects of this lack of doing anything for the country during its oil heydays?

WANLUND: Certainly there were people who were prominent in the social structure that recognized that Venezuela could be doing so much more than it was. What you were saying was the Venezuelans did have the expression that I am sure has been used elsewhere that oil is both a blessing and a curse. To Venezuela it does keep them afloat and certainly a well developed country but since it has always been there, it has always provided the cushion that Venezuelans needed to, and sort of diminished the need to develop the rest of the economy because money is just there.

To be fair in the years I was there, the state oil company was very well run. It had the reputation of being non-corrupt, well managed, and well administered and certainly a lot

of technocrats, but in a good sense. People really knew how to run an organization; they had good business sense, good planning skills and at least in terms of that industry were thinking well ahead.

Within the government they had a policy of siphoning off cash. When oil went above a certain price per barrel, they would skim off that excess profit and store it away sort of like squirrels hoarding acorns so that when the price of oil went down and the revenues went down, there was this reserve fund that they could call on to pump back into the rest of the economy. It was a smart way of doing business.

As I say, there was so much potential there in terms of agriculture, tourism, manufacturing that just never really got established. You would go to the market or to the supermarket and very little in the way of locally produced vegetables and fruits, they were imported from Colombia, or Chile or from Argentina. It was odd but just a fact.

Q: Had drugs entered the society very much?

WANLUND: Yes, well, we would call it, by American standards, not a major social problem but some Venezuelans were just horrified by the fact that when drugs come through Venezuela as a transit point it always affects the country and there were people who were deeply and correctly concerned about it.

I was involved in a program to help raise public awareness in Caracas and the rest of the country to the dangers of drugs. We did public service announcements. It was money from outside sources.

Again, with the exception of a few individuals, it wasn't perceived as a major social problem, it just was not.

Q: What about Venezuela, the cultural side of Venezuela? Was there a flourishing art community and all that?

WANLUND: Yes, there are some brilliant contemporary artists. There are some very nice art museums, a good symphony orchestra, and a good youth orchestra. There was some opera going on there. They have an international guitar festival every year. I think Venezuela holds its own in terms of the arts and cultural scene there. It is not as prominent as maybe as some other countries but it is very respectable.

Again, like so much of Venezuela, they built beautiful museums and supported a lot of art in the 1970s when oil revenues were high and the country was flush. When oil prices went down, and that includes the time I was there in the late 1990s, the money just wasn't there to keep that infrastructure going so the museums weren't acquiring new works, the maintenance wasn't what it should be to keep a first class museum going and then the museum officials and directors were aware of that but they just didn't have the resources. There wasn't a very well developed system there, the money coming in from private sources the way we are accustomed to here in the U.S.

Q: You were there until when? Were you there when Chavez came in?

WANLUND: My assignment covered 1996 to 1999. We were there during the election in 1998. In fact, my wife and I were election observers for that election. Chavez was, what an interesting phenomenon that was. Of course, it is old and well-known history now but he had been the organizer of a coup in the early 1990s which failed. He had been put in jail and was actually pardoned by the guy he had organized the coup against after Chavez had spent a couple of years in jail. Chavez was in the military.

Early in 1998 or maybe even in 1997, when the election campaigns were just getting organized, Chavez had expressed interest in running for the presidency and he was chugging along at two per cent popularity according to the polls for months and months and months. He was not taken seriously, certainly not by Washington for a long time. It was only when Ambassador Maisto showed up in 1998 and took a close look at the situation and talked to people that the embassy and subsequently Washington started taking Chavez seriously as a political phenomenon.

For the longest time in 1998 the leading candidate was Irene Sáez, who was a former Miss Universe, a beautiful woman and the mayor of Chacao, which was a very well to do district, commercial district in Caracas. She was enormously popular, she was also very smart. I guess she had a degree in international relations and had actually done some maybe post-graduate work in the U.S. So she wasn't without credentials to run the country. She had some political experience, she had international exposure. She could write a reasonable resume.

There were some other candidates but Chavez was just a relentless campaigner and he ran on a campaign of hope and he was able to mobilize sort of the poorer segment of the population to a degree that I don't believe had ever been done in the past, certainly that I am aware of in post-revolutionary Venezuela. He even motivated the middle class and not an unsubstantial portion of the upper class, the upper economic class. The perception was the Venezuelan economy was just stagnant; it wasn't going anywhere. It wasn't collapsing noticeably but that it needed to be more dynamic. Chavez plugged into that. He stoked that feeling but he also plugged into it and in doing so just roared to victory in that election.

Q: Again from your point of view, were you seeing the change through the media and all?

WANLUND: The media, I don't recall any of the mainstream media being at all supportive of Chavez. There was, I don't think they liked him as a potential leader of the country. They saw him as a failed "golpista", a coup leader, and didn't think he was good for the country. The press there is very lively, very outspoken. There were no controls real or implied in the media there, they took advantage of it with freedom of expression.

Q: Were we seeing during this election, were we seeing this as being sort of a movement that was going to cause problems for the United States?

WANLUND: I think we saw it had great potential for causing us problems but we also thought we could manage it well. Ambassador Maisto, not to put too fine a point on it, really worked hard. He, more than most, saw Chavez, and our political counselor at the time, saw Chavez as a real force to be reckoned with. Consequently we thought it would be foolish to rule him out and not to take him seriously.

I do know that Ambassador Maisto had really called in some chits in Washington to get the U.S. to bend its policy to allow him to actually meet face to face with Chavez because after all, Chavez was a convicted coup leader and wasn't even eligible for a U.S. visa at that time. Be that as it may, Maisto saw this as really in our best interests to get to know Chavez if he were to be, as we did the rest of the candidates, and if Chavez were to be elected, it would be smarter to be positioned to have some contact with the people he brought into his administration.

Q: Did you find the fact that being a convicted coup leader, he was put on our black list, whatever you want to call it, did this cause any problems for you?

WANLUND: As interest in Chavez' campaign grew, as it did suddenly toward the end of the campaign, yes, we got a lot of press and public inquiries about whether we would lift our restriction on Chavez getting a visa? After all, he would be a duly elected leader of a sovereign state. What do you do? The way we do in issues in consular affairs, we said that will be resolved in the fullness of time. We can't talk about individual visa cases, including the one of a potential head of state.

