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

WILLIAM A. WEINGARTEN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 29th of July, 1999. This is an interview with William A. Weingarten, and this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well, why don't we sort of begin at the beginning. Would you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

WEINGARTEN: Okay, I was born in New York City in 1936 and was raised on the South Shore of Long Island and left there in 1954 for university. I went to Colgate.

Q: Let's go back. What did your father and mother do?

WEINGARTEN: My mother was a housekeeper. My father was the associate comptroller of the Equitable Life Assurance Society. He worked in New York; we lived on Long Island, in a small town called Baldwin. It's about 20 miles outside the city.

Q: Brothers, sisters?

WEINGARTEN: I have one brother, two years younger, and he's now in Evansville, Indiana, and he works for American Standard. He's thinking of retiring, too.

Q: Where did you go to elementary school?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, let me see. I have to cast back for that. I went to two elementary schools in Baldwin. One was - I can't think of the names.

Q: You don't have to know the names.

WEINGARTEN: Then I went to high school in Baldwin.

Q: What interested you during your grammar school and high school years?

WEINGARTEN: Grammar and high school years? Probably sports, reading - history in particular. I used to cause my parents some concern sometimes when they'd ask me what I wanted for Christmas and I'd say I want a copy of *Panzer Battles*, by F.S. von Mellenthin.

Q: Guderian?

WEINGARTEN: That's *Lost Victories*.

Q: Oh, Lost Victories. *Guderian was -*

WEINGARTEN: Yes, Guderian wrote another one. And I'm not sure what they thought I was doing, whether I was going to grow up to be a Nazi or what. But I always had a deep interest in history. I wanted to go to West Point after high school and applied for it but could not get in because of my eyesight, and I didn't know enough at the time to seek a waiver. So I didn't go to West Point. And finally I didn't even get the application in. I went to Colgate.

Q: How did you get into this? Was it military history you were interested in?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, pretty much so. And then I got into the other branches of history at Colgate. I had a terrific professor there by the name of Douglas Reading, and he was my mentor, I suppose, and I took a lot of history courses, took just about every history course they offered there, and graduated with honors in history. But I still wasn't quite sure what I was going to do with it after I finished the course of study at Colgate, and Reading said, "Why don't you look into the Foreign Service?" And so I did. And was supposed to take the test in 1957, I think it was, and the test was offered in Syracuse. And it was December.

Q: This was the written test.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, the written test. And I had an old car at the time. I had a 1949 Ford, and there are a lot of hills between Colgate - Hamilton, New York - and Syracuse in a snowfall. Big snowfall the night before. I couldn't get my car up the hill, so I did not get to take the exam. Then I graduated in 1958, and at that time there was a problem. The economy was not doing very well, and a lot of guys would graduate from college without a job, and that was my situation. I went back to Baldwin, worked as a garbage man for another three months, and then joined the Army.

Q: You were in the Army from when to when?

WEINGARTEN: 1958 to '61. September '58 to I think about July of '61.

Q: What were you doing in the Army?

WEINGARTEN: I was in intelligence.

Q: Where did you serve?

WEINGARTEN: Initially in Fort Holabird, Maryland, which is the intelligence school,

and then to Korea. I spent 13 months there and came back to a unit in Washington, in the old temporary buildings down near Fort McNair and served there another year and a half. I got my commission in the Army about a year before leaving, and they said, "Well, if you want to take up your commission, we'll have to add another year." By that time I had had first-hand experience of the Army and I wanted no more of it. I just wanted to get out. So I got out as a sergeant.

Q: Where did you serve in Korea?

WEINGARTEN: I served in Inchon. Do you know it?

Q: I know Inchon.

WEINGARTEN: You do? Okay.

Q: A little. During the war I was outside of Seoul, actually at Yangtze University, and then some 25 years later I was consul general in Saigon.

WEINGARTEN: Oh, okay. So you know it. I was in Inchon. We had a little offshoot of an intelligence unit, the 308th CIC group, and we had our little squad, about eight people, and we lived in a nice old house. Looking back I guess it dated from the early 1900s. It might have been a rich merchant's house at one time. We were stationed next to the Korean Central Intelligence Agency office there. And we advised them on some things, and other things they didn't need advice on and didn't ask us - mainly beating confessions out of people. They were a very, very tough brand of folks. I was there '59 to '60, and most of what we did was security work. There was a unit also in town that infiltrated people into North Korea from Inchon. We had nothing to do with them. They all served under assumed names. The outfit I was in was much less clandestine than these guys. And we would go out and do security inspections on Army units. Remember ASCOM City?

Q: Yes, that was a big supply area, wasn't it?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, a big sort of main base behind the lines. And then the only exciting thing that happened to me in Korea was the revolution that overthrew Syngman Rhee in 1960. My unit was among the few permitted to go out into the streets. And we were sort of the eyes and ears for Inchon, or the eyes anyway, for the embassy in Seoul.

Q: What was happening in Inchon during that time?

WEINGARTEN: They had, I guess, what has happened in the rest of Korea as well. There was a student uprising, and the students took to the streets from the high schools and middle schools and the university, and they rioted. They attacked police stations, fire stations, government offices. I still remember being in my jeep on a road watching up a hillside and seeing a whole crowd of kids all dressed in black - they all dressed in black at the time - pouring out of the school, down the road, and there were three policemen on

the road. And this horde of kids passed over them, down into the town, and when they had passed, you looked up and saw the three cops lying on the ground, dead I think. So that was my excitement. I did manage to make that event. On the way back to the States, I was on a troop ship back to San Francisco, Oakland, at the time that the U-2 crisis broke and the Paris Conference.

Q: That was in June of '60.

WEINGARTEN: June of '60, yes. And the conference that Eisenhower was to have with Khrushchev was canceled.

Q: In Paris, yes.

WEINGARTEN: In Paris. And we were just sort of stuck out on a boat in the middle of the Pacific and thought, Well, you know, this could be when the world goes up, we'll be the last people here probably.

So we got back to the States, went back to New York, spent some leave, painted my parents' house, and then went to Washington.

Q: Well, while you were in Korea or in Washington, you had this abortive attempt at the Foreign Service Exam wiped out by snow. Had you been able to talk to anybody about the Foreign Service or get any feel for it?

WEINGARTEN: No, I hadn't. The only person I had ever known who had any acquaintance with it was this professor at Colgate, Douglas Reading, and he'd never served in the Foreign Service but he knew of it and it was something he pushed his better students in. So no, I never really met anybody from the State Department or the Foreign Service until after I was in the State Department.

Q: When did you take the Foreign Service Exam the next time?

WEINGARTEN: I finally took it in 1961. When I left the Army in '61 I worked for a year - actually it turned out to be about nine months - for the Equitable Life Assurance Society, my father's firm. They were hiring a corps of management trainees, so I was one of their first management trainees. I really didn't like it, so I decided to cast around for things to do. So I took the law boards first and did very well on those, and then I took the Foreign Service Exam, the written exam, down in Washington, and I passed that. So I then had a choice of whether to go to law school - I got accepted at Harvard - or go in the Foreign Service. And I decided I'd prefer the Foreign Service because it would at least pay me a semi-living wage, whereas three years at law school on beans and soda didn't seem all that appealing. That was, I suppose, one of the major turning points in life. I guess I realized it at the time. One of the amusing things about it is for two or three years afterwards each year I'd receive a card from some guy doing a graduate degree at Harvard wondering what people who had turned down an opportunity to go to the Law School were doing with their lives - which I thought was kind of amusing.

Q: Well, did you take the oral exam? I mean, you had to take the oral exam. When did you take that?

WEINGARTEN: I took the written test in late '61, I think, passed that, and took the oral exam, I guess, some time about March or April in '62 and passed that. They took a long time from passing the oral exam to getting on the register. I had all the security clearances that I needed from the Army, so I couldn't understand why I wasn't getting any appointment. I had already told the people I was working for I was going to leave, and finally I called down here, and I got someone named Brown in Personnel. I'm not sure which one it was - Dave Brown - somebody. I said, "Listen, I've got to make a choice. Have I got a job or not?" And so he said, "Well, yes, you've got a job. Why don't you come down." That's how... I think I got a letter later, but he said, why don't you come down and we'll enter you into the September, 1962, A-100 course.

Q: Do you recall anything about the oral exam?

WEINGARTEN: Only that I did very badly on it on artistic things. They asked me, for example, if I could name any painter from the Hudson Valley School. I couldn't do that, and so they... I figured that was it. I didn't know anybody from the Hudson Valley School, so that was the end of me. But it didn't turn out that way. But no, I don't remember very much of it other than I remember - it's kind of funny, looking back at it - going to... I got my hair cut the day before. I wore a very short crew cut at the time. And then that morning I went into New York and had a shave from a barber - It was the first time I've ever done that, first and last time, too - so I'd look sharp. And then on the way to the exam, I was walking with this girlfriend at the time, and some guy knocked into her on the street in New York and knocked her down and just kept on walking. So I went and grabbed him, and I almost had a fight. And I thought, um, I can't go to my... I was on the way to the Foreign Service Exam, and I was really going to belt this guy, and I thought, Well, if I do that, he belts me, I've got blood all over my shirt, how do I explain that? So I didn't. One of those... You always regret more the things you don't do than the things you do.

Q: Well, you came in in 1962, in September? Can you describe your impression of your class of junior officers who came in with you at that time?

WEINGARTEN: It was a big class. I think even then it was one of the bigger classes that had come into the Foreign Service up to that time, I think. And most of the people in it were in their late 20s. There were some in their early 30s, I think. For the most part, every one in that entering class had an advanced degree, which made me feel I ought to have one, too, if I was going to compete with these people, and so I kept up for a long time with the people I came in the service with. We didn't actually have class reunions, but we'd see each other when you return to Washington, but that sort of dropped off. I think everybody in that class, nearly everyone in that class, has now left the Service, and I think I'm the last one.

Q: What about women, minorities?

WEINGARTEN: There were two or three women, I think, and I think there was a single African American, but that's all I can remember, and I'm not even sure about that. It was pretty much a white bread class.

Q: When you came in, did you have any particular area you wanted to specialize in of any kind?

WEINGARTEN: No, I didn't. I thought I'd like to do intelligence and research, and I thought I might have some kind of a background for that, having been in intelligence and enjoying research. But no, I was told that's not the place to go.

Q: Well, there really isn't any career in that. I mean, you serve your time in there, but it's not a career option.

WEINGARTEN: But you know, that's another one of those places where either you make or decisions are made for you that change your life. Anyway, I wanted a master's degree, so I asked for an assignment in Washington, and they gave that to me, and I worked in the Bureau of Economic Affairs, and I went to Georgetown at night. I got into Georgetown, had an interview with the dean, and he took a phone call at that moment from a former student who was going to take the Foreign Service Exam and was sort of panicked about it, and so he asked me to talk to this guy, and so I talked to him for about ten minutes and told him what kind of exam it was, what to expect, just plow on ahead, don't hesitate or spend too much time on the questions. And the dean said, "Well, I wasn't planning to admit you," until I'd done that. I don't know. It might have been some sort of trick interview thing. So I went to Georgetown at night and got my degree.

Q: In what?

WEINGARTEN: MS in Foreign Service.

Q: Any particular concentration?

WEINGARTEN: Actually, the think it turned out I liked was philosophy. They had a strong element of philosophy in that course.

Q: A Jesuit school, and it was run by Father Healy.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, Father Healy, and then they'd import Jesuits from France and so on. They had some interesting people there. But as a night school it was just sort of... when you go to school at night you don't make very many relationships with your other students. It's like going to a trade school, in a way, and I don't recall having made any friends in that two years that I was going at night. And that's an interesting time. I spent my vacations over in the State Department's library - it's a pretty good library for these purposes - and wrote my term papers down there.

Q: You were two years with the Economic Bureau?

WEINGARTEN: It turned out to be more like two and a half.

Q: This would be like from '60 -

WEINGARTEN: '62 to early '65, about two years. And I would have left earlier but I was offered a job in Vietnam in late '64, and I said sure, that sounds great, and I went and talked to my wife at the time, and she said, "Aw, I don't want to go." She had worked for *Newsweek* in New York and was trying to get established as a journalist here. So I said okay, and I went back and I said, "Well, you know, I can't go." And they were really unhappy about that and as much as accused me of chickening out. So then several months later I was offered... they said, "Would you like to go to Beirut?" And I said, "Sure." And then about two hour later Personnel called back and said, "Well, we're not going to send you to Beirut. We're going to send you to Paris. Would you like that?" I said, "Yes." I'd never been to Europe before. And so I went and told my wife, "We've got an assignment in Paris." She said, "Well, I'm not interested in going overseas." At that point, we split.

Q: How long had you been married?

WEINGARTEN: Three years, married in '62. That was good to find out early.

Q: Oh, absolutely.

WEINGARTEN: Before we had any children.

Q: During the economic bureau time, what were you doing?

WEINGARTEN: I was a rotational officer, one of a number of rotational officers. Then I was lent to the predecessor of USTR (United States Trade Representative). At that time it was just known as the Special Trade Representative. Christian Herter was in charge of it.

Q: Christian Herter, Jr.

WEINGARTEN: No, the one who had been Secretary of State.

Q: Oh, and governor of Massachusetts.

WEINGARTEN: Yes. He headed up USTR. This was under the Kennedy Administration. So I worked over there about six or eight months.

Q: What were you doing?

WEINGARTEN: They were holding hearings for the Kennedy Round, and they had industries that were either for or against tariff cuts would come in and try to make a case.

And so you got people like the last handful of people in the country who made lace handkerchiefs by hand. They came in and pleaded for a higher tariff. They didn't get it, and so now you can no longer buy a handmade lace handkerchief. The steel industry came in. The steel industry in particular tried to make a national security case out of it, but it didn't work, so they were confronted with lower tariffs on steel imports. So it was very interesting. It was fun to work on that.

Q: What was your impression of how the government responded to these industrial pleas?

WEINGARTEN: Well, we tried to write it up in an evenhanded way, but the arguments against tariff cuts were pretty self-serving or had a national security element. They kind of wrapped themselves in the flag. At the level I was, I never felt any pressure personally. All we were doing was writing up the testimony, condensing it, passing it on. I don't know what sort of lobbying activities might have taken place. I'm sure there were a host of them. Steel was a very important tariff.

Q: After that what else were you doing?

WEINGARTEN: I worked in the Office of Food Policy. I worked in the Office of Trade. And that was about it.

Q: How did you feel about getting your feet wet in the economic side? Was this of interest to you at the time?

WEINGARTEN: I thought at the time it was simply a way station, as I was a political officer. They didn't have cones in those days.
Q: I don't think they had cones then. Where did you get the feeling you wanted to be a political officer?

WEINGARTEN: I don't know. I think I just came in the Foreign Service with that in mind. I can't recall if we had to make a choice or if we were recruited for specialties.

Q: I don't think you were.

WEINGARTEN: No, and pretty much I guess your first assignment would determine to a large degree what sort of career you would pursue, what specialty you would pursue. Anyway, I thought of myself as political officer and got assigned to Paris in '65, went to Paris, and as I say, I'd never been to Paris or France before, and I got there. I took the boat, then, the *United States.* I took the boat, and that was fun.

Q: Oh, yes. It was the United States *or the* America*.*

WEINGARTEN: No, it was the *SS United States.* I think the *America* was the one that went down the Mediterranean. This was the one that went straight across. So I had a grand time, got to Paris exhausted, checked in the embassy, shown my hotel, went to

sleep and then woke up at about eight o'clock that night and said, "Bill Weingarten, you're in Paris. You're not going to sleep this night." And so I got up and did the whole circuit of the Boulevard Saint Germain, up and back, came back about one a.m., and just fell in love. I think now I was probably looking back and think this sort of thing but I really fell in love with the city.

Q: Well, you were in Paris from '65 to when?

WEINGARTEN: '68.

Q: What was your job?

WEINGARTEN: I was initially in the Economic Section with the financial part of it, and then after about a year or so (my boss and I didn't get along very well), I wound up switching to the Political Section, where I did internal French politics with Charlie Tanguy.

Q: Well, let's talk a little about the economic side. What were you doing on the economic side?

WEINGARTEN: Basically the balance of payments, France's balance of payments and its gold reserves and so on, all that stuff. It was really very interesting stuff, but it's very secretive, and it was very hard to get into the French Finance Ministry for example and find out what they were actually thinking about, although they did have liaison people who would have lunch. I remember a fellow I'd had lunch with who would explain to me what was going on in French and then explained to me again the same thing in English. So it was one of the things that made me want to get my French to a better level, which I did.

Q: We've always had a Treasury representative over there. Did you find that there was a built-in tension between the Economic Bureau and what you were doing and the Treasury office?

WEINGARTEN: Well, I was in the Treasury office actually. They had two Treasury guys there and two State Department guys, and I was the junior State Department guy. And as I say, I didn't get along with the Treasury representative, and so away I went.

Q: What, was it personal or just -

WEINGARTEN: He was a very difficult guy to get along with and had very little patience. His name was Don McGrew. He was in Paris for 35 or 40 years as Treasury attaché. He started there in '45 and lasted, I think, until maybe '80, about 35 years. Very difficult, very irascible, and as I said, had very little patience with rookies, learners, and so I went on to the Political Section.

Q: You were in the Political Section from when?

WEINGARTEN: Early '66 to '68.

Q: A very interesting time in France.

WEINGARTEN: Yes.

Q: Could you describe the French political scene as you saw it, and then we'll talk about what you were doing?

