

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

**RUTH VAN HEUVEN**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*  
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**FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS**

|                                                                                   |            |
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| Rome, Italy                                                                       | 1962-1964  |
| Resignation due to marriage                                                       | 1964       |
| Berlin, Germany (spouse)                                                          | 1964- 1967 |
| Brussels, Belgium (spouse)                                                        | 1967-1970  |
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| Bonn, Germany – Consular Officer                                                  | 1978-1981  |
| Washington, DC, Consular Affairs                                                  | 1981-1982  |
| Geneva, Switzerland – Information Officer                                         | 1982-1984  |
| State Department – Bureau of Consular Affairs                                     | 1984       |
| State Department – Operations Center                                              | 1985-1986  |
| State Department – Office Director,<br>Office of Public Affairs, Consular Affairs | 1986-1988  |
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|                                                                         |           |
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| Suriname DCM                                                            | 1994-1996 |
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| Milan                                                                   | 1998-2001 |
| Retired                                                                 | 2001      |
| OIG                                                                     | 2002      |

## INTERVIEW

[Note: this interview was not edited by Ms. Van Heuven.]

*Q: Today is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2006. This is an interview with Ruth van Heuven. We will start, as usual, when and where were you born?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was born on Long Island, New York. Actually I was born in New York City as far as the hospital goes but my family lived on Long Island in 1936.

*Q: Where on Long Island?*

VAN HEUVEN: A little town called Floral Park, which is smack dab in the middle of Nassau County.

*Q: Let's do a bit, on your father's side, what was the family name and where did they?*

VAN HEUVEN: My parents were both from Switzerland. They both, in fact, emigrated to the United States separately and met each other and got married in the United States. So I'm a second generation American. Or first. I always thought first was the people who came, but whatever. My father's last name was Held. He was from the canton of Bern and there are a lot of Helds in Bern. My mother's maiden name was Hausheer and she was from Zurich and there are a lot of Hausheers up that way and in the central part of Switzerland. They were both originally, as most people were, from agricultural backgrounds. My mother actually grew up on a farm. Her parents and her brother went on to farm and her nephew went on to farm. So there's still farmers in the Swiss family. My father's antecedents, his family had all been landowners and farmers but about I guess two generations before him they started becoming academics. My grandfather was a Protestant minister in Bern. Actually one of the jokes in the family is that he ended up being retired and collecting a pension longer than he served as a minister, 'cause he lived to 94.

*Q: What was your father doing?*

VAN HEUVEN: My father was, with that background, considered the black sheep in the family because he did not go to university. He got a commercial sort of apprenticeship. One of his brothers was a dentist and the other was a history professor. I guess his mother really wanted him to go into a profession as well but he ended up coming to the United States in his twenties and went to work for a business and made his fortune and ended up being the rich uncle in America.

*Q: What sort of business did he get into?*

VAN HEUVEN: He ended up representing a Swiss company, a textile company, that had developed a lot of finishing processes. They bought, they didn't really make the raw goods any more, they bought the raw goods from elsewhere and then did all of the finishing. They established a company in the United States essentially to protect their patents. That's what it was called, the Haberlein Patent Corporation and he became the president of that and worked with them until he retired.

*Q: And on your mother's side. You say she grew up on a farm. What brought her to the United States?*

VAN HEUVEN: She had a sister who married a Frenchman who came to New York City to work. He was also a businessman and she came to visit her sister and she liked it and she decided to come back. So she had to go back to Switzerland to get an immigrant visa and by the time her immigrant visa came through the Depression had hit. So she almost didn't come but in the end she decided, "Well, I'll go and see. If I find a job in six months I'll stay. If I don't I'll go back." I don't think she ever found a job but she met my father and stayed and got married.

*Q: Well now, did you grow up in Floral Park?*

VAN HEUVEN: Through grade school and the very beginning of high school. Just as I was starting high school my parents bought a house up on the north shore in Nassau Community, in a community called Roslyn. So we moved there and I went to Roslyn High School.

*Q: What was Floral Park like, as a kid?*

VAN HEUVEN: Floral Park, actually Nassau County, during those years was changing enormously. It had been the truck gardens of New York City. You could still see the vestiges, when I was growing up on the north shore, of all of the millionaires who worked in New York City. In fact there was a Vanderbilt highway that they built for themselves. It was like a little toll road that my brother and I used to bike on. There were vestiges of it. You wouldn't recognize any of that today. It's all huge apartment houses and skyscrapers but back then it was all semi-agrarian. Floral Park got its name because of a gentleman named John Lewis Chiles who started a huge nursery. When he sold the nursery and it began to be developed, all the streets had names, like Tulip Avenue. Tulip Avenue happened to be a main thoroughfare. They all had names of flowers or plants.

My parents were the first people to move into their house in this little development that was on the absolute end of Floral Park. We had one of the longest walks to school, about a mile to our school, which was called, appropriately, John Lewis Chiles School. It was a small community with little shops and mainly commuters to New York City.

*Q: I take it as a kid biking was, you could go everywhere, nice and flat. In you family, how many children were there?*

VAN HEUVEN: I had one brother. I have one brother.

*Q: Older, younger?*

VAN HEUVEN: Younger, two years younger.

*Q: Family life at home, was this centered around, you sit around the table at dinnertime, that sort of thing, where you discussed the day's events or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. I was born in 1936. My first memories really are about when the Second World war started. You always listened to the news. I remember wondering out loud what will they ever talk about on the news when the war's over because that's all the news that there was, that I remember, anyway. So, yes, you'd listen to the news and then you'd have dinner and you'd talk about that or whatever else.

*Q: Your father being a businessman, where did he fall politically? Was he a Republican?*

VAN HEUVEN: He was a Republican.

*Q: I would imagine so. This was pretty much standard.*

VAN HEUVEN: And I never knew what my mother was. In other words, we didn't really talk that much about politics *per se*.

*Q: Were you much of a reader or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, I was a voracious reader.

*Q: You recall any of the early books you loved or liked?*

VAN HEUVEN: I used to go to library and just bring home books and read and read. A friend of my parents was the executive assistant to someone who ran the Junior Literary Guild for Doubleday. So I used to get four, five, six books from her every year as well. Then I had a godmother who always gave me the biographies of composers. I still have this collection of juvenile books that are essentially the history of practically every big composer. I remember one of the books from the Junior Literary Guild was on Eleanor Roosevelt and another one was on the UN, which was brand new of course at that time.

*Q: Wasn't actually in the neighborhood but it was in Flushing Meadows, not that far away.*

VAN HEUVEN: We lived on a street where two people worked for the telephone company. Apparently in the very early days of television there was some question about whether telephone and television would compete. As an experiment these two families had television sets when television was practically new. We were among the first people to see television in this period when they were trying to figure out if it worked. Back then from six to eight at night was all the television there was. There were maybe three programs. Then very rapidly it exploded. I remember watching the UN debates in those early years. It was very close to home. They did it live, the way you would only find it now on C-Span, and you followed every one of the Russian translations.

*Q: How was elementary school? What sort of things did you like and not like about school, subjects?*

VAN HEUVEN: I liked school a lot, and I was the valedictorian of my eighth grade graduating class. So school came easily and I enjoyed it and I had really good teachers. I never had a teacher that I didn't like.

*Q: I take it, in that era and all, that it was basically sort of not much of an ethnic mix, or not.*

VAN HEUVEN: We had a strong ethnic mix. We had, actually, not that many African Americans. I went to a high school where there were more African Americans. But lot of Italians, lot of whichever it is, first or second generation, kids whose parents did not speak good English. It was an ethnic community. I would say it was probably half and half, lower middle class and middle class community.

*Q: A lot of going to movies, is this the sort of thing one did?*

VAN HEUVEN: My parents were not were not much for entertainment. They didn't themselves get a television until after my brother and I were in college. But I remember going, even in grade school, on Saturday mornings to the movies. Not often but once in a while. I guess, to go back on the grade school thing, I was saying I had these really wonderful teachers. We had a school newspaper and we went to the annual convention of school newspapers at Columbia University. It was a big deal. We had a seventh grade teacher. That was the year that we basically did current history. She took us to a session at the UN, for instance, and she was very good and inspiring. I think about it now, this is more an American history sort of thing, where did those fabulous teachers go? My personal theory is that they disappeared with women's lib. Those really highly educated women who had nowhere else to go unless it was possibly into nursing. They were fabulous teachers and now people of that intellect, women, have many, many other places to go where they earn a great deal more money.

*Q: And probably have less influence. I can't think of, in many ways, a more influential position than being a teacher.*

VAN HEUVEN: But you have to be very idealistic because the other problem is that back then women were willing to accept a great deal less pay. That's the way the world was. But our tax structures never changed. So teachers still are not well paid and therefore as a profession it simply isn't competitive with a lot of other things that bright go-getters would like to do.

*Q: And it's sad because something unfortunately has basically been lost. The two sides, history and English compared to math and science. Did either of those, did you find yourself more in one than the other?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, I was a big American history buff. I loved reading books about American history, even back in grade school. I was always more inclined towards the letters than towards math and science. Math and science were not a problem. They just didn't turn me on. Certainly in all my testing, you know all those preferential testing things you do, would you rather fix an ironing board or read a book? No question.

*Q: On religion, was your family very religious and where did they fall in the religious spectrum?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, the Swiss Protestant Church, there's really only one and if you're anything else it's called a sect. It's also state subsidized, as in Germany. It is very spare, like Lutheran, like early Lutheran. My father, having grown up the son of a minister, was out-churched by the time he came to the United States, and he only came to church on Easter and Christmas and that was it. My mother was a regular church-goer. She grew up that way and came to the United States and looking for a church that was also spare, not with a lot of ritual and incense. She ended up in Floral Park. I'm really not sure exactly how, whether she knew some people from that church originally, because we were already going there when I was really little, at a Universalist church, which is like the Unitarians. She was always happy in that church and was an active member. She was an avid gardener. She always kept her own gardens and the vegetable gardens that we had during the war, victory gardens they were called, and the gardens at the church building.

*Q: In your neighborhood, were churches important? Catholics, Jews, was there much of a mix there?*

VAN HEUVEN: Our next door neighbors were Catholics. When the little girl in that family who was my age had her first communion I desperately wanted to be Catholic. We had Jewish kids in our classes as well. Not many; must have been mostly, I would guess, Protestant and Catholic.

*Q: Well then, when you moved to Roslyn on the north shore, what was Roslyn like as a community?*

VAN HEUVEN: Roslyn was a community in transition. You're talking about ethnic balance. It was really interesting because when I was a freshman some of those huge north shore estates I was talking about were just being sold. A Vanderbilt estate, there were about three that were then developed during those ensuing three or four years. Some of those new communities, I don't know if the laws had just changed or if society had just changed sufficiently to make this suddenly possible, but these new communities that were developed out of those estates, some of them were virtually exclusively Jewish and it was all Jewish people moving out of the city into what was early suburbs, for the first time. I think there had been prejudice before where people wouldn't sell to them. In fact, I remember my father telling a story. His last name was Held and his first name was Max. I remember him telling a story that back when my parents bought their house in Floral Park, when they went in to get the mortgage there was a group of the bankers that they were talking to who excused themselves and went in the back room. They whispered for a while and came back and said, "Well, we had thought that perhaps you were Jewish but you're not. So it's okay." It was a very different world back then. By the time I was a senior in high school we had a black community in Roslyn, such as did not exist in Floral Park. And we had a big Polish community. I remember my drivers ed instructor was Polish and we were always telling Polish jokes. By the time I was a senior in high school, on Jewish holy days the school would be empty. That's an exaggeration but the mix of the community changed hugely in that period. Of the school, I should say. The little community I lived in, the mix of the community didn't change that much.

*Q: Did you find, I was born in 1928, so I've got a little time on you but I remember as a kid, our family was pretty liberal but there was sort of a feeling, probably not a good idea to date a Jewish girl, not a Jewish girl, that wasn't even a factor but to date a Catholic girl, because if you married her you'd have to raise your children as Catholic and this was and the Catholics felt kind of the same. Did you feel that sort of thing going on?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, absolutely. I wouldn't say so much that I ever heard that from my parents but it was just out there in society. It was something that, just like with women's lib, we all accepted that women took less pay and didn't generally work after they married and so on and so forth. Everybody kind of accepted that there was going to be parental pressure not to marry outside of your faith or your race. That was very strong, really.

*Q: In high school, how did you find high school?*

VAN HEUVEN: I liked it. I had good friends. It was a very different time, I think we had a much easier time in high school than kids do now. We had a lot less temptations.

*Q: No drugs or that sort of thing.*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly. We lived in those very conventional times. Sure, you had the kids who got in trouble, but it was the sort of thing you whispered about. There were these clear boundaries that everybody understood, unless you were really a rebel. You didn't have that many choices. You didn't have that many things to

*Q: Well did kids, boys and girls, go steady then?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, it was called getting pinned.

*Q: My group, we didn't go steady but it was just beginning to creep in. You went out with the gang, which I think has kind of returned more now.*

VAN HEUVEN: Absolutely and that's very healthy.

*Q: My grandkids sort of go out with the guys and girls. There isn't this pairing off. Did you get involved in extracurricular activities in high school?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, a lot. Again, I was on the newspaper and the yearbook and French Club and various after school sports.

*Q: What sort of sports?*

VAN HEUVEN: Field hockey, soccer, basketball, track.

*Q: Sounds like this predates the great emphasis on women's sports, which now are so popular.*

VAN HEUVEN: We had a good sports program.

*Q: Did the outside world intrude much in high school? I'm talking about the Cold War, the threat to Israel, things of that nature.*

VAN HEUVEN: We were still pretty close to New York City and I remember, twice, television crews coming in and interviewing a class in our school on a public events issue. Again, we had very good social studies teachers who were plugged in somehow.

*Q: Speaking of New York City, was this a place you'd go to and see shows, that sort of thing?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. Not very often. We went occasionally with our parents. They were opera lovers who went to the opera once in a while and to dinner in New York. Because my father represented a Swiss company he would sometimes have Swiss visitors and sometimes we would go along to a dinner especially as we got somewhat older. But actually I was fairly young. It started already when we were still in Floral Park, so let's say I was seventh, eighth grade, I used to go into New York by myself to a folk dancing class. My parents really kept up their Swiss connection. In fact, my brother and I both went in the summer one year to a Swiss camp, for Swiss children, where we learned how to sing songs in the various Swiss languages. And I went for two years into New York on Saturdays for a Swiss folk dancing class. My brother and I ended up appearing on the *Howdy Doody Show*? Their show was on at six and they were looking for a country



where it was midnight when it was six in the United States to celebrate New Years. They picked Switzerland and I guess they must have gone to the Swiss consulate and the Swiss consulate suggested our family. So my brother and I were in Swiss costumes on the *Howdy Doody Show*, celebrating New Years.

Your original question was about going into New York. I think it wasn't really until my senior year in high school that once in a while I went into New York with friends, to lunch and a matinee, to Greenwich Village for jazz. But it wasn't 'til I was a senior.

*Q: In high school did sort of the Cold War intrude? Things are going on there.*

VAN HEUVEN: I graduated in '54. The Korean War started in 1950 and one or two boys in the class ahead of ours went off to the Korean War. I was talking about early television and I think the debates that I was watching were really more in high school, in the UN.

*Q: Over whether the UN went in there or not. Did you find yourself, from the Swiss side of things, did that attract you to Swiss history or European history or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: I guess I was probably like most children with parents who still had strong ties and family abroad. We actually had a home leave in reverse where my father's company paid for a trip back to Switzerland every third year. So summer of '46, summer of '49, summer of '52 I went with my family for the whole summer to Switzerland. So we certainly always had a close connection. I would say that it enriched my whole cultural background and my awareness of diversity and different ways of looking at the same issues. But it did not make me particularly interested in Swiss history or Swiss politics.

*Q: To be frank, of all the countries Switzerland, particularly in the early postwar years, was not exactly at the top of anybody's list of interest.*

VAN HEUVEN: When I came into the Foreign Service there was a gal who was the Swiss desk officer. She once went to look up when the last NIE had been done on Switzerland, National Intelligence Estimate, and I think there had never been one done and there probably hasn't to this day. Switzerland was a place that we didn't have to worry about, therefore. Many years later I ended up being the office director for Austria, Germany and Switzerland and we had a huge burning policy issue with 'em at that point which we'll get to later but other than that there was nothing.

*Q: I've done a great many interviews and outside of the Jewish money issue*

VAN HEUVEN: That's when I was in that job, yeah.

*Q: Other than that the real problem has been trying to keep some of our political ambassadors there from ...*

VAN HEUVEN: Straying off the reservation, right.

*Q: Well, did you on your trips back, though, note how Switzerland, was there any feeling about the, if you went back in the Forties, late Forties, we're talking about a devastated Europe but Switzerland wasn't. You get any feel for that?*

VAN HEUVEN: We went over in '46 on the *Ile de France*, a French liner which had been converted to a troop carrier during the war and had not yet been converted back. We were supposed to be on its second voyage when it actually took civilians but it limped into port in Boston and needed extensive repairs. We ended up that they telescoped the first and the second set and we all went. There was plenty of room because it was still fitted out as a troop carrier so that smooshed arrangements that they probably thought we would have on a passenger carrier. We were lucky because we had officers quarters. And officers quarters meant that we were in what probably would have been a stateroom for maybe two, three. Twenty four people in bunks up and down, with just enough room in between the bunks to kind of get in and out. No, it must have been, it was 23, probably because there was one single bunk at the end of the aisle so that if you were in one of the last four sets of bunks you had to climb over that person's bed to get into your bed. And then you shared a largish bathroom with four saltwater showers, four sinks, four toilets with another cabin of 23 on the other side, women and children. So my brother was in with us. I was ten, he was eight. And you ate in these very long tables with kind of sawhorse seats so when somebody sat down everybody bounced up and down the row.

*Q: It must have been a hell of a lot of fun, wasn't it?*

VAN HEUSEN: For my brother it was fabulous. Up on the top deck there were rafts. They had like a stack of maybe 12 of these rafts that were essentially like a big rectangular pontoon with webbing in the middle and he used to climb in and out of those and have the best old time and he would get filthy. And I remember once coming around a corner with my mother and she took one look at him and she said, "Quick, let's go the other way!" Didn't want to admit that was her son. Anyway, on this troopship we pulled into Cherbourg harbor and it was devastated. There were still the hulks of all the boats that had been sunk in the harbor.

*Q: The Germans, just about two years before or three years before, had destroyed everything in the harbor to keep it from being used by the allies.*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly. And the town was nonexistent. The boat couldn't come in, the docks were ruined. You had to get off on a tender. When you got in, the railroad station, which pulled up to the docks, had been totally bombed. So you had to actually walk through those ruins out onto the open tracks to get into the train. And my poor mother, my father flew over later, he could only come for a month and we were going for the whole summer. My mother had these huge suitcases because she was going for the whole summer and she was bringing things to her family, who were still in very meager circumstances. And there were no porters, so she was really lugging. And we got on that train and rode through all of Normandy. The devastation, I just can't even describe it

adequately. The worst, worse than Cherbourg, was Caen, which was essentially leveled to the ground. There were a few walls sticking up here and there, half of a church.

*Q: A huge battle was there, right after D-Day*

VAN HEUVEN: This was 1946 and there was not much evidence of rebuilding by June of 1946. And it was a rainy, gray day. People were living basically in the cellars with plastic sheets to protect them, that was all they had. The next day we took a train from Paris. It's very hard to describe. You were talking about Europe being in ruins and it was. Paris had been spared as a city but it was very gray and grim and, again, all of the things that my parents had been used to in international travel, the infrastructure simply wasn't there. It was hard to tell whether there was going to be a train or no train. And my mother just said, "Okay, we're going to go to the train station and we're going to hang out. We're going to get on a train when we can get on a train." But first of all she still had to negotiate these huge suitcases. We had to get from the hotel to the Metro. There were no cabs. Then on the Metro to the railroad station, the *Gare de l'Est*, I think. And my mother just found a man on the subway who was kind of lounging around and said, "Could you help me?" And he was delighted to help her and she gave him some cigarettes. The currency was cigarettes or stockings. These were the things that people cared about. And he was very kind and he got us all the way in and he waited 'til she found out where the train was going to be and got her to the right *quai*. We sat around for while a while and we got on this train. If you think of taking a train from Paris today to Switzerland, you get on one of these fabulous things and whoops in three or four hours you're there. We were on that train for probably 12, 13, 14 hours and it went all night and it kept stopping. We'd be someplace for hours in the dark and then we'd pick up again for a little while and then it would stop again and who knows why. This is a very long story for saying what was it like to get to Switzerland.

*Q: I think it's a good picture of that era, that time, that particular year.*

VAN HEUVEN: When we got to the Swiss border, literally, like in a bad movie, the sun came out. And all of a sudden we went from black and white to Technicolor and this gray, grim France, we got to the border, there are flowers in the window boxes. The sun is out, everything was orderly and neat and there was no rubble. So your first impression was this is an oasis of peace and prosperity. What you got to see, the prosperity was not there but by comparison it was, to what people in France were going through at the time. We stayed with my mother's brother in Zurich for most of the time. They had food rationing. It was quite stringent still. You had coupons for bread, meat was a rarity. They lived on a farm. They had eggs and they could slaughter a pig from time to time but even milk was rationed in Switzerland. Shoes were very hard to come by. It was a very Spartan, frugal existence that people were still living in 1946, even though Switzerland was far better off than most of Europe.

*Q: How did you find you find your cousins and all?*

VAN HEUVEN: We first had the language problem. Apparently when I was a baby my parents had spoken Swiss-German to me but the war broke out and on the street people would shout “Nazi!” at them because they thought they were talking German. And so my parents stopped, from one day to the next. And by the time I got to kindergarten I was speaking only English and my brother had never had a background of really hearing much or speaking it at all. But by the end of that first summer in 1946, in fact, I remember, my mother did something that in retrospect was really very big of her on that interminable train. No, I guess before, we must have been in Paris already because she picked a train that went to Bern. She asked us where we wanted to go first, whether to my father’s family or to her family and we picked my father’s family because we still had grandparents and we thought we wanted to see them before they died. You can imagine she hadn’t seen her family all that time, but we went to Bern first. We arrived off of that train from hell. My uncle, who was a dentist, had his practice right in the middle of Bern. There’s a clock tower, very famous clock tower that’s on all those postcards, and his office was just opposite that clock tower. He was in a walk-up building, no elevators back them. We climbed up the two, three flights to his apartment and his office were on that same floor. I remember my aunt opening the door and going “blah blah blah blah blah blah blah” and I didn’t understand a word, not a word. So that was the way it was for us in the beginning of that summer. By the end of the summer we really understood what people were saying and we found little Swiss friends in the neighborhood and could speak, not perfect but decent dialect.

*Q: Well then, you did one in '49, too?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, we went back in '49 so I would have been 13.

*Q: How did that go?*

VAN HEUVEN: Fine. We spoke the language, made a huge difference. I don’t remember anything particularly specific about that summer.

*Q: Well then, let’s go back to high school. When you were going to high school, what were you pointed towards? Was there any thought of what you were going to do?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, by then I had another language under my belt and I found that languages came very easily.

*Q: Which languages did you have?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well I had the Swiss-German dialect and from freshman year on I took French and junior and senior years I took Spanish as well. I think once your mind gets used to attaching different labels to things you look at and to coming up with different constructs for it, each language seems to get easier. I must have had a decent ear ‘cause I tended to have a good accent. So I think in retrospect by the time I got to college I would have been better off had I majored in history, or I would have been more interested in

history, but sometimes you get swayed by what you're really good at. So in college I ended up majoring in French.