Q: How long were you there when Chavez was president?

WANLUND: He was elected in November or December in 1998 and didn't take office for a while. It took several months for him to really get his government organized, get the people in power that he wanted and to really start putting his policies into action. That had not happened by the time we left in the summer of 1999.

What I was seeing at the time was a lot of calculation, excitement and curiosity and I think positive enthusiasm for what Chavez was going to do. Even people who didn't vote for him, even those who were suspicious of him at the time were just happy to see a change. He was a dynamic guy with a lot of personal charisma.

Q: Was there sort of the feeling in the Embassy, I hate to have one characterize one's fellow officers, but a feeling of maybe this will be pretty good for Venezuela? Or, was the feeling that this is going to be a disaster?

WANLUND: There were some who thought that it was absolutely going to be a disaster but I think we also had some who were who honestly thought we could work with this guy, that we had enough to offer him, and his government in terms of political, economic

and military cooperation that it would make it worth his while to work with us. There was I think also the feeling that well, you know. This guy campaigned on a philosophy that U.S. interests in Venezuela and interests do not coincide but isn't that a certain amount of political rhetoric? Don't we see that in every political campaign in Latin America? So I think we were willing to cut them a little bit of slack in that regard as well.

In fact, Chavez' rhetoric during the campaign was not nearly as forceful and acidic as it has been since he had been president. I think at the time he recognized and he is a very astute reader of the Venezuelan electorate and I think he judged at the time it was not really in his interest to be perceived as anti-American.

Q: Where did you go in 1999?

WANLUND: I came back to Washington.

Q: What were you doing?

WANLUND: For the first year, 1999 to 2000, I was here I ran the European Office of the International Information Programs branch. The nomenclature is a little tricky because we had just moved over, the U.S. Information Agency had just been absorbed by the State Department and we weren't exactly sure how USIA's bureaucracy was going to fit in. The International Information Programs Office ran what we used to call the wireless file, which was a daily compendium of transcripts, speech texts, fact sheets and other information that public affairs officers and information officers and anybody in embassies around the world could draw on as resources of U.S. policy thinking. I ran the speakers' program; I ran our, what were then libraries, now information resource centers, so just a variety of outreach programs for USIA and the State Department.

Then I learned of a chance to work in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs at the time, EB, to help establish the public diplomacy office so I interviewed with the assistant secretary at the time, Tony Wayne and we hit it off and I was selected to work in that office. I was the assistant office director for policy and public diplomacy.

Q: Let's talk about the earlier phase, the 1999 thing. You are back, USIA is being absorbed. How did you feel about this and how did your fellow USIA colleagues feel? Was this sort of a down period or up period or what?

WANLUND: I think a lot of my colleagues were down by this because they saw it as sort of a loss of autonomy. They took a great deal of pride in USIA's independence. They saw USIA's mandate as presenting a full spectrum of American thought and ideas to the rest of the world and they took that very seriously. The people who worked for the wireless file viewed themselves in many cases, as a result of their previous careers, as independent journalists who were just reporting factual information about the U.S. Of course they had a consciousness of what American policy was but I think a lot of people thought that the State Department was going to exercise undue political and philosophical control over them; for example, the speakers that were sent out, that there would be restrictions on the

kind of people going out to represent the U.S. on speaker programs and exchange programs.

Personally, I didn't see it as such a bad thing. I thought unification if you can call it that, was a logical step. My experience had of course been mostly overseas, mostly in embassies, consulates and it seemed to me that unification had been going on in embassies for certainly as long as I was around. The PAO has always been on the country team, we had worked for the same ambassador, and we had a good sense of what embassy policy was and what our objectives were. With that in mind, I thought the bureaucratic separation was a psychological thing here in Washington that was artificial and I thought the sooner we were working with the State Department, with the political, economic and other desks at the State Department, the better. I thought we could do more with that relationship than we could as a separate entity.

Q: One of the things I have noted in interviewing people is it appears the USIA officers overseas already had a far better job than most State Department Foreign Service officers because they had more autonomy to get out and they had really more responsibility. But back in Washington, the USIA jobs seemed to be almost, I won't say clerical but almost sort of support and nothing to do with policy. They just didn't seem to be very influential jobs.

WANLUND: Yes, I think that's a fair assessment. That was certainly my experience. Between my assignments in Hamburg and Berlin I served in Washington on the USIA European desk for a couple of years. It was full of talented, competent well-meaning people but there was just a limited amount you could do. It did not hold true for my colleagues working in Eastern Europe because that was the time the Wall had come down, the Soviet Union was falling apart or was going to fall apart and we had all sorts of money available all of a sudden to go into Eastern European programs, including cultural and press programs. They really made good use of their Eastern European desk officers who were really I think a useful liaison between the Washington bureaucracy, both USIA and the State Department and our activities in the field, many of them just getting cranked up from the first time.

Q: Who was the head of the USIA when you came back?

WANLUND: When I came back in 1999 it was Joe Duffey.

Q: How did you see Joe Duffey? I mean what were you getting from your colleagues and all?

WANLUND: When I came back in 1999 the deal had already been cut to merge USIA into State. I think there was on the part of a lot of people I talked to, there was a feeling of betrayal, that Duffey had not, he had not protected USIA the way the administrative USAID had protected his agency to keep it autonomous. I think there was a certain amount of bitterness toward Duffey.

I am not sure that that's really fair. For one thing, USIA ever since its inception had, and by the nature of its work has been unable to develop a constituency across the United States. They did do a lot of work with universities and that translates into support and congressional delegations. USIA has a strictly and I think legally mandate that all of our work is overseas. We weren't able to develop that kind of support system in Washington, on the Hill and in the American heartland. We have a Fulbright program; that was popular and we had exchange programs and speakers' programs that drew on universities but that was very, very small. I think Duffey had obstacles that were very, very hard to overcome.

The other thing that I don't think Joe Duffey got credit for was as far as I can tell, and I never met the man, as far as I can tell I think where he did negotiate successfully with State Department was in preserving jobs for American Foreign Service officers, I guess that was a given, but preserving the jobs of civil servants and Foreign Service national employees. I don't think there were too many jobs lost as a result of the merging and I think he deserves credit for that.

Q: Keeping USIA from having too many ties domestically was deliberately designed by Congress, particularly I think Senator Fulbright, who wanted to make sure that this didn't turn into a government propaganda agency, which could have easily slipped into domestic politics.