WEINGARTEN: Okay. Well, the political scene was dominated by General De Gaulle, who had a moral authority over everyone else in France by virtue of his wartime experience. It seemed to us that he was getting more anti-American as time wore on. And we interpreted such things as his visit to Quebec as a kind of effort to set backfires, if you will, that the United States would have to deal with. But General De Gaulle always kept that on a fairly high intellectual-moral basis. People who worked for him, especially people in the political side of his administration were more fundamentally, it seemed, anti-American and really happy to see the United States take a reverse, take a setback. Students, of course, were very much anti-war. I think it's really about '67 that that started to pick up. The embassy had very close relations with the Socialists, including François Mitterrand and his people. And there was also at the time a centrist movement in France, the Centre Démocrate, led by a man named Jean Lecanuet, who was the head of that, and he was much more open to the United States. We also pushed very hard for European unity, which again was something that the French were holding back on. So the embassy tried to cultivate all three of those groups - the Centre Démocrate, the Socialists, and the Gaullists - and then try to fend off all the crank groups, people who would come and say, "We'll give you a safe house in Brittany if you give us some money." And I wound up being the CIA's front man... the person they would shunt people to. People would come into the embassy and say, "I must talk to someone very secretly." And they'd say, "Well, we'll send you to see Mr. Weingarten." And so I'd have to listen to all these crank stories. Some of them were pretty funny. I'm not joking. Someone did offer us a safe house in Brittany for blown agents. We got people who published newsletters that didn't go anywhere, just rants against General De Gaulle. So that was kind of funny. You never knew in the Political Section what you would encounter when you went to work.

Q: I can't remember, by this time had the Algerian business been pretty well settled?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, the Algerian business? Algeria, the French moved out of there in '62, and after terrible bloodshed and slaughter, the *pieds-noirs* came back to France, and then there was a lot of turmoil from, say, '62 to '65, when a lot of people in France had a tremendous resentment vis-à-vis General De Gaulle, who they thought betrayed them. And so there were assassination attempts. I think the last one was in '65, when they tried to ambush him outside Paris. They blew his car to pieces, but missed him. But there were a lot of diehard *Algérie-française* people around at the time.

Q: Sometimes as a new Foreign Service officer, new to France and all, in a way, you're

more sensitive to some of the currents that are going through an embassy, and I was wondering, particularly in the Political Section, did you see an embassy where there were those almost for De Gaulle and those against De Gaulle? Were these two sort of currents going on, or were we pretty much of one mind?
WEINGARTEN: I think we were pretty much of one mind, as I recall it. Remember hat this is a big embassy in a big city, and it was not an embassy that tended to coalesce after work or on weekends, and I think that's pretty much the case for most big embassies today. No, actually, I think the one thing, the one glue that marked the Political Section and the Economic Section, and the entire embassy as a matter of fact, was the resentment that we felt much of the time against the French for the snide remarks and efforts to screw us up in North Africa or to play games with us elsewhere. And so there was... when we could get back at them in some way... I'll give you an example. At the time the embassy was completely open, no barricades. The fence was simply ornamental. And the political counselor was assured by the Quai d'Orsay, by the Americas director there, that nothing would happen. He'd gone to complain about the rise in anti-American activity, and about our Marines at a ceremony who were attacked by a crowd of French. So the Americas director said, oh, no problem, and the day after that, a *lycée* professor came in with about two dozen kids to protest the war in Vietnam, and walked into the courtyard of the embassy, and they all threw inkwells up against the side of the embassy, through the windows, and one of the targets they got was the political counselor's carpet. He had this nice office on the courtyard. A couple of ink bottles went through there and got the carpet. And he was just beside himself with joy. He went over to the Quai d'Orsay, told them about this. They said, "Well, of course, we'll pay for the repairs." So he went out - I don't think he had an Aubusson carpet or anything like that, but he went out for the repairs and did not bother to get the low bid.

Q: Who was the ambassador during this time, '66 to '68?

WEINGARTEN: Charles E. Bohlen.

Q: Oh, yes.

WEINGARTEN: Really, the epitome of an ambassador.
Q: As a large embassy and as junior officer did you have any contact with him?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes. We would go over to the National Assembly, and he'd want to see somebody, one of the deputies, and I would be sent to fetch the deputy, in effect, as the junior officer in the Political Section. We had 12 people in the Political Section. It was a big outfit. But no, I had contact with him, not daily. But to see him in action was really something.

Q: What was your impression of how he operated?

WEINGARTEN: Well, he had a tremendous presence. He was a man who had served in Russia He'd also served in Paris in the late '20s, I think, early '30s, learned Russian at the Institute for Oriental Languages, knew Paris, spoke perfect French, was a real presence.

That's the only word I can think of. He exuded authority. He knew that any Frenchman who would talk to him would know that whatever message he had to convey would be conveyed to Washington at a very high level. He was a very, very impressive man.

Q: Who was the head of the Political Section?

WEINGARTEN: Richard Funkhouser, Dick Funkhouser. He was the only political counselor when I was there. And he knew Paris, too.

Q: Well, during those times, I think we probably had as professional a group as we've ever had in Paris.

WEINGARTEN: Yes. I don't know. I served again in Paris in the '90s. Yes, you might be right on that. I think before then they always did. They always had a core of people with real qualifications, who knew France and who knew the language. Afterwards, I think they still kept... it's still such a sought-after post.
Q: Was there speculation among the junior officers about whither De Gaulle and after De Gaulle, thinking about the situation then?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, but you could not see any real challenge to De Gaulle except if he happened to be assassinated or fell sick and died. He was so far above the rest of the political world in France that he had no real competitor for president. So I think we did... We tried to look for young Gaullists or people we though would play a role, or were young French political leaders. And we managed to pick people who have played a major role since then - not always to our advantage. One was Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who's now the minister of interior. We sent him to the States, and he was my project. And he's turned out to be one of the most fundamentally anti-American French politicians you could have. He was minister of defense during the Kuwait-Iraqi business, and had to resign his post as head of the Franco-Iraqi Friendship Society under real pressure, and finally resigned as Minister.

So we would look for people on the International Visitors Program who we thought might play a role in French society, usually in about 15 or 20 years down the road. And so who would replace General de Gaulle if he happened to pass away right then and there? We didn't do very much speculation on that.

Q: This was still the era, a carryover from the Kennedy time, when we had youth officers and there was a great deal of emphasis on youth. And of course, it turned out in, what was it, May or June of '68, youth was important. Were you still young enough to be kind of a youth officer in those days?

WEINGARTEN: A bit long in the tooth, but yes, we used to have a pretty active youth program run by a fellow who was a friend of the DCM, as I recall. I may be getting into personality.

Q: Well, personalities are all right. The time has gone on.

WEINGARTEN: Well, anyway, we had a couple of receptions, I recall, at the residence - well, not the residence, the building that eventually became the residence - but these weren't the kind of French people... these were kids who were the sons and daughters of the *haute bourgeoisie* and that sort of thing. I remember one time, it still amuses me, two or three of the other junior officers and myself were recruited by a Frenchman who would throw *cotillions* - he'd have parties, dances, once a month or so. As it turned out he was an insurance salesman, and what he was doing was starting to introduce people with titles and so on to people who had money, and what he wanted was some kind of spear carriers to just stand around on the walls - and participate, or course - but didn't expect any of them would have the knowledge of French or the family connections to make any kind of impression on any of these girls. So we'd go to these things, and sometimes they were kind of funny. You'd go out to a chateau on the Loire and have a big party - all of us in tuxedo.

Q: You were observing the mating and breeding ground, in a way.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, I really was. It was a kind of meat market, and it was a place where the girls with titles would meet guys who were from the *haute bourgeoisie* or vice versa - you know, had money but not a title. And so they were very involved, and very sort of snobbish kids and that sort of thing. You know the rest of it was just... I lived in the Latin Quarter, used to meet people, go to cocktail parties and so on. So you got to know a fairly good cross-section of folks.

Q: How did we deal with the Communist Party at that time, and how did we view the Communist Party?

WEINGARTEN: The Communist Party was sort of in a ghetto of its own making. It only cooperated on a arm's-length basis with the Socialist Party, and then only in major elections. As far as seeing us, they had I think one or two people designated as liaison, and they would liaise with the embassy. And we had an officer, Jack Berry, who was our designee, basically, to see these liaisons. And then Jack Berry and I used to go to press conferences that Communist leaders would give. We used to follow what they said fairly closely, but we had very little contact - no unofficial contact with them at all, and very little official.

Q: Well, was the feeling that they were a tool of the Soviet Union?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, very much so, and the French Communist Party particularly. It was really just an extension of Moscow. As it turned out, it was the one... all the other European parties in the '70s began to mark a degree of independence from Moscow, but the French Communist Party never did.

Q: When did you leave? You left Paris before the invasion of Czechoslovakia, didn't you? That was in August of '68, I think.

WEINGARTEN: August of '68. I was in Vietnam by then.

Q: So you didn't feel that repercussion on the -

WEINGARTEN: No, I left Paris, I guess, in April, just before the "Events of May," as we call them. And I was almost a part of that. I was driving my little German Volkswagen down the Rue Danton, and a huge mob of students came up the Rue Danton, and at the time, everyone in the American embassy had 6CD plates: 6CD and then a number. And everyone in town knew that was an American embassy car. They came up and they started to rock the car - with me in it - and started shouting "*Johnson assassin!"* and *"A bas les américains"* and that sort of thing, and so I had to sit there through that. And then they went on about 200 yards further and saw the Radio-Television Luxembourg car up there, a station wagon. They overturned that and burned it. So that was one of the first events, and I'm very happy I didn't wind up with my car burned.

So I left, and my fiancée was still there, so I was really... As I recall, we were cut off here in the States from France for about a month. The telephones didn't work; the mail didn't work; everybody was on strike, and so I finally went back to France in July, and I asked my fiancée to marry me, and she said, yes, okay. So then we spent three weeks in France, on the Côte d'Azur, and then I went back to Paris and flew from Paris to Saigon.

Q: Were we able to sort of get into the student groups and monitor them during that time?

WEINGARTEN: No, not really. The student groups that we knew in the embassy were sort of the Young Socialists, the Young Christian Democrats, the Young Gaullists. But these were all people who thought they already had a political vocation, and we didn't get involved with Danny Cohn-Bendit or his friends because nobody in the embassy went to university at Nanterre, the Sorbonne, or any of those schools. So we did not anticipate it. I remember reading on the back page of *Le Monde* just before leaving that there was a mention of Cohn-Bendit for the first time, and it was really on the back page, the last page, and it said that he was leading a march from Nanterre into the city. And of course that was the one, or I think that was the one, that was one of the major milestone of the uprising.

Q: He's now a Green member of the European Union, isn't he? Or he's a candidate.

WEINGARTEN: I think so.

Q: You don't die as a politician in France, or most countries.

WEINGARTEN: Well, he's German, and so he went back to Germany. I think he was expelled from France, went back to Germany and made a political career for himself in Germany, and now he successfully runs for European-wide offices. But now he's quite a spellbinder.

Q: Yes.

WEINGARTEN: He really got the kids enthused in 1968.

Q: What was sort of our impression of the Socialist Party and Mitterrand and all that in this '65-68 period?

WEINGARTEN: Well, at the time it didn't seem to have much future, the Socialist Party. And it was headed by Guy Mollet, who had been discredited as prime minister over Algeria. And François Mitterrand was just regarded in the embassy as kind of a *condottiere*, as a guy who'd take up a sword for anything that promised him personal advancement. And so I don't think anybody in the embassy saw the Socialists as a real alternative to De Gaulle, except insofar as you could see Pierre Mendès-France as somehow a come-back, because he was the only Socialist of that era who had genuine respect, both domestically and internationally, but he couldn't rally the troops, and so they really seemed to be in sad shape. And I don't think anybody in the embassy in 1968 would have picked Mitterrand to be president of France from '81 to '95.

Q: How was our involvement in Vietnam playing, as you observed it, in France?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it was playing very much as a David-Goliath sort of affair, with Americans putting crushing numbers of soldiers and crushing superiority on the Vietnamese. And so it was one of those clubs that the French, and the Gaullists in particular, would use to attack us, for very similar reasons that when you read French newspapers you see today. To them, we're either overbearing or too strong or we push people around, so on and so forth. And the French have had a relationship with the Vietnamese for 100 years or so, and there are a lot of Vietnamese in Paris, and so they had a lot of sympathy from the French. So Vietnam was a really big issue between the United States and France at the time.

Q: NATO had pulled out or was forced out.

WEINGARTEN: NATO was thrown out in '66.

Q: In '66. Did you find lingering resentment about it? Did this help build up the anti-French feeling within the embassy?

WEINGARTEN: No, I don't think so. I wouldn't characterize it - maybe I mistakenly did - as an anti-French feeling. We welcomed opportunities where we could get back at some of the slights or some of the attacks that we thought were unwarranted, unjustified, but I don't know anyone in the Political Section or the Economic Section, for that matter, who didn't like being in France, who didn't like French people, individually and generally and all the other advantages of life there. We did, however, have a big problem with support staff in the embassy, because they were people that had served in smaller embassies and were used to being part of an embassy family. There was no embassy family in Paris, and they were sort of thrown on their own in this big city, and most of them, probably nearly

all of them, didn't have any French, and they never got off to do much to improve it. And so we had a lot of people who would shorten their tours, and who had problems of one sort or another. Very curious.

Q: I imagine that you were hit with a lot of visitors, particularly Congressional delegations and all, and when they weren't shopping or seeing the town, I would think you normal American Congressman or political type of any kind would come over and say, you know, be annoyed at the French, because the French were doing things to annoy us. And did you find that you would have to say, "Well, let's look at the long one," or "Let's consider our real interests here"? Did you find this was a role that you all had to play?

WEINGARTEN: I can't recall. What I recall was when Bobby Kennedy came to Paris in '67, I think, and the enthusiasm that he was greeted with, both within the political class and generally in the county. See, the French would be very distressed if they thought that Americans were anti-French in any way, because they figure that the criticisms that they make of us are justified and so on, and they don't like to receive criticism, so I don't recall... Bobby Kennedy made a terrific impression. They couldn't get enough of him. Other Congressmen - Hubert Humphrey came over. He didn't make much of an impression. Lyndon Johnson came often when he was in the Senate. Congressmen and senators for the most part, the ones that came over there were already fairly sophisticated people. If they didn't like the French, they did not indulge in any attacks on them. Now I had the impression, that they, at least over there anyway, displayed a lot of forbearance. I can't recall now what... I think attitudes up on the Hill may have been different, and speeches and things people put in the *Congressional Record* - about the "ungrateful French."

Q: What about, well, just before you left there, you say you had a fiancée. Was she French?

WEINGARTEN: No, she's American. We met there, and we're still married - 30-odd years now.

Q: What was she doing there?

WEINGARTEN: She was working for the embassy, in the conference attaché's office. She did all the VIP visits and arranged them, arranged hotels, transportation, that sort of thing. She'd lived there for a long time.

Q: How did the Vietnam assignment come about?

WEINGARTEN: I volunteered for it. I thought that I ought to for a variety of reasons. I thought that I was probably going to be selected for it anyway.

Q: It was certainly the -

WEINGARTEN: I would get some credit by volunteering for it. And the other thing was that it was the big event - not of my generation, but the generation behind me - of that period, so I thought I should go and see what it was all about.

Q: I also went to "see the elephant" - I mean it -

WEINGARTEN: That's a good way to put it.

Q: Well, then, you were in Vietnam from what, '68?

WEINGARTEN: To '70.

Q: To '70. What were you doing there?

WEINGARTEN: Well, I was in charge of what they call a New Life Development Program. And this was all a translation from the Vietnamese of all of the civilian programs that we put in there to try to make their government work better - agricultural programs, public safety, budget, public works, every aspect of a local county government that you can think of we probably had a counterpart to it. We did have a counterpart to it.

Q: When did you get there?

WEINGARTEN: I got there in August.

Q: Of '68.

WEINGARTEN: August of '68, last part of August.

Q: By this time Tet had occurred.

WEINGARTEN: Yes.

Q: Did you find things in pretty much disarray? What was your impression of Vietnam when you arrived?

WEINGARTEN: When I arrived, I spent three days or so in Saigon, and Saigon was being hit by rockets at the time, and there was a good deal of tension in Saigon. And these were big rockets.

Q: Not these little -

WEINGARTEN: - little ones with 107 mm things. They were pretty inaccurate, but they made a lot of noise. So the impression I had of it was kind of a tense city, and then when I got out to My Tho, which was not the most appealing place I had ever seen. I remember coming down by helicopter and looking at it and thinking, What in the world have I let myself in for? Happily, it was just a far more relaxed, far easier kind of place than

Saigon.

Q: You were in the Delta, then.

WEINGARTEN: Yes.

Q: That's M-y T-h-o, two words?

WEINGARTEN: M-y T-h-o, two words in one.

Q: Were you there the whole time?

WEINGARTEN: Yes.

Q: Could you describe both your briefing, what were you told to do, and how did things work out? What were you doing there?

WEINGARTEN: Well, I think we pretty much weren't told a hell of a lot of what you were supposed to do. You kind of pick it up. All of these guys who were experts in their job, and you were supposed to help them with it, make sure that they got their shipments and so on. You became kind of an overall controller-expediter, and you had to develop good relations with the provincial government and with the U.S. military that was there. So we got involved... One thing I really got interested in doing was public works, building bridges and so on. We had this idea in the fall of '68 that if we could build little bridges across drainage ditches and tiny streams and so on into villages that were otherwise cut off, that they would be able to get their produce to the main road, to the market, and the corollary was that the government would be able to come from the main road into the village. And so we first talked to the Ninth Division, and the Ninth Division said they noticed once that they had a whole lot of metal lying around that they weren't using. I asked about it. It almost looked like bridge sections. They weren't bridge sections, but they were pieces that could go into making bridges. So I said, Can we use these, and they said sure, welcome to them, just haul them away. We couldn't haul them away - they were too heavy - so we got a helicopter. A big helicopter should do it. And then we had a Seabee team.