*Q: Where were you pointed towards? Any particular college?*

VAN HEUVEN: One of the things that I did in high school, or I should say that I was selected for, is our assistant principal used to take a few students and have them work with him. It was almost a little bit like a proctor situation in a private school. I worked for our assistant principal my junior and senior year and we had a guidance counselor who took you in, back then, now they do it in your junior year. Back then in your senior year they got around to it in the fall, and I think he gave every kid in the class who was thinking of going to college the same list of twenty schools. So the assistant principal said to me one day, "Okay, what's on your list?" And he was my guide. Neither of my parents had gone to college. They were new in the United States, relatively new and clueless, as my daughters would say. And he said, "Okay, you're going to apply here, you're going to apply there. And you should apply to a college in New York State, because you're sure to get a Regents Scholarship." In New York State everybody took an exam and if you got a certain score you tended to get a Regents Scholarship which would give you a big tuition boost in a New York State college. And I ended up applying to Wellesley and Stanford and Skidmore and Middlebury. Middlebury was languages.

*Q: Middlebury of course is a big language school. Bread loaf or something.*

VAN HEUVEL: Yes. Stanford because I thought, "Well, I know something of Europe. I know something of the East Coast. I know nothing about the West Coast." So that was more of geographical curiosity. Skidmore because it was in New York State. And Wellesley because my assistant principal said apply there. And in the end I was accepted at all of them. I don't know why I chose Wellesley except that I think I was given to understand it was the most prestigious. I don't know that Stanford would not have been equally prestigious. And my father, bless his heart, said forget the Regents Scholarship, which I did get and he paid what today is a derisory amount of money but back then was a lot of money for me to go there.

*Q: So you went to Wellesley from '54 to '58, was it?*

VAN HEUVEL: Yes.

*Q: What was Wellesley like at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: I don't suppose you saw the awful movie

*Q: The Mona Lisa Smile?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. It was actually a class, maybe about three classes ahead of me, that it was supposed to be about. There was a huge buzz among my classmates after that movie came out, mainly of shock and disgust and outrage. There were some caricatures

that were really totally off. On the other hand, there was a lot in it that was true. That's what the times were like. We were very conventional. We were before all of the social revolutions of the Sixties. Fifty percent of my class was married within a year of graduation. There was a huge pressure to, there was certainly no stigma to getting a good education and then going off and imparting it to your children and having that be your only gift to society. My French advisor, my major advisor, kept talking to me about going into academia because it was one of the few places where women could. First of all she thought I had an academic bent and secondly it was one of the few places for advancement for women back then. And women who graduated in my class who didn't get married immediately often became secretaries. We had a lot of fun. It was academically extremely stimulating. There was a group of really interested, committed women. One of the things that strikes me today, I haven't made it to many reunions, because I was often abroad at the time of the reunion, but I find that women I did not know well who were in my class are just as interesting as my friends. You strike up conversations with what would normally be a stranger and yet you find you have enormous things in common, particularly intellectual interests. It was a good group and the motto was *Non Ministrari sed Ministrare*, "not to be ministered unto but to serve" and that was certainly true. I think there was a big public spirit or sense of service.

*Q: I can relate to it somewhat because I was the class of '50 at Williams. Was it sort of the house dorms, were there houses?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, there were dorms, they were called.

*Q: Did you have house mothers?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, absolutely.

*Q: You learn gracious living?*

VAN HEUVEN: 'Bout the only one I remember and that was one of the things they really exaggerated in the movie. In freshman year, besides having to go up to the balcony of the gym and climb down on a rope, we had to go out over the edge of the balcony and climb down on a rope because many of us would at some time in our careers live in a tower apartment where the fire escape didn't get to so you had to be able to lower yourself on a rope. So everybody had to do that freshman year. If you didn't know how to swim you had to learn to swim. There was an exam, an oral exam, where they decided whether you needed diction classes. There was a posture class; everybody had to have a posture photograph.

*Q: Was this part of, were you involved in that posture project where they took nude pictures of*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, absolutely. Supposedly the boys from this or that college were going to come and raid the posture pictures. That went on for years and we had our pictures taken

*Q: May I recommend because, go on the internet and check this out but apparently this whole thing originated from a professor who was really pushing, he was kind of like the Nazi, pushing the Aryan business and all that. I'm not kidding. It's a very interesting thing. I found it on, look for college nude photographs or something. Play with the internet because you can*

VAN HEUVEN: Because it wasn't only Wellesley.

*Q: It was done at Smith. My wife did it, she went to Smith. It was done at male schools too. At Williams we didn't have that. Look under college urban legends. I've read this, it's a fascinating thing.*

VAN HEUVEN: Anyway, first of all you had that picture. Then if you had serious posture problems they would work with you separately. Otherwise you had, I don't remember if they were really called posture classes, but there were things that you did do in almost like a gym class where you learned how to do stretching exercises and learned how to relax and that still stands me in good stead to this day. Some of the things I learned, when you're in a really stressful situation, how to, I almost said detox. I have a friend who went to Wellesley. She graduated five years after me so we were not there at the same time. She says we had classes where we learned how to get in and out of a car gracefully and how to sit in a chair and fold your legs. I just don't remember that. That doesn't mean it didn't happen.

*Q: Did you wear gloves and hats?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, yes, but that was the era. When I came into the Foreign Service we wore hats and gloves, too.

*Q: And looking back on it, quite frankly, stating my prejudice, I don't think that sort of era, there's been a more attractive sort of dress style for women that's come along since then. It was a very sort of sensible thing but it was very attractive but I guess I state my age and prejudice, looking at things at that time.*

*Well now, what about courses? Did you find that, how about the outside world? Did it intrude? Were you looking at international developments and that sort of thing?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, one of my outside interests at Wellesley, I joined a club that was interested in political affairs, both domestically and in terms of foreign policy. I took political science and history courses. In retrospect that's really where my interests lay. But I think another reason, besides starting right out by taking French since I'd been taking it all along, for deciding to major in French was that I wanted to do junior year abroad. Now I think you can do a junior year abroad out of any major but back then it had to be related and it tended, at Wellesley at least, to be virtually only if you were a language major. So I did major in French.

*Q: Where'd you take your junior year abroad?*

VAN HEUVEN: In Paris.

*Q: How'd you find it?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was a wonderful year in terms of life experience and again broadening my focus on the world and my cultural understanding. It was not a great year academically. I took courses at the *Institute des Sciences Politiques*. That was my cultural year so I took history of art, I took history of music. I took a couple of lit courses at the regular university. Those were all sort of easy because, lit courses, you just buy the books. At the *Institute des Sciences Politiques* I could get access to the library twice a week for two hours. And during those two hours if I were lucky enough to find a seat, I think I did that once or twice. Most of the time I sat on the floor. And then I was extremely lucky if I found one of the books that I felt that I needed for the course that I was taking. The major library at the *Institute des Sciences Politiques* was not really catalogued. In fact, the major Paris library at that point, we're talking '56, '57, had only been catalogued through the letter C. So it wasn't a serious year academically but it was a great year in terms of life and how it pointed me in the directions I went in afterwards.

*Q: You have any exposure to the embassy, Foreign Service or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. One of the people in my class who actually also joined the Foreign Service later was, I think, the son of a Foreign Service Officer. So I knew about the Foreign Service. But I also, this is a personal theory, if I look at the people who have joined the Foreign Service I'm always amazed at how many of them have had some other foreign experience before they joined that made them think either this is interesting work or this is something I can do. I can live in this different atmosphere. Many, many, many Foreign Service Officers had a junior year abroad. Many, many were in the Peace Corps or had some other overseas experience.

*Q: In my sort of cohort and all, all of us practically had served overseas in the military.*

VAN HEUVEN: In the military, exactly. That's another.

*Q: Gee whiz, this is what I want to do, get out of uniform but do something useful where they pay you to do it.*

*By the time you graduated in 1958, what were you looking to do?*

VAN HEUVEN: I didn't really know. I knew that I did not want to teach. I guess the short version would be to say I decided to ski bum for starters. It was the summer of the World's Fair in Brussels. The father of a friend of my brother's was the president of the Brass Rail, which was a restaurant in New York City. The Brass Rail had the concession for the restaurant in the American pavilion at the Worlds Fair in Brussels. My brother and I got summer jobs at the Brass Rail. He bused and I worked in the personnel department.



I did the payrolls. I may have done other things as well but that's the part I particularly remember. It was not my favorite job that I've ever had, but it got me to Belgium and I got to see another country and got to see a lot of the World's Fair. It was a very interesting summer and then there I was in Europe. I went to Switzerland and decided that I would find a job to make it possible for me to spend the winter skiing after which I was going to go back to the States and look for a real job. I actually had stayed with a cousin for two weeks at the end of my junior year. She was having a baby and she said, "Could you come and stay and kind of baby-sit" I was like a minor *au pair* "until I get back on my feet?" And she said, "If you ever want to come back and stay you're welcome." So I went and stayed with them and I looked around Zurich for a job. And I guess the first thing was I went in and I applied at the American consulate because I thought, "Well, this is a no-brainer. I'm American and I speak Swiss. What more could they want?" Then of course I learned that I couldn't be hired as an American to work at the American consulate in Switzerland unless I wanted to take the exam, join, be world wide available, etc. That's really the first time that it maybe even occurred to me that that might be something I might want to do in the future. And they helped me out by telling me about a few people who had gotten in touch with them because they were looking for someone. I went and had some interviews here and there. I ended up going to work for Swissair, which was largely through family contacts. My parents knew people who worked for Swissair and actually the head of my father's company was the chairman of the board, although I didn't go through him. That worked out well because I had English and I could speak the *schwyzedütsch*. I got a job with them. They called it being a ground hostess. What you really did was you helped passengers after they got off the plane, if it was a diverted plane or a delayed plane or you helped them make onward arrangements, trains, etc or arriving tourists you helped them find a hotel, etc. And that made it possible for me to stay. I lived with my cousins and I spent my meager salary on going skiing during the winter and actually then was having such a good time. After you're there for four months you get a certain amount of free flights. So I stayed on and took some of these free flights and got to see a lot of places that I never would have gotten to otherwise. Went with some Swissair friends to Cairo and to Istanbul and got some of the adventure out of my life. And I ended up staying a year and a half and went back the following summer. I had a summer in Brussels and a summer in Switzerland.

The beginning of the following summer I went back, went up to Wellesley and looked for a job in the Boston area through the placement office. I found a job with the overseas chemical division of W.R. Grace, did a lot of translating for them, worked again in the personnel office and applied to join the Foreign Service. I came back probably in '60. I applied probably in '60 and I came in in '62. First you had to take the written test and then you have to wait for an oral exam and so on and so forth.

*Q: What about the election of 1960? Did that engage you and your compatriots at all?*

VAN HEUVEN: The voting age was still 21, so it was my first presidential election to vote in. I had just moved to Boston and was rooming with three other women in a nice apartment in downtown Boston. And I arrived the first day and knew none of them. They were friends of friends of mine, so it was making the acquaintance of people who needed

a fourth roommate and I needed a place. And I think on the door they had a big poster that said, “Don’t be a jackass. Vote Goldwater.” And I thought, “Uh, oh, I’m not going to be in the best of political surroundings” or in the most sympathetic of political surroundings. But we all got along very well. One of them was very much for getting out the vote. I remember feeling what a lot of young people didn’t necessarily feel, but I think that was one of those elections where you felt you really had to go out and vote.

*Q: It was Nixon, rather than Goldwater. It might have been an old sticker but the '60 election was Nixon versus Kennedy.*

VAN HEUVEN: The era is right and the poster is right. They could have had a poster from an earlier period, right.

*Q: 'Cause Goldwater was versus Johnson.*

VAN HEUVEN: You’re absolutely right but this was the Kennedy election.

*Q: Anyway, we’re moving in the time you came in the Foreign Service. When you took the oral exam, do you recall any of the questioning or any of the questions or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. When I learned that I had passed the written I talked to about the only person I knew who was in the Foreign Service to ask how to prepare for the orals which back then were just that. It wasn’t the process of today, the multipart. It was just three people asking you questions for however long they decided to take at it. Basically, the person said, “Well, they’re going to ask you whatever they decide to ask you and there’s no way you can know it all and the most important thing is not to guess or pretend to know things you don’t know. Really stick to what you know and in terms of preparing, just be up on current events.” So one of my roommates worked for something very similar to the World Affairs Council, a foundation in Boston. And they had a very good library and I got a year’s worth of the *New York Times Week in Review* and just went through those and that was my preparation for taking the orals. And sure enough one of the three people was a Southeast Asian expert and he asked me about West Irian. I wasn’t sure where West Irian was and so I said so. And then I said, “I didn’t know where West Irian was but I would guess that this is the sort of thing that might be at issue” and he seemed to be pleased with that as an answer. One of the people was probably an admin officer and asked me a lot of hypothetical questions about what you would do if you were the admin officer. And I remember he was very unhappy with one of my answers which had to be with being somewhere where there were a lot of secretaries who had no public transportation and how were they going to get to work and how was I going to solve that problem. And I said, “Well, maybe we could get them all bicycles.” He didn’t think that was a solution and I’m sure what he was looking for was carpool or a van or something of that sort. Those are the two things that come to mind.

*Q: Did you feel, sometimes it wasn’t stated but did you feel that they were looking you over and saying, “Aha! Will she stick in the Foreign Service?” Because in those days if a*

*woman Foreign Service Officer married, even to another Foreign Service Officer, they had to resign.*

VAN HEUVEN: It's not my memory that I came across it in the oral process. I remember shortly after I joined the Foreign Service that we had a career counselor. We were all junior officers and we had a special person who was assigned to us in the beginning process, we were still in A-100. And I sat down and had a meeting with him and he said exactly that, as well. "How long are you going to stay? Are you going to have a viable career?" This was a side comment fairly often. And my answer always was, "Look, you're trying to get the best and the brightest and you have a pyramid problem, an inverted pyramid and you should be glad if you get some women who come in at the bottom and don't stay and then there's more room for advancement for those who do want to stay. You're getting a better selected base." But those people who had that mindset, nothing was going to convince them.

*Q: Were you aware, though, of this before you came into the Foreign Service? Was anybody saying, "Well yes, but as a woman you're up against this."*

VAN HEUVEN: It was a very different world. When I came out of college the opportunities for women with a college degree tended to be either in academia or government. The federal government at that point was really the one place where there actually were already laws or regulations in place that said at least that it was an equal opportunity workplace. In fact, as you say, there was a lot of prejudicial baggage there that took many years to overcome but I certainly felt that my opportunities for a career in the federal government were a great deal better than they were in the private workplace. I think that was demonstrated. I think that even today there's a certain amount of latent prejudice but it's vastly, vastly different than what it was and I think I certainly got a better shake than I would have in the private sector.

*Q: You came into the Foreign Service, your A-100 or basic officer course was in 1962. What was the composition of the group?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, there were four women out of a class of 44 if I remember right and of the four, in fact, at least two had left to be married within two or three years. Well, three, at least three. I don't know what happened to the fourth, because I was one of them.

*Q: How'd you find the A-100 course?*

VAN HEUVEN: I hesitate to use the word fun, but it really was. We had a good group. We got along well and out of a process that at times boggled the mind I think we enjoyed it eventually, or made it enjoyable. I remember one thing which is probably typical of most people when they enter the work force was that one of our very first lectures was with somebody who was telling us about the retirement process and pensions. You just thought, "What do I care about this? This is so far off that this is of very little interest" particularly since he wasn't the most dynamic speaker.

*Q: Well, when you came in did you have any feel, what you wanted to do and where you wanted to go?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. I was ready to try new and different things and have new and different experiences and go anywhere. When it got to the process where you put down your preferences, I did tend to go for the places where I knew I had strengths. French speaking posts or even German speaking posts, if I remember correctly. But no, we arrived as a class in 1962. It was in February and FSI was still in Arlington Towers. We were in a high rise and we had the ground floor and the basement in that high rise. You walked in and there was this huge map which now is in the State Department in that ground floor museum type area. You could push a button and the lights would go on where all the embassies were and all the consulates were and all the missions were. And we all stood there in front of the map and looked at Africa. The following year was the year of independence throughout Africa and we were already in the process of establishing consulates in colonies in anticipation of turning them into embassies when independence happened and we all knew we were going to Africa, to all these new posts. We were just concentrating on looking at that and in fact at the end of the process there's this *eminence grise* that comes over from Personnel. What is it, an eight week course, I think or it was and the seventh week the person comes over from Personnel and reads out, in front of the whole class, where you're going on your first assignment. And most of our class did go to Africa and I ended up going to Rome. When they got to my name and they said, "Rome" there was this loud hiss that went up in the class. Yet in the end, I think it was also kind of the beginning of the R&R program. Almost half of my class came to visit me on R&R. But the reason that actually someone gave me afterwards, they said, "I know it wasn't on your list" but I had had one year of Italian in college and they had over complement positions at the embassy in Rome. It meant they wouldn't have to teach me Italian. So it saved the Department money to send me there and it certainly was a wonderful assignment.

*Q: So you were in Rome from I guess the summer of '62 until when?*

VAN HEUVEN: That was still when we used to have travel freezes. We finished, I guess we started on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, so about mid- to end of March we were finished with A-100 and then we had to take the consular course. So I still had months to go before the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, which was the beginning of the new fiscal year back then, before I could go to Rome on this assignment because of the travel freeze. So I worked in the Department for about two, two and a half months in a new division in Public Affairs. This was the beginning of that process of getting returning or visiting diplomats to do public speaking, to get the American public more familiar with the Foreign Service and the work of the Department of State. And right around the 1<sup>st</sup> of July I got on a boat and went off to Rome.

*Q: By the way, do you recall the consular training? How did you find the consular course?*

VAN HEUVEN: Ohh, so dry, so awful. It was all the FAMs.

*Q: Foreign Affairs Manuals.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right and these huge books that one took home and kind of went through at night and then came back the next day and the instructor was uninspiring I guess is the best way to put it.

*Q: Later they turned this into*

VAN HEUVEN: This wonderful ConGen Rosslyn.

*Q: Now you were in Rome from what?*

VAN HEUVEN: '62 to the spring of '64. I got there on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July and I left a little short of the two year mark. And the reason I left a little short was that, again, brand new system, Department of State, where they computerized everyone's language skills. I had only been in Rome a year when the DCM called me in one day. And Rome is a big enough embassy that that was sort of an awesome event and the DCM was a very awe-inspiring gentleman named Outerbridge Horsey IV. He said that there was a call from the Department to transfer me after I'd been in Rome I think even less, maybe nine months, something like that, I'd been there nine months, transfer to me to Laos. And the reason was that I had tested 4+, 4+ in French. There was a new ambassador going to Laos who spoke no French. His predecessor had been fluent in French and the new ambassador was going to take someone with him whose name was Françoise. She was a factotum in Southeast Asia because of the fact that she was bilingual and was going to go everywhere with the ambassador and translate for him and had done the same in Saigon, I think, before, and was going to move to Laos with Ambassador Unger. And she suddenly decided to get married and resigned and so overnight they needed somebody to fulfill the same function. And I said to the DCM, "Well, I just signed a lease on an apartment. I just got here. I would really like to finish out my Central Complement experience. I'd be happy to go to Laos later but it would be a source of great regret if I had to." And he got back in touch with the Department and said no, Rome would not release me, which was from my perspective very kind of him at the time. Well, wheels turned and Françoise in fact delayed her marriage, stayed on, took care of, went everywhere with I think it was Leonard Unger who was the ambassador in Laos. Then, about a year later, she said, "Okay, now I'm going" and the computer went back to work and my name spit out again. So in March of '64 the second cable came and said that they wanted to transfer me. And so I said, "Well, I got almost my two years and now I'll go." I actually was really looking forward to it because there were a number of people at the embassy in Rome who had served in Laos and told me a lot about it and I was it ready to go. So that's an aside on the whole Rome experience.

*Q: Now we'll go back to Rome. What was the situation, I realize you were at the bottom of the feeding chain but the situation in Italy at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: Let me start a little bit differently, if I may and get to the situation. Italy ended up being the bookends of my career. My very first assignment was in Rome. My very last assignment was in Milan. And the change over that '62 to '01, over that forty-year period, could not be more dramatic. When I arrived in Italy it was a very poor, very fractured country of emigration. The waiting list for an immigrant visa to the United States was 14 years long. America was the land of dreams for Italians and particularly in Rome because historically emigration from Italy to America came from the south. Rome's kind of the beginning of the south. And from the north they all went to South America. People lived very frugally. Think of all the early cinema from Italy in the Sixties. That's really what it was like. And yet in those two years that I was in Rome things began to change dramatically.

The first effects of having joined the Common Market I think were what you really saw, increasing prosperity. Not prosperity by today's means whatsoever but a huge difference in 1962 and 1964. People who had motorcycles, Lambrettas, traded up to Fiat 500s. And people who had Fiat 500s traded up to Fiat 1100s. All of a sudden the streets schmucked up. When I first arrived it was easy to get to the embassy. When I left the traffic was incredibly bad and they hadn't worked out how to arrange it yet. People bought their first refrigerators, modern appliances, and it began to change their whole work style. Women still bought one dress per season, one outfit and they wore it all the time and it was classy; but this idea that we had in the United States that you change what you wore every day didn't exist. When I left Milan many years later some women were changing what they wore three times a day.

And all the stories that people told really still went back to the immediate postwar period. There was still, from Rome south certainly, thievery was still a huge issue, because people were really poor. And I remember, I actually had a Fiat 600 with a convertible top, canvas top. When I arrived, within a week the canvas top had been slashed, the first time. And the big issue then, I had left something in the car, which of course I immediately learned never to do again. But the big issue that you had to worry about was that Fiats only had something like forty keys. So thieves would take your car, drive it away somewhere and strip it. So you might get the chassis back but no tires, no nothing. So I got, under everyone's advice, very quickly something called an *antifurta*, which was a steering wheel lock with a very fancy three-part key. We also had a very fancy three-part key for our apartment, which is what everyone had to make it very difficult to break in. And left it empty and never locked it because there was nothing to steal, you couldn't drive it away. You didn't have to keep paying for a new canvas top. But the feeling of the tremendous devastation of the postwar period was still very much there when I got there and it was waning by the time I left.

*Q: What was the embassy like? Who was the ambassador and how did you find yourself sort of at the bottom of this big thing?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was on Central Complement. So that meant that I, in the old system, as you know, I was to do six months in each of the major disciplines within the Foreign Service and my first two assignments were in the economic section and in the consular

section. I never made it to the admin section because after that first year, for reasons we'll get to later, I ended up being transferred to the political section and I stayed in that job for the whole remainder of my time there, which was not quite a year. And I was sort of the second staff aide to the ambassador. My experience was different in that sense because I ended up having a close relationship with the ambassador and the DCM because of the job I was in. The ambassador was Fred Reinhardt, who was a wonderful, absolutely wonderful man. I think they ran a really good program. I never felt, as you described, the lowly person on the totem pole. I did have a tiny bit of association with the admin section because they needed someone to do the price survey, on the basis of which they decide what the cost of living allowance is, the cost of living survey may be what it's called. It was a wonderful experience because I ended up having to drive all over Rome to find out what the cost of oranges was in high priced, middle priced and low priced areas and what the cost of men's shirts were and so and so forth. I learned my way around Rome the first month I was there, I got lots of practice for my Italian and I got to know a lot of the FSNs really well. So it was a very positive experience.

When I got to the econ section, first of all the econ counselor invited me home for lunch. It was the beginning of the summer, his wife was home in the States, he just had me over for lunch one day. It was a big section and that was a very nice thing for him to do. And I remember it was funny because one of the things he says, "Well what's the gossip in Washington? What's going on? What are people saying?" And what did I know? I'd been in the Foreign Service for several months. And I said, "Well people are all saying that morale has never been lower." And he looked at me over his bifocals and he said, "My dear, morale in the Foreign Service has always never been lower."