WANLUND: It sure could have. That was certainly the fear coming out of the McCarthy era. This fear goes back that far, because as you know, State used to have a Bureau of Cultural Affairs but it got hived off just for that very reason. There was concern that somehow the State Department was going to be propagandizing American citizens and so it was written into law that we could not do that. Our publications and our activities by law could not be distributed in the United States. All of our effort had to be directed overseas and that was good, it helped us keep our focus. Bureaucratically, it worked against us. I think overall it was good.

Q: Let's talk about this time you were dealing with international things. What was your main concentration in Washington, the first part of your assignment?

WANLUND: I had the great good fortune of working with very experienced staff in Washington who were good at what they did. I am talking about a team of writers who worked for the used to call the wireless file and the Washington file and it's now a website. I provided advice to them on issues to write about but they had their own sphere of activities.

I also had a very good crew of people who worked on the speakers' program from the regional standpoint. I am sort of talking around the issue here. My job was primarily administrative. Personnel management which was something of a challenge because the human resources' structure that was in place there was sort of they were experimenting with the notion of horizontal management; that is, no bosses, just sort of a collective farm. The civil servants who were working there were very good but they also took that

very seriously, that they were responsible for their own production and output. When they had problems they came to me, but generally, they liked to be left alone to do their own stuff.

Q: I think one of the hardest things is if you find something that works, and you are put in charge of it, do you mess around with it? I mean, did you have to sort of sit on your hands or grit your teeth to make sure you didn't screw things up?

WANLUND: That was actually my operating motto; don't screw it up if it was working well. At that time there was a Spanish translation of the wireless file and there was Russian. I never saw the Russian. I don't speak a word of Russian so I was totally at the mercy of these three Russian émigrés and in a bizarre sort of way, it made sense. They would take the wireless item files, the texts and important papers we wanted to put on the Russian file, they would do a translation here in Washington, they would email it to Moscow where a team of lowly paid translators would look at it, edit it and send it back to them overnight and then we would put that out on the file for Russian language consumption. In a way, it sort of made sense. I am not sure why but it did. The translators would come to me and complain about some translation the folks had done in Moscow, and I would check with my colleagues in Washington and would say what you guys are doing in Washington is sort of archaic Russian. It's not being used in contemporary Russia. It was that kind of management. It was funny but you do a lot based on faith.

Q: After the EB assignment you left Washington?

WANLUND: That was in 2004 and I went to Vienna and was there from 2004 to 2007.

Q: What was your job there?

WANLUND: I was the Counselor for Public Affairs.

Q: How would you describe the Viennese scene in 2004?

WANLUND: As you probably know, Austria has a fairly stable political system, they don't kind of ricochet around the spectrum very much. I would say it was fairly quiet, certainly in terms of political stability. I got there the second half of the year in 2004 and there was starting to be quite a bit of interest building in the U.S. political campaign and that was certainly the focus of a lot of my outreach efforts in public affairs but also just in terms of how Austrians perceived what was going on the U.S.

Q: This would have been the political campaign of George W. Bush versus John Kerry.

Who was the ambassador?

WANLUND: The ambassador was Lee Brown; he was a political appointee as most of them are in Austria. I can't think of any exceptions, in fact. He had been in Vienna for at

least two years at that point so he was coming to the end of his tour, he had about another year left.

Q: What sort of establishment, by this time it would be public diplomacy apparatus have in Austria?

WANLUND: I think we had a fairly standard staffing organization. We had, by the time I got there the American public diplomacy staff was down to two at the bilateral mission and so it was myself and a deputy. We had a press staff of two, we had a cultural affairs staff of about five, we had a translator, we had an administrative person, and we had two librarians, or information resource staff.

As I said, I was assigned to the Embassy to Austria, the bilateral relations mission. As you know, there are three U.S. diplomatic missions in Vienna, the Embassy to Austria, the United Nations representation, and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) mission. But as a bilateral mission, we made it a point to get out of Vienna and into some of the other media and educational centers of Austria the best we could. Salzburg certainly because Salzburg Seminar was a big part of our programs although we don't have an American officer stationed there anymore. We used to. We also were active in places like Innsbruck, Linz, Graz where there are major media outlets and also the universities where we did a lot of our programming.

Q: Austria for some years now the only time it gains attention in the American press seems to be when insipient Nazism or expressions of racism. How stood the situation?

WANLUND: That was certainly true in terms of the American perception of what was going on in Austria. I think it is quite a bit of a bum rap but that's what the media report and that's what Americans have to go on. It is certainly a politically intensely conservative country in terms of I don't want to say race. That was certainly extreme right wing political element there. I doubt if it represented more than eight or ten per cent of the population in terms of their attitudes. Quite often it was people looking for scapegoats, the way it happens in any society.

I think Austria has also gotten kind of a bum rap in Washington. It has got the reputation of being sort of a sleepy place where not much happens and it's safe. In fact, I think that used to be true, 10 or 15 years ago but I think two things happened; certainly when the Iron Curtain came down and when Austria joined the European Union, Austria became much more of a player in the world. Mostly in terms of finance, business and investment but I think it is punching above its weight, at least the weight that we, the State Department tend to give it.

So it is an important player in the European Union (EU), although interestingly, in terms of public opinion, it ranks fairly low among European countries in terms of national perception of the usefulness of the EU to Austria. Austria has clearly benefitted from EU membership but Austrians kind of tend to like their independence.

Q: Is there a kind of affinity between Austria and Switzerland in that regard?

WANLUND: Yes, I think so, although Switzerland is not part of the EU. I think the mentality is very similar there.

Q: How did the ambassador use you?

WANLUND: Ambassador Brown had a very fixed idea of what public diplomacy meant to him. He didn't hold it in very high opinion. He saw its usefulness in terms of getting information into the press that was useful. He, himself, like many ambassadors had sort of approach avoidance attitude toward the media, particularly the Austrian media. He saw the usefulness of getting his name and his picture in the paper. He didn't necessarily want to sit down and do interviews with press. I'm not sure what his motivations were; I sensed that he was a little afraid of saying something off the reservation.

Q: What was his background?

WANLUND: He comes from the Brown and Forman distillery family in Kentucky. He was closer to George H. W. Bush than to George W. He was active I believe before he came to Vienna, was active in some international relations committees back in the States.