Q: Construction Battalion team.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, Navy Construction Battalion, a team of about 12 guys who were all really good, cross-trained in all their specialty. And so we got these things together and we went out and talked to villages and said, "Would you like a bridge to make things easier for you?" And most of them said sure. So we built the bridges, and then in March of 1969 they all got blown up.

Q: What happened then?

WEINGARTEN: Well, they had sort of a Tet II offensive in late February or early

March, and all our little bridges got blown up. And so we went back and said, "How come..." By this time we knew that the Vietcong never just turned up suddenly. They always sent a guy out before hand with a little notebook and he'd measure the abutments so they'd figure out how much C-4 plastic explosive they'd need. So we said, "Why didn't you tell us when this guy comes around standing by the bridge making notes measuring the abutments? Why didn't you let us know?" Well, the basic reason boiled down to they didn't really think it was their bridge. It was the American bridge, and they were not going to get into trouble over the Americans' bridge. So at that point we said, okay, if the bridge is going to be rebuilt, it will be by you guys. So I told the village chief we'd provide some money for it, but apart from that we'd have nothing to do with that. He would have to get the labor himself. So I probably learned from that experience what every advisor before me and after me had learned, that you can't do it yourself.

Q: No.

WEINGARTEN: You can't do it as an American project. But then we did another one which did last. It's a big bridge, about two hundred feet long, a pretty good-sized bridge. It was across one of the tributaries of the Mekong, and it opened up an area that we hadn't been in before. The Seabees built it, and one of the things that I was able to do was to steal a pile-driver for them - intercept a pile-driver - an old Eiffel. You know, Eiffel built the Eiffel Tower, but Eiffel also even then was selling machinery in Southeast Asia, the Eiffel Company. It was a little one-lung pile-driver with a two-stroke engine - *bum-bum-bum* - that would pull the pile up and drop it - *bang*. It drove the piles, built the bridge, and that still was standing in 1970. Might still be. I don't know. I may go back and take a look for it.

Q: How did you find relations were with the Vietnamese, both the military and the civilian?

WEINGARTEN: Vietnamese?

Q: Yes.

WEINGARTEN: It depended on the military unit. You had your elite units, your Vietnamese Marine or Airborne or Ranger outfits were just different as night and day from local troops. As it was in the Army. Have you been in the Army?

Q: I was in the Air Force, enlisted man.

WEINGARTEN: I think the units that we worked with were mostly the popular force and regional force. The regional force were the companies that could be used anywhere in our province, and the popular force were restricted to their village for operations.

Q: What was your time like that you were working with?

WEINGARTEN: We had a large team with about, oh, I guess maybe about 100 people or

so, and maybe about 15-20 civilians and the rest military. So I think we got along pretty well. There were sometimes towards the end there, when I remember I got my orders to go back to Washington, and I couldn't get out for a while. What I was going to do, my wife and I were going to go to Phnom Penh and then down to what is it, the big... you know, where the...

Q: Angkor Wat?

WEINGARTEN: Angkor Wat. And we had our visas and everything for that, and then we had to cancel that because of our invasion in 1970, April, '70.

Q: It was May or April.

WEINGARTEN: April, yes.

Q: April, '70.

WEINGARTEN: So then I said, well, I'll get out of here in June and we'll go back through Europe for a month or so and then I'll come back to Washington. Well, I had my orders to depart, but because it's a military outfit they wouldn't let me go until my replacement turned up, so that caused a little strain. I went to John Paul Vann and I said, "I've got my orders and I'm supposed to get out of here. I've been here two years." I was getting a little antsy, and because by that time we'd gone through what seemed like three different sets of military advisors and they all were able to get out when their time came up... So I had to wait and finally got a replacement. At the replacement, I threw my stuff in a box, put it in the back of a Scout and left for Saigon.

Q: Well, I take it your wife was where, was she in Bangkok?

WEINGARTEN: No, she was in the Philippines.

Q: In the Philippines. Were you ever under attack, or not, there?

WEINGARTEN: In Vietnam?

'*Q: Yes.*

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, yes. It was pretty mild stuff. There were mortar attacks basically. We got mortared fairly frequently, and we got ambushed once, and I still like to tell that story of our ambush, and I had to get out of the Scout and jump into the rice paddy, which is not such a benign place to jump into if the rice patty is just full of human waste basically, and fired back. And then we got out of there. There was a truck in front of us with a .50 caliber machine gun, and somebody got up and was working that. And we got about a mile down the road and there was some kind of officer - a U.S. Ranger officer - and we were kind of dirty and a little bit shaken. He gave us each a beer, a cold Budweiser. This was probably at 11 in the morning. And I lit up - I smoked at the time - I

lit up a Marlboro and took a drag on that, and I swear to God, the smoke went all the way down to my toes and back up - the best drag I've ever had on a cigarette - and the beer tasted as good as anything I've ever had - better. I guess at the time the greatest fear I had was driving down a road that was on a berm. I could see far enough ahead. There was a roadblock, and the guys on the roadblock, I couldn't see what kind of weapons they had, but I could see the weapons had banana clips, which was a feature of the AK-47, and I thought, I'm done for. So I had the M-16, had that loaded, cocked, and I was going to drive on and see if I could drive on through. And it turned out they were our people, our Vietnamese, who had welded or soldered the magazine so it wasn't a square magazine, but a banana clip on the M-16. That was a big relief. So anyway, we left.

Q: I'm trying to portray this life. I mean, here were a bunch of essentially civilian diplomats out driving jeeps in very dangerous country.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, but it was interesting times, anyway.

Q: Were you getting some of the new officers? You were getting young Foreign Service officers coming in, weren't you? I've often thought, you know, we were getting some of these guys had been protesting or demonstrating in the streets in the United States against the war six months before, and then they went to be nice cushy diplomats and the next thing they know they were in My Tho or some other place like that driving around. What was the spirit, morale, or whatever you'd like to talk about?

WEINGARTEN: I don't recall that we ever got anybody down there. Howard Gross and I were the only Foreign Service officers in My Tho. Then we had one guy also a Foreign Service officer down the road in Vinit Kiem, and then everybody else was an AID officer. And it was an AID Foreign Service reserve, but I never ran into anybody who thought, My God, no, I went into the diplomatic service and here I am. And the Foreign Service officers up at the embassy always struck me as pretty dedicated to the effort. So I never ran into anybody like that.

Q: You mentioned Howard Gross. Howard took me on a tour of his bridges. I remember this. I came from the embassy to My Tho, and Howard and I had served together in Yugoslavia. We probably met at that point, but Howard took me out to see his bridges. He was very proud of these. I was very antsy because I was a Saigon type, and I hadn't been out in the-

WEINGARTEN: He called them *his* bridges, Howard did?

Q: Well, I know, his bridges - I mean I just remember he took me to bridges.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, those were *my* bridges.

Q: Oh, they were your bridges. Well, he took me to bridges.

WEINGARTEN: Okay.

Q: And showing me.

WEINGARTEN: Well, I used to have the exact opposite impression. I was more at ease in the country than I was in Saigon. I'd get up to Saigon and have the feeling of being a country boy in a very big and bustling city. I didn't know my way around, and I didn't like it very much. And I'd go to the embassy or go to AID headquarters and think, what am I doing here? What are these guys doing here? You remember that AID complex? They had guys there that I don't think knew what they were doing. They'd come down every once in a while to My Tho, which was close in, and want to take a look at a village. It might be the chief of the Village Development Division of AID. You know, "That's a village, eh. That's what it looks like." But they were interesting times.

Q: Well, when you left there in 1970, how did you feel things were going? Whither Vietnam in your opinion at that time?

WEINGARTEN: I was pretty confident that we had turned the tables on the war, that the Vietcong had hurt themselves tremendously in 1968, and many of their cadres had been killed in this tremendous uprising. The Vietnamese Army never looked particularly good, but at least it looked as if it was big enough, heavy enough that it couldn't be overturned, and it seemed to be there was more peace in the Delta most of the time. Some exceptions where they'd have a hard-core Vietcong or NVA battalion would come through, and they were very, very tough and very difficult to... They could really inflict damage on our local troops. The consequence was that we would have to have South Vietnam Marines or Airborne or Rangers down to match them. And we were the first, the Delta was the first part of Vietnam from which our troops were withdrawn, beginning in '69, and so it was a sort of a cockpit of Vietnamization. And it really seemed as though things were going pretty well. I left there and figured I'd never have to go back.

Q: What about corruption? How did you feel about that, or what did you observe?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, there certainly was corruption, but it didn't affect... It was really pretty much a Vietnamese thing, Vietnamese demanding money from other Vietnamese. But we would... There were things we didn't know. We didn't know, for example, why the budget had been proclaimed up in Saigon and yet our province didn't have its budget for months and months and months. As it turned out, it was either being lent out along the way at exorbitant interest rates or it was being ripped off. But where I was the corruption didn't seem to be all that much. I mean it was not... This was really out in the country, out in the sticks, and we didn't seem to have as much there. Now I guess up in Saigon you must have had a good deal of it. It must have been endemic, but I never had the impression that it was really affecting daily operations.

Q: What did you want to do, and how did you want to sort of direct yourself when you were getting out in 1970?

WEINGARTEN: Well, Howard had told me a lot about Yugoslavia, and I wanted to get

back to Europe, so about that time, sometime in early '70, John Burns, the director general of the Foreign Service came out, and he saw everybody.

Q: I remember that trip.

WEINGARTEN: He came down to this little room I was in, and he said, "Well, where would you like to go after Vietnam, after your tour here?" And I thought, Wow, that's a pretty nice offer. And I said, "Tell me, where do you have me pegged to go now?" And he had a guy with him, and he asked the guy, and the guy says, "Indonesian language training." And I said, "I'd much prefer to go back to Europe." At that time, I had thought that I had done my overseas service. And I thought, well, one of the ways I can beat the rule that requires domestic service is to go back for hard language training and then go back overseas. And only years and years later - I think you'll like this - I discovered that as far as the State Department was concerned, service in Vietnam counted as domestic service.

Q: Really? I didn't know that.

WEINGARTEN: You didn't know that? It counted as domestic because the State Department had, in effect, assigned you to AID, but that transaction had taken place in Washington, and then what AID did with you after that was of no concern of the State Department. So basically it was domestic service, so I could have really said, "I'd like to go back to France," or "I'd like to go to Italy," or something like that. But I picked Yugoslavia for that reason, and enjoyed that.

Q: Did you take Serbian, then?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, I took Serbian.
Q: From what, '70 to '71?

WEINGARTEN: '70 to '71.

Q: Where, at the Foreign Service Institute?

WEINGARTEN: Were we still in Arlington Towers then, or were we over on Key Boulevard?

Q: I took it in the garage of Arlington Towers.

WEINGARTEN: When did you take it?

Q: I took it a long time ago. I took it '61-62.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, I think we were in the -

Q: Probably in the Crystal -

WEINGARTEN: I think we were in it then.

Q: That tall building.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, Key Boulevard.

Q: Who were your teachers?

WEINGARTEN: Father Milosevic and Mr. Jankovic - remember Janko?

Q: Oh, yes.

WEINGARTEN: And Popovic was the voice on the tape. We never had Popovic as a teacher.

Q: You missed something - not much, but you missed something.

WEINGARTEN: At the time we used to have to drive down as a department and listen to the tapes in the Department. And listen to Mr. Popovic say "Dobur dan!" And he was supposed to be... If the king's folks had won and dominated or managed to dominate after the end of World War II he was going to be the interior minister.

Q: He would have been a very good minister under Milosevic, too, for the interior. He was a very inflexible person. As a matter of fact, I found him a very good source for understanding Yugoslavia later on - almost revolted against him. In fact, a group of us had taken... We were assigned to Popovic; we were not allowed to study with Jankovic, and we ended up revolting and asking that the classes be mixed, much to their dismay.

Just to end this phase of learning about the language, what were you picking up from your teaching and reading about Yugoslavia?

WEINGARTEN: Well, I guess what I was picking up there was the kind of myth that the Yugoslavs like to portray of themselves as rugged and stalwart defenders of their country against the Germans and that sort of thing. They're very proud of that. I just got the impression from Janko about a country that was a vigorous and happy place, and he was very sad that he couldn't go back to it because of the political situation. Our other professor was Father Milosevic, a Serbian Orthodox priest, but a man with a great sense of humor and jolly, a heavy-set fellow. And you got nothing whatsoever from either of them of any kind of internal stress between Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, and so on, except in kind of a joking way like Serbian recruits in the army ask how many pairs of undershorts they want. A person somewhere says, one, two, three, and then finally a guy from Macedonia says, "I'll need 12," and then, "What do you need 12 for?" and he says, "*Januar, Februar...*"

Q: These are the months.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, the months. So it was that kind of a... you got that kind of impression of it, and you had really no sense of underlying animosity... nor for that matter did I get much sense of what _____ between the nationalities when I got to Belgrade. The Croats in '71 had a nationalist phase, and it wasn't even really an uprising. They just had some people out in the square, and that was repressed very harshly. And the Serbians, the government in Belgrade, was always very concerned about the *Ustaši*. They had an incursion of people from Australia and Canada into the Bosnian mountains, all of whom were either killed or captured and then executed. But you know, you never really felt any deep hatred. One of the few times I've really been shocked was looking at a *Time Magazine* on a plane coming back from Paris in '91, I think, and it showed pictures of guys with masks on and combat fatigues with the dead civilians they'd just killed.

Q: This was in Bosnia.

WEINGARTEN: Yes. It was after the war with the Slovenians and after the Vukovar battle with the Croats. And this was just guys that had come down in the mud and they'd killed all these... Bijeljina - it was at Bijeljina, in Bosnia... killed all these old folks, lying there, and there was a picture of a guy with an AK-47 taking a kick at the head of one of these dead people. And I said, these are not the Serbs I knew.

Q: Yes.
WEINGARTEN: They were solid and very hardy and rugged folks, but you didn't think they would go after old women and old geezers [men], but they did. And so you just had to reexamine our feelings about the Serbs. We *loved* Serbia.

Q: Oh, we did, too.

WEINGARTEN: We had a marvelous time.

Q: We had five years there, and just loved it.

WEINGARTEN: Our kids loved it. Our kids learned to play soccer with Yugoslav kids. I used to run sports programs there, and I'd seek out Yugoslav kids to come and play soccer. They taught the American kids; they also didn't take any guff either. And I just thought they were terrific people. But of all the countries I served in, I think that would be the one I would not go back to at this time. I'd have a hard time with that. Have you been back?

Q: I've been back to Bosnia twice as an election monitor.

WEINGARTEN: When?

Q: Last year and the year before.

WEINGARTEN: Oh, okay. How do you find it?

Q: Well, it's a different world, just a different world. I find I had very little sympathy... I have no sympathy for the Serbs. Some of my fellow officers who served there, I think, can't get rid of that bonding or something, but I didn't.

WEINGARTEN: I just could have no sympathy whatsoever for anybody that did that. And I'm sorry, in a way, that in this war that we have just waged in Kosovo we didn't come to grips with these people, the Captain Arkans and Seselj crowd.

Q: Let me stop here. We'll pick this up the next time. We've talked a bit about your time in language training in 1970-71 and all about what you were picking up from it, and we'll go to when you went to Serbia, or to Yugoslavia, in 1971.

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Q: Today is the 17th of August, 1999. Bill, you were in Belgrade from when to when?

WEINGARTEN: I was there from 1971 to 1974.

Q: What was your job?

WEINGARTEN: I was an economic officer and covered pretty much whatever anybody wanted done on economics, from oil to trade to -

Q: Also that included commercial work in those days, didn't it?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, quite a bit.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

WEINGARTEN: When I got there it was Bill Leonhart, and very shortly after I got there he was called back and was replaced by Malcolm Toon, who was the ambassador for the three years that we were there. And I think I met Leonhart once, just on arriving there. And he had, as you know, had a major problem with his DCM, who was Tom Enders, and he got rid of Tom Enders, but shortly thereafter the Administration called him back and replaced him with Toon.

Q: This was a very well-known blow-up. I mean, I think it had been growing for a while but it happened at a country team meeting before your time. But was the aftermath of this sort of hanging around when you arrived? How would you describe sort of the mood of the embassy and what you were getting?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it was kind of curious because they had pro-Enders and anti-Enders groups, and people would invite you into their office, close the door, and then tell you in hushed tone what had happened at such and such a time between Enders and Leonhart, and who had wronged whom. It was really quite a show. I didn't have anything

to do with it. I wasn't there long enough to pick a side or to have a side picked for me, but I was very happy that I didn't have to go through that.

Q: Was the problem at all what we would call "substantive," or was this just purely personality as far as your -

WEINGARTEN: I think it was purely personality, from what I heard. There may have been some substance involved, but it just was two people who apparently simply did not get along with one another and had apparently developed a very strong, more than just dislike but almost a hatred of one another. They apparently could barely be civil in each other's company. It was really a curious affair. It was nice to avoid.

Q: How did you find Malcolm Toon as the ambassador?

WEINGARTEN: He was really quite good, really professional. He was a very, very tough guy. He always prided himself on that. He was later ambassador to Moscow, and the Russians refused to accept him for about almost a year, nine months or so, because he was so very, very tough with them, and he was known as a man who enjoyed giving them bad news and, indeed, never shrank from giving anybody bad news. As I say, he was a very tough guy, very forceful fellow.