*Q: It's true! The funny thing is, people don't leave the Foreign Service and basically enjoy the hell out of it but somehow they love to bitch. I think they bitch to newspaper people.*

VAN HEUVEN: And to each other. Have you ever taken Myers-Briggs?

*Q: Yeah. Myers-Briggs is a personality test.*

VAN HEUVEN: That was the management fad of the Nineties and it seems as if most of the management training course I took, well late Eighties and Nineties, I took were in that period. So I must have taken Myers-Briggs four times and that made it kind of engrained in me. One of the most common combinations in the Foreign Service is, makes sense, you gravitate, you like to do analysis. These are critical thinkers and loners. Loners and critical thinkers and people who are critical thinkers by nature bitch, because they're critical. If you're going to take something apart, you're going to take it apart. So we're a self-reinforcing society in that sense.

*Q: Were sort of events in the rest of Europe affecting, were you seeing developments, because at this time you had, the Cold War was once again heating up. The Berlin Wall, you were there during the Cuban Missile Crisis. What kind of reactions were you getting, you personally and your colleagues getting at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: From Italians?

*Q: Just being there.*

VAN HEUVEN: Well the Cuban Missile Crisis I remember we were basically all told to be available. Not to go anywhere, let people know where you were, so you could be found if needed. We set up all kinds of teams for any eventuality. From the Italian point of view, I would say two things. They were so self-absorbed in their own problems. It was the time of the first *aperatura ala sinistra*, opening to the left, and even today I would say that Italy is still working out the vestiges of the huge polarization between essentially three trends. You were either a Christian Democrat of some persuasion or you were a Communist or a Socialist or you were a fascist or a post-fascist. And those tendencies are still there. They're attenuating over time but it's like in France and Greece, where you have these sharply divided visions of how the world should be organized politically and socially. So the Italians were still I think at that point regarding their navels or looking at the world from the view of their ideological background and they essentially idolized America, unless they were the Communists. We were going to solve their problems.

*Q: Did you get the feeling about the Communists in Italy, that it was benign? In other words, that it was not going to turn everything into a Soviet country or not or that was its purpose or not. Was there any feel that way?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. Now, was there any feeling that way? I wouldn't want to speak for the American government. I would certainly say for my own, I wasn't making policy, but for my own perspective many of the people that, I had a cousin who lived in Rome. He had married an Italian. He was a Communist. He was not a Marxist, he was anti-church. It was not easy officially to meet Communists. They were not going to have anything to do with us because from their point of view we were the anti-Christ. We, even to the extent there were some people within the embassy who were moving to open doors for dialogue, this was very upsetting to the Christian Democratic government, who wanted no one to have any contacts with 'em. But certainly with the benefit of hindsight and with the benefit of what I saw and knew during the period that I was there, most of the people in Italy who voted Communist I would say were really, it was a protest to what they saw as the overly clerical aspect of the Christian Democratic Party and the sway of the Catholic church. They were secular. They did not want that religious a government and they were anti-corruption, because it's always been an element I think of communism in most countries. It was the ultimate protest against the corruption within the Christian Democrats. Didn't come 'til many years later but it certainly was there already. In fact, one of the officers in the political section who was somewhat of a mentor of mine took me along to a meeting in the office with Pietro Nenni, who was the head of the Socialist Party. Even that was a real sucking in of your breath. Oh, my goodness, he was going out on a bit of a limb that I'm not sure the whole political section was in agreement with, to go out and talk with Nenni. So it was still a long row to hoe.



On the same theme, what I ended up doing in that second year, supposedly I was assigned to the political section where I was going to have very important functions, as the DCM told me when they pulled me out of the consular section early and also do the bios. I never stepped foot inside the political section the whole time I was supposedly in that job and never wrote a bio. I became the protocol officer. They had had a social secretary for quite some time. She succeeded the famous Tish Baldrige, who wrote her memoirs of being Clare Booth Luce's social secretary. Matilde Sinclair was an American. Her mother must have been Italian and of the Italian aristocracy and Matilde had been protocol officer ever since Tish Baldrige. So we're talking probably almost ten years that she had been the social secretary for the embassy.

President Kennedy went on his famous trip to Berlin, where he got up and said, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*." On that same trip he came to Rome. I think the negotiations for what was going to be the substantive stuff of his visit to Italy began about a month before. The essence of it was that he wanted to meet with all parties. That meant he wanted to meet with the Communists and the Socialists and the Fascists. The Christian Democratic Party wasn't having it. The embassy kept going back and saying the Italians would be really unhappy and Kennedy kept coming back and saying, "I don't care" or people on his behalf kept coming back and saying, "He doesn't care!" A week before he arrived they had sent out invitations for a big lunch, the traditional thing: the host country president gives a dinner for the visiting president and then the visiting president reciprocates in some way. Our reciprocation was going to be a lunch at the ambassador's residence, hosted by our president, for 44 people. And a week before, the invitations had all gone out, a week before the word came from, I think they were already on the trip, I think the word came from Berlin, well, scrap the lunch. If we can't invite people from parties, if we can't sit down and talk with them all, then we're just going to have a working lunch, five people: the secretaries of defense, foreign affairs, the prime minister, I forget who the other two were. And Matilde Sinclair had a semi-nervous breakdown and resigned. So a week before the president was to arrive they didn't have a social secretary. So the DCM called me in and said, "Miss Held, we have a very important new assignment for you. We're going to pull you out of consular section early" and as advertised. In retrospect, people say, "Didn't you get nervous?" I knew so little. After the fact, I probably had my own little semi-nervous breakdown but it all really went swimmingly. I never went back. I think I packed up my desk a couple weeks later but the DCM took me over to meet Matilde. We got in the car. We went over to the foreign ministry. She introduced me to the protocol people there and she said, "They will help you. If you have any questions, just call them. They will help you." And I did.

The first thing that hit me was people calling. Invitations had just gone out. We sent out drivers to get them back, for the lunch. And the first thing I got was a call from the man who was the head of their Constitutional Court, which is like our Supreme Court, a lovely old gentleman who said, "Is it really true? Is the lunch really cancelled? I had so much wanted to meet President Kennedy." It was really awkward, really hard. The solution that they eventually came up with, the compromise, which gets us back to this division of government and thinking and how the Christian Democratic Party was not willing to have us talk to what they considered the banned parties, was that at the Italian president's

dinner at the Quirinale there was at least drinks before dinner if I remember right. And Kennedy took a little walk down a lane in the gardens to talk to the head of the Fascist Party, to talk to the head of the Communist faction in the parliament and to talk to Nenni, who were invited, which may have been unusual. Maybe they only came to drinks before the dinner, probably.

*Q: Well, the Italians are good at eventually coming up with a compresso, or even a compresso storico. When were you in Italy?*

VAN HEUVEN: From July of '62 to March of '64.

*Q: Talk about what you were doing in your rotational assignments, before you moved on.*

VAN HEUVEN: My first real rotational assignment was in the economic section and I was very lucky. In fact I feel as if I was lucky all the way through the process in that supposedly I was there filling a junior officer Central Complement apprentice position but in fact I was put into a job in the econ section that had actually been filled by a second secretary. So I had substance. It was certainly still among the more junior positions in the econ section but I had a whole portfolio. I've seen too many interns in the Department that come and basically people are kind of searching for things for them to do. What I would always advise is, "Go out and find something you want to do and sell it to people, rather than sitting there twiddling your thumbs." I learned a lot during that assignment about what the Department was interested in, what issues were out there, just also from attending the econ section staff meetings. It's funny how each one of your assignments is somehow a building block to the future. It was a very useful building block, I feel.

I was young. I was, I would say, naïve. I remember writing a report that said that the development of the south was about to make this big leap forward and more than thirty years later when I was in Milan on a later assignment you look back and the development of the south was still one of the major problems that Italy was combating. Very nicely the deputy to the econ counselor said, "Are you sure? Are you sure you really want to say that?" I did but I qualified what I said, based on his good advice. In that assignment I really didn't travel as much as I might have had I had the assignment for a whole three, four year period, because back then, except for junior officers, assignments tended to be for four years.

*Q: Did you get any feel, dealing with these various economic commodities, the fine hand of, one, the government and, two, of corruption?*

VAN HEUVEN: I never glommed onto corruption, although it was certainly there. My immediate supervisor took a trip down to Sicily to visit some of the oil refineries and he talked about how they came with their helicopters over some of these wonderful towns down in Sicily. They saw people scrambling in every direction because they thought it was a police helicopter and of course they were grave robbers pulling out artifacts. From getting to read the newspapers and seeing early on that in reading any newspaper you

really had to know who was behind that newspaper, what party they represented and what business interest, you got a feeling for the cartel-like atmosphere of the whole place. And that was really a vestige in many ways as well of the fascist era, the way the country had been organized and the way it remained because it helped people protect their private interests.

*Q: You moved from the economic section*

VAN HEUVEN: After six months to the consular section.

*Q: What were you doing there?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was in what was back then called the passport and citizenship section. There was another section called SCS, special citizen services, with a wonderful lion of a woman, Teresa Offey, in the position. I never worked with her but she was the other end of that part of consular work. Back in '62-'64 we were still dealing with nationality law that laid out a system by which a naturalized American citizen, if they went abroad for more than, if I remember right, five years

*Q: Five or three?*

VAN HEUVEN: To the country of their native origin. I remember two, but maybe it was three. I really spent the majority of my time interviewing Italian-Americans who had become citizens and who had upon retirement moved back to Italy where they could live like kings on their Social Security. Most of them in fact had left their families in Italy, had never brought them to the United States, just came back on occasional visits and now the real tough issue was, how could they hold onto that passport. Not that they wouldn't still have gotten their Social Security but the American citizenship was an enormous point of pride. I think we talked about this lionization of America in the mind of the average Italian, about it wasn't just that it was the land of milk and honey but they had family connections, people just thought America was top of the hill. They didn't want to give up that status, I think. They didn't want to give up the passport. So they had to find ways to try to demonstrate that somehow they were exempt under one of the provisions and almost always the one that they went for was health. And then they had to be extremely inventive, because the first question you would ask is, "Well, what medical treatment can you get for your ailment here that you couldn't get in the United States?" And one of the favorites was mud baths. Everything that helped them could be handled by mud baths which of course they are available but not in many places in the United States. In Italy they seem to be, certainly in the part of Italy I was dealing with, they seem to be prevalent. My favorite was a wonderful old man who came in one day and he looked at me and we were talking in Italian and I said, "What is it here that cures you?" And he said, "*Aria nativa*." Native air. So sweet, at least he was honest. And I remember, you had this wonderful sense of these people who wanted to keep the best of both their worlds. There was a wonderful, really elderly man in his late eighties who lived way up high in the Abruzzi and he would come every two years. He had to come in and defend his case again. I said, "You know, you don't have to do this anymore. You can just mail

me your passport. It's a four hour bus trip." And he said, "No, no, I want to come. I want to see the flag. I want to be here in the embassy." Probably half the village saw him off when he came down.

Of course, in those days people still could come into the embassy freely. I used to interview people in my office and American citizens, walking down the Via Veneto and this was the height of

*Q: La dolce vita.*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly, when we went out for coffee on the Via Veneto we would see half of the *dolce vita* right there. Every once in a while a movie star would come in for a visa and we would all walk up and down the hall to see them as they came and went. That was a really nice aspect of being a Foreign Service Officer abroad, a consular officer, in whatever capacity, that people could walk down the street, see the flag and come in. That American citizens could still feel like this was their home abroad as opposed to the kind of fortresses that we work in today.

Anyway, I had a wonderful boss in the consular section whose name was Leonard Dameron, who went on to become the head of the Passport Agency in Hawaii and I think he retired from there. And then one day I got this telephone call that I mentioned earlier from our DCM, who called me over and told me I was going to go to work in the political section. I ended up being the protocol officer. I sat not even in the political section but in the anteroom to the DCM's and the ambassador's offices, with the secretary of the DCM and the secretary of the political counselor. It was a huge office. It's been all downhill for me ever since.

It was on the *piano nobile* of the American embassy, which we requisitioned at the end of the Second World War. It had been the palace of the Queen Mother of Italy, *Regina Margarita* and that's what I think it's still called, *Palazzo de Regina Margarita*, if it's not being called the American embassy. That room was her ballroom. It was not only huge with red brocade wall coverings and a, I think it was a Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington over this marble fireplace. It also had French windows that led out to this huge balcony where she would wave to the crowd. I've never had an office like that again!

*Q: As protocol officer I assume that part of your thing was to arrange seating or did somebody else arrange seating?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, no, that's one of the things I did. I came into the job and for the first ten days I did nothing but prepare for and handle the visit of President Kennedy. The one day I had with Matilde Sinclair, my predecessor, before she precipitously retired, she did sit me down and say, "And here's how you do table arrangements and here's how you solve this problem and here's how you solve the problem when you have too many people who think they're the highest ranking person and here's how you solve" etc "and

here's how you solve the problem wife, the person who brings someone other than his wife" or so on and so forth, which has been a boon for the rest of my life.

*Q: I would think one thing, just knowing Italian society, you've got this decaying nobility which is of very little account but some attach themselves to ambassadors and to try to seat them would be a problem.*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, it was an interesting time in that sense, too. I think that Matilde obviously had connections in the aristocratic set and in fact she tried to introduce me to a few of my own age before she left as well or when she came back on a visit. But Freddy Reinhardt, first of all, something I didn't say before, I came in in the early Kennedy era. It was an extremely exciting time to be in government and I remember even in that short period when I was in Washington how people would talk about how Kennedy would pick up the phone and call a desk officer directly.

*Q: I had problems here in Washington. I was a very junior officer and I would call somebody and they'd say, "Who is this?" And I would say, "This is Mr. Kennedy" and there'd be this long pause.*

VAN HEUVEN: Did you have the New England twang, though?

*Q: No. At that time they weren't necessarily listening. All they knew was, it was Kennedy.*

VAN HEUVEN: Anyway, there was this bubbling feeling that things were changing. Freddy Reinhardt said, "We're not going to entertain the old social set. That's not what we're here for. We're here to meet and deal with the movers and shakers of the Italian economy and polity." Those were certainly the marching orders that I saw when I was there, but I think that probably the departure of Matilde made it more dramatic because I wasn't going to run in all the time and say, "Oh, you have to have these people and you have to have those people." And in fact it did happen to me three or four times that I would meet people at parties and they'd say, "You've got to talk to the ambassador. He's got to do something about this. He just isn't inviting the right people anymore." And I would smile sweetly and move on.

I suppose this is really the appropriate time to talk about that whole visit. That second day, after Matilde was gone, was the day when we dealt with the problem of having to call back all these invitations to what was going to be a party for 44 Italians and ended up being a lunch for five Italians. I think it was about the third day, but right in there in the beginning I got a call from a lieutenant commander in the navy, down in Naples. He was the protocol officer there and had a big problem and somebody said to him, "Why don't you call the protocol officer in Rome?" And he said, "Here's my problem." After his visit in Rome, Kennedy was slated to go to Naples with the president of Italy, President Segni, to review the large NATO installation in Naples. There was going to be a reviewing stand. I would say like 50-60 members of the various militaries on this reviewing stand and who sat where? And the problem was that many of them were dual hatted. They had their personal ranks from their own military and then they had ranks from NATO and

which took precedence over which? And then he said, "Once we get that part worked out, I can do some of this from my rules but I can't do the people outside, because the Cardinal, Archbishop of Naples was coming." Well, in Italy generally the Cardinal outranks everybody. You had two presidents. How did you handle that problem, etc, etc. So I thought, this poor guy. Little does he know that I know less than he does and I've been in this job less time than he has. But I had this moment of power, this feeling of power and I said, "Well, I think, it's a NATO base, you'll just have to decide it's going to be the NATO rank and let's go with that." So then I said, "Why don't you send me your list and I'll work it out and I'll call you back." So back then, it was the beginning of faxes and he faxed me his list and I got in the car and I went over to the Foreign Ministry, the folks I had just been introduced to two days before and said, "Okay, here's my problem. What do I do?" And they sat down and in no time flat they had the whole thing done. The only thing they didn't, in a moment of real diplomacy, they were not willing to say where Segni was going to sit and where Kennedy was going to sit. So I had to work that part out but they did all the rest for me. So I went back and I called the lieutenant commander and I said, "Okay, the fax is coming." And he said, "Thank you very much." And I thought, "Well, okay, I'm going to be able to do this." And maybe a day or two later he called and he said, "Well, now this person isn't coming and that person's coming and this person isn't." So I said, "Okay, send me another fax" and I repeated the whole, got in the car, went over to the Foreign Ministry, faxed him back and I never heard any complaints afterwards so that part worked.

I mentioned before the whole issue of why the lunch was reduced. The other issue then became that the government fell, three days, or four days perhaps, before Kennedy arrived. Then the embassy said, "You just can't come. You can't come when there's no government." And Kennedy was bound and determined he was going to come. He was also going to see the Pope and he was going to do the Italy bit and we should just work it out. So eventually the embassy said, "Well, okay." The way it ended up working out was that actually the vote on this new proposed government which they managed to scramble was taking place while the five, one was President Segni but there was the prime minister-designate, the foreign minister-designate, defense minister-designate and another minister-designate, while they were at lunch with President Kennedy.

Now I have to backtrack. The ambassador was ill and was in the hospital with an undiagnosed ailment which later turned out to be pneumonia that they missed. So when the last advance team came through, they said, "This is the best place for the president to stay." The ambassador's residence, the Villa Taverna, in Rome, is in immense grounds with a big wall around it and it was really, from the Secret Service's point of view, the perfect place to be. So the ambassador's wife and children, all four of them, moved out to a hotel and during the president's visit the president and his party lived in the ambassador's residence. And the Secret Service moved in, as they do, a day or three or whatever before. One of the many things they did to prepare the Villa Taverna for the president's stay there was that they replaced all the telephones in the residence with White House phones. So this presented us with some problems in the immediate period before he got there because it was only by dint of great persuasion that the admin officer was able to get them to leave the phone in the kitchen connected to Rome, so that the

cook could order things. That literally was the only telephone that we could use while we were trying to get everything organized, even just to call the embassy. It was before cell phones. I was standing, because I was responsible for the arrangements for the lunch, I was standing in this oval room, the dining room in the embassy. Because there were only ten of them there was just this round table in the middle. I was standing towards the door that leads to the kitchen when the prime minister got up from the table in the middle of the conversation and came over and asked me where there was a phone that he could use, because he wanted to find out if he was the prime minister. And I said, "Come right this way, sir." And I took him into this hall where the waiters were going back and forth with the trays. It was a very narrow hall and there were five people lined up to use that one phone. The person who was on the phone was Angier Biddle Duke, who was the protocol officer who came with the president, the chief of protocol in Washington. He was trying to solve a last minute snafu that had to do with a press issue, so right behind him was the embassy press officer. Then there were two people behind them, one of whom was the ambassador's staff aide, with whom I worked a lot. And it was a little bit like a Mack Sennett routine. I tapped my colleague's shoulder, who turned around, saw that I had Professor Leone, the prime minister-designate, with me and kind of melted away. Tapped on the shoulder of the person in front of him, etc. And I got to Angier Biddle Duke. Luckily I had already met him and I went [inaudible] and he understood to hand me the phone, which I then handed to the prime minister who then, minutes later, was able to go back and say, "Well, we're legit!" and the luncheon went on from there.

You had asked before what President Kennedy was like. I really did not have any direct contact with him, even though he supposedly picked up the phone and talked to desk officers. I still didn't feel that he was approachable unless invited. I was also the gift officer for the visit. He actually arrived from a meeting by car and drove in while we were still in the house making the preparations. But most of the embassy, everybody, families and children too, were invited to come. He spoke to the embassy community for a few minutes, which I didn't attend because I was otherwise occupied. We could see him driving through to go and stand and talk to the assembled embassy and he was very busily combing his hair. So you knew that he cared about how he looked. But he had, I would say, just observing him, being in the same room, that wonderful sort of sense of self-assurance and at the same time humor that was very engaging. Ronald Reagan had that same, he was someone that made you feel like he felt good and therefore it was okay to feel good. I guess they both had that Irish sense of humor as well. He always seemed to be at least half smiling, and not in a wry way but in an inviting way. I approached McGeorge Bundy, who was on the trip with him, and told him while they were preparing pre-lunch, because he was going to be seeing the president and the prime minister-designate, what the gifts were that had come in, so that the president could say something about them orally if the occasion rose. One of the gifts from the Republic of Italy was a sailboat for John-John, it was about three and a half feet tall. And I said to McGeorge Bundy, "There's this fabulous sailboat that's about three and a half feet tall." And I saw him walk across to the room and talk to the president and I saw him go like this and the president smiled. You felt like you were part of the conversation.

*Q: Was Jackie there?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, she was bed-ridden and I have the feeling it was with Patrick, the one who died and that's why she didn't come.

*Q: Did you get involved in any of the other parts of the trip?*

VAN HEUVEN: Again it was mainly from the protocol aspect, which was my responsibility and the one other sort of mini-crisis moment that I had was the following night. President Segni gave his official dinner for the many at the Quirinale, his residence. Most of the presidential party and most of the luminaries from the embassy were included in that dinner. I got a desperate call from the Quirinale. I was at home, because dinners start late, starting at nine o'clock in Italy, from the ambassador's staff aide, who had gone with the ambassador. He wasn't at the dinner but he was the person who was there seeing that things went right. It turned out that Pierre Salinger was a no-show.

*Q: He was the press officer.*

VAN HEUVEN: He was the White House press spokesman, and was along, and was invited and didn't tell anybody but didn't show. Went off, I think the word later was, and talked to old press buddies in Rome. So I had thirty minutes to find someone to go in his place. Luckily I remember who was there and I just went down through the list. Anybody would have murdered me if I invited somebody lower down. I think the next person was the defense attaché and he wasn't home. And then I called the second defense attaché and he wasn't home. And then I called the third, who was an air force colonel, and he said, "Yes!" And I said, okay, you have to put on your dress uniform and you have to be there in twenty minutes and he was and he came after and said, "Thank you!"

They went on to Naples and apparently that was a very successful visit. And he did have his audience with the Pope. Italy was the last stop and then they went back.

*Q: Well then, after this*

VAN HEUVEN: Trial by fire.

*Q: Trial by fire, thank you, how did things go?*

VAN HEUVEN: They went well. It was a very busy assignment and I did get to know a lot of the senior officers very well. I got to know a lot of the other agencies very well, which I wouldn't have done in a normal junior officer job. So I learned a lot as well about how an embassy works and I tried very hard to be an open door as opposed to a "no, you can't possibly bother" and to see that people got included where somebody who was a contact of theirs was going to be at a function of the ambassador's. Once I got into trouble and that was because once you open a door it is a lot harder to say no and I was beginning to be extremely pressured by people from all over the embassy. One of Kennedy's big initiatives was the youth initiative.



*Q: Yes, we were naming youth officers.*

VAN HEUVEN: We had a youth officer and the embassy, what's now called the country team, was exhorted to come up with ideas for how we could do things with youth. And along came a request for a visit with the ambassador or a reception or whatever by a group of, I believe it was Vassar but it might have been Smith, with visiting students who were at the end of their study year abroad. They were having an educational tour of Italy and could they come in and get an embassy briefing. I think it was the ambassador himself who came up with the idea, well, why don't we use this as an occasion to invite some youth. Here we've got these great college students from the United States and let's invite Italians of their age. And I ended up being tasked with getting in touch with the center for foreign students, so it wasn't only Italians, and negotiated with them about finding students of about that age from other countries who were studying in Rome. And then people in the political section came up with Italian students. And then, all of a sudden, we had a fair amount of students, like maybe three to every one of the American gals and then everyone in the embassy wanted to be there because it was different and I was finding it really hard to say no. And all of a sudden I had to go in to the ambassador and say, "I have something awful to tell you. This is a group of 400." And he was not a wealthy man and he did not have a huge representation allowance and that was kind of tough. And I said, "I can go back and simply tell people I'm sorry but we have to cut the list down." And he said, "No, you did it. We'll do it, but don't do it again." He was just as nice as he could be but it was a big lesson to me.