Q: In a way it sounds like you were dealing with a difficult leader in that he didn't want to give interviews but liked sort of the public relations side, pictures taken and all that but not getting into the substance or willing to get into the give and take, that precludes an awful lot of good public diplomacy.

WANLUND: Sure, it does, but you find ways to work around that.

Q: How did you do that?

WANLUND: As public affairs officer, I was also the spokesman for the embassy. I didn't have the juice that he did as ambassador but in terms of getting embassy points of view out to the media, the press knew they could come to me or through my staff to get at least the information they needed. As I said, they weren't interested in sitting down with me for a lengthy interview, whereas they would be with the ambassador.

The ambassador was also willing to give speeches. He chose his audiences carefully but when he'd give a speech, of course your audience goes far beyond the room that you are actually standing and talking to. You can be talking to a room of 25 people, but if you market the information in that speech correctly through the internet or press releases or whatever, you can have much more impact. You can impact on a much broader scale. So we did that.

In addition, it allowed my staff and I to focus more on other tools we had for public diplomacy; exchange programs, speakers' programs, speakers coming from the U.S. to address topics of mutual interest. We worked pretty hard to get our embassy website up

to snuff. I was sort of astounded when I got there that our website was only in English; we didn't have a German language option so we got that fixed.

The ambassador's attitude toward the press was sort of good news and bad news for me personally because I didn't feel that he was going to call me up in 20 minutes to come up and talk to him. That certainly wasn't the case. It allowed me to get out and in my first year there I made a lot of contacts and got to know a lot better how Austria runs; who does what, what newspapers reach what audiences, how Austrians get their information, who they rely on as honest brokers of information.

Q: In Germany, we talked about this before, the papers broke down to some serious ones, Die Welt and Frankfurter Allgemeine and others. And then there is the tabloid press. Was there, Austria being a small country, was there sort of the equivalent of the New York Times, or the Washington Post for Austria?

WANLUND: In terms of, I wouldn't compare them in terms of the journalism they practiced; there is a different idea about journalism in Austria and in Europe, I think but yes, there were a couple of papers that played the role of the New York Times or the Washington Post. One was somewhat more liberal in the American sense than the other but there were two main daily papers that I think would qualify as respectable. Because Austria is such a small country, the media there tended to be national papers anyway. Remember you could drive to Salzburg in two and a half hours.

Q: What were the two papers?

WANLUND: Die Presse and Der Standard were the two major papers. There were others. There was the Weiner Zeitung which in our press reporting we always described it as a quasi-official paper. It was a private news organization but it was almost the newspaper of record in the sense that government pronouncements and announcements would go there. You could reliably go there for the text of important documents and stuff like that. They did their independent journalism as well.

Q: How about the media and TV, did we have a problem of portraying the U.S. or was it a mixed bag or what?

WANLUND: Again, just like the newspapers, the broadcast media was sort of a microcosm of how they do it in Germany and that is there was one quasi-official TV radio network, ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk). Then there were a whole slew of private radio stations, not your first source of news. This was basically your rock and roll and people listened to it for entertainment. They get their broadcast news from the ORF which gets funding from the government but it is not government controlled. There is no government censorship body or editing body that controls what goes on.

Because we were essentially trying to get news and information across to various audiences, we would work almost exclusively with ORF so we developed good contacts in both radio and TV.

There was actually a station that did some of its broadcasting in English for the fairly large international community in Austria.

Q: Was CNN an important element?

WANLUND: No, not for us. Not in terms of getting information to the Austrian public. They certainly didn't have a bureau in Vienna. I can't remember dealing with them at all; maybe taking a few phone calls but not on a regular basis at all.

Q: Did you have a problem with, obviously you are there during an American election which all round the world people take a considerable interest in and you've got a political appointee who's the ambassador and you are supposed to be evenhanded. Did you have a problem giving a fairly straight story of how the election was going and the issues despite a political ambassador?

WANLUND: No. He was certainly a Republican. He understood his job wasn't to proselytize for the Republican Party. In embassies we typically have an election night event and there is six hour difference from the East Coast in the U.S. so it tends to get started kind of late in the evening. If you remember back in 2004 as we got to about a month or three weeks before the election we thought it was pretty close. The polls pretty much had them neck and head, Kerry and Bush neck and neck and in fact, some polls predicted Kerry to win the election.

Ambassador Brown came very close to not authorizing an election night embassy party because he said he just couldn't be there if George W. Bush were to lose. We talked to him about this and he finally agreed we could go ahead and have this party but he couldn't guarantee he was going to be there because he just didn't know what he could do. He also said that if Kerry were to win he wouldn't be able to represent him effectively and he would resign immediately after the election.

Later on as the election came closer and the polls started looking more favorable for President Bush, then Ambassador Brown got a little more relaxed about it and of course, he did show up the night of the election. He was there and did stand up interviews with the press and did a great job, even though it wasn't until six o'clock in the morning the next day that Kerry actually conceded.

Q: Well, at least you didn't get caught in a six week or whatever it was in the 2000 one, right? Everybody was just thinking, "Oh, God, not again."

WANLUND: There was certainly a lot of that. In fact I was at a panel at a local university. I was there as the embassy representative expressing just giving our views on the election and it was a breakfast event and if I am not mistaken, it started I am thinking it started at six o'clock in the morning. It is hard to believe. Maybe I am off by a couple of hours. In any case, literally two minutes before I was supposed to walk in the room,

my wife called me and said that Kerry had conceded. I was able to go in with a little bit of news and some closure at the end of a long evening.

Q: When you arrived, Bush was - to say the least - by that time the least popular American president we have had dealing with a post war Europe. What was the opinion in a relatively conservative country like Austria?

WANLUND: I think the prevailing opinion was it was certainly reflected in the media was that Bush is fighting this war in Afghanistan; he's fighting this war in Iraq. War is bad. If you vote for Bush, you must be an idiot. Therefore, when we reelected Bush we, Americans were all, our sanity was questioned. Why would we elect a guy like this?