Q: Did you feel he came with an attitude? I think he'd had previous Soviet experience, and my impression was, I remember, when Spike Dubs came to Belgrade from Moscow, he had sort of a carryover, thinking that Yugoslavia was a miniature Soviet Union for a while, and things just were really so different that it took a little while to sort of adjust to it. Did you find this at all with Toon?

WEINGARTEN: No, I had the sense he was flexible enough to come into a place like Yugoslavia, assess it, assess its leadership, find out very quickly how it worked, and as in the Soviet Union, it was the Party in Yugoslavia that made things happen, and then the superstructure, to use a communist term, that we all dealt with. Actually, the League of Communists was very closed to the embassy. We could only very rarely go and talk to one of the people who were running the party, you know, somebody like Stane Dolanc. There was also a screwy guy that was the ideologue, who used to go on television every once in a while and spout real nonsense, and sometimes I would translate that, because Workers' self-management was the big deal and had some kind of resonance in the West in France. There was a lot of theory about it, and I'd sometimes have to translate the stuff and put it into English and send it to the States, and I remember Toon saying to me once, "Bill, this is a load of crap." And I said, "Well, I can't help it. It's not my writing; it's..." I can't remember the fellow's name now, but he was the number two or the number three to Tito.

Q: Was this Kardelj?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, it was Kardelj, that's right.

Q: Edvard Kardelj, yes. He was Slovenian, I think, wasn't he?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, what an obscurantist he was. He never made sense, never used a simple word when he could use a complicated one. Did we ever discuss the language training?

Q: I think we did.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, we did. Did I tell you the story about coming to Yugoslavia and our teacher - remember Mr. Jankovic, and he had come from Šabac - did I tell you that story?

Q: Why don't you tell it again? We can eliminate it if necessary.

WEINGARTEN: And he'd grown up in Šabac, which at the time, I guess before the war, had cultural pretensions as a competitor, challenger to Belgrade. And of course after the war, Šabac sank into obscurity and became a pig-farming center, a hog-raising center, and Jankovic's Serbian never changed. He was pre-war and had a Šabac accent, and so a generation of Foreign Service officers apparently went to Yugoslavia with a really rustic accent, out-of-date Serbian that was pre-war, never really learned how to use the intimate verbs. And we had this wonderful lady in the embassy - I think she was probably there when you were there.

Q: Angelovic?

WEINGARTEN: Madame Angelovic, who took us all in hand and he taught us Serbian. It was like a finishing course.

Q: When you arrived in 1971, what was the political-economic situation in Yugoslavia as you saw it?

WEINGARTEN: Right after I arrived, there was a challenge in Croatia to Tito or tot the Communist Party. It was a nationalist movement in Zagreb that was a pretty mild sort of movement, but it was put down very harshly by Tito, who realized - as we've seen since - that any kind of insurgent nationalism can have very serious impact on the other nationalities within Yugoslavia. And so he shut that down pretty hard, put people in jail, broke up demonstrations, all sorts of things. Then in '72, another curious event hat I recall was the invasion of the Ustaši. Fifteen or so heavily-armed guys came in from Austria, who were Croats from Canada, Australia. They came in and they took over a little town up in the mountains in Croatian Bosnia, way up in the mountains. They took that over for a couple of days, and then the police and the army came in and wiped them out, captured a lot of them, and then held them incommunicado, and then apparently interrogated them pretty thoroughly to find out who had sent them, who had financed them. For about three or four months they thought that the Americans were behind it, but they never released any of the testimony and, as a matter of fact, shot everybody that they had captured. It really was a "dead men tell no tales" sort of thing that took place.

But it could be a very suspicious place. Another thing that we had at that time was the detente with the Russians, and the Russians embassy was a large embassy there, larger than ours, and they put on a real charm offensive, and Toon was sensitive enough to realize that this kind of thing bothered the Yugoslavs. You'd see the Americans and the Russians having lunch together, at receptions in honor of one another, so he'd sort of tried to damp that down a little bit. But it was an interesting time. Every country I've been to I've really enjoyed being in for one reason or another, even Vietnam. It's just a marvelous place, and I'm sorry we didn't make more of it than we did. But Yugoslavia was a terrific assignment.

Q: What was your impression of the economy there?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it worked to some degree, because people were willing to overlook a lot of things. They had tremendous problems. They owed debt to one another within the country, and they never paid it off. They'd just keep on building the debt. Finally, it just seized the whole economy up. But they were very open to imports. They also had, I thought, a very poor banking system. That's one of the things I followed. I got to know all of the people that ran the National Bank because I could speak Serbian. These guys preferred to speak either English or French, which I could also speak, so I'd go over there. I remember one time I was supposed to have an interview. It was supposed to talk to the man who was known as the "Gray Fox of the National Bank." He was the guy who did their foreign exchange dealings. And I got over there, and they said, "Well, he's not available." And I said, "But I've got an appointment with him." And he said, "Well, he's off listening to a lecture by Milton Friedman." And then another guy I tracked down was somebody over in the Plan, in the Ministry of the Economy, I guess it was, who was in charge figuring out the prices for all the inputs of industry everywhere in Yugoslavia. And I went and saw him and met him a few times. He was very interesting. He was a professor, a Macedonian, but he was absolutely... I figured he was a little bit nuts, because he didn't have a computer, and he tried to figure out the relationship of all these input prices, one to the other, and could never get them all right, so he'd get something wrong and the farmers, for example, would start to drive their cattle across the border to Italy to sell it rather than sell it this artificially low decreed price. But there were always things like that. A couple of people came to see me once and they said, "We have a proposal to make to you for developing a nickel-mining operation in Macedonia." They said, "This is a surefire thing. All we need is $200 million." And so they gave me a one-page prospectus on this and said, "Well, what do you think?" I said, "Well, that's not the way to get $200 million from international lenders - or from anyone. You really have to have it studied, looked into." But believe it or not that actually became a project. Somebody did lend them the money; they built the... Actually, it's down in Kosovo, the northern part of Kosovo, in Kosovska Mitrovica or somewhere, or Trepca, and it's a great big nickel facility, and it did get built. It was also the kind of country that foreign lenders liked because it was developing, there was a cadre of people who had been to school in the West who seemed to know what they were doing. It was a relatively open society. It was just streets ahead of everybody else in Eastern Europe, so people liked to come and lend to it. It was an interesting economy.

Q: Well, what would you tell an American who came in and said, "I'm interested in opening up either a trade relation or a factory or something here in Yugoslavia"?

WEINGARTEN: Well, you'd have to look around for a reliable partner, somebody who could help you through the regulations. I'd translated all of the banking regulations in to English for people, and some of them didn't make any sense no matter what you did with the translation, and I went and asked this fellow, the Gray Fox, and I said, "What is the meaning of this? I don't understand this." And he said, "You're not supposed to understand it. It was written that way. That was not to be followed, not to be understood; it was just to make people come see us, and then we make the decisions." To American businessmen, I'd say be very careful, somebody looking to invest in Yugoslavia, find a reliable local partner. There were outside organizations - the World Bank. There was an Investment Corporation of Yugoslavia that Tony Solomon ran. Go check with them and find somebody reliable, but then don't throw all of your money into it. Be very careful with it. It was a kind of an economy that lent itself to anecdotal evidence. The statistics were baloney for the most part and did not take into account all of these payments that had seized up between companies. And as I say, I followed the banks, and the local banks had sort of a Western façade to them. You know, you'd go in and do a foreign exchange transaction sometimes and they were reasonable, but of the six major banks, I remember one time a U.S. banker came in and said, "What's going on with this bank?" and I said, "Well, the manager's just absconded to Western Europe with a lot of money." He said, "What about this one?" "Oh, the president is in jail." But there was always a lot of corruption, peculation, cooking books, and so on. Which is why you needed somebody reliable to make your way there.

Q: Well, how did you find the self-governing enterprise system worked in reality? Were you able to get a fix on that?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, pretty much so for the self-governing workers-governed plant or factory, the real final arbiter of most arguments or difficulties was the local Party rep, and all of this other superstructure was just that - and very complicated. They had levels of representation and a lot of workers involved in it, and I guess in that sense, if you weren't very sophisticated, you'd think that was the way it ran, but basically, if they did have an investment problem or had a real labor relations problem, you went to the Party, and the Party decided at the local level, and if they couldn't do it, then they took it to the municipality and then further up.

It was a fascinating place, and another thing we liked about it, my wife and I, was that of the many places we'd been it was the one that had one of the closest most cohesive diplomatic communities in it. Do you recall that?

Q: Oh, yes, very much so.

WEINGARTEN: We're still friends with some of the people we made acquaintance with in Yugoslavia. We'd go out. There was an English-speaking hunting group. There was a

French-speaking hunting group, tennis tournaments. They had all sorts of things going on, and they did a lot of parties and a lot of smaller embassies were there that didn't have any idea what was going on... that were kind of clueless, and nobody spoke Serbian and so on. So they were always happy to hear what sort of opinions we had of the place.

Q: Were you able to make trips out into the country?
WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, quite a lot, and we used to go pheasant hunting down in Bosnia, down around Brcko. A lovely area, you go out, and there were always... I spoke Serbian, but the embassy always wanted you to go out with someone else. They didn't want you to go out into the country by yourself, so I always went with my assistant, whom you've probably met - Anda Miloslavjevic, who used to work... Well, anyway-

Q: Yes, I knew him.

WEINGARTEN: -he used to go out with me, and we'd go various places, all over, and the Ministry of Finance would always send this very small and timid man to come along with us so there'd be three of us, and he, it turned out, was a sort of an agent for the UDBA, the secret police at the time, and would report on what we were doing. We weren't doing anything... you know, we weren't going around taking pictures of sensitive installations. So we'd go out in this trio, and I remember we went to Kosovo Polje at one point in time. I just wanted to see that. And I remember Anda Miloslavjevic, who was a fairly sophisticated guy, burst into tears when he was on the Kosovo Polje. You know, the battle the Serbs lost 600 years earlier. So we'd go around, we'd talk to municipality officials, we talked to businesses, and always do it in Serbo-Croatian, unless we ran across somebody who was really good in English. And I always got a good reception, partially because we had the secret police guy with us. Anybody give us a problem, they'd have a bigger one in return. And the secret police guy was a very nice, very gentle little man. It turned out that he had some years earlier been picked up, thrown in jail by the UDBA, just beaten unmercifully, so much so that he apparently could not stand to be by himself once darkness fell, and so he'd always come into Anda's room and sleep in Andre's room. There wasn't anything going on between them, but he was just afraid of the dark and so badly brutalized by the cops.

Sometimes we'd go someplace and somebody would just... any question we asked, the reply would be some sort of doctrinal thing, you know, "As Edvard Kardelj has said..." but for the most part people were happy to see us, seemed to be, anyway. One of the jobs I had, I got about $1000 a year in travel money from AID. They wanted somebody to go around and look at all of the projects that they'd built and see if they were still there - the steel mills in Skopje, the dam up above Dubrovnik, you know, that sort of thing - and I thought, fine. I had a four-wheel drive vehicle, I'd just go all over the place and stay in little hotels in little towns.

Q: Did you get over into Croatia, Slovenia at all?

WEINGARTEN: Not much, just we did a... we'd go through there. Of course, they have a consulate in Zagreb, and they covered those two areas pretty thoroughly. We'd just drive

through. My wife and I would make two runs a year to the PX up in-

Q: Aviano?

WEINGARTEN: Near Aviano - it was Vicenza. And we'd go through Croatia and Slovenia and then in to Italy, and each step of the way there was more electric lighting, the roads were wider, better. You know, the whole thing, sort of observable degrees of economic development got better until finally you went to Italy and got into Italy and it was really so much brighter than towns like Belgrade. We'd go up there, and we'd do a day's PX shopping. We had three kids. We'd fill up our station wagon with stuff, and then to entice my wife to do this, I'd always promise her dinner in Venice. So we'd put all the stuff in the room and take the car down to Venice, take the boat, and have a nice dinner.

Q: How was our consulate general in Zagreb reporting on this clampdown on Croatian nationalism? Was our consulate general seeing a different Yugoslavia than you all were seeing it in Belgrade, do you think?

WEINGARTEN: No, I don't think so. I think he was just seeing another aspect of... We could tell that this régime had some very serious concerns about nationalism and regional differences. But as far as I could tell, there was no conflict between the consulate and the embassy, as I recall. I may be wrong. Most of the reporting from the consulate came through the embassy before it went back to Washington, and so, no, I never noticed, or I never picked up any real dissension between the two posts.

Q: Later, of course, these things we're talking about now - we're talking in 1999 - and Western Europe and the United States have been very heavily involved in the breakup of Yugoslavia - did you get any feel for the divisions in that society?

WEINGARTEN: No, I never did, and the funny thing is that both my wife and I spoke Serbian. We had Serbian friends. We traveled a lot within Serbia. We liked the place. We knew the people. People could tell that we liked it, so that helps them to be more open. We always admired the Serbs, thought the Serbs were terrific, straightforward, gutsy people. But you got a sense that a lot of history had passed between these people, but you never had any slightest inkling that they would ever take after each other the way they did. And I remember one of the most shocking things I've ever seen was coming back on a plane from Paris to Washington after a meeting in Paris and reading *Newsweek*, which I never read. I picked it up on the plane and read it, and I saw a picture of one of Captain Arkans' people in Bijeljina, in Bosnia, and it was just after they'd finished killing some unarmed civilians, and they were lying in the street-

Q: This was during the Bosnian-

WEINGARTEN: Yes, this was '91, right in the beginning. And this one guy, this thuggish looking guy, was kicking one of these dead people in the head. I think you'd recall the picture if you saw it again. I was shocked by that. I said I couldn't believe that Serbs could do this sort of thing. I always thought that they were... because they had

propagated this myth that they had fought the Germans to a standstill in World War II, which as it turns out was a myth. The Germans only had a few divisions in Yugoslavia, and for the most part these guys fought each other. But still the myth lasts that they were brave and forthright kind of people that wouldn't kill women and kids and old people, but it turns out that they did. But you didn't have the impression going around Yugoslavia that this sort of thing was just beneath the surface, but it must have been.

Q: Were you getting a feel towards - now we call them the Kosovars or the Albanians there; we called them Sciptars in those times - I guess it was a derogatory term - but did you get any feel towards the Serb attitude towards those people at that time?

WEINGARTEN: Well, Serbs didn't much like them, but at that time Kosovo was autonomous within the Federal Republic, and so they had rights there. They had rights until Milosevic took them away in '88-89. But it was dirt poor. It was really a dirt-poor area. There wasn't much going on there economically, and so we would go down to Priština sometimes and talk to people. We didn't spend a lot of time down there. It didn't seem like there was much going on. And there was no or very little Serb-Albanian... Serbs and Albanians didn't mix but they didn't seem to... they weren't at daggers-drawn - or at least not to an outsider. Have you been back?

Q: I've been to Bosnia.

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, you told me that. That's right. I'm not sure I'd want to go back. It's one of the only places I've been, I think, that I wouldn't want to go back to because Serbs that we knew would talk sometimes about Kosovo Polje and it's a historical kind of thing, and people talk about the Civil War here. But then who knows who you're talking to. How they managed to elect a government like Milosevic and support or at least tolerate people like Seselj and Arkans and thug outfits like that.

Q: I have to say that I had a wonderful time, same as you, but I don't have any feeling of sympathy for the Serbs. I mean I find myself, these people, as a people, unfortunately, are responsible for some of the greatest horrors certainly in Western Europe.

Well, then, in '74, whither?

WEINGARTEN: Back to Washington, in '74 to '77, and I went to the economics course at FSI and then went from there to the Bureau of Economic Affairs and worked '75-77 in the Office of International Commodities, which was active at the time because we were doing issues like the Common Fund, the CIEC discussions with developing countries.

Q: What does that mean?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, that's the Conference on International Economic Cooperation, and it was something that was forced on us by the oil producers in '75, who were looking for some way to spread the blame for higher oil prices and the impact of the prices on developing countries. And so they got us to go along with a two-year cycle of

conferences to see what could be done to help the developing countries, but it took a lot of time and a lot of work. And then the Common Fund was a UN idea that countries would contribute substantial amounts of money to help stabilize primary commodities so that they would not have the fluctuations that you have, you know, very high prices followed by very low prices. But that never worked because they always wanted to - insofar as you could figure out what an equilibrium price was - they would always... they couldn't agree on it because the producer countries of one product or another always wanted a higher equilibrium price. It's sort of an effort to suspend the laws of supply and demand, and it couldn't be done.

Q: Where was the impetus coming from for this?

WEINGARTEN: It originally came from the developing countries and the oil-producing countries and some of the larger developing countries - countries like India, Algeria, Latin American countries.

Q: Well, this was the end of the Nixon-Ford time. How was the State Department responding to these efforts to it? Were we just doing it because we felt we had to be there, or were we trying to work with them?

WEINGARTEN: Well, we participated with an effort to try to put some aspect of reason into it, make sure that it wasn't going to cost a huge amount of our money and that it wasn't going to screw up the international economy. And I think we were pretty successful at that. The whole edifice crashed about early '77, the whole CIEC conference crashed. The Common Fund idea never got off the ground. Although we signed it in 1979, it really never got... we never contributed any money to it, and it never really got going. And there was a sort of time when a sort of new international economic order, and that was pretty much an attempt to put a template of government control over international trade and finance activities, and we said no, we're not going to do it. So we fought against it and managed to either neuter it or kill it off.

Q: How were some of the major trading countries - ourselves, Germany, France, Japan, Great Britain - how were they responding to all this?

WEINGARTEN: Well, they always keyed on us, and we would be assumed to always take the most right-wing position, and then countries like France and Germany - the European countries - and Japan would always take a position nuanced from that and more towards the developing countries, who were united then in the Group of 77.