*Q: While you were there, did you have much of a chance to get out and around with Italian people and all, talking about socially and all that?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. I actually ended up rooming with a gal that I had been on junior year with who was in Italy as a private American who was teaching English to Italians. That was how she financed her stay in Rome. And she had been there about two years and so she already had a huge group of Italian friends, through whom I was very lucky to have an instant set of a hundred acquaintances. So I saw, also, the side of life of Italians of that young professional set which I can tell you at that point revolved mainly around getting together in largish groups, ten to fifteen or so, at about nine o'clock at night and spending an hour deciding where to go and eat and then getting there and spending a considerable amount of time deciding what to eat. So that it generally was getting onto 10:30, 11:00 by the time we ate and the next day I had to be in the embassy at 8:15. This very quickly segued into nine o'clock, which is what most of the political section and the ambassador and the DCM did, because they were trying to be in (a) some kind of sync with Washington and (b) with the Italian Foreign Ministry. When I was still in the consular section I was duty officer over Easter weekend and by the end of that Easter weekend I was practically on a *tu* basis, on a first name basis, which was not frequent back in those days, with the *maresciallo della frontiera*, which was the equivalent of the INS inspector at the airport in Rome, with all these people who were trying to enter Italy and didn't have the appropriate papers. One was a permanent resident alien who only had his green card and didn't have a visa and had to have some kind of permission from the

part of the Foreign Ministry that handled those issues, called the *ufficio stranieri*, the office for strangers and I remember calling, though it was Saturday afternoon and the gentleman saying, “Oh, with difficulty, someone may be in after four o’clock.”

And that was the issue. If you came to work at 8:15 then you had your lunch at twelve. You got back at one when they were all leaving for their three hour lunch and siesta and coming back at four and the important people really didn’t come back ‘til five or six and left again at seven or eight, when we like to be home with our family. So you had to work out some system of being in reasonable contact. So anyway I got so that being on the rather late evening circuit I allowed myself to come in at nine.

*Q: Did you get any feel about the Italian political system. I spent some time as consul general in Naples, this was in '79- '81. I was a new boy. I had never been in Italy before at all and all the excitement or something that went around at the embassy about change of government when in Naples it was sort of a shrug of the shoulders, same old people. Which it was and had been since 1945 or '48. Did you get any feel for that sort of little minuet that went on there?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, I don’t even remember how many governments we went through in my less than two years there but there was a constant litany. You were asking before about something similar. So much of what happens in Italy, when it’s not ideology, when it’s not this issue of the huge divides between the Communists or Socialist persuasion, the Christian Democrat and the Fascist strains, it’s a matter of face. Saving face, protesting face, losing face. So very often these gyrations, it’s a little like the column they have in the *Washington Post*, who’s in and who’s out, these revolving governments were partly reflection of who was the flavor of the month or who was the person who the least people would object to so you could keep moving. Because there would be issues on which they couldn’t come to a compromise so you would find some other constellation, just to keep things going.

*Q: Arrangiarsi, to somehow work it out.*

VAN HEUVEN: Accommodate, yeah, *sistemarsi*. In French, it’s called *system d’appuyer*, figure out a way.

*Q: As protocol officer I would think you’d have to sort of keep who was in and who was out and all of that.*

VAN HEUVEN: No, because it was rare that I was the person who would propose who would come to dinner. I had my little stable of extra men or extra ladies. The only thing I kept trying to push was getting more officers in to the ambassador’s table so it wasn’t always the political counselor and the econ counselor. That was really the political section’s call or the economic section’s call or the ambassador’s call.

*Q: Get any feel about the Italian system where you didn’t get your job by, I’m talking about the professional level, or other levels, it was family connections. I mean, people*

*would get very good degrees at a university but if their family didn't have the right connections, nothing happened.*

VAN HEUVEN: Absolutely and that's still true today. The word in Italian is, this gets you into a whole larger issue of the attitude of the average Italian to government, and the word is *campanilismo*, which is the campanile, the bell tower, so it's where is loyalty, as an Italian. Your loyalty, first of all, is to your family and then to your extended family and then to your village, in other words your bell tower, and there is not a sense of loyalty to the state. There may be a little bit of sense of loyalty to the region or the province and then everything, once you have to go beyond, if your extended family can't do it for you and if your connections in your village can't do it for you then the most important thing you can do is to have connections somewhere else that can help you to advance your personal interests, which come before any sense of fealty or loyalty to a larger Italian entity.

*Q: Is there anything else we can cover you think on the Italian side?*

VAN HEUVEN: Back then? Let me mention some embassy things. You can talk for hours about Italy but when I came into that job, the DCM was Francis Williamson, who was a marvelous man, a great, quiet humor and he had an exchange of correspondence with Jack Tuthill, who was at USOECD in Brussels at the time. The two of them just really had similar senses of humor and just kept trading these cables or at times more private things back and forth which some of us got to enjoy on the way through. To give one example: Francis Williamson was the chief negotiator of the Austrian State Treaty that essentially ended up in the Soviets pulling back from the only territory that they pulled back from after the Second World War. They occupied I think from Vienna east and Western forces were west of Vienna. They went on for years, the negotiations. Whenever it looked as if something might happen the more august negotiator would pop in from the United States, but the person who was really there through the whole thing was Francis Williamson.

And one of the many papers that we got to trade around showing his sense of humor was an annotated Lords Prayer which he did during those negotiations, which apparently back then was pretty famous throughout the circuit. And it went something like "Our", first footnote: the French object to the use of the word our because everyone knows that the Holy Father is French. And then "who art in heaven", footnote two: the Soviets object to the use of the term heaven because everyone knows there is only a terrestrial reality. And so on down. You got the flavor, which I saw a fair amount of many years later, negotiating with the Soviets, on how incredibly tedious those things really were.

And he always had a twinkle. He would have been the perfect person to play Santa Claus if he had not been in such an august position. One day he came in and he looked at me, the way he looked at you, over his bifocals and he said, "Miss Held, I am appointing you to a new and important position and henceforth you are going to be the sartorial officer." And it turned out that he got up and his wife was still sleeping and he got dressed in semi-dark and he got out to the car and the chauffeur looked at him and said, he was on

his way to the Foreign Ministry and he had put on the jacket to one suit and the pants to another. So this chauffeur saved him. This was just a way of telling, "Look what a stupid thing I did" to tell me I was going to be sartorial officer. One day he looked at me and he said, "You know, I thought I was coming here to decide when we would send in the Sixth Fleet and when we wouldn't and here I am deciding who gets how many paperclips" with this wonderful note of bemused frustration.

Anyway, he got a medical clearance that supposedly said for Rome only. He had heart problems and MED, the Department wanted him to go and MED said, "Okay, he's getting this clearance for Rome only because there are decent doctors there and he ended up having a heart attack and being operated on in Rome and he died on the operating table shortly before I was due to leave post. And I had gotten to know them quite well in that year and I actually went and stayed with Gertrude a few days.

*Q: His wife, Gertrude, who I knew. She worked for me in Athens at one point, a delightful person.*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, you know, she went back to the Department. He did not have a big pension. This was a second career for him and his girls were not yet in college or maybe Ruthie was already in college. Gertrude came back and she was in desperate straits. I went back before her and I rented a place and said, "You can come and stay with me 'til you figure out where you're going to go." And she did and it was really obvious that she was quite depressed. Nothing had happened. No one from the Department had called her. There was no such thing as the Family Liaison Office. I was just about to begin my second tour and I went into the office of the assistant secretary for EUR and he saw me. I didn't even have to tell his secretary why. I just asked to see him, Mr. Tyler, and I said, "You know, she's back and she hasn't heard from anyone. She needs a job. She does not have, he did not leave a pension that is going to support her." And when I got home at the end of the day she said, "Guess what? This gentleman called and I'm going in to see him tomorrow" and they found her a job.

*Q: She ended up going to Athens in the Seventies to work for Mrs. Tasca, a very difficult woman, as sort of her protocol and social secretary and that didn't work out.*

VAN HEUVEN: I'm sure, because Gertrude was a very gracious lady.

*Q: And Mrs. Tasca was a very difficult lady. Anyway, they asked whether I could use a consular officer. I said, "Sure!" So we made her a consular officer. She was very good. Worked there a while and came back here and eventually died of cancer. We used to see her quite frequently.*

VAN HEUVEN: Anyway, he was a wonderful man and she was a wonderful lady.

*Q: I was just wondering how you found being a junior officer but handling the protocol thing. In a way you've got clout because you're acting for the ambassador. Did you find yourself in problems with some of the more senior officers at the embassy?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, I think the lesson with that one party where I allowed myself to be somewhat browbeaten was a very good one. And there were some people who could be somewhat unpleasant. I just learned to deal with it. They existed, as they exist everywhere.

*Q: Anything else we should cover?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, yes, as my onward assignment was Laos, I was going to Vientiane. There was a wonderful young man in the general services section that I went to and he helped me with making all the arrangements for shipping my car and shipping my things. And Danilo looked at me and he said, "You know, you're going to a part of the world where you never know what's going to happen. So I'm going to keep your things here until you tell me, 'Okay, send them.'" Because I was going back on home leave, I was going for three weeks of Southeast Asia area training. So there was still quite a bit of time before I was going to arrive in Vientiane. And that ended up being a very good thing because I left, I went back to Washington, and while I was in the States I got engaged. I got engaged to a young man that I had actually met in Washington. He was the legal advisor at the U.S. Mission in Berlin. He turned up again in Rome and we re-met through the ambassador's staff aide who had been a college roommate of his. To make a long story very short he proposed and I accepted. And there I was on home leave on my way to Vientiane. And this was back in the days when women who got married resigned, because there was no attempt at trying to assign two people to the same place. I think there may already have been an example or two, it wasn't an absolute requirement that you resign, that at least one, Melissa Wells, who got married but was willing to take an assignment where she was separated from her husband. So it may be that it wasn't absolute anymore.

*Q: Actually, the thing was that if you asked when you were getting ready to resign, show me the regulation*

VAN HEUVEN: That's what Elinor Constable did so she was another example but I don't think she was hit by the "No, you don't have to resign" but the "have to go to Laos." I did go so far, since I was in area training, I did both go to the German, Berlin desk, which was called CE at that time and ask whether they might have an assignment for me in Berlin and they didn't. I even went, without even asking my new fiancé, to see if there might be something for him in Vientiane. Neither of which was a possibility and there just wasn't, people weren't flexible about those things back then. There just wasn't anything and nobody was saying, "Yeah, but maybe in six months there would be." So I resigned. Mentioning the car thing because it ended up being a wonderful thing that a few months later I could go and pick up the car and drive it up to Berlin to join my husband. I guess I did it, I came back in the summer when we were still engaged, drove my things up.

*Q: This was Marten.*

VAN HEUVEN: Marten, right.

*Q: There's an oral history of Marten. Marten tells a completely different story.*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, right. When people ask us how we met, there's this very long pause. Anyway, so I didn't have to retrieve my car and effects from Vientiane, which was lucky.

*Q: How, you went to Berlin. What was Berlin like at the time? This is, how long were you in Berlin?*

VAN HEUVEN: We were married in October of '64, so I arrived there in early November of '64, which was some time after the wall went up. It was quite grim. We used to say every day you saw more hearses than baby carriages. It was a city of old people. They were trying desperately to get young people to come or to stay in Berlin and in fact they subsidized young families and children born in Berlin.

*Q: The Free University was part of that process at one point, wasn't it?*

VAN HEUVEN: You mean making the tuition lower, could be, to get students in? That's possible, I can't corroborate that but that's entirely possible. And they had all kinds of subsidies for economic enterprises to keep up the economic viability of West Berlin, which people used to say that you'd have a coat made somewhere and you'd ship it to Berlin to have the label sewed in and you'd get a tremendous subsidy out of that. It was very difficult to get back and forth from the western sectors to the east where all the museums and the theater were because the east had been the downtown area of Berlin. And we did do it but it was like straight out of all the movies you've seen of that era. In fact, once, one of the issues was that we were not to let our diplomatic passports out of our hands. There were no Soviets. You had to go back and forth either in an official car through Checkpoint Charlie or on the U-Bahn. There were two subway systems, the allies ran the U-Bahn and the Soviets ran the S-Bahn. So the S-Bahn, even the part of it that was in West Berlin, 'cause they both went in and out of both sectors, you weren't allowed to use. You could only use the U-Bahn and that was the one other way that you could go to the Eastern Sector. There were only East German policemen there doing the border control as you went from one subway stop to the other underground from west to east and back and you were not allowed to put your passport in their hands.

One day I went with another woman, just the two of us, and we were going to one of the museums. We ran into trouble coming back where this East German just insisted on seeing the passport and I said, "Here it is." He wanted to have it in his hand. Eventually, we'd been there 45 minutes, I let him have it. I came back and said, "I'm really sorry" to the fellow in the political section whose responsibility it was and he said, "It's okay. I'd have done it, too."

There were difficult moments. We lived through three or four mini blockades. And we lived quite close to headquarters at Clayallee, where what was called USBER, U.S.

Government Berlin, was located. And one of the things, first of all the mini blockades. Berlin was one of the places where the Soviets put on the screws. Wherever they wanted to raise tensions over whatever their issue was they would institute a mini blockade. And then the second thing would be that they would have their jets come right down the driveway so that some of the guys who were in the offices, Marten may have told this same story, on that first floor swore they could see the faces of the pilots before at the very last minute they would shoot up and break the sound barrier overhead. So our windows, we were five minute walk away, were rattling all the time. I remember a number of times when I looked around and thought, "Okay, if we have to leave in a hurry, what am I going to take? What am I going to grab?" And a number of times where, at that point I wasn't working, I was there as a wife, the men would be gone all night in the bunker or maybe for a couple of days because it was an emergency situation. Marten may have told you the story of being over in British headquarters with his opposite number, the British legal advisor, who was briefing parliamentarians on a visit. They'd ask Marten to come and help at the briefing and that's exactly what was happening, they were breaking the sonic boom over British headquarters at the same time. The plaster was literally falling off the walls and the British parliamentarians, with that wonderful British *sang froid*, just kept on talking as if nothing were happening.

*Q: Well what were you doing then?*

VAN HEUVEN: The mission kept me almost half involved. They made me a member of their youth committee. They had me on a variety of other committees. So that was nice because I kept a little in touch and that reminds me of one Kennedy story I neglected to tell.

I was still in Rome when Kennedy was assassinated. We were in fact at a reception in the political counselor's house and the phone rang because there was a flash message and the duty officer had to go in and then there was another flash message and somebody else had to go in and pretty soon there was a call. The political counselor must have had 250 people at his residence and he got up on a table and he said, "We've had word that the president has been shot and I ask you all to join me in prayer." It was a very wise way of handling it because everybody recognized that that was the end of the party and kind of melted away and left and we all could rush in to the embassy. By the time actually we left his house we already knew that the president had not survived being shot and we had to start to figure out how we were going to handle this. And the handling began almost immediately. And again I was the protocol officer and how were we going to handle all these people that were starting to stream in the embassy gates and wanted somehow to participate. You know kind of the standard thing is you have a condolence book. Well, we had no time for preparation. We had no condolence book. And I ran over to the consular section and I grabbed a bunch of old ledgers, of the kind that one used to have.

*Q: Green ledgers.*

VAN HEUVEN: Actually, these I think, I think had a mottled red cover. Pre-green. And that gave people something to do. These were huge, thick books. We went through the

four I had grabbed in a couple of hours. We had to go scrounging for more. And I remember a couple of hours into this process there was a young American, probably a student, who was just sitting scrunched against the wall by the stairs in the entryway where you would have gone up to the main offices. This was also pre-security guards and so there was a desk there right at those stairs which is where I think the receptionist normally sat. That's where we were operating out of and we were most of the people in the political section and me and the ambassador's staff aide primarily and the more senior officers were upstairs looking ahead, one hopes. The ambassador's staff aide said to me, the receptionist's desk was where you had the traditional picture of the president and the secretary of state above for everyone to see as they entered. The aide looked at it and he said, "We have to do something about the president's picture." Back then you used to put black ribbons as a sort of drape of mourning but we didn't have any black ribbon and it was night. It would be hard to do 'til the next day and I said, "Maybe the best thing is just take it down for now." And this young man, he was probably my age or a little bit younger, who was sitting there scrunched up, all of a sudden looked up, we weren't aware he was listening to our conversation and he said, "Don't you dare touch that picture!" It just sent shivers through me at the time.

We then went into huge organizational activity because as I suppose happened in most embassies abroad we organized a memorial service.

*Q: We did in Belgrade which that was the first time a significant number of the hierarchy and Tito's government went into a Catholic Church. They were all Serbs and it was a Catholic Church. They went.*

VAN HEUVEN: The Church offered us St. Peter's and this was held at St. Peter's and every seat was full and I didn't go home. My memory is that I slept in the embassy and I worked all Saturday and I worked all Sunday and the memorial service was on Monday. And on Saturday someone handed me a telegram and it was from my father saying that my uncle had died and could I go and represent the family at his funeral in Bern, in Switzerland on Monday. In any case, the ambassador's staff aide came up to me at one point and said, "Is there something that I could do to help you?" And I said, "Yes. Can you figure out" because it was on the day following the memorial service, my uncle's funeral, "Can you figure out how I can get from Rome to Bern if I leave straight from St. Peter's at the end of the service in time for my uncle's funeral?" And he disappeared and I just kept working and he said, "Okay, here it is, this is what you're going to do." There was no way to get there by plane. Bern doesn't have or certainly didn't back then have much of an airport. So the best that he could come up with was that I would fly from Rome to Milan and then I would take an overnight train to Bern. And a friend of his from the consulate in Milan, who I didn't know at the time, would come and pick me up at the airport and get me to the train. And we just kept doing our thing and the arrangements all worked. The Church was fabulous, as if they hadn't done enough ceremonies in their life. It was more dealing with people inside the embassy, people who wanted to be invited, than anything else. They really took care of arrangements inside the church. And I left, had a cab waiting outside of St. Peter's, got on the plane. They still used to hand out newspapers and I picked up a newspaper and there was all the coverage of the president



having died and it was the first minute I had to react to it, because I'd been so busy all that time and I think I cried. I just remember some anonymous person on my right passing me Kleenex in great succession and everyone being very kind on the plane. And I got off and was met by this young officer of the consulate in Milan whose name was Lou Murray. And Lou took one look at me and he said, "I'm going to find you a train first thing in the morning. You're going to spend the night here." Put me up in a hotel and I got on a train very early in the morning and got there in plenty of time and had had my personal reaction.

*Q: I don't think anybody reading this in a different era can understand the emotions that came out when President Kennedy was assassinated. The Europeans took this very strongly. Every flag in Yugoslavia was at half-mast. This was of course the government saying this. Tito had just had a state visit there but it went down to the people. You'd go into the marketplace and there were little plastic pictures of President Kennedy in almost every house you'd go to there'd be a picture of President Kennedy.*

VAN HEUVEN: There was polling in Vietnam that showed that more Vietnamese knew who President Kennedy was than who the two Diem brothers were. He captured the imagination not only of the American people but of the world because he was not afraid to articulate the American Dream and to set high standards and high aspirations for everyone to live up to and had ways of articulating that that were so inclusive. I think that was his magic outside of the United States. The magic within, the shock to the country was not just the vulnerability of having the first president in most of our lifetimes at that point be assassinated. I think that part was probably very similar to the shock of 9/11, with the vulnerability that we as a nation had not sensed. But the loss that people in other countries felt I think was the loss of that magnanimous American vision that he had.

*Q: Also youth, too.*

VAN HEUVEN: And the youth and the charisma.

*Q: From the post-war generation where the leadership looked kind of like the old guard.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right, in other countries but he also was of a very new generation in the United States.

*Q: Very much so and it also engaged a great number of people in the Foreign Service. A number of us came into the Foreign Service with the idea of service.*

VAN HEUVEN: And the Peace Corps, all of it together.

*Q: It was an emotional period that hasn't been duplicated since.*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, I think in 9/11 it was duplicated, in a different sense but similar.

*Q: Well, going back to Berlin. Did you find you were being sort of used without pay?*

VAN HEUVEN: This is an issue that comes up again and again or came up again and again throughout my career also when I finally came back, from younger women. "How could they have done that to you? Doesn't it make you angry? How could they have asked you to do all those things when you were a wife? Didn't it make you angry?" I was from a pre-'63-'64 generation. That was how the world was. I accepted it. I certainly was pushing on those frontiers by having joined the career, by having a profession, but when I look back I often feel that I had the best of both possible worlds. You asked me what I did in Berlin. When I first arrived I had actually a wife of a colleague of Marten's who was a bit of a mentor because she, too, was an emancipated woman and she said, "I want to give you a piece of advice right away. You have two ways of getting out of the wives' rat race and that is, have a baby or get a job." And I did both. I got a job and then I had a baby. But the women's rat race, some of it I didn't mind. I certainly didn't mind doing the entertaining and I didn't mind even going to the occasional German-American Women's Club affair. I didn't mind bringing cookies for a reception. But there was an element in Berlin that went beyond what one saw in the regular Foreign Service and that was you were at an army post. The U.S. Mission was, like a great big POLAD to the army that was in charge but the Foreign Service element of it didn't seem that bad to me.

*Q: Part of the thing was, both on the military and the Foreign Service side was, you say it's like a military post but you were in the middle of Indian country and the Indians were around you. You were in a stockade. This was not sort of business as usual. It was an honest to God threat.*

VAN HEUVEN: Let me say one of the things I learned over a career. We had most of our assignments in Europe. Although everyone always wanted to go to Europe and considered Europe the plum assignment very often morale was better at hardship posts because you had to stick to each other, as you said, against this hostile outside world. And Berlin in that sense was a hardship post and had terrific morale. I think for most people some of your best friends in the Foreign Service are the ones that you gain early in your career when you have more discretionary time, where you can do things with friends, where you're not eaten up with official obligations and so on. That was certainly the case with us. Some of our best friends to this day are from that rather difficult period in Berlin. You had to plan well in advance if you wanted to take a vacation because you had three ways: you could fly, you could take this overnight train where they pulled the curtains down and you had to stay on the train until you got to the other end of the corridor, or you go on the autobahn, on this one corridor where you couldn't stop from one end to the other. If you didn't arrive at the other end within a certain period of time the MPs would come out and look for you 'cause maybe you had a flat 'cause you were not supposed to stop. It was no picnicking, no potty stops for kids, no nothing. We were a couple starting out, we couldn't afford to fly and the military train took a lot of time. So the best option was to go by car but basically you had to drive three and a half hours before you could start driving to a vacation destination. Or you had to make your vacation in West Berlin somehow.

We did actually take the military train to Strasbourg a couple of times. The American military train went to Frankfurt, from which you could get on a train and go elsewhere in Europe if you wanted to. The French train went to Strasbourg, which is essentially the first place inside of France. We used to take a picnic dinner and sleep on the train. You arrived at some ungodly hour, before six a.m. and nothing was open except the cafes right around the train station. We'd go there and have a long coffee and croissant kind of breakfast, which by then was good and certainly better than in Berlin. And then we'd spend the day in Strasbourg, have a lovely lunch someplace, go round, visit the cathedral and see all the pretty buildings and then that night get back on the train, go back. It was a nice mini-vacation.