It's one of those challenges and opportunities at the same time because you get, and it is understandable when you look at the coverage of U.S. foreign policy in the Austrian media, it was all the war, it was all focused on Iraq. At that time certainly the war was beginning to go really badly. That was the news and the Austrian media picked it up. There was no or little interest of anything else the United States was doing; for example, in Africa and Asia in our international economic policies, despite our efforts. I think we tried but we just couldn't develop a whole lot of interest in the Austrian media in anything other than the war. That was the average Austrian perception of what was going on in the U.S. They saw us on a war footing and that was dominating everything that was going on in the U.S. It is logical they would come to the conclusion that we were riding the war train.

Q: Did the universities particularly express dismay?

WANLUND: Yes, sure. There was a lot of anecdotal stuff. You could measure it in the handbills that were being passed out on campus and the posters and the programs that were, the extracurricular programs that were being held on campus by various organizations and the graffiti on the walls. It is truly anecdotal; we never did a survey. When I would go into a class at the invitation of the professor to talk about U.S. policy, I obviously had to address what is going on in Iraq but I would try to bring the focus to other things that were going on; the administration's AID's relief program which is a good legacy of the Bush administration. People wanted to talk about the war but my response; I was always very respectfully received and the arguments were intellectual, not emotional. Of course, that's a strong tradition in Austrian academics to be analytical.

Q: Did you sense a certain amount of schadenfreude, given their own past being pretty nasty, to be able to stick it to the United States?

WANLUND: There was probably a certain amount of that, although after the war, I think for geostrategic reasons the various allies decided it was in their interests to allow the Austrians to themselves as victims of Hitler rather than collaborators. So they were perfectly willing to accept that interpretation of history.

I think Austrians are coming to grips with the nationalist socialist part of their history. They came to grips later than the Germans did.

Q: The Germans as we both know, particularly even today have made extraordinary efforts to acknowledge the past, so it is not going to crop up again. One gathered, at least this was the reporting, that in Austria, the sort of Nazi past wasn't being squelched as much. Did you get a feeling there was a difference?

WANLUND: It wasn't being squelched so much as ignored. In fact, we were there in 2005 and the 60th anniversary observances of the end of war. Certainly a lot of it had to do with all the things that went on in concentration camps, several of which were in Austria. But to me there was a surprising amount, well, maybe not surprising but a remarkable amount of attention paid to the destruction of Vienna and a lot of its cultural artifacts by Allied bombing in 1944, 1945. There is a certain amount of sadness to the destruction of some of this beautiful architecture. There was a fair amount of focus on the terror of the bombing but there was also an acknowledgement by probably a majority that this was one of the consequences of the war and Austrian cooperation with the Third Reich.

Does that also translate into schadenfreude? I think it probably does in terms of Austrians, and other Europeans as well, not unwilling to point to the parallels.

Q: Americans can be rather annoyingly self-righteous about a lot of things. We have gotten involved in racism and basically a colonial thins in various places where we are doing God's work and don't get in our way.

WANLUND: That's right and that doesn't go unnoticed.

Q: What was your impression of Austria in the European Union? You said it punched above its weight. Did this have any, was the European Union as an entity of interest to you or was this taken care of in Brussels?

WANLUND: For the most part it was taken care of in Brussels and I think Austrians in the banking and economic community as well as those in government were generally happy enough to let Brussels set the economic policies. I didn't see much evidence of Austrians trying to guide the EU business agenda, economic agenda.

Where the embassy got particularly involved, I think it was 2006 when Austria assumed the rotating presidency of the EU. So they had the EU presidency for the first half of 2006 and so a lot of the organizational and other meetings of the EU were held in Austria and a lot of the statements being made in the name of the EU were coming out of the Austrian foreign minister or chancellor's office. There was a lot of consciousness raising in Austria by the EU. They put up displays and exhibits and held informational meetings to help educate Austrians about what the EU was doing for them. I think that helped get a lot of attention.

I think at least from what I observed, Austrians behaved like most countries, most European countries that take over the presidency. They look at it as an opportunity to help set an agenda for the EU but it never really comes about. They just don't, they may be first among equals during the time of their presidency but they are not really able to move.

Q: Well, six months is not a long time and you've got other countries getting restive, waiting for their turn.

How stood Austria towards the Balkans? They are right on the edge of the Balkans there. During this time we sent our troops in and things were basically tamped down but still there was a lot of uncovering of the horror of the Balkan wars.

WANLUND: Yes and that was certainly a matter of public discussion. By that I mean you would see a lot of articles and editorializing in the press about what was going on in the Balkans and some reporters just did a splendid job of analyzing the situation, partly because of the geographic proximity and also because the main effect the unrest in the Balkans had in Austria was quite frankly, immigration, and that had an economic impact on the country, not all of it positive, and Austria, try as they might, there is still among parts of the population, distrust and interest in trying to keep those people at arm's length.

At the same time, Austrian investment was quite heavy; banking, telecom. I think the Austrian oil company was represented in the Balkans so there was a lot of financial interest in Austria.

Q: Did you find any sort of sympathy toward Serbia?

WANLUND: No, I didn't sense any.

Q: I would assume much more affinity toward Croatia. Serbia and Austria started World War I.

WANLUND: Yes, and they certainly have long memories of that. There certainly wasn't a lot of sympathy for Milosevic and the gang that was running Serbia.

You are absolutely right, the breakaway, the Balkan states that were carved away from Serbia and later pursuing EU membership. There was a lot more interest there and those are places where Austrians like to take holidays.

Q: How did you find social life, both social and official life in Austria?

WANLUND: I know you don't like this to get too personal but I found it, I found it wonderful, both in terms in what I did in the off hours. There was just so much available in terms of arts and culture that it was splendid.

Officially, as American diplomats, I thought we were very well treated by Austrians. Whatever their attitudes were toward our public policies, they were able to differentiate those policies from you as an individual. If you were at all receptive and showed some interest in what was going on, that would be reciprocated in Austrians that you meet on a social level, whether it was an official function or not.

A very gentlemanly, courtly folks; the Austrians take great pride in treating visitors kindly. They keep a distance, like in Germany it takes a while to be welcomed to the bosom of the family or the community, but at least on the surface or even a little below the surface, you can get accepted.

Q: I have wondered because every year at New Year's we see this concert from the Vienna Orchestra playing at the opera house and they end with the Radetzky March. My wife and I keep looking to see women in the orchestra and we don't see any. The Americans put so much push into bringing more women more into the professional scene, would you say Austria was lagging in that or was the orchestra just a throwback to Franz Joseph?