Q: Okay.

WEINGARTEN: and less ideological than we were presumed to be. And there was expectation that that would change after the end of the Ford Administration, Ford and Kissinger departed. And to some degree it did. There was an effort to be more accommodating to developing countries, but by that time nobody really had their heart in it. We did, as I say, sign this Common Fund agreement in 1979, but it never went

anywhere - happily.

Q: Was there sort of the feeling within the Economic Bureau that this all sounds fine but it's going against the economic tides?

WEINGARTEN: It didn't even sound fine. We had within the government ferocious fights with the Treasury Department over policy. In that sense we didn't like these ideas any better than Treasury did, but Treasury always had a very hard ideological position with Bill Simon, the Treasury Secretary, and so we used to have ferocious fights, really, about the nuances of our policy, how we would approach something. The State Department would always try to sugar the pill a little bit, but the pill was always very bitter as far as developing countries were concerned. The Treasury Department always said, "Just shove that pill down their throats."

Q: Was the feeling sort of that this was India and other countries that essentially wanted us to take the losses or what have you and pass it on to them?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, basically they wanted a transfer of resources from the developed countries, the rich countries, to the poor countries. And they wanted those resources in the form of assistance, either official assistance or unofficial assistance in terms of price maintenance and so on. And at that time the level of official assistance in developing countries from the United States started down, and even then, I think, people were beginning to realize that it didn't really work. So basically that's what it was. It's very essence was an argument over transfer of resources. We didn't want to transfer the resources, and we certainly didn't want to transfer them in this under-the-table way of maintaining prices, because it just would hurt us, and it wouldn't necessarily... as the old expression goes, one of these price-maintenance agreements would be taking money from the poor in a rich country and handing it to the rich in a poor country.

Q: Yes.

WEINGARTEN: The plantation owners and so on. The coffee growers. So I spent three years doing that.

Q: Did you have a feeling you were fighting a rear-guard guerilla action or something?

WEINGARTEN: No, we really though we were winning the war. These people weren't going to get any of our money. These proposals were going to be stuck back in their box, and they were. It was successful.

Q: How did you find the Economic Bureau at this time? Did you find it was a well-managed organization and people knew what they were doing?

WEINGARTEN: For the most part, yes, I think so. It was very well run. Jules Katz had been in it for so long he knew everything everywhere and knew where all the bodies were buried. So it ran pretty well, and it had authority within the Department. In part, the State

Department had immense authority at the time because Henry Kissinger ran it, and you always knew if you had a real policy disagreement, say with Treasury Department or somewhere else in the government and it couldn't be resolved at a lower level, it would gradually go up, and Kissinger was so smart and his influence was so great that he would - if you had to take it up there - he'd win it for you. And so there was a real *esprit de corps*. Working for a guy that good was just terrific. The State Department was... We actually had people say, "I want to work for the Bureau of Economic Affairs because I want to learn how to roll over people." So it was interesting, but the problem with Washington at the time was prices were going up, but the salaries weren't. By 1976, I said, we've got to get out of town, or I've got to quit, or I've got to get a second job, something. I had three kids, one in private school, the other two in elementary school in upper Northwest DC. Second finishing elementary school and then the problem of where to put him for high school. So I decided to lobby for an overseas post and got assigned to Brussels.

Q: During the time you were doing that, what was the role of oil? Now it was all impacting on what you were doing.

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes, very much so. Oil was the single commodity where the producers had managed to get together and take control of the market and impose their scheme of things on prices. They kept raising prices, and finally another crisis came to pass in 1979-80 with Iran. But the oil prices were what drove the whole Economic Bureau at time.

Q: What was your impression of the oil expert cadre in the Economic Bureau at that time?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, it was first-rate. Steve Bosworth ran the oil operation, and I worked for him in the commodities office, and he was just as good in his way as Katz and Kissinger, just as smart, just as sharp, just as hard-working. And at that time everybody in the Economic Bureau worked late at night. If you got out at seven o'clock you felt you were a shirker. And so it was an interesting place to work and again, the finances were such that you couldn't really stay in Washington and survive with three kids.

Q: So you went to Brussels in '77, and you were there till when?

WEINGARTEN: '81.

Q: And what was your job?

WEINGARTEN: I was at the embassy there, and I was again -

Q: Which embassy?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, the embassy to the Belgians. I was one of the three economic officers, and I did pretty much the same things that I did in Yugoslavia and got into

energy a little bit more, did science work. I did science, labor, economic-commercial stuff. That was the time when the commercial service was split off from the economic part of the house, and we resented that because we thought that we'd provided very good service to American businessmen. Everywhere I'd been we had. And I remember somebody from the Commerce Department coming in looking at my office and at one point saying to me, "Well, this is going to be a nice office. I'll really enjoy working here." And as it turned out they didn't have the guns, couldn't do it. They got a huge number of posts, including most of the ones with a lot of largely commercial posts in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and they couldn't staff them. And they finally gave them back to the State Department, minus, of course, the positions. And the State Department had to staff those places from static resources. The Commerce Department kept the places in Europe, nice posts, but they were still, in our view, very weak on the basics, and they could not give really good advice to businessmen because they weren't experienced enough, didn't know enough about the countries they were in, both developed or undeveloped. Now I can tell you a story later about that when we get to Australia.

Q: How did you find Belgium at this particular time? It's always been sort of in the heartland of the economic world and all, but what was your impression there?

WEINGARTEN: Impression of Belgium? It was very highly developed, was crippled by the linguistic divisions and also was a very high-cost place, and at that time - '77-'80, '81 - it was very, very expensive to live there on a dollar salary. The exchange rate was low the entire time. It struck me the more you got into the Belgian economy, the more you realized it was just an adjunct of the German economy. It was the supplier of one thing or another to the German economy, and it was tied to kind of an informal Deutschmark grouping within the European Community. And the Germans pretty much dictated the level of interest rates. If they raised interests rates, everybody else was obliged to do so. But it was a very comfortable society. People were very capable and highly developed. Terrific infrastructure, roads, railroads, telephone system - the whole thing worked much better, as I recall, in terms of infrastructure, than France in the '60s. It was a pleasant place to be, very easy to live there - great food, very friendly people.

Q: Did you find that the Flemish-Walloon division inhibited the economics?

WEINGARTEN: Of the country?

Q: Yes.

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes. It made for a great deal of inefficiency because they really did have two of everything - at least two of everything. They would have two postal services sometimes, in areas like Brussels, which had a mixture of Walloons and Flamands. They'd have two different postal systems working the same street. They had, in Brussels anyway, which was one of the truly bilingual places of Belgium, and most of the shopkeepers and a lot of the people who worked there were Flemish but spoke really good French and were happy to speak French with you as an American. When you got out into the Flemish part of the country, people wouldn't speak French with you.

Sometimes when you're overseas and you have a foreign language, that's the foreign language that comes out first wherever you are. But if you came out with French in Flanders, people would stare at you. They knew it perfectly well, but they didn't want to speak it. But then you'd speak English, and they were really good at English. That was another thing that was extraordinary in that country, that virtually everyone spoke English, and good English, and in higher levels of their army and bureaucracy they all spoke English, and in some cases in the army, rather than speak either French or Dutch, higher commanders would speak English to one another and write memos in English to one another. And so it was really a thing. It seemed to be a country that was at least coping with this problem. But it also had some other serious problems. They had a lot of dying industry down in the Walloon part. I followed the steel industry very closely with a lot of interest in the steel trade back in the States. And that was really a rust belt industry and way overmanned, underinvested, and just a pure loser. And they had a lot of restructuring to do, but it really was a highly developed country.

Q: Were you sort of carrying on a watching brief? I know in so many of my interviews when we get into Africa we get the Union Minière, and that and its influence in the Congo/Zaire. Was that at all a factor by this time?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes. I was the guy in the embassy who was charged with that, and I had a lot of contacts at the Union Minière, people that I got to like, saw fairly frequently, and these were the people that had a lock on the cobalt supply, and the cobalt was necessary to make jet engine rotors, and there apparently was no real substitute for it. Cobalt was very expensive, and these guys kept a monopoly on the production with their Zairois friends or colleagues or co-conspirators or whatever you want to call them, and they kept the price high, and a lot of people made a lot of money off that, and a lot of it was sort of misspent down in Africa. But we kept very close tabs on them.

Q: Were we trying to do anything to loosen them up on that, or we letting that sort of monopoly work its way?

WEINGARTEN: No, I think we sort of faced the facts. It was a monopoly. It would be hard to break it up - break it up into what? The Zairois company was called Gecamines. Gecamines was controlled by Union Minière and it worked in Katanga, the old breakaway part of the Congo. I don't know that we could see any alternative at the time to the Union Minière, and what finally broke the monopoly, in effect, was that they kept the price too high, and so people started to search for substitutes for cobalt and they found some to make jet engine rotors for commercial jets, that didn't have to be made out of cobalt. The still needed the cobalt for fighter jets, much higher temperature rotors, I guess. We've never had a really conscious policy, as I remember, of trying to dismantle this monopoly.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

WEINGARTEN: Anne Cox Chambers.

Q: How did you find her and her interest in the economic side?

WEINGARTEN: She didn't have all that much interest in the economic side of it. She was a Carter appointee who had been very influential on getting Carter known nationally and financed him very substantially in his election campaign.

Q: She was a publisher in Georgia, was that it?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, the *Atlanta Constitution* and the big investment is Cox Enterprises - cable TV systems, worth billions of dollars. And she and her sister owned the thing - they're both billionaires, and unlike a lot of people with that kind of money, she's very generous, so that the staff would get the benefit wherever it could. We had representational funds the ambassador never used. The embassy's representational funds would have disappeared in a New York minute the way she spent money, but she left it all to the troops, so I had a very large representation account, so I was able to entertain a lot of people - and always got repaid for it. She was very generous. She really liked being a part of the activity, seeing and meeting famous people, participating in meetings with the President and that sort of thing. And she was very jealous of her ambassadorial prerogatives, too. She had problems in keeping DCMs. We had three DCMs in the four years I was there. A couple of them were canned for getting too far into what she considered her zone, her prerogatives. But she was a good person. As I say, she was generous.

Q: I realize we had an embassy there dealing with what I guess was the European Union at the time, or was it the European Commission?

WEINGARTEN: The European Commission.

Q: The European Commission, but it went through several manifestations. But what was your impression of the Belgian connection to the European Union?

WEINGARTEN: Well, the European Union was very important for them and it gave them more of a voice in European affairs than they would have on their own, the size of the country and so on. They derived a lot of benefit from having it located in Brussels. A lot of money was spent by the European Commission in Belgium, in terms of salaries and building buildings to house these guys. They got far more out of it, I think, over all, than they were able to put into it. They were happy to have the European Commission there, although they complained about all the allowances and perks that people who worked for the Commission got - no taxes, breaks on cars, very substantial living allowances.

Q: I must say that looking at this whole European thing, they live quite well, don't they, these European representatives. What was your impression of the role of controls, bureaucracy, on the economy? I have the gut feeling that by the time the Europeans are through they'll strangle themselves by over-controls, particularly coming from the German and the French side, but how about Belgium?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, they had a lot of control, but the Belgians were used to this, and they were pretty good at evading needless restrictions. The whole country, where it could, it ran on a cash economy so people wouldn't report a lot of income. As a matter of fact, on their national accounts, they could never balance the national accounts because they always had a tremendous imbalance between what was produced and then what was reported as paid for. Any kind of personal service - you know, you get your car fixed, furniture repaired - people would always quote you a price in cash and a price if you wanted to pay by check. And so it always made sense to pay cash, and so they evaded it that way. There really was a lot of tax evasion.

Q: Did the political parties play much of a role in the economy, or even the royal family, or was this pretty much a business-run economy - business people running the economy?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, parties had major roles in business. Any kind of public contract was pretty much determined by the parties, and just before we left - I thought it was '81 - when they had big contracts. We sold them the F-16. We were in competition with the French, who wanted to sell them the Mirage, but we won it, and we think we won it fair and square, although I'm not so sure any more. I think there was a lot of money passed. We sold it. I was involved in doing some of the offset work. The Belgians and the Dutch all wanted to buy the plane, but they wanted to have the costs of these things offset by work that would be given them by General Dynamics.

Q: This is General Dynamics.

WEINGARTEN: General Dynamics, the maker of the F-16's. And so the embassy worked very closely with General Dynamics, so we won that contract, and we won it basically because General Dynamics realized that the people who ran the Belgian Air Force were all fighter pilots, and the F-16 was an incredibly quick airplane. And so what they did was they'd arrange things, they'd have all these guys out to the airport, and they'd have an F-16 on one runway and an F-4, which at that time was the first-run aircraft, and they'd have them both take off at the same time, and the F-16 would take off so much faster, and then it would loop, while the F-4 would take off. And the F-16 would already be on its tail. And the F-16 was so highly powered that if you revved the engine up on the ground you had to tie the wings down. So these guys loved this. This was just like riding a rocket as far as they were concerned, so that's what they had to have. So they persuaded the government that they had to have it. But there was a tremendous scandal with the helicopter contract, where the Italians sold them Bell Agusta choppers. And there was a tremendous amount of bribes paid for that. And somebody who was involved in it was a socialist politician, a Walloon politician involved in this, and he got murdered, and they never found out who did it. And a socialist who became the Secretary General of NATO, Willy Claes, a very capable guy, was forced to resign from fall-out years later from this helicopter scandal. But any big contract, anything that went out to bid, would quite probably have a kind of *pot-de-vin* attached to it, a kind of bribe. It was a very small country and very rich. It had a lot of public expenditure. And as we've seen since, it's a very carelessly run place. People escape from jail. Some very strange things go on in Belgium.

Q: Was there a large émigré group, say from the Congo or from Rwanda or the Belgian colonies, and did they play much of a role?

WEINGARTEN: No, not much of one. They had a lot of guest-workers, *Gastarbeiter*, from all over, but they had a lot of North Africans, Zairois, Rwandans, but they didn't play that big a role in the economy, it seemed to me. They weren't that visible in the economy, and they were mainly factory workers.

Q: What about the unions? You think of France and the unions are into everything.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, well, there are very strong unions in Belgium, too. They're tied to the political parties. They have French-speaking unions and Flemish-speaking unions. You get the impression, as I recall, that the unions were stronger in the Walloon part of the country because that was the declining region. The declining region is where the jobs were being lost, and they had some really derelict towns, towns which were one-industry steel mill towns, and they were really looking pretty bad by 1980-81.

Q: You've been following this at this time. Why was it that the big steel complexes in the United States and Western Europe and all were going downhill at this time? Was the demand for steel going down, or was it being picked up somewhere else? I mean, what was causing this?

WEINGARTEN: Well, partially it was technological and partially it was wage costs. And the wage costs were too high in the Western countries and the United States. And then the U.S. steel industry just didn't keep up with the technology of steel-making, and people like the Japanese and the Koreans did, and so they were able to undercut, sell steel at a much lower price, and so that's what caused it. But basically it was technological, because now, the United States is among the most competitive producers of steel in the world, beating out the Japanese and Koreans because we dismantled the whole old steel industry, closed it all down, and now we've got steel mills that use the technology, the oxygen furnace, which uses scrap iron and produces steel much, much cheaper than the old furnaces. And all sorts of technology. I don't know that much about the -

Q: And a lot fewer people, too.

WEINGARTEN: Lots fewer people, and they're non-unionized. And they're just leaner, and they're more fixed on producing steel that their customers want and when they want it.

Q: I was consul general in Naples around this time, and there were a couple of steel mills outside of Naples, one in Taranto, and the problem was that the government couldn't shut them down because in those days they employed a hell of a lot of people, and so they were running them at a loss because they couldn't afford to throw 5,000 people out of work.

WEINGARTEN: Well, it was a big problem back here, but they finally, in the '80s, shut down those big West Virginia and Pennsylvania mills, and really, we had the most competitive steel mills in the world.

Q: Really?

WEINGARTEN: Yes. So you could see all of these steel mills declining in Belgium for basically the same reasons. They were heavily unionized, high-cost, and high-cost raw materials and outdated technology - poor management too. The steel mills didn't benefit, basically, from very advanced management. They really were not in the vanguard.

Q: What about the port of Antwerp? That must have been a major engine in the Belgian economy.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, it sure was, no doubt about it.

Q: Were you watching this and how things were going there?

WEINGARTEN: We had a consulate general up there, so they would keep track of it. Pretty much everything on northern Europe either comes through Antwerp or Rotterdam, and both are gigantic ports. Both are very efficient ports, and they've got this tremendous infrastructure of roads and railroads that tie into them, and airports. But the whole thing is really integrated and really works.

Q: Were we watching that and picking up... I mean, were we looking at, say, a complex like this and passing on ideas, saying, Gee, this would work - why don't we do this in the States? Or do we just let industry pick this up for themselves?

WEINGARTEN: Where we would come across something that we thought was interesting and could be used in the United States, since I was the science officer there and was later science officer in Australia, you would see sometimes I really got to like the idea of reading obscure journals and going out and seeing things. One of the things I tried to push from Belgium was *in situ* coal gas, where you'd fire up some coal underground and then draw off the gas and use the gas, draw off this natural gas. And I used to write airgrams and send the documents about this process back to the Department of Energy, and I finally got them so upset that they wrote me and said, "Stop sending us this stuff. This wouldn't work in the States. The coal seams are different." But that sort of thing. Where we would find an innovation and report it back to the government, but then the government doesn't do very much with information like that back here. In Australia I remember finding somebody who had invented a natural replacement for red dye number two, the food color. Instead of costing $1500 a pound, which is what it costs to make it artificially, it cost $50 dollars a pound. So I wrote that up and sent it back. But once it goes back to the government, it goes back to the Department of Commerce, what do they do with it? You know, that's one of the poorest outfits in the U.S. government. I'm not sure they can get out of their own way, those people.