*Q: What type of job did you have?*

VAN HEUVEN: I became a teacher at the John F. Kennedy School and I taught English. It was a bilingual school, English and German, but it attracted quite a few foreigners as well, children of other diplomats or children of businessmen, for some of whom neither language was the language they brought to the school. So I basically was teaching English to foreigners, 'cause I didn't necessarily speak their languages. I enjoyed it.

*Q: You were there, in Berlin, from when to when?*

VAN HEUVEN: '64 'til '67. You were asking before about what Berlin was like. I think I used this image once before in another context but I remember very vividly even though West Berlin was really rather gray and drab and sad, the difference when you went from west to east was, again, like going from a Technicolor movie to a black and white movie. People in East Berlin, no one smiled. No one looked you straight in the eye. People walked around looking as if they had a twenty-pound weight on their heads. They all tightly hunched, very unhappy is the best, physical image of unhappiness. The main shopping streets were like a Potemkin village. They might have really reasonably modern looking things in the window but if you went inside they were never available. Grocery store, I remember seeing bottled vegetables and meats and things that looked like something my grandmother might have bottled fifty years before and hadn't been touched since. There were no such things as oranges or bananas, like Russia, some years later, still was. No one helped anyone. It was like everybody was walking around in their own little isolated bubble of misery. Visually it hit you in the face.

*Q: Did you have much contact with Germans?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, in West Berlin, a great deal, through Marten's job because he was the legal advisor. He and the British and the French legal advisors together essentially ran or supervised, let's say, the legal and the judiciary systems. And they dealt closely with another set of British, French and Americans who were called the safety something and they supervised the police. So we got to know a great many lawyers, law professors and judges in the process. We got to know our neighbors. We got to know a fair amount of people through private interests. Marten was a rider. We got to know people through horseback riding. We made lifelong British and French diplomatic friends because when

you were talking about us being a hardship post, hanging to each other, in a certain sense the French and the British and the Americans were all in this tough situation together and really helped each other out. Matter of fact, I think one of the first things I remember noticing as a wife, we lived in a house, all the houses had been requisitioned from Nazis and we lived in a house, a tiny house 'cause there were just the two of us and then eventually our first daughter was born there and we were told that if anyone came in to repair anything you had to stand right there while they did it. Now I did that but they could have been planting a bug in front of me and I didn't have the technical know-how but I certainly tried to be as intimidating as I could be. I remember very well because we did make all of these friendships in the British and the French sector that when you would be on the phone at first you could hear virtually nothing. Then as your conversation proceeded and people figured out that it was innocuous the French would hang up, and then the British would hang up, and then maybe the Americans hang up, and then the West Germans would hang up, and at some point the East Germans and the Russians would hang up, and by the end of the conversation you could actually really hear each other. That was a huge issue at the time.

*Q: I'm thinking, up through '67, were there any major developments there at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: There were for Marten, which I'm sure he covered. He was responsible for Spandau and a number of the people in Spandau were released during his tenure, all except Rudolf Hess. We did have those mini blockades which were significant in their own way. Those are the major ones that I particularly remember.

*Q: Ruth, you wanted to add something about Rome.*

VAN HEUVEN: A couple of things, actually. You had asked about the ambassador. Freddy Reinhardt was, I think, a really excellent role model as a Foreign Service Officer who became ambassador in Rome already in the era when a great many U.S. ambassadors in Europe were political as opposed to professionals. He went on to be Counselor of the Department later. He just had a really good feel, I thought, for what was important and what wasn't and a very nice, mild-mannered way of putting it across. After I had left I heard from others who were still at post that he had a disagreement with President Johnson. LBJ wanted to go to the Vatican and see the Pope and did not want to bother with the Republic of Italy at the same time. And Reinhardt basically said, "You cannot come if you don't also see the Republic of Italy. You can't just do the one." And he prevailed but it was the end of his assignment. So he essentially made the president do what he had to do but there was a cost, a personal cost.

And Johnson had actually come on a visit as vice president while I was there. In the end, by the time I had retired, I had seen and/or met every one of the presidents of my era with the exception of Ronald Reagan, probably just because we had so many European assignments and at some point or another they all tended to come to Europe. The Johnson advance stories were legion. The kinds of things that came out in the cables before he would hit post, down to the kind of bed-board under the mattress and the angle of the showerhead.

*Q: Had to be something like 11 feet off the ground, too, I think.*

VAN HEUVEN: And what kind of breakfast cereal. In fact, I remember telling a friend at some point later who was working for an advertising agency and the cereal was Grape-Nuts and he said, "Oh, can I use it?" I think Grape-Nuts must have been one of his company's clients. I said, "I doubt it."

I think it was on that same trip when he came to Rome as vice president. Probably not, it was probably when he was president, because he stayed in the residence of the DCM at the embassy in Bonn. The advance team came in and the DCM and his wife had to move out so the vice president could stay there. And the advance team came in and looked and said, "Oh, he doesn't like books." And they boarded up the bookcases in the library in the DCM's residence for the duration of the vice president's visit.

Well the thing in Rome, besides what was the angle of the showerhead and so on was that, I was in the control room, again, as one of the junior officers that was what you got pulled out to help with. It seemed as if everything he wanted LBJ had to have 300 of. I don't know if this was a Texan phenomenon or what. It was often on a whim, all of a sudden. At three o'clock in the morning the DCM had to find a tie shop that could be opened so one of us could run over and buy 300 silk ties for Johnson to take back to the States, probably as gifts for whomever. And I went over, actually during the day, not in the middle of the night, to a shop and bought 300 postcards and the postcards couldn't have a religious or a political connotation. That's kind of hard to come by in Rome, to find 300 such postcards. Obviously I got 50 of this and 50 of that but it wasn't easy.

He also wanted to collect some art. The last day that he was in Rome we had these pictures stacked all over the control room, 50 or so oil paintings. He came in and he looked at them. And there were three or four that he decided that he really liked. He asked what the price was and then he came in with the DCM and he said, "Call the artist back and see if he'll," he offered half the price.

Actually there was another story from Berlin on the trip to Germany that he did the same. He went to one of the really big porcelain companies, manufacturers that have their headquarters in Berlin. He picked out some china and wanted seconds and wanted to haggle on the price of the seconds, which somehow to us didn't seem like what one should do as the vice president.

It was time to go and LBJ got in his motorcade and went off and the DCM, who was this famous Outerbridge Horsey, who smoked a cigarette on a cigarette holder and was a man of great distinction, just walked back and forth for a while. The call came from the motorcade, "What does the artist say?" And he said, "Well, I'm waiting to hear from him." He didn't lie. He said something to say he didn't have an answer yet. Never called him and eventually called back to say, "The artist says no." And Johnson said, "Oh, okay, I'll take them" at the full price. So we had to wrap them in a big hurry and get them in a car and send them out to the airport.

*Q: I interviewed, Tom Stern, administrative officer in Bonn, I think on the same trip and Johnson, the cultural affairs officer had gathered portraits together and it was, "That's not what I want. I want real German pictures." And then he realized what he wanted. A stag at bay, an old man*

VAN HEUVEN: A Hummel figure.

*Q: It basically was PX art which were assembled in an old torpedo factory by Turkish painters who were doing it by the number. And then Johnson said, "Oh yes, I want these and that's great. Exactly what I want but I want a history of the artist." So Tom got people, they got, "This was done by Helmut Schwartz, an artist of some distinction, coming from the small town of" making this up and putting it on the back of the pictures.*

VAN HEUVEN: Lady Bird, on the other hand, was a really gracious person who personally came into the control room before they left to thank us all for our work and sent us little hand-written notes. She was a class act.

The other thing about Freddy Reinhardt was that we shared a somewhat similar background in the sense that he, too, had Swiss ancestry and spoke schwyzerdütsch and every once in a while he'd pull me in just to talk a little schwyzerdütsch or actually teach me jokes in schwyzerdütsch. Some people call it a dialect. Really it's a great deal more different than High German than American English from British English. You really have to learn it.

At that time there were very few countries that recognized the Vatican as a separate entity and that had ambassadors. It was really primarily the countries with Catholic monarchs that had their own ambassador to the Vatican. So Reinhardt still functioned in the dual capacity. He was our accredited representative to the Vatican and if there was something to be done over there he personally was the one. It wasn't somebody in the political section, he personally was the one who went. And he used to have a lot of fun. He would walk in and the Swiss guard would always be there. The Swiss Guard, this is still one of these hereditary things handed down almost from father to son

*Q: They're still doing it I understand.*

VAN HEUVEN: They still do it and they still come from what are called the inner cantons, the three original cantons in William Tell times that formed the original union, that were never touched by the religious wars, that remained very Catholic. And they to this day provide over 75 percent of the present day Swiss Guard. So they also speak this Swiss German dialect or language. That was probably one of the primary times when he used to call me in, because he used to have great delight, he didn't go that often, in coming back and telling me about how he'd arrived and he'd spoken schwyzerdütsch to the guards. They were just totally, an American ambassador talking to them in this semi-secret little tongue. So those were the Rome things that I wanted to add.

On Berlin, we had talked about the height of the Soviet threat at that time, the difficulties between West and East. I think I ought to, in terms of a sense of fear and existential problems that existed, I think one thing that I should have added was that this was just a few years after the wall went up and you really knew it. We would go for walks with the dog in areas where there was still park land. One area was along a lake the other border of which was in East Berlin. You heard gunshots at times and you always figured it was some poor person trying to escape. It could have been something else, too, but the reality of the time was that it wasn't that long after they'd discovered that tunnel where people had been escaping.

*Q: Eavesdropping tunnel, yeah.*

VAN HEUVEN: No, the escaping tunnel. There were eavesdropping tunnels as well. But a year or so before I got there, a tunnel was found through which quite a few people escaped, a long, long tunnel that was then discovered and that was the end of that way out. The only people, the only Germans that were allowed to go back and forth were the elderly. For some reason split families, where the elderly person was on the western side, not on the eastern side, were allowed to go back and visit. And we had a cleaning lady who was elderly enough to fit that category and had a son in East Berlin, so she was able to go back once in a while. And Marten had a suit that I hated because I thought looked too Mafioso; it was one of these dark suits with a very prominent light stripe to it and I finally convinced him to give it to Frau Schultz and she was very proud to take it to her son in East Berlin. And we always used to get a private chuckle at the idea of her son in East Berlin in this incredibly capitalistic suit.

*Q: You left Berlin when?*

VAN HEUVEN: We left Berlin in the summer of '67, had home leave and then arrived in the early fall in Brussels. I may be wrong on the month but I can tell you the day. We arrived the day that NATO moved up from Paris to Brussels and they were literally still rolling out turf for the grass around the building and pouring cement for the parking lots. And we were the only newcomers in the mission. Everybody else in the U.S. Mission to NATO had just moved up from Paris or was still moving up. And I would say that you probably could have seen the groove of their heels all the way from Paris to Brussels. They were not happy about leaving Paris.

*Q: Was there considerable resentment against the French or just against the move?*

VAN HEUVEN: That was one of the reasons my husband ended up being assigned there. He had been a lawyer working for L. He came in as an attorney-advisor and was assigned to Berlin as the legal advisor. While he was in Berlin he applied to convert to the Foreign Service and actually did, went to Brussels as a Foreign Service Officer. I think one of the reasons he got picked for the assignment was when he was in L his main field was L/UNA. In that capacity he knew Harlan Cleveland who was in IO and who then became ambassador at NATO. Cleveland was interested in pursuing a claim for damages against the French, in terms of probably the costs of this entire dislocation and wanted Marten to

pursue that portfolio. Which in the end he didn't, really. They kind of let it go. But that was the purpose.

What everyone else was really voicing was their regret at leaving Paris. And of course to us, we hadn't had Paris. I had actually spent a year there my junior year in college but we weren't missing that. We quite enjoyed Brussels and found it probably in many ways, certainly with very little children, a more comfortable place to live. There was a definite downtown but it was nowhere near the size of a big city. It was easier to get out into the country, to go for walks, etc. The food was excellent. There were more museums than we had time to go to or other cultural events at that stage in our career. One of the real challengers, obviously, in moving a whole mission from Paris to Brussels, was finding housing for that many people. What the mission decided to do was to go out and find 250 properties and we were just assigned to a property. Because they felt if each of us went out and found our own place

*Q: You'd bid each other up.*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly. The first place we were assigned to was a city apartment that was a great deal closer for Marten to get to the embassy. But because of the confusion and everybody arriving and they're putting all of this together, it wasn't ready when we first got there. So we spent the first seven or eight weeks in a hotel, which was not easy. Our first daughter was born in Berlin and she was eight, nine months old when we arrived. So she was just at the crawling stage. We didn't have a baby carriage or a stroller and we had a dog. So there I was in a hotel room while Marten was going off to the office every day and if I walked the dog I had to carry the baby on my other hip or I had to get what they called the *chasseur*, the bellhops, to take the dog out for a walk and try and find a laundromat to do all the laundry that's associated with a baby etc, etc. And at that point, SHAPE was setting up down near Mons,

*Q: Supreme Allied Headquarters Europe.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right. They were setting up because that was the other half of the equation. It wasn't just the political portion, which was the NATO headquarters, but it was the military headquarters as well that had moved up from France. They moved close to the French border which in my memory was part of the deal with Belgium. It was very interesting to Belgium to have both headquarters move to Belgium. They had to do first of all the ethnic thing, where you had some in the French-speaking part and some further up north, although Brussels has always stayed bilingual but it was also a less well-off area economically. It's where all the old coalmines are and that was not a big industry or let's say a failing industry at the time. So my memory is that's the reason why they picked Mons as the SHAPE headquarters. But this was so early in there that this, too, was almost a jerry-rigged operation in that very early period when we first arrived. And I remember going down and hoping to find some baby things. The PX was a Quonset hut with these very deep shelves and very narrow aisles. You literally had to take a flashlight with you to be able to see what was towards the backs of the shelves. And it changed a lot by the time we left, three years later.



Anyway, so we moved into an apartment, a lovely old baroque, from the Belgian era type apartment where by this time we had managed to acquire a stroller. You were, however, not allowed to take the stroller up in the elevator. The elevator was just like all those old Parisian elevators, in a cage, where you could see through with these funny little fold-out semi-glass doors. So you had to leave the stroller downstairs and put all your groceries on the floor in the elevator and take your child on your hip to go upstairs. We ended up, partly I think because of the decision, the fact that so many of us moved there at once, the decision to find housing for everyone and the difficulties of juggling all of those assignments, we ended up moving every year that we were in Brussels. It was a lovely apartment but our daughter was teething. She would cry at night and the people upstairs and the people downstairs would bang on the ceiling or the floor and the landlady would come and make comments. I sat up for hours with her in the rocker and it just wasn't possible to get her not to cry. So we asked if we could move and they found us a townhouse in another part of town that was actually closer to NATO headquarters where actually the first shopping mall in all of Europe was created. So we're talking here 1968.

And the reason was it was an end unit. So we put her in the outside bedroom that was as far away as possible from contiguous walls with anybody else and after letting her cry for three nights that was it. It was nice because we had a garden in back and it was a much more suburban area than a city apartment.

We ended up moving again because I was then pregnant with our second daughter and this was one of these very European places. It was on four floors and all stairs. And so again we asked whether it might be possible to move and we were then actually allowed to go out and find a place ourselves, because the pressure was off by then. I don't think we would have moved the third time had we thought that we would not be there for four years. We ended up leaving at the end of the third year. So we moved again and that was the carriage house of a former estate out in Rhode-Saint-Genèse which was on the way down towards Waterloo. That was the perfect place and I'm sorry we couldn't stay the second year. I would say probably of all of our assignments Belgium was the place where it was the hardest to get to know people outside of the mission. That might have had something to do with the fact that NATO had a very particularized mission, your work was with people from other countries.

*Q: Also, you'd all just hit the place at the same time, which probably overwhelmed the Belgians, too.*

VAN HEUVEN: They made a big effort. They had a welcome committee group, headed by a Belgian baroness who did all kinds of trips and things but, yes, I'm sure that was part of it as well. But there in that third house we did meet some of our Belgian neighbors who stayed friends over the years. Those years, the Soviet threat may not have looked as large to us or as imminent as it did in Berlin but it still was a huge enemy.

*Q: You're talking about '68 and August of '68 and Czechoslovakia and this was, how did that hit you all?*

VAN HEUVEN: Hard, professionally. That kept Marten very busy. Even though the threat was large, Czechoslovakia, all the reasons for creating NATO in the first place were very palpable, even so Harlan Cleveland was already working on finding rationales for the continued existence [of NATO.] There must have been things going on already that made him feel we have to sell this institution to our allies and to our constituents back home, our public back home. So, yes, those were years where NATO was very active and was doing a lot of the preparatory work. And of course I just remember this from the conversations. I was not directly involved. I was a wife who was just accompanying her husband there and besides raising two little babies I was doing graduate work. I think this was probably primarily organized by the military. They had an arrangement with Boston University where professors, I think two at a time, would spend a semester in Brussels and offer graduate courses in international relations.

So I took a number of those courses while we were there. I remember that in the latter half of the Sixties a lot of the basic work was done in the area of civil emergency planning. This was one of the things Marten worked on. I think you see even today, looking back, that this is one of the enduring strengths of NATO. That when the Europeans talk about going out and creating their own defense force and their own defense capabilities, all of that infrastructure for working together in taking care of any emergency that comes along is within the NATO framework. They would go back to it; they would need it for that purpose and it has stood them in good stead quite a number of times.

*Q: Well then, you left there in 1969 or '70?*

VAN HEUVEN: '70.

*Q: '70. Where'd you go?*

VAN HEUVEN: We went back to the United States and that was in fact our first assignment together in Washington. So we had been out '64 to '70. And we bought our first house. Marten went back early because he was asked to take an assignment with ACDA.

*Q: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.*

VAN HEUVEN: They felt that with the work that he'd been doing in NATO, he would have a very good background for the specific job they wanted him for, which primarily had to do with the CCD, which was the Committee on the Conference on Disarmament. And that was a framework within the UN family that had its headquarters in Geneva. So those first couple of years Marten was going back and forth between Washington and conferences in Geneva. Those years in Washington, from '70 to '74, were the years both of Vietnam and of the Watergate for me personally because I was still at home in that period.

In 1972 women's liberation finally hit the Department of State. They began to allow women who married to remain in the sense that they were willing to make an effort to be more flexible about finding them work and working out arrangements so that both spouses could work in the Foreign Service. I wasn't part of the class suit but I was a beneficiary. So it's not fair to say I was a member of the class. And Allison Palmer was one of the people who brought the suit. By the time the Department got the judgment and figured out how they were going to handle it we were already in late '72. The redress that they offered was reinstatement if your sole reason for resigning was marriage. And I didn't choose to take advantage immediately because our girls were still very little and I didn't actually apply until we were leaving Washington in '74. In fact I think I applied from Princeton in '75, because we had a year in Princeton where Marten had a sabbatical.

To go backwards, now, we were in Washington for four years. I, on the side, worked in real estate for a while. And I made the same mistake that I made later in coming back into the Foreign Service, in picking a kind of work that I thought would make it possible for me to have a very flexible schedule and to be home when my kids needed me. Real estate didn't turn out to be like that. If you wanted to be successful, you had to be ready to go at the drop of a hat when somebody needed you and you had to be able to make arrangements for your children. Luckily, during those years, we had a succession of *au pairs*, a couple of gals from families we had known in Belgium, the daughter of a cousin from Italy, the daughter of a cousin from Switzerland. So I did always have somebody who could help out at home.

But what I remember the most in terms of those years was first of all the absolute grip that the Watergate hearings and that whole period had on our whole society. I hate to iron but I got a year's worth of ironing done just sitting there turning the television on and watching those hearings, ironing everything in sight. And that was our first television set was in order to be able to watch the Watergate hearings. It was also a really crucial period in Vietnam. I remember, probably because of Marten's original background as a lawyer, we knew a lot of people in Justice. We also knew, more from friendships before joining the Foreign Service, a fair amount of people in EAP, in Far East affairs. It wasn't even called EAP at that point. In any case, I remember on both accounts, the people had to do with the Watergate and the people who had to do with Vietnam policy, various ones. One said, "Every morning I get up and look at myself while I'm shaving in the mirror and ask myself is this the day I'm going to resign?" There were a lot of issues out there that you had to deal with that you weren't necessarily comfortable with.

I'm telling this because this was a really good lesson for me. I had had my own assignment in Italy. I had been with Marten in Berlin. And both times, I think, I was less than tolerant of peoples' stories about how they handled the fascist period in their countries. It seemed to me that in Italy I only knew one person, who was one of our language teachers at the embassy in Rome, who said, "Of course my family was fascist. Everyone was fascist." Everyone else, oh no, they had fought Mussolini tooth and nail and had been heroic in this and that. Same thing in Germany. The wife of the justice minister was the one person who said, "Yes, I joined the Hitler Youth. I thought he was wonderful." And everyone else in Berlin would say, "Oh, well, this was a southern

phenomenon. This came out of Munich. We did not participate. We voted against Hitler.” Which may well have been true but once he was in that wasn’t the case any more.

But I think seeing situations where heroism would have been, even in a much lower degree, in our own country, to stand up and take a position against a policy or efforts to distort what the Justice Department was doing, I gained a lot of tolerance where an individual person’s line is. Where is that line where you say, “This far and no further?” Where do you say, “Yes, of course, I do what my boss says” or “I protest?”

*Q: So, you went to Princeton and this would be ’74-’75?*

VAN HEUVEN: ’74-’75. It was that mid-career year, mid-career training and he chose the program at Princeton. It was a wonderful year for all of us, as a family because he got home at a reasonable hour. We could do all kinds of things. He could come to the kids’ school programs. I, as the wife of a fellow, this was at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, could audit courses for free at Princeton. Our younger daughter was in kindergarten so for the first time I had that kind of freedom. I had my mornings to myself. And so I took a whole lot of wonderful courses there that were great.

*Q: Were you keeping your eye on renewing your career?*

VAN HEUVEN: At that point I was ready. Both girls were in school, and I went back down from Princeton to file all of my papers to apply for reinstatement. In family terms I’m still very grateful that I did it. It turned out I had earlier made a tactical error. In ’72 the heat of the courts was on the State Department and they had to comply. I believe that for the women who applied to take benefit of this ability to be reinstated the skids were greased and it all went quite quickly. But by the time I turned up three years later this was not on anybody’s hot burner, and it actually ended up taking me almost three years to be reinstated.

Part of the problem was, it was the spring of ’75 by the time I actually filed my papers and then we went abroad in the summer of ’75. We went to the Hague and you’re far away, you’re never noodging or you’re only noodging occasionally. Every time I was home in the States I would come into the State Department and I would pretty much physically move my papers from one person’s desk to the next person’s desk but then nothing would happen again until I was back the next time. And I actually hit one real stumbling block fairly late in the process. This came from another woman Foreign Service Officer, wife of a Foreign Service Officer. She was younger and so she must have come in under the program, after the class action suit. And she said, “This isn’t going to work because you’re not world wide available. Your husband is assigned in the Hague. So we can’t assign you anywhere.” And I went home and I talked to Marten about it and he said, “Go talk to Joan Clark about it.” Joan was the DG at the time. And I did. I went in and I talked to her and I said, “This is a Catch 22. If this program is there, how do you get started? Obviously your husband’s going to have an assignment somewhere and I’m willing to take leave without pay until we have our next assignment but that might be quite a few more years as well.” And after that visit it ended up working out, and not

immediately either, but the paperwork kept moving along. And it finally came through while we were in our next post, which was Berlin. So it was over a three-year period.