WANLUND: I think it was. I didn't move in those circles very much but it was something that was noticed but nobody seemed to get too worked up about it in terms of the general public. People would remark on it on occasion.

Q: Using this as an example. Were there women?

WANLUND: There were women politically. I think there were probably more women in Parliament, percentagewise than in the U.S. Congress. The foreign minister is a woman, several cabinet officials were women, and several provincial governors are women. There are women leading businesses and major institutions in Austria. You do get the feeling it is a bit of an exception but I think women are gradually assuming a more prominent place. They are not there yet.

Q: How stood Austria with NATO? It is not in NATO?

WANLUND: No. The Austrians, part of the post war agreement that gave Austria its independence from the occupying powers, the big four so to speak, part of the agreement that was necessary to get the Soviets to agree was that Austria was to remain politically neutral. That precluded membership in NATO, not the EU, although Austria was kind of late to get to the EU. It was 1993 to 1994 that they finally joined. They have never joined NATO. They may occasionally send observers to NATO maneuvers but they are not in NATO.

Q: Was there an affinity to Switzerland because in many ways it sounds like they were somewhat akin. I mean not only mountains but in their stance on things.

WANLUND: Yes, I think so although the Austrians view the Swiss as being more conservative than they. They think the Swiss language, Swisser Deutch, is

incomprehensible. They also view the Swiss as economic competitors, going after the same markets in Europe, certainly in banking and in other investment areas. I don't think it is a hostile relationship at all.

Q: Austria had some problems down along the mountainous Italian border with schools and language and all that. Was this at boiling at all?

WANLUND: Not boiling, but it was an issue and people would talk about the schools. Actually in the province of Carinthia where (Jörg) Haidar had been the governor, there was more of a border issue with Slovenia where a lot of Austrian communities along the border of Slovenia had by statute installed bilingual street signs. Haidar took this up as an issue saying this is Austria, we speak German. We don't need these Slovenian signs. He made it a point to campaign to get rid of them. I was amazed to see it is still an issue. People are still talking about it. But Italy, not so much.

Q: Had there been any return of Jews to Vienna or not?

WANLUND: The Jewish community is noticeable but still pretty small in Vienna. There is a Jewish museum, there is a good sized, very interesting Jewish memorial to the holocaust in downtown Vienna and there's a Jewish cultural center that we worked with occasionally but by and large the Jewish community in Vienna keeps a pretty low profile.

Q: Maybe it had been relatively small but was certainly a major factor in Austrian culture, and finance and arts and all that.

WANLUND: Yes, that's absolutely right but it's, I don't think there was ever the return to Austria on any major scale.

Q: What was going on culturally, the arts, movies?

WANLUND: What gets the most attention is the classics, opera, Mozart. You know you're tripping over Mozart memorabilia everywhere you go. They had a Mozart bicentennial while we were there. On one hand, the Austrians like to remind people that we are more than just Mozart and yodeling in the Alps but that's what the tourism board promotes all around the world and rightfully so. It's a remarkable strain of culture but there is also a lot of very interesting contemporary art and music being performed and portrayed in Austria. It's really quite a lively arts scene.

Cinema, some but not too much that I am aware of.

Q: It's interesting, particularly in cinema. You know, when Hitler came along, he essentially destroyed German/Austrian cinema which had been very lively up until that point and most of the actors got the hell out and ended up in Hollywood. We certainly came out ahead on that exchange.

WANLUND: We sure did. I represented the embassy at the funeral of an Austrian character actor whose name I still don't remember and didn't recognize at the time but he had been quite a fixture in the Austrian legitimate stage, Jewish. Fled Austria and I think the role Americans knew him as was Colonel Klink in Hogan's Heroes. [Ed: Colonel Klink was German actor Werner Klemperer who fled to U.S. in 1930s and served in U.S. Army during WWII in the Pacific Theater.]

Q: In a TV series called Hogan's Heroes. He was the son of a very famous conductor, I believe.

WANLUND: I think that's right and he was one who actually did come back after his acting career in Hollywood was over, came back to Austria and was quite the toast of the town, even though he had been driven out in the 1930s.

Q: Austria had in a way its post war heyday when it became the center for Jews coming out of the Soviet Union and they were sort of, this is where they went and then sort of divide off. Some would go to Israel and some would go to the United States but that whole sort of refugee center that was closed by the time you got there?

WANLUND: Yes. To be honest this is really the first I was aware of that.

Q: This was a big deal at one time because there were Jews leaving the Soviet Union under various agreements and all, were supposedly going to Israel but they would land in Austria. The Austrians went along with it as long as the people came in would leave. This was an important era.

While you were there did you get involved in Austrian playing the part of a weigh station or almost a neutral body in any foreign policy efforts? You know, used as a meeting ground?

WANLUND: That happened occasionally although bureaucratically that wasn't so much our bailiwick as that of our colleagues in OSCE in the UN mission but occasionally. For example there were a lot of negotiations about holocaust preparations that took place in Austria. When there was so much initial excitement about Iran developing nuclear weapons, there were a couple of six party meetings in Vienna having to do with that. It was principally a UN function but organizationally the bilateral mission got involved in that, for example, when the secretary of state would come.

And again with the EU there were a lot of international gatherings going on.

Q: Where did you go afterwards?

WANLUND: I came back here to retire. I came back to Washington to retire in 2007.

Q: How did you feel about the disintegration of the USIA and its integration into the Foreign Service? You saw in the field and how it was working at that point.

WANLUND: I was actually in Washington when the deal was consummated, but actually first, I thought it was inevitable and second, I thought it was a good idea. I was sort of isolated among my veteran compatriots but overseas. Of course, USIA had always been integrated with State Department activities. We worked for the same ambassador, we all represented on the country team. Although we had our own budget, our own personnel system and our own trappings of representation and we had our own motor pool and that was a big benefit.

I think it was harder here for a lot of people because they saw a loss of autonomy and nobody really likes that. Second, I think there was a fear among long-term USIA people that by being subsumed by the State Department, we were, all of a sudden because we had lost our independence we were our work was going to be overseen and second-guessed by traditional State Department folks and there was some angst about that. I think it was misplaced and I think in fact people who do public diplomacy are now much better place to have an influence on our foreign policy than we were as a separate organization.