Q: Well, I'm told it's the most political -
WEINGARTEN: Commerce, yes.

Q: - Commerce, not so much that it's doing anything, but it's just a good place to put people, so it's loaded with political appointees who are sort of third-class people.

WEINGARTEN: Well, I tell you, it worked all the way down through the ranks of professional people, they were not held in very high esteem.

Well, anyway, we enjoyed Brussels. We really had a grand time, and we still have friends that we stay in touch with.

Q: Well, then in '81, whither?

WEINGARTEN: Australia.

Q: You were there from '81 to -

WEINGARTEN: '84. When I left, Washington in '77, I used to tell the story that I swore on the heads of my wife and kids that I wouldn't come back to Washington again, and so we went straight from Brussels to Australia and came back on home leave. That was another terrific post.

Q: Did your kids go away to school while you were in Brussels?

WEINGARTEN: No they all were in school in Brussels, at the American School there, which became my project. We got there and the school was terrible, the American school. It was a military school - a military school in the sense that it was an overseas school and had a lot of military kids in it, small school, but it was really badly run. So after a year or so I got on the school board and later became the president of the PTA, and we tried to get the State Department to pull the State Department kids out of it. It was drug-ridden; it was very badly run. And we got two of the ambassadors, Ambassador Chambers and Dean Hinton, who was the ambassador to the European Commission, supported the effort to get the State Department kids out of the school and get them an allowance that would enable them to go to one of the other two schools, the Brussels American School in Brussels and St. John's. Both were good schools, but the NATO ambassador didn't want to do that because he thought that the military kids would then have to go to a boarding school in Frankfurt and he wouldn't get topnotch officers to work at NATO. So we finally wrote a memo or a telegram that was made into a memo and presented to Ben Reed, who was the secretary of the Department or whatever.

Q: Yes, he was the head of administration, I think.

WEINGARTEN: And it had the three alternatives, and as you always do, he was supposed to pick the middle one. That's the way it was written, like a Confucian essay. You're supposed to pick the middle one. He didn't pick the middle one; he picked one of

the extremes. The extreme he picked was to give the military another chance, and so the military pumped all kinds of resources into the school, new people, new money, and so on, because we had a four-star general who was a kind of ally of mine, Bill Knowltan, who was at NATO, and four-star generals have amazing clout. So on a back-channel basis, he got all sorts of people in the Pentagon interested in this, and so he really transformed the school. And so the first year they did that it did have a major impact on it. They fired the principal, fired some dud teachers - you know, fired in the sense that they just moved them somewhere else within the Overseas School system. But the school turned around. They got a really tough principal who reinstilled discipline in it in a very tough, no-nonsense kind of way. So the school still wasn't any kind of an intellectual... didn't really nurture kids in that respect, but at least we got rid of the drugs, we got a policy in force that people who had kids using drugs were themselves sent back to the States or the kids were sent back. I can tell you, the culture of the school - I had all three of my kids in it - and I couldn't afford to send them elsewhere - that's what really annoyed me. I didn't make enough money to pay the tuition, and you didn't get any support from the government if you did. And it really annoyed me because these other schools were much better. And so anyway we stuck it out with the school, and I was on the school board and was the president of the PTA in my final year. We did the best we could with it. Anyway, that's the one project I got into over there that I was really kind of wound up in, that I was really into in a big way.

Q: Australia '81 to '84 - Reagan Administration is in, how were our relations with Australia during this particular time?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, they were terrific, really. We had very good relations with them. Initially, Malcolm Fraser was a Conservative prime minister, and after he was defeated in '83 by Hawke, Labor. But we had good relations with both governments. Back in the '70s, Australia had really been a sort of Foreign Service resort, and when they had a change of administration, they had a Labor prime minister and nobody in the embassy knew anybody on that side of the policy divide, and so the embassy was out of it for a long time, and so we determined that would not happen to us again. They sent Marshall Green out there as ambassador, and we got relations reset, and then after that, since then for the most part we've sent political appointees to it. The ambassador at the time I was there was a very nice man, a Cadillac dealer from Thousand Oaks, California, who was a friend of Reagan's. So we had a very good DCM, whose name was Steve Lyne. And of all the embassies we've been in, the embassy was one where everybody got along well, everybody worked together, and- (end of tape)

Q: I would have thought it would be difficult to be in Canberra and be economic... I assume you were in charge of the Economic Section. What were you?

WEINGARTEN: No, I wasn't. I was just the number two guy.
Q: But I mean to do economics, because economics aren't a Canberra thing. Politically you might be able to do something, but economically I would think you would be looking to Sydney, Melbourne, other places.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, we did. At the time the Australian economy was very much state-controlled in a lot of ways, so we had a lot of activities - trade and financial issues - with the government in Canberra, but we used to travel quite a bit to Sydney and Melbourne, and the commercial attaché there had got himself transferred from Canberra to Sydney, but he didn't have the first clue what he was doing, so I wound up taking that over, doing mostly commercial work.

Q: How does one take over something which is run by another department?

WEINGARTEN: Ha, you just do it. Cables come in asking you to do this, that, and the other thing, and the other guy doesn't pick it up, you pick it up yourself. And so at one point, I think it was in '83, I went to Tokyo. They had a meeting of Commerce reps in Tokyo, and they wanted all the commercial attachés, so the ambassador said, "Well, you should go; you're doing it." I went it, and I went to the meeting, and they said, "You shouldn't be here. You don't work for the Commerce Department. You work for the State Department. In fact, you're our enemy. We don't want you here." And so, well, I said, "That's fine." So I went off and had a three-day holiday in Tokyo. I just went around Tokyo. And these guys didn't want to have anything to do with me, didn't want to talk about commercial work while I was there, assuming I was a spy. That's great. I'll take three days off. And then they fired this guy finally, the Commerce Department.

We just took care of all of the stuff for him and kept his files, kept his accounts, and he was a nice guy. He liked it. We got along with each other fine, but he just didn't know the first thing about operating in the government.

Q: What were the main economic concerns in Australia from our point of view?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, trade restrictions that we had, that we would threaten to impose on the Australians. What else? It was not all that much, I guess. We did a lot of reporting from Australia that I suspect nobody really paid much attention to in Washington, but we kept ourselves busy. But basically trade restrictions, ours and theirs, were the major -

Q: Where were the trade restrictions?

WEINGARTEN: Well, we would sometimes have trade restrictions on things like imports into the United States of Australian lamb. We would annoy the hell out of the Australians by subsidizing our exports of wheat to third countries where they were major exporters - that sort of thing. We would object to the tariff structure that they had in Australia, which kept foreign products out. They had a very high protective tariff on a lot of things that we wanted to sell into Australia, and one of them was automobiles. They had a high enough tariff rate - 100 percent on luxury cars - so as soon as you get there people would say, "Would you like to buy a BMW?" And you'd buy a BMW for about a third of what it cost an Australian, and then you drove it for a couple of years and then you could sell it back to the dealer or on the market for about twice what you paid for it. So that was just kind of anomaly of what happens when you have very high tariffs. People do this kind of thing. Once you said you'd sold your BMW or Mercedes back into

the system, the Australian who bought it didn't have to pay there tariff on it, so he got it for a lot less than he'd have to pay for it new.

Q: I imagine unions were quite powerful there.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, they really were. They were extremely powerful. We had a labor attaché who took care of them. Of course, they were Labor supporters. They were very fragmented. They had a lot of small unions. We calculated once there were 36 unions between the coal mines and the ports and loading it onto a ship, and 36 different unions that could go out on strike and cut off the supply, and often did. There were a lot of strikes. A very politicized labor movement.

Q: Did you find that the unions were taking sort of an anti-American view. I'm thinking were they picking up almost a classic leftist view shown in the British unions and some Canadian unions?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, in some respects they did. But I don't know, the Australians are so friendly and so outgoing, they never seemed to have a grudge against Americans personally. They had a big problem with... we had a number of bases in Australia, one at Alice Springs, another up on the upper northwest part of Australia that tracked Soviet submarines and things like that. They were very secret, and the Australians and the New Zealanders at that time were very worried that these kinds of bases were very excellent targets for the Soviets in case there was a war, so they were very resentful of these bases. And I recall in '83 that the White House wanted to send President Reagan out to do a trip through Australia, and the idea was to get a lot of campaign footage that would show a lot of smiling little white kids waving flags and so on for the campaign coming up in '84. And we had to tell him that if you send him out here to make a speech or to do that sort of thing, it would provoke full-scale riots. They had been in Vietnam, and Johnson had twisted their arms. They sent troops to Vietnam, and they felt they'd really been euchred by us on that, and so they were very suspicious of us and what they regarded as our bellicose attitude. Now they didn't send Reagan out; Bush came out. Bush did a -

Q: He was Vice President.

WEINGARTEN: He was Vice President then. He came out and did the Coral Sea celebration. Every year they celebrated the Coral Sea Battle, which was the battle that kept the Japanese from invading Australia and was one of the setbacks to the Japanese in '42, one of the few setbacks they had. And so that was always kind of the touchstone of U.S.-Australian relations because the Australians were unable to defend themselves at the time because their troops were all fighting for the British in North Africa.

That's a terrific... have you ever been there?

Q: No.

WEINGARTEN: Terrific place. You really should... Very friendly, very outgoing, very

much an outdoors country. We played tennis, swam all the time. Great place.

Q: How did you find Australian industry?

WEINGARTEN: Very small, protected by high tariffs. The only really world-class firms extracted minerals - Broken Hill Proprietary, the big iron-ore mines, coal mines. They were very competitive, but they were hampered by labor unions. They could produce coal as cheaply as anyone else in the world, but by the time they managed to run the gauntlet of all these unions and get it on the water, it was no cheaper than American coal or South African coal. So there were a few industries that were world class, and everything was... They had some automobile firms that were established there behind this very high protective law. General Motors had a couple of plants there. Ford had some plants there. They produced cars that really looked like the previous generation of U.S. cars. They weren't modern at all. If they'd permitted tariff-free imports of automobiles, these companies would have gone out of business. Agricultural products, of course, they were world class, too. World-class wines, wheat, and so forth.

Q: How did you deal with the commodities tariff subsidy problems, both American and Australian?

WEINGARTEN: How did we deal with them? Well, we just tried to damp down the outcry, I guess. We had restrictions put out from Washington. We didn't have much input into that decision. And then as far as... the structural problems that the economy had through this high tariff law, we could never persuade the Australians to bring that down. I don't think the embassy had much impact either way.

Q: Well, then after this, '84, whither?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, after that I went from there to Canada.

Q: Aha. So you were in Canada from when to when?

WEINGARTEN: '84-87, and I was the energy officer in Ottawa, and I hit that at a very lucky time, because that was when the Canadians decided to deregulate their energy industry, and they export a lot of oil and gas and electricity to the United States. It's a major trade sector, ran about $10 billion a year. And so we had a specifically designated energy officer up there, so I loved that job - terrific job. And I got to go out to Calgary, where the energy industry was located, got to know all the oil company people, helped the government, which was very friendly. It was the Mulroney government. It was very friendly to the United States. We helped them deregulate, dismantle their very complicated regulations that they had that prevented the U.S. investment, and so we played a major role.

Q: It had been a policy, I guess initially under Trudeau, hadn't it, to try to do something about our energy for us and not... had that been gradually changing over the years?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it changed. Part of this is some of the research I'm doing now for this project I'm on, but in the early '70s, in '71, we put restrictions on Canadian imports of oil because they were swamping our import control system. Two years later the Canadians put on export controls to keep the oil from coming down to the United States and causing them shortages. But then later in the '70s and '80s, the Canadians had some major energy projects, and it's a small country so they don't have the investment pool to draw from, so they needed U.S. investment, but they were very reluctant to have U.S. companies come in and take control of things. And then the Mulroney government in 1984 came in, and they changed the policy 180 degrees, and they welcomed investment, and they dismantled the regulations that kept U.S. investors from... They did this progressively, over the three years I was there. And so trade boomed; big projects got underway; offshore projects, arctic projects.

Q: How about water projects from Quebec?

WEINGARTEN: For the electricity?

Q: Yes.

WEINGARTEN: Those were big projects. We always had problems with that because it was a question of reliability, but in the other sense of reliability, not the sense that they couldn't supply it. But they had these gigantic, very high tension electric power lines that spanned all the way from James Bay, up in northern Quebec, down to New York, but if any kind of lightning struck one of these things, it would make the whole East Coast system of the United States wobble because it made such a major contribution. And normally, in the United States there are so many interconnections and doubling that if one main line is put out the system can adjust very quickly to compensate, but not in when that big Canadian line goes out. And as I recall, that's what happened in '79 when we had that big blackout in New York. That was where it originated, up in Canada.

The Canadians did not like the idea that they were hewers of wood and drawers of water, just selling raw materials to the United States, and so there was a terrific degree of sensitivity to that in Canada, which made the job interesting and made the... It was really one of the few countries I've been in where the embassy really made a difference. We could really get into serious problems if you didn't understand what was going on.

Q: How would this work, for example? You said you were helping another country deregulate or take away its own regulations. How did that work out?

WEINGARTEN: You'd just say, "Hey, that's great, atta boy [good job]." Take them down and show them how things worked in the States. Basically, we just encouraged them to do this. It's sort of like pushing on an open door.

Q: Were you looking and saying, "This is causing problems; that's causing problems"?

WEINGARTEN: Yes. And we'd tell them that this is slowing investor interest in the

states and this doesn't work and you ought to consider getting rid of it.

Q: The impetus was that the prime minister said, "It shall be done"?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, and so then we'd track it and make sure it was done an identify if there were a roadblock to it, try to identify that.

Q: How did you find the Canadian bureaucracy?

WEINGARTEN: It depended. The Ministry of Finance was very good. The Department of Energy and Resources was good. The Foreign Minister was probably the one most sensitive to slights. The people in the Foreign Office could be rubbed the wrong way very quickly. There was always a kind of envy and distaste, maybe equally balanced. They don't like a lot of what they saw going on in the States, but they can't help but be fascinated by it. Also, Canada's not a very competitive sort of place, and it has a host of restrictions on cultural things and so on. And they have restrictions on Americans buying property up there. They want to keep Canada for the Canadians, but on the other hand, they also have expressions like, "If you're so good, how come you're still in Saskatoon?" So Canadians that want to make it, there's the U.S. to go try your hand at, New York or LA, San Francisco or Chicago. So there's just a host of difference between Americans... Canadians are very keen on being different from Americans, and there are differences that most Americans wouldn't notice, wouldn't consider to be real differences. But it's a terrific country.

Q: Let's talk about the Quebec power grid. Was there anything that could be done about that?

WEINGARTEN: No, not really. On the receiving end you just had to be very careful and try to have enough power elsewhere to compensate for sudden loss of it coming down. And so they'd have to make those kinds of preparations back in New York State, basically. And then selling all this power to New York, which needed it, but then they got involved in... Environmentalists in Canada objected to these gigantic projects for environmental reasons and also because of the impact that they had on the indigenous Indian people up there. They'd flood huge parts of western Quebec to build these dams. It was country that people figured was really not productive in any way. But they didn't really consult very closely with the Indians, and so they had some real problems. And New York finally decided against importing a lot more extra power from Quebec, in part because of the reliability issue, and in part because of the environmental issue and also in part because they figured they could promote conservation and coax people to use energy more efficiently.

Q: How about the oil? I would assume that oil producers in Canada would be delighted to sell their oil wherever it would go?

WEINGARTEN: Sure, and there were always tensions between the people in western Canada who produced the oil and people in eastern Canada who ran the government. And

it was even more acute than that. They had the same kind of problem in the States, Washington and some of the outlying areas, when we were doing a free-trade agreement, the forerunner to NAFTA. We discovered that the Bonneville Power Administration in Washington State, which is an autonomous outfit but comes under the Secretary of Energy, and they didn't like what the federal government was doing with the Free Trade Agreement, and so they were able to have an effective veto over it. And they made that stick. You know, here's an autonomous federal government agency, and they made their view successfully known through the Congressional delegations from those four states out there, from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and Montana.

Q: What were they concerned about?

WEINGARTEN: They were concerned that we were going to give the Canadians an opportunity to get into the California electric power market by forcing Bonneville Power to let the Canadian power come in over its lines to California. It would have made sense for the consumers in California. They would have got cheaper energy, but we couldn't get that through. Bonneville refused to go along with it. But that was a much more acute relationship or controversy between the federal government in Canada and the provinces, which have a great deal more independence in most respects than the states do vis-à-vis the federal government.

Q: Was this a matter of nationalism with the central government, or was it a matter of things being diverted from going to Ontario and going south? Did sort of the petroleum grid and electric grid go east and west, or was it pretty much designed just to go north-south?

WEINGARTEN: It pretty much goes south, north and south, and the two economies are complementary in the sense that you have your big surge in electric power use in the States during the summer when it's much cooler up in Canada, so they had spare power; and then vice versa in the winter time. And so the oil pipeline grid doesn't extend in to eastern Canada. It doesn't go to Quebec, and it doesn't extent to the populated part of Ontario. It heads south, and so the Canadians find it more economical to sell it to us. Of course they could build a pipeline across the whole country, but it wouldn't be economical. It wouldn't be competitive with oil that came in from pipelines that begin in Maine, for example, and go up to Quebec. And so they have a line, the Ottawa Valley Line, and pretty much east of that is where there are 100 percent imports. The oil, and especially now natural gas, in Canada is very competitive, very sought after on the West Coast and Midwest markets and also in the East. It complements the gas that's brought up from Louisiana and Texas and Oklahoma. And we have a system that is so big, so enormous, of pipelines that they can connect into at various places. They make a lot of money on it, and they negotiate very tough contracts.