*Q: How did you find the Netherlands?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was a very interesting assignment. It used to be that you would never be assigned to the country of your birth, if you were not a native-born American and of course Marten was born in Holland. And I remember he asked the fellow that said, "How about political counselor in the Hague?" "Are you sure?" It did make a huge difference, in totally positive ways. Marten was fluent in Dutch. We met so many people. It's just easier when they don't have to talk to you in English. I kind of picked up Dutch because I had a lot of German in my background and English and Dutch is kind of halfway between German and English. I also took courses at the University of Leiden, again in international relations on the graduate level. In the beginning, the big advantage was that most of the texts were in English, but some were in Dutch. In the beginning I would be looking up fifty words on a page and by the end I was hardly looking up a word. It was mostly seminars and in the seminars the professors were really terrific. The way we worked it out, everybody else in the class would talk in Dutch, I would talk in English. We all understood each other but got to speak in the language where we could be the most articulate. I really think the language thing was a huge key to making that an assignment where first of all we as a couple could be really effective.

The same thing had happened, going way back, in Berlin. We were both fluent in French. There was one other couple in the American mission in Berlin where both of them were fluent in French. I want to tell you that the four of us were the token Americans at every French dinner party. If they were there, we were not. If we were there, they were not. We never saw another American at one of their parties unless it was something really big and the minister was there. We really got around in the Netherlands, and still have a great many friends both privately and in the Dutch foreign ministry.

*Q: How did the Dutch political situation, you'd been in Belgium. Did you see any reflection of the Walloon-Fleming split or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, not at all. The Walloon-Fleming split was in the process of aggravating when we were in Belgium. I remember we lived in a small apartment the first year and my family wanted to come and visit. Marten's family wanted to come and visit and Marten's Dutch relatives, not that far away, wanted to come and visit. We didn't have room to put anybody up. Our solution was to rent a house on the shore in a community called Le Zoute, which was kind of the fashionable beach place for Belgians. Many wealthy Belgians had great big houses in Le Zoute. But the fashionable season to be in Le Zoute was July and August and you could rent their houses for a fare-the-well in June. So we did that the first year and then we kept that up because we rented a house with six or seven bedrooms and we just had a month-long house party with Dutch relatives and American relatives and even one or two Swiss relatives. Our second daughter, who was born in Brussels, born at SHAPE, was baptized in a little Anglican church out there in Le Zoute.

There's a whole string of little Anglican churches dotted throughout Europe in places the British tended to go as tourists. They're all over the ski places in Switzerland, and in the watering places in Italy. They're all along that Belgian coast there across the Channel. They're manned, interestingly, by Anglican priests, probably mostly from rather poor parishes who can't afford to go someplace on vacation. So they get their room and board in exchange for doing a sermon on Sunday and being there for the week in case somebody has a pastoral need in the meantime. We went in to talk to the incumbent at this little church, which was called St. George's. It was a Scottish priest who actually used the Scottish rite, which is different from the St. James version, rather a hellfire and brimstone version. He agreed to christen our little girl and we had that experience. He was something else. A little bit like Southern Baptists.

In that period in Le Zoute I had to call back to Brussels. I had to call someone and I didn't have her phone number. So I called information and I spoke French and the person on the other end kept answering me in Flemish. This is before we went to Holland, before I picked up Dutch. So finally I said in French, "Excuse me but I'm a foreigner and I don't understand you." And this person said, in French, "*Un moment*", "Just a minute." And I waited more like sixty seconds and somebody came on the phone and spoke English. Now it could have been that he recognized that I had an English accent but my sense is, when I say this was the period where all of this was beginning to get almost radicalized, was they were not going to speak French. Le Zoute was a Flemish-speaking area even though I'm using the French name for it. The wealthy Belgians from Brussels that went there obviously spoke French but this was a place where they were going to speak Flemish and Flemish only. If you needed a telephone number you darn well better be able to speak enough Flemish to get it from them or they'd find somebody who could speak another language to you.

*Q: Well how did you find the temperature regarding this sort of thing in the Netherlands, was there any of this?*

VAN HEUVEN: I don't remember, ever, there being those kind of issues there. You mean between the south of? It's one language but there's a heavily Protestant north and a heavily Catholic southern part of the country. Somehow they worked that out long ago and it wasn't an issue when we were there.

*Q: Did you get any feel for, at that time, relations with Germany, among sort of the people and all?*

VAN HEUVEN: You needed the younger generation to grow up. That's now no longer anywhere near as acute. But when we were there, that was still palpable, that many people in Marten's family had had bad experiences in the war. In 1975 to 1978 we were in Holland. People who were in the war were in their fifties and there was a huge celebration every year on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, which was the day when Holland was completely liberated. It wasn't a fireworks and dancing in the streets; it was a religious, somber, remembering of all of those who died and who suffered in the war. Yet at the

same time we used to comment somewhat ironically that we lived in one of the suburbs of the Hague, which is very close to a big beach resort, which is called Scheveningen. Scheveningen was in fact during the war one of the words that the Dutch resistance used to use to test, to be sure that somebody wasn't a German, because the Germans couldn't pronounce it. But it was a big beach. There was a casino and a spa so a lot of Germans would come there for the salt water. All the little houses along the main roads leading into Scheveningen would have little signs saying "*Zimmer mit fröstück*", "room with breakfast" [in German.] So at the same time people were beginning to make economic decisions that maybe they could take Germans in overnight.

*Q: How were Dutch-American relations at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: Excellent. The Dutch, in many fora, NATO, UN, trade we had first of all common interests but in many ways common values. The Dutch were often among our most stalwart allies.

*Q: And also you'd gotten past that period where we had a very nasty confrontation for years in front of our consulate general in Amsterdam over Vietnam. Or was Amsterdam a unique area?*

VAN HEUVEN: I would put that off to something totally different. Holland was changing internally. You can say this about every country in Europe and we've served mainly in Europe. I know I've said it over and over about what a love relationship the Italians had with us when I was in Rome but the relationship of every European country with the United States is and has always been a love-hate relationship. And that hate relationship is a very complex one that has a fair dose of envy and a fair dose of frustration at someone else having more power and being able to, a feeling as if one is being dictated to, a sense of powerlessness. Only I would argue, no, from the beginning you had a huge ideological basis. So in Italy, in those early years, certainly the members of the Communist Party didn't love us and so that was always part of the political reality. Holland, by the time we got there

*Q: You were there from when to when?*

VAN HEUVEN: '75 to '78, was very, very late, among European countries, in coming to terms with the Second World War and the social changes that the Second World War created in their societies. And actually, as you know, I have a long background in Switzerland and my husband, Marten, had a long background in Holland. We used to have almost constant conversations about this, in the years that we were in Holland, because I always saw huge similarities between the two societies. They were societies that had very disparate parts with very different backgrounds, different religions, different languages, well, even different languages in Holland. And they managed to knit themselves together by imposing a model that worked, an accommodational model, where people dealt with each other in certain ways in order to make the polity work. And that meant that they ended up being heavily conventional. So it took huge pressure to break that societal mold. And in Holland that's what, I would argue, the riots in

Amsterdam were about. That's what in the period just as we were arriving, what they called the *krakkers*, which were the early hippies. See how much latter they had hippies than we did in the States, who became squatters in abandoned or tenantless buildings and were for all practical purposes anarchists. They were against all authority, against the power of the state, so on and so forth. I would argue that it took that kind of radical violence, like the bra-burners who made women's liberation happen, in order to change a very strong mold that most of society had been willing to live by. And in fact the same was true, as I said, in Switzerland. The demonstrations, the riots that happened everywhere else in Europe in the Sixties didn't happen there until the late Seventies, early Eighties.

Well it was happening in Holland in the early Seventies and it was still going on while we were there. And the political changes to reflect it were happening as we were there. First you got maybe the economic changes, then the social changes, then finally the political changes. So it was during that period that you had society that one of the main political scientists described as a pillar society. Totally vertical organization where people went to a certain church and that party represented that church and they played soccer with people from that church and their choir was all people from that church and their hockey clubs and Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts and the camps they sent their kids to, so there was virtually no horizontal communication. Which meant you didn't have differences of opinion. And the same if you were secular, which meant that you were labor, the same was true. You just can't imagine within the Protestant Church that you could have as many little divisions and it all had to do with whether you believed some arcane little thing in the Bible, whether you belonged to that particular church or this particular church. There was even a schism from the Catholic Church. They were called the Old Catholics.

*Q: In*

VAN HEUVEN: Germany as well, very similar.

*Q: With the Anglican in a way, at least*

VAN HEUVEN: Old Catholics in Holland went in a different direction. In any case, it was during those years that we were in Holland that many of these parties were beginning to die out because religiosity was beginning to die out with advancing prosperity. And the power structure was such that enough politicians felt they had to do something in order to keep a grasp on power. And so in the end you had a Christian Democratic Party, which had never been possible before. All but the most extreme Protestants joined with the Catholics, which, end of the religious wars, 1977, I think, came together in one Christian Democratic Party. It became fairly similar to the Christian democratic parties throughout Europe and one labor party. And there was still a fairly strong Liberal Party, which was the other secular but non-union party that tended to be businessmen and so on. So you then had a three-way system where over the next twenty years either the Christian Democratic Party or the Labor party would be in the ascendancy.



*Q: Was there any reflection of sort of a Bader-Meinhof or real nasty people, were they out doing things or was there any*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, they were already out doing things. We were much more aware of it in our following assignment in Bonn. It was very early terrorism, that period when we were there. The first summer that we went home on home leave, we got on a Pan Am plane two days after that first huge hijacking. They took three planes to the Anatolian desert and blew them up. One of the three, actually only two ended up in the Anatolian desert. One of the three was that same flight that we took two days before. It was a Pan Am flight from Brussels. It was supposed to go to New York. It was one of the first jumbo jets and it was too big to land on that strip of desert in Anatolia so it was diverted to Cairo. It landed in Cairo and was blown up within a minute or two. Everybody got off amazingly quickly when you think of it. In fact, there's a Foreign Service story that goes with that. The French minister to NATO was from a really old French family. He was being assigned to the UN in New York. He was on that plane and got off safely. But he decided that he didn't trust all of his family heirloom silver to the packers. So he took it on the plane with him and of course it all got blown up.

*Q: Was there any problem at that time, 'cause certainly having it now, all over Europe, with immigration? The Dutch had people from Indonesia*

VAN HEUVEN: The Dutch had a number of terrorist incidents, mainly by people from Molucca, which is part of the Indonesian archipelago. There were a fair amount of Moluccans in the Netherlands and they were trying to affect policy. Of course, by then Indonesia was already independent so I can't really say anymore why they thought Holland would have any sway on what the Indonesian government decided to do.

*Q: Relations weren't certainly that warm!*

VAN HEUVEN: But they were there and terrorism was becoming the flavor of the day. Who knows? We lived right around the corner from the Dutch foreign minister, who was Max van der Stoel. He continued to be in Dutch politics for many years thereafter, a very quiet, very introverted man, with a wife who was the absolute opposite. Our girls would get on the school bus on a bus corner not too far from our house. When these incidents started happening, all of a sudden you had two 18, 19 year old Dutch military people with what looked like machine guns hanging off their shoulders out in front of his house. That was the early how do you protect somebody in this kind of situation and I thought they were more dangerous than the terrorists. How do you handle this with your children, as you're trying to not scare them to death and yet at the same time prepare them for this new world? And I simply said, "You know, these people are there to protect the foreign minister but you have to think they may be pretty afraid and they may react very quickly and so I think it's better if you go to the bus stop, walk the other way until they're not there any more."

The two major incidents that I remember were they hijacked a train and the train was sitting off in northern Holland for a couple of days until they got organized. But when the

Dutch finally went in to seize the train they did it very well, very professionally. No one was hurt except a couple of the hijackers. People took over a school and to my memory that was the first time a school was taken over. It's happened X number of times since then. And that went on, too, for three days or so and there began to be concerns about disease and water and food and so on. But after wearing these hostage takers down, they took the school back and freed all the children and the teachers.

*Q: Well then, you left there and what happened career-wise?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was around the time that we left Holland I think that my paperwork at State finally was all put to bed. At some point I flew back to the States to take the orals. That was the one thing that the Foreign Service insisted on, was that you retake the orals again, which I thought was fair.

*Q: Had you been keeping up with*

VAN HEUVEN: I had. Sure, you could have turned into a vegetable in the meantime. And I was out almost 14 years by the time I came back so I thought that was a very reasonable requirement. The way it ended up working out was that Marten was assigned to Bonn as political counselor from the Hague. He was offered the position of DCM in the Hague and we talked about staying but I think we both felt that we had given what we had to give, done what we could do, in the Hague and staying on just to get the DCM title would not have added anything.

*Q: Who was the ambassador while you were there?*

VAN HEUVEN: We had two. The first was Kingdon Gould, who was a real estate figure here in Washington, DC. Lives in Maryland, was the Republican finance chairman for it must have been early Reagan and was a political appointee. And he is the person that I always tell everyone about when they rant and rail about political appointees. I have known career ambassadors who were really not good, particularly when I was in the OIG I came to know a few. And this was an example of a political appointee who was fabulous and who brought all sorts of strengths to the equation that we Foreign Service Officers generally don't have. One of course is access to the White House and being able to get directly to people in the White House. We have to work through our desks and offices and DASes to try and make that happen and it isn't that easy. He was a businessman and he had a lot of savvy in terms of export promotion, terms of the business end of things. Most of us tend to be negotiators and analysts and those are important strengths to have but we're not really generally businessmen or business oriented. That may have gotten ever so slightly better with the advent of the commercial service, but nevertheless. He was an example of entrepreneurship in government.

For instance, we had to organize the bicentennial, 1776. We were in the Hague and we were going to throw a huge event but how were we going to finance it? And he went out and played golf, the way I guess businessmen do, with a number of the big Dutch companies that had a lot of interests in the United States, from Shell to Phillips to

Unilever. He got private sponsorship for renting the exhibition hall in the Hague for a whole weekend and then USIS put on a fabulous set of exhibits and museums. We had singers and dancers and you name it and it was a wonderful weekend. The Queen came, most of the government came, and everyday Dutch people streamed in and out all weekend.

And the other thing which I have also noticed with virtually all of the political appointee ambassadors that we or I have had over the years is that they tended to be privately wealthy. They were mostly all willing to fund their entertaining out of their own pocket, leaving our meager representational funds to be shared among the officers. This meant that you were much more likely to be reimbursed for the entertaining that you needed to do in terms of your job. So there were a lot of reasons why I don't think we should be as quick to sneer on the practice of having political appointees.

*Q: Sometimes, when it works it can work very well. Who was the other ambassador while you were there?*

VAN HEUVEN: The second ambassador was more of a career officer. He was Bob McCloskey

*Q: Who's sort of been in and out.*

VAN HEUVEN: He was a journalist who came in as a journalist and I'm not sure whether he ever actually joined the Foreign Service but had two overseas postings. The first was as ambassador to the Hague, and the second was as ambassador to Cyprus, and then he left the Foreign Service. Bob had quite a temper. He had been the spokesman of the Department for a very long time and wanted out, just felt that he needed a change. He had two daughters around the age of ours and probably was getting some pressure from his wife, too. So eventually Henry Kissinger sent him off to the Hague as ambassador. As an example of his temper, the Dutch were in the chair at the European Union. There was an issue on which Bob needed to go in and talk to the foreign ministry. He didn't get a cable of instructions and he didn't get a cable and he didn't get a cable. Eventually he fired off a cable to the Department saying it was undignified for an American ambassador to have to go in without instructions on this issue. And a little bit of time passed a cable came in from Arthur Hartman, who was the assistant secretary for EUR, and his cable just said, "Bob, you must be kidding." And a couple of more hours went by and then a cable came in from Henry Kissinger and it said, "When I released you from bondage I never promised you dignity." He laughed about it himself. He was good in a totally different way. He was a good ambassador.

Didn't stay long because actually Kissinger called him back. I don't remember what the issue was. There was a burning issue, and whoever the spokesman was just wasn't doing it for Kissinger. So he called him back and then eventually he got to go to Cyprus.

In Rome, there was another big historical event while I was there and that was the Ecumenical Council that was called by John XXIII, who was the pope at the time. I

ended up seeing some of the fringes of that, in two different ways. The first one was that I got a letter from a previous president of Wellesley College, of which I'm an alumna, from Mildred Horton. She had been Mildred McAfee and the first commander I guess of the WAVES when they were first created in the Second World War. She was the president of Wellesley and she was called to come down and help create the WAVES. She took an extended leave of absence from Wellesley and during those years they built on campus a barracks for the training of women navy personnel. That dorm still existed when I went there many years later and it was called "Navy", quite appropriately. It's not there anymore because it was one of those temporary barracky things. Mildred McAfee came back, re-became president of Wellesley, and then got married and left. And she married a gentleman named Horton who was the president of the Union Theological Seminary. He was invited as one of the Protestant observers to the Ecumenical Council and she came along. And, bless her heart, as an ex-president, many years removed, she was still promoting Wellesley and doing for Wellesley what she could do. So she wrote to me and said that she would be in Rome and here was the list from the Wellesley alumni office of all the Wellesley alumni living in Italy. Perhaps I could see who I could get together and she would be happy to talk to all of us. So I did it and I got in touch with about thirty women all over Italy, many of whom were Americans who had married Italians. I would say it was probably about half and half. The other half were Italians who for one reason or another had attended Wellesley. And virtually every one came. I think they all saw this as an occasion to meet somebody who had been a major figure at Wellesley. And she really lived up to her reputation. She was in her late seventies, early eighties I would say, and very snappy, very with it, very cogent, very focused and we had a delightful afternoon. I ran into one or two of those women again in my second tour, years later, in Milan.

Around that same time the Catholic Church was preparing for beatification ceremonies of Mother Mary Seton, who was on track to become the first American-born saint and it was a huge event for American Catholics. They chartered one of the *Queens*, the *Queen Mary* or the *Queen Elizabeth* and two planes. At least three of the American cardinals came. One I particularly remember was Cardinal Spellman, because he was the one who spoke. Lots of priests and nuns and a lot of laymen, as well. Again, at that point, we didn't have relations with the Vatican, but there was an invitation extended to the embassy. Since the ambassador to Italy was the person who was the direct representative he asked me if I wanted to go. There were about ten of us I think who went as observers. Because we didn't have diplomatic relations, we didn't sit down with the diplomatic group. They created bleachers in St. Peter's because there was such a huge crowd. So we were in one of the side bleachers above, probably about twenty rows ascending into the ceiling of nuns. It was serendipitous because we soon discovered that I don't think any of us were Catholic. I don't think any of the nuns spoke Italian so they would tell us from a kind of liturgy point of view what was happening and we would tell them from a language point of view what was happening. We had a great thing going there for a while.

One of my best memories: There was an Episcopal church in Rome, it was called St. Paul's outside the Walls. It was already before that I became aware that Catholics in Italy were not as devout as Catholics in America were. I remember that if you ever went into a

Catholic church you covered your head, you were very pious, everything was very devotional. And it happened over and over again in this Episcopal church that looked like every other church and was on a big street that Italians would walk in and think that it was a Catholic mass. They thought they could take care of their mass obligation by just wandering into this church. And then you'd see them, they all stood in the back, and they talked out loud during the services. You could tell that over time they got more and more uncomfortable and thought, "Something's wrong here. This is not right" and then eventually they would leave. But it was astonishing that they just felt like they could wander around and talk. And after I'd been there for a while, it's actually, it's a wonderful thing. It's like a Sunday morning meeting where people go in and chat with their friends and eat their sandwiches and feed their babies but they're there and they are participating in the mass.

*Q: I just talked with somebody just the other day who was saying he remembered going to an Italian thing with a cousin or something and the woman went in and he sort of motioned with his hand and for the women to go in and they stood in the back and he kind of looked for a while then tossed his head and went outside where all the other guys were, where the men were. They were there and they then went outside and they smoked and talked about whatever, soccer or what have you and then the women came out.*

VAN HEUVEN: In any case, that's kind of a prologue to this story. In St. Peter's the ushers were passing out programs and the programs were in Italian and of course the nuns couldn't speak Italian. So I asked this usher, "Do you have any programs in English?" It was a fair guess and he said, "Yes." And he went down and across the nave of St. Peter's he shouts to his friend across the hall, "*Paolo hai i programmi in inglese?*" "Do you have any programs in English?" And of course Paolo did and he came across with a stack and this is again cultural differences. What would you do in the United States if you had a pack of programs? You'd give them to the guy at the end of the row and he would take one and pass them on, right? This guy started throwing them across the bleachers. And you could hear the collective intake of breath on the part of all these nuns. "What is going on here, in the holiest of all churches?" It was really one of those wonderful insights into different cultures.

Cardinal Spellman spoke and he had apparently been at the Vatican for quite a long time. If you spent a lot of time working in the Vatican you had to be able to speak in Latin and in Italian. So you had certain expectations. And his Italian was atrocious. His American accent was so strong that you had to know that it was Italian that he was trying to do to be able even to figure it out. And the tension, it wasn't just we that were kind of taken aback but everybody else who was there that spoke Italian. And when he finished, sweet Pope John XXIII, the liturgy was "*encore delle belle parole*" "some more beautiful words" and everybody burst out laughing. It was like a break in the tension of "Oh, my goodness. Isn't this incredible!"

When we were talking about going back to the United States from Brussels, those intervening years, '74 to '75. I think I had mentioned that that was the period of Watergate and of the end of the Vietnam era. I remember watching our prisoners get off

the plane coming back from Vietnam on one of the last days when we were in Washington. We got back in '67, and soon there was Marten Luther King's assassination and all of the ensuing riots in downtown Washington. The thing that really shocked me was that I had lived in Washington before and I had gone to school with a lot of African-Americans in New York and had always been accustomed to having a very easy relationship. And all of a sudden our movers, we had a crew that was not mixed, it was all African-Americans. They were so hostile it was just blatant. And the whole experience of that unpack, how unfriendly and how hostile they were. I just couldn't believe that difference. But you certainly saw it, maybe not quite to that dramatic an extent, over the next year or so. You could see what a huge change had taken place in Washington in those five years that we were gone.

George Vest was our DCM when we were at NATO. He was a first class gentleman and at the same time a man of tremendous integrity. George did what he thought was right and was someone who stood up to whatever the situation was. We went to the same church in Washington and he was at the Easter Sunday services alone. Emily was out of town. And we invited him to come home with us after church if he wanted to. Our children were really little. We had invited a couple of other people with their children over. They were all going to go hunt for eggs in the garden and have lunch. And he came. It was just absolutely impromptu, spontaneous at the last moment. One of the children of another family was a little boy who was the original Dennis the Menace. In fact, it was kind of the nemesis. We carpooled our children to the same nursery school and I always had to be sure that he sat in the front with me 'cause otherwise he was punching everyone in sight. Well lo and behold this little boy goes up to George Vest and kicks him in the shins. Mother, that was part of the problem. George knelt down until he was eye to eye with this little boy and said, "I hit back." And that was the end.

We had actually invited George and Emily to a dinner once. We were brand new. This was our second assignment as a married couple. It was the first one where we had to use our own furniture because when we'd been in Berlin everything had been provided from the quartermaster, as it was called. Marten had some old kind of hideous maple furniture that he'd had in his apartment over where FSI was at Rosslyn at that point and I had a foam rubber city sofa. I don't know if you remember foam rubber city but it was essentially slats with screw-in legs and a slab of foam rubber in the bottom in back and a few other little oddments. Everything went all right, as far as I know, with the dinner. After dinner we served coffee and Emily took a cup of coffee and went to sit down on the foam rubber sofa and the foam rubber sofa just kept going. That was the moment the leg decided to give way and whole thing went down. And she went down so gracefully with it she never dropped a drop of coffee. I was mortified and she was just as gracious as she could be.