Q: In my interviews with USIA officers, they saw their role overseas as so important. This was really a major branch and then to talk to people who went to Washington with USIA where they ended up as sort of personnel people or something. They were removed from the policy process.

WANLUND: That's right.

Q: What have you been doing since?

WANLUND: I retired in September of 2007 and have been working as a WAE, When Actually Employed, which is sort of the State Department rehiring on a short term basis its own retirees who have security clearances.

Q: What sort of work have you been doing?

WANLUND: My first WAE job was the Balkans. I went to Serbia. It was at a time when they were without a public affairs officer and they really wanted one. It was late 2007, early 2008 when the Kosovo unpleasantness was really coming to a head. The ambassador really, really wanted a full public affairs complement out there. He had an information officer and he had a cultural affairs officer, both of whom were very good but both relatively junior. In fact, even before I officially retired the European office knew I was I was in the market for WAE work and I got a call on a cell phone saying, "How would you like to go to Belgrade for a couple of months?" I pointed out that I had never served in the Balkans and I didn't speak a word of the language. They said, "Don't worry about it" so I went there in late November, 2007 and stayed through March.

Q: Let's talk about it. We had fought a little war with Serbia. We bombed the hell out of the place, didn't we? I was there from 1962 to 1967. I would assume we are not the most popular people on the block?

WANLUND: No and the government has made sure people don't forget it. Right on the street a block in one direction and two or three in another direction are the shells of bombed out buildings and that's where the defense ministry was on one side and the police headquarters on the other. They have rebuilt most of the rest of the city but they have managed to leave those two buildings there as a, I am sure it is not an accident, reminder of what American bombers do or NATO bombers do.

Q: What were you doing? Our stand on Kosovo was extremely unpopular with Serbia. How did you deal with that?

WANLUND: It was very clear to Ambassador Munter, to me and to the rest of the staff it was clear that we were not going to change any minds about the U.S. position on Kosovo. We supported Kosovo's independence. The Serbs hated the idea for cultural and historical reasons. We were never going to come to a meeting of the minds on that. We continued to point out our position on Kosovo. We didn't stick our fingers in anybody's eyes about it but we always made our positions clear.

From a public affairs standpoint, we also did our best to keep a very active, visible public appearance through cultural events, in the press. USAID had a terrific operation there and in fact they had their own press operation which I didn't want to mess with because it was so good and so effective. We cooperated and we coordinated. Essentially, they did what they did. They were doing the really important infrastructure of the building or redeveloping the sewer systems, financial development, and the kind of stuff USAID can do so well.

We would arrange cultural events, we would show up at other people's cultural events, we would respond to invitations to speaking engagements and we would continue to work with NGOs (non-government organizations) in Belgrade that were sympathetic to us and that had the same objectives which tended to be things like education, integration in a society. We would try to show up wherever we were welcome.

Q: What sort of speakers could you get that would be received?

WANLUND: We did a lot of the speaking ourselves from the embassy. We didn't, I don't believe we had any speakers come coming in from the outside, no academic speakers like we typically have. We did a lot ourselves. I would go out and speak in English. Political officers would go out, some of whom had very good Serbian. The ambassador was out all the time. He would, he was a good sport about going out. Again, we would be politely received by and large and we did an awfully lot of press stuff. For all the emotion that surrounded the Kosovo issue, there is a very lively independent media, press in Serbia and we worked with them a lot.

I got there in November. We tended to shut down cultural programming, traditionally, not just for anything that was going on at the time from mid-December to mid-January, just for the Holidays. The American Christmas holidays and the Serbian Christmas holidays, which followed the orthodox calendar and came afterwards. It was traditionally a kind of a fallow time in our cultural programming anyway.

Then February came and the Kosovo thing came to a real head at that time [Ed: Kosovo declaration of independence was February 17, 2008]. Then we switched over to a full press operation. We were getting press calls from the international media as well as I said the hyper-active Serbian media who were constantly doing that stuff.

The press officer at the time at the embassy spoke excellent Serbian and we divided our responsibilities pretty much by language. I handled the press calls that came in from the international media and she worked almost exclusively with the Serbian press. She had more work to do than I did for sure because she was hyperactive.

Q: What was happening in Kosovo at this time?

WANLUND: At that time the tsunami was approaching of Kosovo's formal declaration of independence. There wasn't a certain date set but the head of the state, the political head was saying, "We are going to declare independence, we are going to do it soon." He was trying to rally international support for it so there was a lot of noise.

You asked about the kind of programming we did. I actually accompanied a couple of Serbian journalists down to the U.S. NATO base in Kosovo near Pristina for a three day information tour. I accompanied them to put a political side to it. They were basically in the hands of the U.S. military presence there. They were given a very good demonstration. You could just sort of see the pot coming to the boil in Serbia as Kosovo's independence came closer and closer and the political rhetoric in Serbia was just getting cranked up proportionately.

They were also coming into an election period in Serbia, first for parliament and then for president and prime minister and I am a little hazy on the sequence of events and timing. What was quite clear that no Serbian politician in his right mind was going to come down on the side of Kosovo independence. That was just not in anybody's cards. Some were less militant than others and some would signal to the embassy a willingness to work with us. but nobody was saying that publicly.

Q: Could you have an exchange program?

WANLUND: Yes, we had exchange visitors. The government didn't really clamp down on us until after Kosovo's independence. We had an active exchange program going, both ways. We had Fulbrighters, for example in the country.

Q: Were we sort of keeping a lower profile than normal, would you say there during the time, turning things over to the British or French?

WANLUND: In the terms of arguing the Kosovo case, yes. By the same token, we were pointing out in public programming that there was much more to the U.S.-Serbian relationship than the Kosovo. There are long historic ties, cultural ties, a huge Serb population in the U.S. in Ohio, for instance. We recognized we were in a rough patch in our diplomatic relations with Serbia over Kosovo. We can ride through this, we've had other crisis. We were just trying to shore up the battlements because we knew there would be a rupture when Kosovo independence was finally declared and the U.S. came down on that.

Q: Were you there when that happened?

WANLUND: Yes, I was. Independence was declared February [17th] and of course, there were demonstrations, anti-American demonstrations, but also anti French, Italian British, those who had gone along with us but we were the focus of most of it. Interestingly, there was one demonstration at the embassy. It was at night so nobody was there; only the security forces, the Marines and the private security guards. Although it was kind of a threatening crowd, a couple of hundred people, the police kept them at bay and dispersed them and there was no damage.