Q: Did you get into the contract negotiations?

WEINGARTEN: Sometimes. Once in 1987, there was a $5 billion deal where Amoco in Chicago was going to buy a big Canadian company called Dome, and the chairman of

Dome, who was never accessible, came to Ottawa and saw the finance minister in the morning to tell him that he was going to sell to Amoco, told the foreign minister in the afternoon, and had lunch with me in the interim and told me about it.

Q: Your general marching orders were to try to keep this moving as well as we can.

WEINGARTEN: Yes.

Q: In other words, to knock down as many barriers - I mean, this was what we were after.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, and it also was to look into the federal and provincial regulations and see where there were obstacles.

Q: Well, did you find it was the federal regulations that were more the obstacle than the provincial ones?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, much more so.

Q: Basically this was Ottawa trying to control things.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, and it's a much more consensual form of relationship between the provinces and the federal government than it is in the States. The federal government had constitutional crises with the oil-producing province of Alberta in the late '70s, and part of it was the same sort of thing that you get here. The people in the west say, "These goddam people in the East, these people in suits in Washington who don't know what they're doing are screwing up our business." It was very acute up there.

Q: Did the French-English conflict intrude at all into what you were trying to do?

WEINGARTEN: Not really. It was an advantage to speak French there, but you didn't really need it, because there were very few energy - apart from the electric power people in Quebec - very few people that you would find to speak French to in business terms. And the French up there is a French that's got a lot of... it's sort of the French of Brittany of 300 years ago. It hasn't evolved to the extent that modern French has, and so it's really a dialect. And my wife, who speaks really good French, lived for 24 years in France, always spoke French in the market... In Ottawa they all come from across the river in Quebec and sell goods, sell their fruit and veggies and meat and so on. And she always figured if she spoke French to them, they would have a higher regard for you, give you a better cut of meat. So she'd speak French to these guys, and they'd all respond in English, in very good English. And she'd insist. She'd speak to them in French. And finally, they would speak back to her in French, but it wasn't the French they were used to speaking. This was *français de France* -

Q: School French.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, school French for them. It wasn't their dialect, which is really hard to understand. It's called *Jouale*. You really had to have a sharp ear for that. Of course, you go up to Quebec City or Montreal, and if people took you for Canadian they would really insist that you spoke French, but if you were American, you know, they'd just give you a pass.

Q: Did the Maritime Provinces play any role in what you were trying to do?

WEINGARTEN: Did they what?

Q: I mean, were they of any concern to you on the energy side?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes. There were some big projects off Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that we were interested in that were being promoted to provide gas to the northeastern part of the United States or to provide oil. Oil from Canada was always considered a much safer source. At one point in time, we had an actual tariff preference for oil from the Western Hemisphere. It's no longer there, but people are still anxious to see Canadians develop these projects because they are more secure sources of oil than many of the other oil producers you think of.

Q: What was going on? Was it a lot of exploration?

WEINGARTEN: A lot of exploration and a couple of big projects, both of which have taken place, finally, only recently. They were pretty high cost. They were offshore projects, an offshore gas project and then an offshore oil project off Newfoundland. And so they've both come on stream, and presumably I think they're both making money.

Q: Well, the next time we do this we'll pick this up in 1987 and get you back to Washington by then?

WEINGARTEN: I came back to Washington and did Washington five years this time. The oath I took did not stick. It stuck for 11 years.

Q: So we'll pick this up in 1987 when you come back to Washington.

WEINGARTEN: Great. Okay.

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Q: Today is the 26th of August, 1999. 1987 you're back. Where did you go?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, I came back and went to the Bureau of Economic Affairs, and I was the deputy director of the Office of Fuels and Energy. It changed names several times in the interim. Anyway, it was the energy office in the Bureau of Economic Affairs, deputy director.

Q: First a little bit about how it was set up. Who was in charge and up the line a bit?

WEINGARTEN: The fellow in charge of the energy office was Bill Ramsay, an old friend of mine and somebody I'd served with in Brussels back in the late '70s. I called him from Ottawa and said, "I need a job." And I said, "I'm not really sure I'm going to get promoted. I'm in the last year of my open window, and if I don't get promoted to the Senior Foreign Service I'm out on my ear." So I said, "I don't know how much time I can spend with you, but I would like to take a shot at it." And he said, "Okay, fine, come on down here." Then it turned out that that year both of us got promoted at the same time to Senior Foreign Service, and it was really kind of a surprise to me. That's a very tough hurdle to get across. But I got across it, and then spent five years in Washington.

Q: What were the issues of your particular interest, I mean your office of fuels and energy? The great crises of the '70s were sort of past, weren't they? What were we looking at?

WEINGARTEN: Well, basically, we were tracking what OPEC was doing. We were maintaining good relationships with our major suppliers, the Saudis, the other moderate Arab countries in the Gulf, the Canadians, the Venezuelans. That was basically it. We worked with the Energy Department. We staffed out a lot of international conferences. We did a lot of travel in this office, a lot of it to Paris, as far as the travel money, which was always short, would carry us. And basically we did that. The first couple of years there, you're right, there were not crises, and so the office kind of dwindled. We would lose officers who would be pulled out to work in other places that seemed to be more active, more in the spotlight, and so I worked a couple of years at that, really enjoyed it.

Q: While we're still on this particular period, how did we see OPEC at this, say, '87 to '90 or whatever, while we were going through this preliminary period, and how did we deal with it at that point?

WEINGARTEN: We didn't deal with OPEC itself so much as we dealt with the individual countries that made up OPEC. We had very poor relations, as you can imagine, with both Iran and Iraq and Libya, three major members of it. We didn't go to OPEC conferences. We had as a tenet of our policy that we would not consent to any kind of overall producer-consumer dialogue because it would be seen in the outside world - in the energy world, anyway - as the producers and consumers conspiring to fix price levels that the market wouldn't have fixed. So we stayed away from OPEC as such, and we dealt with the moderates. We traveled; we tried to keep the Saudis happy. They were anxious to have annual consultations with us. Kuwaitis, all of these more moderate countries.

Q: I'm thinking of the Italians, the French, and the Germans at this time - were any of them playing a different game? The Japanese, were they playing different games than we were?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, well, somewhat, but not one that made a very big difference as far

as we were concerned. I think the French had better relations, say, with the Iraqis than we did. The Italians still had some relationship with the Libyans. The Europeans in general wanted to renew a dialogue with the Iranians well before we did. We worked out most of that at the OECD in Paris - actually at the International Energy Agency in Paris. So it wasn't a major bone of contention, as I recall, between us and the Europeans. It was just something - you know, we had different emphases, some cases where traditional friendships or traditional links were maintained even on an attenuated basis.

Q: What about Venezuela and Nigeria? These are two other big oil producers.

WEINGARTEN: Well, Nigeria - we actually didn't have a great deal of relationship with Nigeria. Nigeria was always a place with a tremendous amount of low-level turmoil, and it was very difficult to... I never traveled to Lagos. Venezuela was just the sort of country that was so linked to the U.S. market. 90 percent of its economy is based on oil, 90 percent of its government receipts come from oil, and the U.S. is basically the only market, because the transportation addition to the oil price makes it uneconomic for them to ship oil to Europe most of the time. We also nurtured a better growing relationship with Mexico, which became a major producer over this period of time, and of course, the U.S. market was a natural for them. So it was really a case of managing various relationships to ensure that we got continued uninterrupted supply of oil and gas.

Q: This was a time of great prosperity, comparative, in Mexico, wasn't it? They'd gone thorough sort of a boom-bust. Weren't they in a boom at that point, or how were they?

WEINGARTEN: Well, they had had a major oil industry back in the '30s. They'd nationalized it and it had declined substantially in the '40s and '50s, '60s. And they found still more oil, and they began to develop that in a big way in the '70s, and in the '80s were major suppliers to the U.S. Their oil company was kind of a textbook example of a corrupt and inefficient state organization - way overstaffed, not particularly good at either exploring or developing the oil that it did find - and kind of a textbook example of a place where it really needed a good infusion of U.S. expertise. The U.S. international oil companies have just no equal. They are innovative, they're way ahead on the technical side of it over all the other ones, Europeans as well, and if you want to find oil and you want to develop it inexpensively, those are the guys you have to go through. But the Mexicans have it embedded in their constitution that oil is a national treasure of some sort that cannot have any kind of foreign ownership of it.

Even at that time, there were still a lot of countries developing offshore oil, for example, which had been found in the '70s, when prices were high, and sometimes the process would take as long as 10 years to come to fruition. And so they were finally coming on stream, and that was helping to keep the price very reasonable in the late '80s. As I said, I did a couple of years of that. It was very interesting, a lot of fun. And I did do a lot of traveling.

Q: Did you find when you were working, was there a sort of a band of fuels and energy people that you would be dealing with all the time from other ministries and other

countries and all?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, pretty much so. And within the U.S. government as well. There was a cadre of people who followed energy and were interested in it, at the Department of Energy, the Department of the Treasury. The Agency at the time had an oil and gas branch that had considerable technical expertise and also had a kind of funding that enabled them to buy gigantic computers and produce maps and so on and kind of gee-whiz briefings. They had a book they brought over and opened it up, and it was a kind of automatic computer-driven slide projector. They had stuff like that. Sometimes it was fun to bring them in when we had foreigners in and show them this stuff. They were very impressed.

Q: What was the State Department and you and your colleagues bringing to these consultations and various things? What were you about?

WEINGARTEN: With these other agencies in the government?

Q: No, what the Department of State was about, your group.

WEINGARTEN: Well, we were responsible for the international aspect of all energy, energy writ large. And we could pretty much go into any aspect we cared to go into, and we could... Within the State Department, we had the expertise... hat we would have a lot of struggle sometimes with the regional bureaus over policy. And then within the U.S. government, because we had this international focus as opposed to domestic focus that most agencies had, and so we'd have to work out compromises or just in some cases just steamroller people to get an accord. And then only after that did we go out and deal with the foreigners.

Q: That's always the greatest negotiation - within the government.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, once you get through that process, it's almost a cinch to go out and talk to your international colleagues.

Q: Were the Soviets - they were still the Soviets during this time - were they playing any role? They were a big oil producer.

WEINGARTEN: Big oil producers. Yes, they began to play a role because it began to look as though they might be open, towards '89-90, to foreign investment. And they produced a lot of oil, but they produced it very inefficiently and in a very environmentally incorrect manner, and both for the long-term future of their oil fields as well, they drew out so much oil that they would cause flooding. The existing reservoirs would be flooded with water, and by pulling out too much oil now, you lost a large chunk of it for the future. So there were times when we'd look into ways that we could help our companies get involved in one way or another with the Russians. But we always had in mind the idea, we had this inexorable increase in demand for oil products - for heating, automobiles, and so on - and we tried to make sure that the supply would be more than

adequate, because we recalled that OPEC's power in the '70s and then again in '79-80 came out in the fact that if there were any problems within an OPEC country, there was no spare capacity elsewhere that could be brought on line to make up for the oil that had just like that disappeared from the picture. So I liked that job. I enjoyed it.

Q: I would imagine - it was in 1990 - it would have been a crucial time, wasn't it?

WEINGARTEN: It was, and we were, I remember, my wife and I decided that summer of 1990 not to go to Europe on vacation but went to Sea Island, Georgia, instead, and that's when Saddam invaded Kuwait. And I knew that we were going to be working seven-day weeks when we got back, and on the way back - we drove back - and we drove past North Carolina, and you could already see troop movements on the road. The 82nd Airborne was going off. And I was right. When I got back there was a tremendous amount of work. We did work seven days a week. But also, just before I'd gone down to Sea Island, Bill Ramsay, who was the deputy assistant secretary, asked me if I would take over his food policy operation. We had the commodities office and we had energy and we had food. And I was initially reluctant to do it because it had a reputation at the time of just being kind of a place where junior officers who had started out and hadn't done particularly well on their first tour were shunted. And so I said, "Okay, I'd like to do both of these." And Ramsay said, "No, no, really, that's a very complicated job, and I'm not getting the kind of results I need out of the guy who's got it now." So I said, "Okay, I'll do it." I did it, and as it turned out, that was the best job I've ever had.

Q: You did that from when to when?

WEINGARTEN: That one lasted from 1990 to '92.

Q: The job was food and -

WEINGARTEN: - food policy.

Q: Food policy. What was this?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it was made up of several components. It did have a lot of odds and ends to it. My office was responsible for the agricultural component of the NAFTA agreement with the Mexicans and Canadians. We were also the State Department component of the annual government determination of where food aid would go, in conjunction with AID. We also did, for the State Department, commodities such as sugar, coffee, both of which were agreements we belonged to at the time. Another aspect that was negotiating with the European Union and participating in negotiations with the European Union on the agricultural chapter of the trade round. But the thing that took up the most time was a program that we had, that Congress had mandated, whereby we supported U.S. farmers, U.S. companies selling grains and other commodities overseas, basically against European competition. What we were supposed to do was provide what was called an "export enhancement program" - that's basically subsidies. Well, they're kind of complicated subsidies. A company would go out and make a sale, make a

commitment, say, to provide China with six million tons of wheat. And the Europeans would also be in that market as well, and the Europeans would offer a subsidized price. We would try to offer a price below theirs to beat them out of the market, and the difference between the world price and the price we were offering in China would be made up by a subsidy. We would pay the U.S. seller a subsidy based on this difference, but the subsidy would come out of the warehouses where we had all this surplus food stored. So eventually we were so successful in that program that we wound up cleaning out all the warehouses and saving the government billions of dollars in storage fees - putting storage companies out of business, though, but there's an ox gored on every issue. But the problem there was getting these things through the government, because all of the regional bureaus were ferociously opposed to them.

Q: Why would that be?

WEINGARTEN: Well, partially because most Foreign Service officers come in with drummed into them the notion of free trade and so on, which is right. But these were short-term expedient policies. And they really didn't like them. We had very bad relations with the Australians over grain, with the New Zealanders over dairy products, and the Argentineans on grain. And so the desks didn't like it. And so we would up with a lot of these things, we had to send them up to the undersecretary, who was Bob Zoellick at the time, for determination. And so what I did, I had this corps of 12 junior officers - most of them junior officers - and what I did was teach them how to write papers that would get Zoellick's attention, to write it in a way that after he reads the title he's going to want to read the rest of it, all in bullets and tics. I trained them all in that, and I really worked them very hard, and I said, "You work for me, do this right, and I'll do my best to get you promoted." I got them all promoted, every last one, including some very... I'm sorry, I missed on one, a kid who just didn't pay attention, a kid who actually died later because he fell into a river up in Central Asia, died of hypothermia. But he was the kind of kid who was careless, the kind of kid who when he was a consular officer he left the consular seal out overnight a couple of times, and they got on his case about that. He just was not cut out for it. But all the others, we got them promoted. I had a corps of hotshots.

Q: Were the Desks trying to stab you in the back?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes. Desks would try to work around us, and that was back in the days of rather than having dueling memos go up to the Secretary or the undersecretary, we always had what we called split memos - different opinions - and so we used to say, well, we'll put in whatever you want to say, and we did. And I was just appalled at how badly written some of these things were and how illogical they were. We just put their stuff in there and let them kill themselves. But anyway, I really enjoyed doing that, and putting this stuff up to Zoellick, who didn't like the process, but after all, it was Congressionally mandated. We had to do it.

Q: Well, I would have thought that some of the things you mention are terribly political, always have been - sugar, coffee, rice, particularly.

WEINGARTEN: Coffee!
Q: Could you talk about some of those commodities that you were dealing with, and maybe the Congressional component.

WEINGARTEN: Well, we had the international agreements on coffee and sugar. We are of course the major consumer of sugar, the major consumer of coffee, and we decided early on that we didn't want to participate in these international commodity organizations any more. They cost us money; they tried to maintain prices higher than the market. So we worked with the USTR, and we got out of the sugar agreement.

Q: U.S. Trade Representative.

WEINGARTEN: U.S. Trade Representative. Then we went and worked on the coffee agreement, and tried to get the coffee agreement to have more of a market bias to it than it had. And that one we had to work on very seriously because it was the centerpiece of JFK's Alliance for Progress - you know, in Latin America in '62. We couldn't make the coffee agreement work the way we wanted it to work, and so we finally opted out of that as well.

Q: What did that mean, by opting out?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it means that we said, "Well, we're not going to abide by the rules of the coffee agreement. We'll just buy coffee at the market price - buy it if the price is low, if the price is high, we'll buy it high. We'll let the market set the prices. We're not going to get involved in buffer stocks and so on." And so none of these countries wanted us to leave, because we are so big, the U.S. market's so enormous that without it a lot of these agreements feel that they have failed. So we said, "Well, go ahead and fail." You have to remember, this is the late '80s, and as the 1980s or early '90s, those were the years of the market.

Q: Reagan-Bush being -

WEINGARTEN: Reagan-Bush, yes. Anything that had a market orientation to it had favor in the Administration. So that's what we did. We had some political things, too. We had a sugar quota. We'd maintain a domestic price for sugar that's far higher than the world price, and this is to favor some major sugar producers in the south and southwest and the west, sugar beet producers and so on. So we maintain a high price, and we do not import sugar, except via a sugar quota, which we distribute among various countries in Latin America and Central America - little countries like Dominica and the Dominican Republic. And for them, the sugar quota is a major thing. And there's a lot of money to be made on it. There are a lot of lobbyists involved in it. So we would have annual meetings about it over at the USDA, at the Department of Agriculture, and the undersecretary would begin the meeting by saying, "Now if this goddam thing leaks one more time" - our decision - he says, "I'm calling in the FBI." And it always leaked, and it always leaked out of the Department of Agriculture, not out of the State Department. But those were the sort of things we did.