*Q: So you're off to Bonn. You were in Bonn from when to when?*

VAN HEUVEN: We were there from '78 to '81. I actually, I had applied to be reinstated in 1975 while we were in Princeton and I think I had mentioned that the will wasn't there to move paper fast. It just took a very long time. And by February of '77, when we were

still in the Hague, I had reached the stage where I actually sent in the last package of formal papers because now they were willing to accept them. And then in fall of '77 I was invited back to take the orals. And then it took until November of '78 for the formal approval to come through. One delay would have been the security clearance after the orals. I really don't remember what else made it take that long but in fact eventually a cable came to Bonn in early November of '78 with formal approval for my reappointment and saying that I should be sworn in on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November and put on leave without pay the following day, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November. So I was back but there was no job, there was no opening in the embassy.

By then there were cones and I had to pick a cone and I picked the consular cone. I had really enjoyed my short stint in consular work in Rome and I think I mistakenly thought that with two children still at home I would be able to go home earlier than my husband. My last assignment would have been as a political officer, but there would have been no music in having two political officers in the same family in terms of getting tandem assignments. And I thought, "well, if I do consular work I'll get home at a more decent hour" which didn't always turn out to be the case.

But even in that short time in Rome I felt as if you had so many satisfactions from being able to help people and wonderful experiences. You could write a novel for every six months in consular work.

So I chose the consular cone. But there was an extremely small consular section at the embassy in Bonn so there was no opening. Theoretically I could have taken an assignment in some other section but that just didn't happen in the intervening period. And in fact the following summer, so this is from November '78 to the summer of '79, I was home on annual leave with the family and got a call from the embassy offering me the job as the consular officer. There was only one. There was a head of section, supposedly, but there was only one consular position at that time which I was very happy to accept. I was really immensely pleased to be able, after that fairly long process, to go back to work, to be back in the Foreign Service and I felt that the timing was really good. Our daughters were ten and twelve. They were at an age where they really could fend for themselves and we got an *au pair* so there was someone there to help them when they got home from school until I got home from work.

In the years afterwards, I was always happy to accept women officers and give them a chance as well and to mentor them to the extent that was possible. Younger women would always say, "Aren't you angry you lost all that time? You lost all that seniority, etc." And I really felt that I had the best of both possible worlds, that I was able to stay home when my children were little and I was able to go back to work when they didn't need me hanging over them anymore. And saw so often these younger women who were working for me who had three months off and then with tiny babies had to come back to work, spent a fair amount of time weeping over their computers in the beginning. That isn't something that only happens in the Foreign Service. That's a phenomenon with the problem that working mothers have and going back to work. I don't think that

opportunity is available any more to women, that you could take that long a leave of absence and come back. So I really basically feel as if it was a blessing, in retrospect.

I faced a bunch of big challenges when I first started. One was the fact that as the consular officer in Bonn I was supposedly the supervising consular coordinator or supervisory consular officer for all of Germany, which at that point still had six consulates.

*Q: And very senior people.*

VAN HEUVEN: Vern Penner was a very strong officer who was the head of the consular section in Frankfurt. This existed long before I got there and continued long after I left. To be between CA and the embassy over whether the supervisory consular officer should not be in Frankfurt, which was far and away the biggest consular operation in the whole country, or whether it should be in Bonn, where the ambassador and the DCM were. I'm not sure if that ever changed after I left. I don't believe it ever did because I think invariably the ambassador and the DCM won out and they wanted their advisor where they were. So here I was coming back after a 15 year absence, huge changes in all of the legislation and regulations across the whole consular field.

And in fact when I got that call in the summer while I was still in the States I called ConGen Rosslyn and asked if I could come and take the course again, because I really felt like I needed that brush-up, particularly being in Bonn all by myself. And they said, well, actually I think the fellow said, "Well let me consult and figure this out." And he called me back and he said, "Well, you're going to have a three week overlap with your predecessor and we think that's going to be enough. He'll be able to get you through this." In fact I ended up having about a two and a half day overlap with him. It was down to a week and most of that week he was out packing, running around, doing his paperwork and that very next week I sent something back to the Department and said, "Okay, well how about taking the correspondence course?" I got a letter from them saying, "The correspondence course is only for FSNs, you can't take it."

So what we finally worked was that I went two weeks to Frankfurt and one week to Düsseldorf. Düsseldorf was a much smaller operation so it was similar to my operation. Frankfurt, of course, was the place with all the expertise. Well that didn't exactly help in terms of my relationship with Vern Penner but that worked out.

My actual return to duty was August 20<sup>th</sup> of 1979. In 15 years of absence a great deal had changed. For one thing, I was recently looking through some of my papers, in part by way of preparation and I noticed that my salary when I left in '64 was \$7,000 and my salary when I reentered in '78 was \$22,000, which was I think not only a sign of inflation.

*Q: There'd also been some major changes in citizenship, particularly. We spent an awful lot of time in Germany trying to get German-Americans to go back to the United States*



VAN HEUVEN: Oh, that was gone.

*Q: And that was all gone.*

VAN HEUVEN: Totally gone. Lot of court cases, right, on that. Essentially, over time, the courts whittled away every hindrance to American citizenship, once you got it, that Congress ever tried to legislate. But there still were not, when I came back in, in '78, women were still few and far between. I think the really major changes have been since then. So it took probably a decade after those class action suits before you began to see a difference in terms of the make-up of the Foreign Service.

In working out the relationship between Bonn and Frankfurt, one of the things that I did was I just changed the title myself. I just said coordinating consular officer instead of supervisory. Very early on it fell to me to organize an in-country consular conference, which was essentially our answer to a recent OIG inspection that said that there were too many differences in how visa policy was being implemented among all the consulates and that we had to do something about this. So being the organizer of it, hosting it in Bonn, that helped give me a visible role that put us all onto good footing. And over time, I had the funding from the embassy to go and visit each of the posts and it was a mutual learning experience.

*Q: Who filled in for you when you were gone?*

VAN HEUVEN: That was a very difficult problem to solve. I'm not sure now whether the DCM or the admin section came up with it but there were younger officers in the various sections who had recent consular experience. Young second tour officers who were still familiar enough with consular procedures who were tapped and I had a roster of like six or seven. And so anytime I had to go out of town the next one on the roster would come up. If he was not free, then the next one and then you'd go back. So it was fair. One was a labor officer, one was in the political section, one was in admin. So no particular section was getting the full brunt of having to release somebody. When I took leave in the summer they took turns. One did a week, somebody else did another week, so on. And I always kept a file, a read-in file for them, so any new instructions that came in, they could read when they got there. So that really worked very well but it hadn't existed before.

My other real challenge and the reason the job opened up was a recommendation of the OIG as well. I can only guess at the reasons. They were not happy with my predecessor and essentially recommended that he leave and they said, "You have this other person who could come in and fill in." What I found when I got there was a barely functional consular section. It certainly wasn't his fault that there had been reductions, both of officers and FSNs, in the section, not anticipating an increase in workload. So there was more work, fewer people to do it.

There were only two FSNs left and one consular officer. So this was not a huge section I was working with. The two were both very strong personalities and what I found was no

one spoke to each other. The consular officer that I was replacing and the two FSNs didn't talk to each other. The FSNs had their names on everything. This is my pen and my scotch tape and my lamp and my pad. And the place was dingy and messy and unhappy. Apparently there were a lot of complaints as well, a thick letter file full, particularly about one of the two. I think my predecessor was a strong introvert and these two FSN gals were so strong and so unpleasant that a lot of times he just retreated into his office and rarely came out.

So I had a bit of a challenge in trying to turn this into a neat, attractive, friendly, happy workplace, all of which really, I could understand the inspectors thought something needed doing. And at the same time there really was substantially more workload, actually also as a result of various OIG recommendations. So I was organizing for survival, productivity, and I was lucky because very early on there was a CAT Team that came through Frankfurt. I think they were called Consular Assistance Teams. They don't exist anymore but it was a wonderful thing.

*Q: A remarkable idea. If there was a problem or something, they would send, say, two or three people who were experienced, just go take a look and help.*

VAN HEUVEN: And they had people with experience in structural changes, in computer changes, across the board. They had a team that fit. And of course Frankfurt was such a huge operation

*Q: That was my first post, Frankfurt, '55, I was baby births officer at one time. I did nothing but register baby births.*

VAN HEUVEN: It was still going on when I was there. So I was very lucky because I was able to convince the CAT team to come up, just for a day, literally. They just came for one day and they were very helpful in figuring out ways to streamline, to improve the waiting room, to make the whole place more efficient, because we needed all the help that we could get. And then I was also lucky in that where funds were not available for positions, the embassy was able to scrape together some money and improve the furniture, improve the filing, put new rugs on the floor, paint on the walls, a new public address system. All those little things that end up making a really big difference. And the two other pieces of really good luck that I had. I have to say in the one case I really worked hard with the one FSN who had the folder full of complaints about rudeness and the end result was she chose to retire early. So I was very lucky to be able to replace her with a young, cheerful, energetic person who wasn't allergic to change, which is so often the problem.

And then my second stroke of good luck was that I was also able to convince the embassy to give me a PIT position. A part-time, intermittent, temporary, if I remember right, that may be what it stands for. It was very early in the existence, I think, of that program. There was a lot of serendipity in the ability to hire spouses and I was able to hire the wife of one of our admin officers. And boy, she was my good luck, she was a star. She was an American citizen so she could fill one of these PIT positions but she was

German-born. So she was fluent in German and in English as well. And she was a manager. She was an administrator. So everything rapidly got a lot better.

It was a very small consular section. Our consular district was the city of Bonn only. The rest of Nordrhein-Westfalen was handled by the consulate in Düsseldorf. So we had a very small American citizen services operation, fair-sized special services. We had a fair amount of indigents and ill and mentally ill. They probably were attracted by a capital city. I really don't know why so many of them ended up with us but we had them.

We had a huge volume of work in terms of creating official passports or what went for official passports, essentially for the military. When the military had to go to a country where we did not SOFA agreement, a status of forces agreement, they had to have an official passport. In many, many years of trying I was never able to get the military to plan and think ahead enough so those official passports could be issued in Washington when a soldier went off on a tour of duty someplace where it was likely that he would need one. So it was always an extremely last minute thing, where a courier would come up by car, not even by train sometimes, from whatever the military base was and need an official passport and a visa, usually, too, overnight. And we had a huge volume. Of course the embassies were all in Bonn so you had to get the visas and you had to have the passport to put the visa in.

The second year I was there this exploded because the United States reached an agreement with Saudi Arabia in one of those many *quid pro quo* situations where we agreed to give them two or three AWACS planes with crews that would patrol over Saudi territory. The military didn't have basing rights and so they just sent a crew for a month to Saudi out of somewhere in Germany and then a month later those folks were replaced by another crew. They didn't think ahead, so it was always very last minute and with the Saudis: I got to know the DCM at the Saudi embassy extremely well in the process. It was just so difficult and I kept saying, "Look, this is something we're doing as a favor to your country. You want these planes in the air and so you need to get the people there so they can keep the planes in the air." But they had their regulations and the square didn't fit the circle. Over time we worked that out as well but it took a lot of effort and the military end of it never worked as it might have. Essentially this American PIT ended up doing all of that work so we still had a regular FSN who did the visa work and an FSN who did the passports and other ACS work. This PIT did all of the official travel and it was more than a fulltime job.

You were mentioning about being the birth officer. That was another on-going issue that I had that whole time. I worked with a lot of the deputies to the commanders of the various bases about trying to set up a system for all of our consulates where there would be regular reminders to young people in the military that they needed to get a report of birth for their children right away. And they needed to get passports right away for their wives so that if they suddenly got transferred they could go and they didn't have to leave their families behind with their poor wives having to make up for all the missing paperwork. The other part of the issue, in terms of getting the passports and getting these officials passports that I kept trying to work with the military on, and followed up in

various jobs in the Department with the Pentagon in Washington, was getting a copy of their American birth certificate put in the personnel folder of every serviceman that was sent abroad. Never succeeded but that would have solved so many problems. And they kept saying it was an expense. They would have had to pay for the birth certificate and if you add that, let's say, back then, five dollars. Five dollars times every serviceman that's sent abroad, it was a cost that they weren't prepared to pay, but the cost in terms of hours of work over time, I really think was bigger.

*Q: Bureaucratic. Did you get into any protection and welfare there?*

VAN HEUVEN: Absolutely. I'll just mention one case because it was very symptomatic. We had a really good relationship among the consulates. We all supported each other. One of the nice things was that if you had a difficult SCS case, and they left your district you let the other posts know that this person may be coming their way and here's what I did with them to try and keep them going. And I got a call one day from Berlin and they said, "Well we had this guy here for quite a while and he ended up just sleeping in our waiting room until finally the Marines forced him to leave and I think he's probably coming your way." And sure enough, the next day Elwood X was in my consular section. He was looking for assistance because he wanted to get a visa to go to East Germany and they wouldn't give him a visa. So I said, "Well, Elwood, why do you want a visa to go to East Germany, to the DDR, the German Democratic Republic?" And he said that he had essentially left the United States because AT&T had been sending radio waves, bombarding him with radio waves, for years. You've had a few of those.

*Q: One guy tried putting tinfoil on his head.*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, what Frankfurt told me, when I was telling them about having this guy, someone said, "Well I had one not so long ago and I told him to go into the *KaDaWe*, the big department store and buy the thickest rubber bathing cap he could find and he came in the next day with this bathing cap on and said, 'Thank you. Thank you so much. It's working!'" It was classic. So he'd left the United States, Elwood, to get away from AT&T and by golly he got to Europe and IT&T picked him up and was bombarding him with very similar radio waves. So he wanted to go to East Germany because he was sure that would not be in the communist sphere and he was seeking relief. From a layman's point of view, from everything I understand this is fairly classic for a schizophrenic. They hear their subconscious talking to them and they think it's radio waves that are being beamed from outside. And he had all of the paranoia that went with schizophrenia.

*Q: I had a case back in '55 in Frankfurt, I was protection and welfare officer for a while, poor man, the Rockefellers were doing it to him. And I've had in other places the CIA was doing it. It's the same modus operandi.*

VAN HEUVEN: I had x number when I was in Bonn and one of the other things I noticed is that they tend to write you letters with a lot of capitalization and different colors for emphasis. There are a whole lot of things that just seem to fit in the syndrome.

Anyway, Elwood, to make a very long story shorter, it was pretty clear to me that he had problems. He was looking for assistance to get a visa to the GDR. I asked to see his passport. He didn't want to give it to me because he probably had an experience in Berlin or who knows where and realized that he didn't want anybody to find out where his family was, to try to send him back to the States, anything of that sort. So he wasn't giving up his passport and he ended up camping out on the lawn in front of the embassy with this big sign with writing on it about how he was being persecuted. He was there day and night. I don't know how he fed himself. I gave him a cookie occasionally when he would come inside but he must have had a little bit of money somehow to help himself out. And one day when I asked again about his passport he ripped it up, right in front of me. And then our security folks started getting concerned. They didn't like the fact that this guy was sitting there right in front of the embassy and they wanted to have the Marines remove him. And I said, "Look, we're only going to get him back. He's not hurting anybody sitting out there and it's getting colder." It was October. "Pretty soon, he's going to find a different solution. So why don't we let him find the solution?" And sure enough, a couple of days later he came in and he said, "I'm going East and I need my passport." And I said, "Well, you know, Elwood, that means you're going to have to have your picture taken because you ripped your old passport so we have to start all over again." And he said, "That's all right, I will, I will do that." He had the money to pay for a new passport and he got the picture and I gave him the new passport and I said, "Now here on your application it says 'destination.' You have to fill in where you're going to go." Because I was trying to alert whatever direction he was coming in 'cause the big message in Berlin was "Don't ever let him in the consular section." And in fact every time I talked to him I talked to him outside, in front of the Marines. I never did let him inside. So he just wrote "East" and left. Two days later there was a cable out of Vienna and the Austrians were a lot less lenient on him than the Germans had been. He was on the train displaying some aberrant behavior and they had him, on the train, in a straitjacket. Let him off in Vienna at the embassy. The embassy sent a cable to the Department but they infoed neighboring embassies, so that's how I knew what had happened to him.

I actually also had another case, a custody case of a very disturbed woman who was trying to get her children. She had married a German psychiatrist who had divorced [her] and taken the children back to Germany. She was there trying to get her children back. She was obviously quite unstable herself. Whether she was just undone by the whole custody issue I'm really not sure but that was another very long, protracted and difficult case.

*Q: Did you get involved in any of these, there's several custody cases that have lasted almost decades. German law, if you're German the courts won't send children to their mothers, for example.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's right. She was a case in point, absolutely. She probably could not have, had she been able to hold herself together, for appearances before the judge, she probably still would not have succeeded.

*Q: We've had our presidents raise these issues.*

VAN HEUVEN: Oh, absolutely. Later on I dealt with cases in the Middle East which are really impossible. In any case I was describing the work in the consular section. The other thing that hit us about a year into my tenure there was the takeover of our embassy in Teheran and all of our people there becoming hostages. At that point Iranians who wanted to get visas to go to the United States had to apply in some other country. There was no American presence in Iran anymore. These Iranians tended to go to countries where they had relatives, where they had some place to stay and Germany was a huge destination. There were big Iranian populations in Hamburg, in Frankfurt. London was another post that had a huge influx of Iranian visa cases. And I got a lot of them because I was within an easy train ride of Frankfurt. You had to wait forever to even get in in Frankfurt or they had already been refused in Frankfurt and wanted to make another try somewhere else. That was a huge additional workload because every Iranian case, it was the typical Middle Eastern thing where you thought you had to work through intercessionaries. So the family you were staying with would all call whomever they knew, who would call me or would call other officers, who would call me. The person themselves, obviously, if they had contacts from anywhere else would do so. Their business contacts would get in touch with the embassy. It was just, the letters, the phone calls, for each Iranian was a lot.

*Q: There was a large student population of Iranians trying to go to school even when the Shah was fully in power they were shopping because many of them would go and not come back.*

VAN HEUVEN: Or they were stuck in the United States and after about two years of this they felt that they had to go home and visit their families because it was so difficult for their families to get out or to get visas. And then they would take their chances, come out, and try to get a visa to return. And actually they were almost the easiest. It was the parents or the families that wanted to go visit their student children in the States that were the tougher ones.

*Q: I remember the time I must say that I was in Naples and we were terribly unsympathetic to young Iranians because we were having, that time our hostages were being held, we were having, Iranians in Los Angeles were demonstrating against us having riots in Los Angeles*

VAN HEUVEN: Oxnard, California. There was an English language institute in Oxnard, California that we called "Teheran West" because I think it was exclusively Iranian students.

*Q: Which was not looked upon at all well by Americans.*

VAN HEUVEN: No, of course not. It was a very tough period and it was tough at times to be courteous.

*Q: We were also worried, I don't know if you had it but I was the consul general so I had the whole thing to worry about. There were Iranians sort of wandering around in Naples looking at our place. I suspect most of them were trying to figure out how to go for a visa but you had these Middle Eastern types looking, there was concern about their taking over something and so we were very nervous about this whole*

VAN HEUVEN: Tough times, not easy. I remember one woman. This was a mother who hadn't seen her kids. At the same time the idea of not telling the truth was perfectly okay to them, if it got them what they needed. It's a different sense of ethics about these things. So you could understand the human reaction but you couldn't trust what they were telling you. This one woman who when I refused her had a catatonic fit in front of me. Now, did she just produce it? It went on for twenty minutes. I don't know. I never will know. Was she just a really good actress? Hard to say.

*Q: Who was the ambassador while you were there?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was Walter Stoessel until about one month before we left, at which time it was Arthur Burns.

*Q: Did you find yourself playing the usual dual role? You were the consular officer but then you were Marten's hostess and all that?*

VAN HEUVEN: Oh, absolutely. I did a fair amount of my own entertaining. The other portion of the unusual workload there, if you think about a classic consular section, was that we had a lot of the post-Nazi era issues that were still very much with us or were still being mopped up. We had a workload that really tends to be at an embassy, as opposed to a consulate in consular work, which was extraditions. And we had a fairly big extradition workload. I was lucky because we had a legal advisor so we always worked those together and he was a huge help to me on those. Also there was a big judicial assistance workload. Judicial assistance essentially means helping a court or a legal entity in the United States get court documents or historic records for legal purposes in the United States from a foreign country. So we would be preparing these very cumbersome diplomatic *note verbales* asking for things.

*Q: Authenticating documents.*

VAN HEUVEN: Getting the documents and then having them also authenticated as legal documents. But the big issue, in Germany in any case, was getting them because you were asking for records. All of which went with new legislation in the United States. A new office was created in the Department of Justice called the Office of Special Investigations. It was tracking Nazi war criminals who were in the United States and had gained citizenship under false pretences because they said they had no Nazi past. So this was the effort to prove the fact that they had a Nazi past. We at that point still controlled something called the Berlin Document Center which had huge military archives from the Germans

*Q: The Germans were meticulous and they saved everything.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's right. So it was all there.

*Q: We've now given it back to the Germans but we made copies, I think.*

VAN HEUVEN: We did and they are in a warehouse in Alexandria, Virginia. But back then they were still in Berlin and that was the easy part. But as soon as you had to go to get something from a German town, like a residence or a birth certificate or whatever it was, you had to go through this very formal process of a legal trail.

*Q: Each person had to put a stamp on it*

VAN HEUVEN: All the way through. And that had been handled by the political section 'cause it was seen as essentially a political issue. And I really don't know what the reason was why the inspectors said, "That ought to go to the consular section" but it came to us. This was the early years of this Office of Special Investigations and they sent a lot of queries to pursue their cases. They also sent several teams of researchers. I set up appointments for them all over Germany and helped them get into the various archives that they wanted. Ludwigshafen was another place where the Germans had a big repository of Second World War information. Another post-World War II remnant was something called the International Tracing Service in Arolsen and that was administered and funded by 13 or 14 countries, of which we were one. This was the repository of the records on prisoners of war and concentration camps. And if you needed, for instance, a death certificate for somebody that died as a prisoner of war, Arolsen had whatever there was. We met once a year and I was the U.S. rep, because of being in that particular position. I had the working relationship with them because I was always asking them for documents on behalf of U.S. inquirers. I also had the semi-management relationship because we would get together once a year, see what was working, what wasn't working, what could be done about it, could we get more funds from our countries to make these things happen. And one of big issues in my time was transferring these very fragile, dying records to more permanent methods. It was a little too early to go straight to computers. I don't know how they finally solved it but it was one of the big challenges.

The last of those issues was a new ground for ineligibility for a visa. Someone who did anything to injure another person, in terms of persecution of others during the Nazi period, was really what it was all about. Figuring out what it meant, interpreting it, it's really very clear. Liz Holtzman was the name of the congresswoman who proposed the legislation, from Brooklyn, and she wrote a very good legislative record so that it was quite clear. I think lots of time you don't know in the beginning what are the parameters exactly of this and you work it out over time with the regulations. This is going to apply and this isn't. It was really pretty clear that anybody who persecuted anybody under the auspices of the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945 was going to be ineligible in the future for a visa. Nevertheless, it did mean, particularly for posts in Germany, we had to presume that we were going to have the brunt of these cases and that we were going to



have to end up advising other posts who had the odd German walk in on how to go about this and what to look for and what to ask for.