The real drama came a couple of days later; I think it was on a Friday. Thursday the government had called what the Germans would call a Schauderfeier. It was a memorial service if you will for Kosovo, called by the government and they did everything they could to make sure people from all over the Serbia could take part. They wanted a million people there in Belgrade. So they provided free bus and train transportation for people from outside Belgrade to come to the city to participate in this march. I honestly don't know how many showed up but it was a huge crowd. It may have been a half million. It was generally a peaceful observance. There were a lot of nationalist speeches but it was generally peaceful during the day.

Ambassador Munter had ordered the embassy shut that day around noon or one o'clock, not because of any particular threat to the embassy but because the Belgrade authorities essentially shut down the main street, the main part of downtown Belgrade and there was no public transportation. The foreign national employees couldn't get home; none of us could get home so he basically threw us all out of the embassy. I didn't go home; I was watching it all on television.

Early in the evening the major demonstration that had gone on downtown had marched up to the basilica, to the main church to regroup and because there was a religious element to Kosovo's departure as well. It was a small minority of demonstrators but still a substantial number of people broke loose and demonstrated in front of the American embassy. There was a lot of trashing of the downtown Belgrade as well but a demonstration gathered in front of the embassy and this time the police pulled back and didn't really interfere with the demonstration.

The result was there was quite a bit of damage done to our embassy. There were Molotov cocktails thrown in, windows were broken, there was a fire set in the embassy which was contained in the consular section and in an unused storage area. There was quite a bit of damage done to those areas.

In fact, a young man was killed by the fire. He had gotten up on the balcony, broken into a window that led into the storage area and actually got himself into the courtyard of the embassy there and had broken into one of the buildings on the compound. There is the chancery and a series of four or five outbuildings there surrounding the courtyard. He'd gotten into, out of the chancery, into the courtyard and actually into one of the buildings there which in fact housed where the public affairs office, although he didn't get up there. He'd gotten into the ground floor of the building where the information technology office was located, did some damage there and then tried to get out but was overcome by smoke or flames and died in the embassy. He had no contact with the Marines or the private security force. He just died as a result of the fire.

Q: Did we shut down for a little while afterward to clean up afterwards?

WANLUND: We closed the embassy on Friday and over the weekend and it was closed for business on Monday although some of the Americans came in. We came in to see what the state of things were. I think we had a skeleton staff of foreign nationals in on Tuesday and I think we reopened for most business on Wednesday although the consular office was closed. They just couldn't work in there for fire damage, water damage and some of the equipment had been destroyed so they shut down their operations.

Later that week the embassy, there was an ordered evacuation and dependents and nonessential staff, American staff left the country. Consular operations were resumed from embassies in neighboring countries.

Q: When did you leave?

WANLUND: I stayed in Belgrade until the end of March 2008.

Q: Did you have the feeling they had gotten this out of their system and sort of things were moving towards getting back?

WANLUND: I think it was sort of a sobering reminder to the government that they had let things get out of control. I think the damage to the embassy and the consequences of that just kind of woke them up.

The Serbian government had recalled its ambassadors from countries that had recognized Kosovo, including the U.S. They had also barred our ambassador from having contact with senior government officials so there was still contact going on at the working level and certainly on the non official level. For all intents and purposes because our ambassador couldn't have contact with the foreign minister or the chancellor's office or the prime minister's office, our diplomatic activities were on hold.

Q: At one point, under Milosevic, sort of a criminal element, were a strong force within the Serbian government. Had that dissipated by the time you were there?

WANLUND: I didn't see much of that. What was quite clear was that there were individuals in the private sector that had an awful lot of influence. There was certainly a lot of corruption going on between persons in the private sector and sort of enabling officials in the government that allowed individuals to amass an awful lot of power, not in the sense of having private armies but basically having the government on their side to get whatever done that they wanted to accomplish, banking or media or other areas.

Q: When you left, what was your feeling about whither Serbia?

WANLUND: I didn't have much history with Serbia or the Balkans. I did realize losing Kosovo was sort of a, that was the last straw. A lot of Serbs, very intelligent, well educated and generally objective people had blinders on when it came to Kosovo. They understood that they weren't acting in a way that much of the rest of the world would regard as rational when it came to that. There was so much culture and so much religion and history tied up with Serbia and Kosovo. It was also the last province, if you will of the old Serbia that was cut off and carved off and sent off on its own. I think it was hard for a lot of people to take.

Some of the Serbs on my staff who were aware and I think generally supportive of the arguments for Kosovo's independence, they cried when it was official; it just meant that much. I think that is where maybe our diplomacy came up short in not recognizing how deeply, deeply affected the Serbs would be by this. We recognized it intellectually. We knew that smart people told us that this was going to happen and I think we believed it but I think we had no idea of the depth of feelings there.

Q: Then you retired and came back.

WANLUND: I came back and of course still wanted to keep working. I went to work at for the Foreign Press Center. It is a State Department office in downtown Washington that caters to the accredited foreign media based here in Washington. By this time it was 2008. The America elections were in full swing. The Foreign Press Center had gotten half a million dollars from the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy to run a program to bring foreign journalists to the U.S. to cover the last two weeks of the election. So it paid for their transportation and their living expenses while they were here. We brought them to Washington for a couple of days of orientation and farmed them out to attach to or work with U.S. media, radio, newspapers, or web based organizations in battle ground states. So we had 49; one guy couldn't get a visa, from all around the world for the last two weeks of a very exciting election campaign.

Q: Did you find that the foreign press was particularly engaged by the Obama candidacy? This was something that was really sort of astounding in American politics.

WANLUND: Yes and the effect the Obama candidacy had around the world is just remarkable. Astounding is a good word for it. Surely the interest in Obama and his campaign inspired an awful lot of interest overseas and that is why and I think that is why so many journalists came to the U.S. to cover that. Not to put too fine a point on it, I think when this program was being developed and I only got the benefit of it, I wasn't in on the creation of it but I think Obama's candidacy was a no brainer, that this was going to attract a lot of attention overseas and that this would be a good time to take advantage of it and a good way to do it.

Q: I think this is a good place to stop. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

WANLUND: My pleasure.

End of interview