We did the AID stuff, determining food, PL-480 levels for various countries. And it was a very busy job. As I say, I really enjoyed that.

Q: What about rice?

WEINGARTEN: Well, rice is another one of those sorry chapters in our history. We grow a lot of rice, and we grow it very inexpensively, or at least on the surface it seems inexpensive because we don't take into account the water used in growing it, and we sell it and disrupt and displace a lot of foreign rice producers. But the only time we got involved with rice was. After the Iraqis invaded Kuwait, we cut off all our trade with Iraq. Iraq was one of the biggest importers of rice and other commodities on the PL-480 program, and they were not that good a customer. Sometimes they'd be late with their payments and so on, and so a political decision was made, and there was a big hullabaloo after the war broke out, who was responsible for approving the PL-480 shipments to Iraq. And that's still a sensitive issue. But we got involved in it to try to cut off these things, and we had a lot of, for example, a U.S. broker who'd loaded a ship, set to sail for Iraq when the war broke out, with 27,000 tons of rice on it, and we refused to give him a license to export it, and he was really upset, and he said, "You'll put me out of business." And so he then hired, what was it, Boggs and Blow, the big lobbyist firm, and we'd get people yelling down the phone at us at seven, seven-thirty, eight o'clock at night saying, "You've got to let this stuff go." We said no, and we had support. Maybe I'm glossing over things in retrospect, but that was the nice thing about that: the Baker-Zoellick State Department would back its people. If you could make an adequate explanation of what you were doing, then they would support you. So anyway, we blocked that rice, and this guy would come back and say, "Well, I'm going to ship my rice to such and such a port." And we said, "No, you're not." Because the Iraqis are the only serious rice eaters in the Middle East, we said, "No, we know where that's going, and we're not going to let you ship it." And finally, it spoiled and he had to sell it at a cut rate.

Q: Well, I would have thought that one of your major things would be the perennial battle, which will continue, much more than the Northern Irish problem of the Catholic thing, and that is between the United States and the European Union over agricultural products. We're talking about two groups with very strong agricultural lobbies where it's more than just money - it's a way of life, it's everything you can think of.

WEINGARTEN: Well, it is, or at least it's sometimes presented that way, but there's very little difference between major commodities like rice and grain and corn and dairy products. For the most part, all of the major producers exported are derived from big farms, big agricultural enterprises, and with few exceptions - the New Zealanders, the Argentineans, and Australia, who have a major advantage in either more fertile land, cheaper labor, or better growing conditions - have the lowest price; and the others have to scramble to meet that and meet it with subsidies or - in the case of the European Union - a combination of subsidies and tariff barriers to keep other people's grains out. You recall, back 35 years ago, we had a major export market in Europe for grains and agricultural products of all kinds, and that's gone, disappeared. And we discovered in the

'70s high barriers in Europe, very high prices inside, so they over-produce, then they have to sell that overproduction, and they sell it abroad, and they sell it against the efficient producers, and to beat them they have to subsidize it. So they lose on their agricultural policy two ways. They produce more expensive food, and the consumers have to pay much more for it, and then they pay a second time in the subsidies they have to pay to get rid of the excess. That's extremely inefficient. It's a real money eater. We would fight against them, but you're right, it's a political issue, and it was the issue that stalled those trade talks for years and was finally resolved at a very high level in '92.

Q: Well, was the World Trade Organization in the offing at that point?

WEINGARTEN: It was still a couple of years down the road. It was beginning to take shape.

Q: That would take care of many of the problems, wouldn't it?

WEINGARTEN: Well, we thought it might, but then these are problems that are so structural, really. We've had the World Tirade Organization as the successor to the GATT, and they've got probably more problems than the GATT did. The problems still exist, and it's the same protagonists.

Q: Would you go over and break lances against the European Union on agricultural things?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, but by that time the positions were so rigid, it almost became a kind of a ritual.

Q: A kabuki dance or something.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, a little bit of that ritual. It was more like a joust.

Q: How about dealing with Japan? Did this involve you?

WEINGARTEN: Japan was a major consumer, but I don't recall that Japan was that big a factor. They tried to keep their market, make sure there was a balance in their market between suppliers from Asia, suppliers like us, and suppliers from Europe. And we would have problems with them, for example when the... I'm thinking about the Koreans, who are big rice growers and wanted to... where did they want to dump some rice? They wanted to dump it somewhere, and it's a major, very politically potent lobby in Washington for rice, so they would come and beat on us to stop this, which we did. But the Japanese - I don't recall we had any real contentious problems with them.

Q: How about dealing with China, as far as a market and dealing with it? Did you get involved with that?

WEINGARTEN: Well, just in these export enhancements, the question of selling six

million tons of wheat. But I would get involved in just making sure that the State Department was behind either the original proposal or get the proposal modified so that we could support it, and then it would take place.

Q: Well, then, in '92, whither?

WEINGARTEN: Paris.
Q: And you were in Paris from when to when?

WEINGARTEN: '92 to '96.

Q: What were you up to?

WEINGARTEN: I was the minister counselor for economic affairs at the OECD mission. I had selected that post or for some years, kept an eye on it, because I had promised my wife back in 1968 and told her that I'd take her back to Paris some day to live, and I hadn't been able to do that, and this was the time to do it.

Q: What was the OECD at that time? I mean, what was its coverage? I mean, what was it?

WEINGARTEN: Well, at the time, it was an organization that includes all of the major Western industrial democracies plus Japan, New Zealand, and Australia, and it was pretty much a sleepy organization until about '91-92, and it was kind of a terminal place to go. Nobody ever gets promoted out of the OECD. It's kind of a pre-retirement tour for a lot of people. But then, it was also the place in the '70s and '80s, where if you had a really intractable international problem that you couldn't make progress on politically, you'd shunt if off to the OECD, have it looked at, have it staffed, and have it studied and talk about it there. That takes it out of the spotlight.

Q: OECD stands for what?

WEINGARTEN: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. It's the outgrowth of the old OEEC, which was the operating system for the Marshall Plan. And so over the years, for example, the International Energy Agency was created within the OECD structure to address the energy problem in the 1970s. And then in '92, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, all of these Eastern European countries, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and so on, all wanted links with the West. For example, the preferred one was NATO. They wanted NATO, but NATO had a clause that commits every member to defend every other member, which was not something we were anxious to do with respect, say, to Poland. The other organization they angled to get into was the European Union, but the European Union has very high barriers to entry, and economically these countries weren't ready for that. But they wanted some form of link with the West that would keep them happy and would fend off the day when we would have to consider them for NATO or the European Union, so the OECD came into the fore. So we wound up bringing in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and then we

added Korea during the time I was there. And we had to, in effect, interview each of these countries very, very carefully because the OECD is not an organization without entry barriers of its own. You have to have convertible currencies; you have to have free capital movements - so on and so forth. So we did a lot of work in examining these countries.

Q: I take it when you say "we" you're talking about the other members, too.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, the other members. The other thing that's interesting about the OECD is that all of the ideas, all of the motivations for the organization all come from the United States. It's really quite extraordinary. The U.S. is basically the only country that proposes new things for the OECD to consider. Nobody else does.

Q: I would have thought that would have sort of a stultifying effect on the rest of the group.

WEINGARTEN: It does, and we never intended it that way, but they did not use the OECD or did not see the OECD as an instrument that could further their national policies, and we did. And so we used it. And then finally, I think it got to be a habit. They just sort of sat back and let the Americans take the lead.

Q: I would have though the French would have... you know, it's in Paris, and the French don't like the United States leading anything. I would have thought they would have been a -

WEINGARTEN: Well, sometimes they would be the ones that would say, "No, no, you can't do this" or "you shouldn't do that" or "you should do it this way." But they never had ideas of their own, nor did the Europeans as a group were 16 of the 27 members. But the French were very critical of some of the U.S. proposals, and could get them modified if they made a convincing persuasive case, but they never really projected... One time they sort of floated the idea that maybe the OECD should extend its reach into North Africa, but they never pushed it very strongly. It never seemed to be more than just an idea thrown up but not pushed very hard.

Q: What was the OECD doing? I mean, what was its operation?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, they had a vast variety of things. It ranged all the way from setting standards for fruits and vegetables to international aviation standards. We did aviation. AID standards, untying aid, reporting aid transactions. It was an international energy agency; it was a forum for trade debates, sometimes very technical, sometimes policy level. And then one of the things that was done while I was there was to extend a hand to these newly independent countries of Eastern Europe and give them assistance in the form of advice on how to set up a central bank, how to set up statistical systems that enabled you to measure how your economy was doing.

Q: It sounds like there are a lot of other organizations. The European Union is setting up fruits and vegetable standards - whether cucumbers can be curved or not - and you have

the ICAO dealing with aviation - you know, I mean, each country is going out and doing its own aid program and all - it sounds like you were doing things, but any other countries were just doing what they or other organizations were doing their thing.

WEINGARTEN: Well, in a sense yes, but the OECD had this coordination function. All of the members would keep each other in the picture on what they were doing in these various fields, and one of the important things that the OECD had was kind of a peer-pressure aspect. As you review somebody's economy - and another part of their activity was to do an annual review of each economy, and they'd provide advice or guidance - and we, for example, in the U.S. economy, we would always try to send over somebody very senior from the Treasury Department who would get a lot of questions about U.S. deficit or about other aspects that weren't so hot in our economy. Sometimes they'd get very angry at being questioned like this.

Q: From what you're saying, though, you're saying it's sort of a sleepy thing, but it sounds like a rather key organization within the industrial world.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, it is, and it's probably not recognized as such by all that many people. It is a key economic organization, and you're right, it could be a very sleepy place at times.

Q: But it sounds like a... The types of decisions and all that would be coming out of here all sound controversial as all hell, that would set standards or how to distribute aid and all that would all seem to be very political.

WEINGARTEN: Oh, yes. It was all politicized, but to the extent possible, it had some of the political sting that these issues could have if debated openly, pitting one country against the other. In the OECD, you could debate these things, set standards, and inform each other of what you were doing and do it sort of out of the limelight.
Q: Well, what would happen when you'd set these standards? Would countries go along with them?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, basically, it's a financial organization. It sets financial standards for capital movements and so on, so that's a big part of the operation.

Q: Who was the ambassador there?

WEINGARTEN: The first ambassador was Alan Larson, who was a Foreign Service officer and is now assistant secretary for economic affairs and may become the undersecretary for economic affairs in the Department. He was there the first year, and he was the one who hired me. I knew him pretty well. I'd worked for him before, and so I went and saw him and asked to be considered for this job. And I had a lot of push from Washington because I had done this thankless food policy job and enjoyed it. So I got that job. That was Al's third year, and then he was replaced by David Aaron, who's now the undersecretary for international affairs at Commerce. And so he was there the three years, the last three years I was there. I did a four-year tour there.

Q: What were the major issues that you were in?

WEINGARTEN: The major issue that I was involved in was the opening of Central and Eastern Europe, and I did pretty much anything that anybody wanted done or the ambassador wanted done. I became a speechwriter, wrote a lot of speeches for him. And it was kind of funny because he's a professional writer. He writes potboiler mysteries. And I wrote speeches for him. Basically, it was a nice assignment. It was not a particularly testing one. I didn't really work flat-out. But I sure lived flat-out in Paris. It's really a nice place.

Q: Well, what about the new countries coming out of the former Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc? The criteria to get in, you must have had to cut a lot of corners in order to get them in because they were - I mean they were coming out of this authoritarian system.

WEINGARTEN: Yes, well, you did have to bend the rules. There were some rules, though, that were critical to the organization, and one of those was the convertibility of the currency, the free capital movements. You had to have that; pretty much everything else could be negotiated. And what those countries got out of it, was they would undergo the same kind of reviews that the others did and point out to them some of the policy mistakes or any shortfalls they were making and problems they were causing for themselves. I benefited them. It does sort of knit you into the Western world. And it's still very sought after.

Q: Did you find that your delegation and other Western delegations were acting as sort of tutors?

WEINGARTEN: Yes, basically, that's it. They basically asked to be tutored, and we were happy to do it.

Q: What about dealing with the Europeans?

WEINGARTEN: We dealt with them... one of the things that made it easy to work in the OECD was that all of the representatives to it were either located in the same building or in the immediate vicinity, so it was really easy to stay in touch with these folks. So we had good relations with everyone.

Q: Well, then - '96, where?

WEINGARTEN: Back to Washington.
Q: Was that a wrench for your wife?

WEINGARTEN: Well, it was very hard for my wife. She had by that time, also, she'd lived 24 years in France, really liked it, and so we came back and basically came back to do the three years that I needed - I was 60 at the time - I needed three years to get locality pay factored into my pension, and I will have that in about another week.

Q: What have you been doing?

WEINGARTEN: Since then I've worked in... I came back and did energy again. I did that for two years, pretty much the same issues, although we had a little more cooperation with OPEC this time. We went to producer meetings, but never at a very senior level. They always send me. I remember I was in Goa, India, and my instructions were just to keep my mouth shut, and all the other representatives were ministers - Iran, Iraq, the UK, and so on. I got there and discovered that they wanted to pass a resolution that I thought would be very damaging to our interests, and it was a weekend and I couldn't get back to Washington to get any instructions, so I just made up my own and made it very clear to the, you know... It was one of those set-piece things where you have to notify the Secretary a couple of days before you intend to make a submission, and then you have to give them copies of it, and so on. And I said, "No," I sort of broke in, "I have to make a statement." I read out a statement that I'd prepared that said the United States objects to this and will not participate in this kind of a meeting and so forth and so on, just sort of threw the cat among the canaries. And as it turned out it was absolutely the right thing to do, but it really caused a commotion. It caused a commotion there and it caused a commotion afterwards. We had people coming up to for at least a year after and saying, well, can't you modify that a little bit and have some formal meetings with these OPEC producers? We said no.

I used to go back to Paris fairly frequently to attend IEA meetings. The other thing, because I had a lot of experience with Canada, I always kept that as a kind of a dossier that I was interested in, and the last year I was there I was negotiating with the Canadians on renewing an electric power treaty that governs the operation of one of the big dams in the Columbia River system, the Bonneville Power Administration System, and then after a couple of years of that, Ramsay retired, went to Paris to be the number two in the International Energy Agency. By that time, my wife and I had become responsible for a pair of aged old friends who had no children and no relatives, and so we had to take over their affairs. And my wife, it turned out, became their sole beneficiary. And so I had a couple of overseas possibilities. I wanted to go back overseas, and I thought, Locality pay is fine, but this is not the place I want to be. So I had a possibility of becoming the consul general in Istanbul, or going to Brussels and working at NATO as some sort of deputy assistant secretary general doing something with respect to energy with NATO. I couldn't pursue either of those. I had to stay here. And about that time I started to have some real problems with my knees, and so I wound up, by the time I knew I had to stay here, the jobs were gone except for the... I tell you, this just feels kind of funny... except for the job that was director of Canadian affairs, and I went and I saw the guy who was recruiting for that, and he said, well, I'd had the experience and negotiating with the Canadians, and he said, "Wow, you'd be just perfect for this job." So I thought I was really in on that one, and then I was told that they wanted an ambassador as country director, because the Canadians wanted somebody more senior. So they wound up with probably one of the few five-way shootouts. They got five FEMC officers -

Q: FEMC meaning?

WEINGARTEN: Meaning minister counselor level, very senior people - competing for this job. And I had the most support for it, and so my career counselor thought, well, you've got this made. So I went off to Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan on a trip and came back, and I didn't get a call, and I called in and I said, "What happened?" He said, "Well, we had the five-way shootout - 13 people voting - and, " he said, "you got six votes in the first round, the other seven scattered among the other four candidates." And he said, "The guy who would have been your seventh vote had to stay home and take care of a sick kid."

Q: Oh, no.

WEINGARTEN: So I never got the seventh vote. They had three or four votes, and they finally gave it to this other guy. So I went and talked to the Office of the Historian. By that time I figured I'm going to retire. I need one more year, and I'll get out of here. So I talked to the Office of the Historian, and they were looking for somebody to do the collating and writing of the documentary history of the 1973 oil crisis, and they said, "Well, you have the experience and knowledge." And I said, "Yes, I'd love to do that." But in the interim, I had to get both my knees operated on and had both knees replaced, and so I was basically out from September through to March doing that.

Q: Of what, of '97?

WEINGARTEN: Oh, that would be September of '98 to March of '99, and I've worked at that since I returned in March, and I'll work up until the end of the year on that and then I'm going to retire on December 31st. I was going to retire a little bit earlier, but then I was afraid the Department might get efficient and send me my leave check in '99, which would mean I'd have to pay taxes on it in 2000, so I decided... I always figured it was very unlikely that the Department would be that efficient.

Q: Oh, you can't tell.

WEINGARTEN: You never know. I figured, well, it's worth working another couple of weeks to get that. So I retire on December 31st. I may come back if they can get me hired; I may come back to finish the job on a part-time basis, but if not, then I'm gone - 41 years.

Q: Great. That's a long time..

WEINGARTEN: Yes, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed every place I went to. I had all assignments that made me grow in one way or another. I would go back to any of them except Yugoslavia right now. But I had a great time. I really enjoyed it, and when I came into it I never figured I'd wind up doing 41 years of it.

Q: That's a long time.

WEINGARTEN: That's a long time. It sure is. Anyway, it was fun. That's 41 years of government service. I had 37 or 37 ½ with State department.

Q: Great. Thank you.

End of interview