So that was the second consular conference that I organized. I managed to get Chuck Kyle, who was in the job in the Visa Office that dealt with this specific new legislation, to come over from the Department. So we had all the consular officers together. We asked him our questions. Some of them he promised to go back and get an answer and get back to us. Some he had answers for already. We pointed out to him some of the things that would be helpful to us. I went in to the Foreign Office. I told them this was coming. We tried to achieve a no surprises environment and I think by really getting ready the whole process went quite smoothly and was never an issue.

*Q: Oh, of course, because all of a sudden somebody who's been a respectable citizen for many years and all of a sudden they can't go anymore and they've got their contacts*

VAN HEUVEN: There were people in the German government who had been members of the Nazi Party, who had been in the *Hitlerjugend*, who had this and that. You had to know exactly what you asking and what you were looking for and how to handle it because it could have been a big issue. And it ended up working out, I thought, very well.

To go back to the just plain membership issue, in the Communist Party or in the Nazi Party. What I noticed in going through all of those cases in those years in Bonn was that time after time people who by the accident of geography lived in the eastern part of Germany or in East Berlin went virtually straight from being members of the Hitler Youth to being members of the Communist Youth. They went virtually straight from being members of the Nazi Party to members of the Communist Party. You saw this over and over. I was talking about this earlier, about how easy it is to see it as non-heroic if you've been in the lucky position of never having to make those kind of life choices, but if you wanted to study you couldn't get a place in a university if you didn't belong to one or the other of the youth organizations. If you wanted to get a job as a professor at a university you had to be a member of the party, etc.

*Q: I noted when I was doing visa work in Germany in the mid-Fifties how many people came and we had the Berlin Document Center and found they'd become members of the Nazi Party on April 20, 1944. Now what the hell was this? Anybody in their right mind, in 1944 was not a good time to join the Nazi Party. Well, April 20<sup>th</sup> was Hitler's birthday, as any of us served around that time knew and all the local blockführers went and signed a lot of their neighbors up. Many of them really didn't know that they were signed up and I would get these terrible reactions of people. They weren't kidding. They didn't know this. There were some of these things that just didn't, we gave an almost automatic bye, either for stupidity or for lack of knowledge. April 20, 1944 was a very bad time in Germany.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's a little like what's going on now with the Stasi files that the East German secret police kept files on everybody and files even on the informers. My

husband and I are tempted to go and see; he has a file for sure. I doubt whether I have a file but you don't know 'cause they were everywhere.

The other issue at the time was the Germans passed their first privacy act, which was actually called a data protection act. And that caused us a lot of complications, particularly in the beginning. You have a new law and people say no to everything until they figure out what they can say yes to and what they can say no to. That caused us a lot of problems in trying to do security checks and of course in terms of trying to figure these issues out. Was somebody a member of any of the parties they weren't supposed to be members of, etc.

Some of the other things that we did manage to get done while we were there on behalf of the other consulates involved: the legal advisor and I together did a handbook for all the consulates on judicial assistance, on the best ways to get results from the German courts, and how to handle this kind of judicial assistance case, how to handle that one. And I started and then got all of the other consulates to contribute to a handbook for couriers. Which did two things. It satisfied, again, the inspectors wanting us to have all of our procedures more in line. If all of the military couriers were bringing everybody everything from all the different bases in the same way then we all were going to be handling things similarly.

*Q: You might point out that couriers were basically clerks, military ones, who*

VAN HEUVEN: In the personnel sections, who forwarded the paperwork

*Q: Passport applications, visa applications, what have you, to facilitate the movement of American troops. Or birth certificates, the whole thing and*

VAN HEUVEN: And the problem was, they change personnel like once a year. And the new person would come in and they wouldn't do it right. If you were in Frankfurt and you sent back to them, "Do it this way!" then the applications that you were getting in Frankfurt started looking different from the applications they were getting in Stuttgart or in Bremen. And so we decided we were going to turn this around and we were going to write one handbook for all of them, at all the bases all around, so that the product that everybody would be getting would be the same. It would save everybody time and it would help us standardize to the maximum extent. And we set up a coordinating group, I got together a committee of the consuls from the other countries of big immigration. So, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and we would get together three-four times a year and just compare notes on immigration trends, on issues in Germany, so on, so forth.

One of the big elements in Bonn was not just people with mental problems but was people who ran out of money. You had a lot of GIs who went back to the States and didn't find a job and still remembered that cosseted existence that they'd had in Germany. They didn't maybe recognize that that was really provided for them by the military and thought, "Well, I'll go back to Germany and get a job there." And of course

once they were out of the military all of that was gone and they couldn't find a job in Germany and they ran out of money and then somehow they had to get themselves back to the States. So they would end up very regularly, I'm sure more on the posts that were closer to bases, but I got more than my fair share as well.

*Q: In Frankfurt this was one of my big jobs, putting these guys on troopships. In those days we had troopships and we could push 'em on troopships.*

VAN HEUVEN: For us it was planes. That would have been a wonderful and they took non-military members on troopships?

*Q: They would, yeah.*

VAN HEUVEN: Oh, that's wonderful. No, we were down to strictly commercial carriers. In any case I had an indigent who was not claiming to be in the military but who came in and had lost his passport, lost his everything, lost his wallet and said he needed help getting back to the States. Had no verifying documents whatsoever and he had a Canadian accent, I thought. Could have been Philadelphia but I just thought, "This guy could be a Canadian and he could be just trying to try us out." And I called my Canadian opposite number, who by then I knew from the committee that I had formed, and I said, "I have this guy and his name is." And he said, "Oh, he was here yesterday. I refused him!" So every once in a while these things can be really helpful to you. So I said, "I think you need to go back to the Canadians."

We also dealt a fair amount, early refugee period, a fair amount with the ICM and the UNHCR, people who wanted to get into United States and essentially the only program open to them was through the refugee program. So we did a fair amount of that as well. And I had one other kind of famous case that was the son of Shostakovich got out. This was when you were really sneaking out of the Soviet Union and he turned up in Bonn. He called his good friend, or his father's good friend, Rostropovich, who was in the United States by then and Rostropovich said, "I will get you into the United States." Well, talk about Iranian intercessions. I had more calls, from the Hill, from the Department, that this guy was there and he was going to be getting in touch with me and so on. And I kept saying, "Well he needs to go to Frankfurt and he needs to go to talk to the INS." And they kept calling me. And then eventually this fellow called me. He was hiding out somewhere because he was a famous person. They could have snatched him back. By then I had talked to the head of INS in Frankfurt x number of times about this and we had agreed there was no point to him coming to me first, that he should go straight to this fellow. So when I talked to him on the phone I said, "There's somebody else who's going to take care of you and you need to call him. Don't tell me where you are over the telephone. You call him and you work out how you're going to get together." And in the end, my INS colleague told me later, he ended up getting in his car and going way out into the country somewhere, met him in a farmhouse and did all their stuff. I don't really know how he got to the airport but I think the fine hand of Rostropovich was all the way through this situation. Then there was a huge celebration when he got to Washington.

You were asking about entertainment. We did a lot of entertaining. And probably the one that my daughters will never forget was a party that was just for fun. The son of a cousin of my husband's from Holland was at university. At university in Holland, if you're musically inclined, the really big and popular thing back then, was to play Hungarian music. They called it gypsy music. So these young people, instead of having a jazz ensemble, they had a gypsy music ensemble. We had visited in Holland at one point and we said, "If you ever want to take a trip, you can come and stay with us for a couple of days in Bonn and we'll throw a party and invite people and you can play gypsy music and it'll be fun." Well, sure enough, they came and so we thought we'll just throw this one fun party and we invited about 75 people 'cause you figure always that about somewhere between thirty and forty percent won't come. We figured we'll end up with fifty people. Everybody accepted. Then all of a sudden, there we were looking at our house and trying to figure out how we were going to get 75 people smooshed in there and finding places for them to sit and eat. And it worked but it was very difficult.

One of the big issues, again this was very early on in tandem couples, was that I was the head of the consular officer and my husband was the head of the political section. We always felt that we had to lean over backward so there would be no appearance that somehow either of us was favoring something from the other. So, for instance, on that whole issue about the roster to fill in for me, he had his deputy work out the roster and work with me on when a replacement had to go to the consular section. And we worried at times, would there be gaps, would we both have to do something at the same time. And the only time I can remember that being a little bit of a problem was we were having a Christmas reception, a week or two before Christmas. Some American friends of ours came on a visit, on their way, they were going skiing in Europe and they came and stayed with us a couple of days first. They were there on the Sunday morning of this Christmas reception, which was going to be around noon. Nine o'clock Sunday morning I get a call from the Department and I had to go in to get a very highly classified cable which by now I'm sure is declassified. The issue was canceling the passport of Philip Agee who had published the names of

*Q: He'd been a CIA officer.*

VAN HEUVEN: Agent himself and wrote a book, Inside the Company: CIA Diary, and published the names of some of his colleagues.

*Q: It caused a tremendous amount of trouble.*

VAN HEUVEN: So one of the decisions was to cancel his passport. The reason for canceling his passport was to keep him from traveling because at that point somehow they knew that he was in Germany and we found out he was living up near Hamburg. They wanted to be sure that he couldn't leave Germany and go and make speeches in other countries where he would continue this practice. It wasn't that easy to retrieve the cable, and then I had to start calling. I called my opposite number up in Hamburg and he had to get his communicator in and so on and so forth. So leaving at nine a.m., when you get that kind of call, you don't know. I turned to Marten and said, "You're in charge!" An

hour later, he got a call and he had to go in on some other issue and so he turned to our guests and said, “The punch bowl is here, the ladle is there.” And our friends started the party, they were the host and hostess until, I think, I got back first because I left earlier and Marten got back later but it all worked out.

We lived in a very interesting house. The embassy had just acquired it as a new house for the political counselor because up until then all of the counselors had lived also in Plittersdorf, where they had separate houses as opposed to apartments. A joke back then was that the apartments were so uniform that the way to tell if it was your house was look in the garbage can on your way in. Anyway, there were these four houses for counselors and I think they added another counselor so they needed one more house. So they went out and rented this house and decided it would be the house of the political counselor. It was on the same street as the ambassador’s residence, a little further down, and it was somewhat closer to the embassy than Plittersdorf. In fact, it was wonderful. We rode our bikes to work, along the Rhine. We were on a bluff above the Rhine and you could see the barges and you could hear the chug-chug-chug of the barges as they went back and you had a view across of the *Seibengebirge*. You came out with your bike and just went down this little hill and there was a bike path all along the Rhine into work. I’ve never had a nicer commute. It was really wonderful.

*Q: You left Bonn when?*

VAN HEUVEN: In the summer of ’81.

*Q: And where did you go?*

VAN HEUVEN: We went somewhat unexpectedly back to the Department. Marten had been slated to go to Brussels and I was already looking for a job in Brussels. Would have been a wonderful community because I essentially had three missions to bid on, to find a job, in but it was one of those chain event things. The person he was to replace was to succeed somebody who didn’t leave so everything backed up. And suddenly, very late in the process, his assignment was broken and he was assigned instead to the Senior Seminar. So we were suddenly going back to Washington and I went back to Washington on Central Complement and looked for a job after we got there.

*Q: So we’re now to 1981 and you’re looking for a job. How does one look for a job?*

VAN HEUVEN: The issue was complicated because we didn’t know all this was going to happen until sometime in July. We had to give our house tenants in Washington notice. We did have a diplomatic clause but the diplomatic clause meant that you had to give them three months’ notice. So we were coming back to Washington very unexpectedly with a daughter who was about to head for the seventh grade. I was going on over-complement and what we ended up choosing to do was that Marten, since he was in the Senior Seminar and was going to be on the road quite a bit, got digs, I don’t even remember where. I was simply on over-complement. Then at a certain point I took leave without pay through November when we were able to get back into our house. And Katie

and I went up to Vermont, where we had a summer house, and she started school up there in the seventh grade, through the beginning of November. I guess it was end of October that we were able to move back into our house.

I then went to work in CA. I was a consular cone officer and it was actually my first opportunity to work for Consular Affairs in the Department. I first arrived still on over-complement, and shortly thereafter they created a slot for me in the Citizens Emergency Center. I think it was called financial assistance and deaths officer. Back then, the Citizens Emergency Center was divided functionally, so you had specialists who handled, for instance, financial assistance for Americans in distress abroad or the death of an American citizen abroad, the arrest of an American citizen abroad. And then, after a certain period of time people decided well it really isn't the best to have these specialties in the art of financial assistance or the art of handling death and we're going to do everybody regionally. So by the next time I got back to Consular Affairs the office was divided so people handled every kind of emergency that happened to somebody in Europe or in South America. For all I know by now they're back to organizing it functionally again because there are advantages and disadvantages to anything.

But in any case I did primarily financial assistance. It was wonderful training. I have to say two things. In the first place, despite the fact that it was so very difficult to get back into the Foreign Service, that it took me so many years to get all the paperwork done, once I was back I found that even in those very early years of tandem assignments that the Department was really very flexible, in its normal inflexibility, about handling these kind of situations. So my ability to go on leave without pay for a short period of time, their willingness to send me back on over-complement and this happened again later was really, I felt, very forthcoming.

And the second thing is that back then you had a number of choices as a tandem couple. One was that you both wanted to be assigned to the same post and you were going to take what they could find for you. One of you was the lead person and then the other one would scramble. And if nothing else was available you could be on leave without pay for an assignment. Or you could go to different places. And I chose always to be the follow person. In retrospect, it worked out really well. I was spared the agony of always trying to find the most credible career ladder and the most advantageous job and I was just always happy to fall into what was available. Looking back later each of these ended up being a fabulous step towards what came afterwards.

So I very much enjoyed my assignment in the Citizens Emergency Center. We dealt with congressional offices, because of citizens in distress abroad and the families called their congressmen. We dealt with families directly who got in touch with us, we dealt with the Department of Defense, primarily in arranging for Air Force medical evacuations of people who were ill in places that were very hard to get to. We dealt with HHS, Health and Human Services on a regular basis in terms of placing indigents, in other words people who came back with no financial resources, who had to be hospitalized and finding a way to hospitalize them in the United States. We dealt with VA all the time, people with veterans benefits, for the same purpose, finding a veterans hospital for them.

And we dealt with consular officers all around the world who had a problem child on their hands and got in touch with us to figure out how to solve their problems.

I remember one case where I ended up drafting essentially a cable that ended up being a guidance cable. The worst cases always were those who were mentally ill and who didn't want to go home. Who were a problem wherever they were, who stood to either be put in jail or be out on the streets in a foreign country, depending on how that foreign country handled those kind of cases and who didn't want to be taken care of. This was before the days of street people here in the United States, where there was this recognition that if they really don't want to be cared for they have a right not to be cared for. I think for a lot of consular officers abroad the idea that there was nothing you could do was really hard to accept.

*Q: And going back to the good old days, you might say, particularly when I was doing it, we could usually get the local authorities to pick up somebody like this. Essentially we'd find an escort for them, have them give 'em a shot, knock 'em out 'til they got to the States and they'd show up back in the States. Now they might show up a year or two but at least we'd move them to get them to proper hands.*

VAN HEUVEN: Disappeared, unless you could get a judge in wherever country they were in to declare them incompetent. Then they became your ward and you could make the arrangements for them. But in quite a few countries this just was not an option. The case where we ended up writing this cable was someone who kept being shuttled back and forth between Hong Kong and another jurisdiction. It was essentially between two countries at that point. Neither was willing to do anything about him; they just kept putting him on a boat and sending him back and forth. We had to say until this person decides they're sick of being shunted back and forth or you can convince a judge in the one country or the other, these are the parameters of what one can do for an American citizen who does not want to be helped.

This was a two-year assignment, as most assignments in the Department are. It ended up being broken because after his year in the Senior Seminar Marten was assigned as DCM in Geneva. That was when I hit my greatest difficulty in seeking a tandem assignment to accompany him to Geneva. First, I was told that I had to apply for curtailment in order to bid on assignments in Geneva. So we did and I was curtailed. Then I was told that because my husband was going to be the DCM I could not encumber a State Department position because in any job there I would somehow be under his supervision, even if it was at several removes. Nowadays, just by force of the number of tandem couples and the difficulty in finding assignments, they have worked out all kinds of arrangements where just being one layer removed is enough or they find some jerry-rigged system of finding a different supervisor, but back then it was on the slightly draconian side. So I then was really scrambling around and I bid on jobs in Bern which would not have been that far away, the embassy to Switzerland. I'm still at the Department at this point, and I went over to IO, the bureau for International Organizations, to see if they might be able to help me get a job with some branch of the UN in Geneva. There wasn't much that they

did and I would have to just go to Geneva and start wandering around from agency to agency over there.

I also applied to USIA. That was the one other kind of logical organization there that was at that point still separate to see if they might have something. I went over and talked to Jock Shirley, who was at that point the Counselor at USIA. He had been press officer in the embassy in Rome back when I had served in Rome, so we knew each other from twenty years earlier. And he said, "Well, actually, we do have an opening coming up for a press officer, so why don't you put in a bid on that job?"

Let me just add a few things about my Emergency Center work. I had said I was the financial assistance officer. The way it worked was that they did actually rotate Foreign Service Officers so they got a little more training, as opposed to the civil service specialists who were always there. I had been there over six months and I became the death officer. I dealt with nothing but deaths, which had a lot of downer aspects to it.

*Q: Because you were usually the first person to call, weren't you?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was the person who would call people in the middle of the night or whenever and let them know that a loved one had died abroad. Which was not easy but you did eventually learn ways to do it with which you could be comfortable and with which you hoped you would be minimizing the shock to the greatest possible extent. It was very tricky and difficult work but I actually found it very satisfying. Again, because in the situation where you really can't be of help to people, in a way you were of help. The really toughest ones were the ones where we had no clue of the next of kin. Maybe the person had never written down a next of kin on their passport application and not written one in their passport book or whatever. Sometimes you had an address for them in the United States. I used to have to call the police in that locality and ask them to break into the apartment or the house and look around and see if they could find any records that gave a clue as to next of kin.

I remember one particularly difficult case which involved a pilot of a one-engine plane that crashed in the Caribbean and he was probably smuggling drugs. This was somebody who did not want to be found. And we found some clue to Florida and I ended up working for the longest time with the motor vehicle bureau, to see if there was a drivers license record. Some of them were really, really difficult.

*Q: Did you find, when people are told a loved one has died or something often they want to take it out on somebody, anger.*

VAN HEUVEN: Not at first, that comes a little bit later, how could this be? There are stages and you're right. First is just shock and disbelief and then comes the anger. And then later, with many people and you see this, for instance, it's classic with people whose loved ones are killed in the military. They don't get the kind of information from DOD, they're not sure, was it really, did it really happen that way? There's a search for information. They want to know absolutely everything about this in order to be able to



deal with it. Or they suspect there was foul play and want to find out about this. And then a last one for many people is I don't want this to happen to anybody else and I'm going to see to it that this kind of situation is made better. You saw that very classically, for instance, in the relatives of that Pan Am bombing over Lockerbie. You saw it in the 9/11 families, this bonding to see that something like this never happens again. And it's strongest in the unexplained cases. Someone dies of a heart attack; somehow that's easier. But when it's an outside force that creates a tragedy, especially that cuts somebody off in mid or early life, these are classic stages that people tend to go through.

*Q: Well, was there, in that unit a problem of doing this sort of a daily basis, either one of getting overwhelmed emotionally or getting callous?*

VAN HEUVEN: The civil servant who was happy to take a break and have me be the death officer for a couple months as a way of training was somebody who had done this for years. She was a very measured person who just handled it beautifully and managed. I really felt that, as tough as it was, it didn't get to me. I could have kept doing it. I don't know for how long.

*Q: Going back to the financial assistance thing, young college kid or something or a young person or not so young or maybe even someone who's a professional bum. Family says, "We've had it. We're not going to send any money. This is the third time." Or "He's a dissolute so-and-so and that's it!" How'd you deal with that?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, in the end, the government, if you exhaust all possibilities of finding someone who'll pay for their ticket home, the government gives what's called a repatriation loan. About the only claim the government has on ever getting that money back is that you limit the passport for return to the United States only. If the person ever wants to apply for a passport again they can't get one until they pay off their loan. I don't know what the statistics are on collecting.

*Q: You must have had files on some people that had been playing this game for years, didn't you, or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: There was one woman who had a file that was at least two feet thick, so it was several files. There were people that one followed and knew and if you were a consular officer you told each other stories about or "Oh, did you deal with that person as well?" I think they were virtually exclusively schizophrenics. I think it was in the late Seventies when lithium became available as a medicine to even out the hills and valleys for schizophrenics that a lot of people who had been institutionalized for many years were no longer institutionalized because by taking medicine they could have perfectly normal lives. The problem that developed over time was that they still had sufficient elements of their, it's a chemical imbalance, the disease and the only problem was that disease was still there latently. One of the things that seems to go with schizophrenia is paranoia, that classically goes with it, and they had a real allergy to any form of control. So they didn't want to take their medicine. Their relatives all wanted them to take their medicine so they got to be kind of allergic to their relatives, who were trying to exert

control over them. Or what would often happen is the families simply felt they couldn't deal with it any more and were almost glad to support, particularly more wealthy families, to support someone's wish to go traveling, to get away. This particular person, it must have been on that assignment, when I dealt with, it was always with a lawyer who was trustee for the family. I never dealt with a family member. And it was very clear that they were more than happy to have her continue to be abroad and go from post to post and they would always send money.

I had mentioned before one that I had back when I was in Bonn. This was not somebody from a wealthy family. This was simply somebody that wanted to escape and had been in the military in the past so he knew there was another world out there but there was no money to send him abroad so once he was sent back I doubt that he ever got out there again.

This particular woman spent a lot of time in Southeast Asia so she was really very well known around the posts in that area. Very sad.

*Q: Okay, we'll go back to Switzerland, or what happened? This was '81 or '82.*

VAN HEUVEN: Geneva, right. I had one last assignment. Knowing that I was then leaving, not knowing what my assignment was going to be, I asked if I could be an arrest officer. So my last two months I did arrests. And those also are extremely difficult and tricky, primarily because of the Privacy Act. Sometimes families are desperate to find their missing son or daughter and the son or daughter is in prison and doesn't want the family to know. If they haven't signed a Privacy Act waiver you are really between a rock and a hard place because you can't tell the family. If you say, "Well, we're sure that he's alive and well but we can't tell you anything more than that," it's very difficult.

So, anyway, there I am. I'm trying to find a job in Geneva. I had talked to Jock Shirley and he promised to see whether it might not be possible to arrange a detail to USIA for the purposes of that assignment. I think that the PAO, the public affairs officer, in other words the USIA officer in charge of the post, understandably was not eager to have somebody with no press experience come in and be his press officer at a place where there was some very, very press tricky issues of high international press interest. I suspect that in the end the reason why I did get the job was the intervention of the ambassador in Geneva.

*Q: Who was the ambassador?*

VAN HEUVEN: The ambassador was Geoff Swaebe. He was a political appointee. He was from Los Angeles and he was the CEO, chairman of the board, I'm not sure which, of the May Company which is a whole set of department stores. And his wife, Mary, was a very good friend of Nancy Reagan. Actually, we got to know, serving in that assignment in Geneva, there was a whole group of friends of Nancy Reagan's, all of whose husbands ended up either as ambassadors or in high government positions in Washington. Another was Mary Jane Wick, a good friend of the Swaebes. They were all

good friends of each other, obviously because they were all friends of Nancy's, whose husband, Charlie Wick, became the head of USIA. I suspect that Geoff Swaebe at some point picked up the phone and called his friend Charlie Wick and that's what made it happen. No one ever said that, but. Another was Betsy Bloomingdale and another was, I've forgotten her first name, the wife of Charlie Price who became ambassador in Brussels and later ambassador in London and he was this man from Kansas, if I remember right. And they all came to visit the Swaebes at one point or another.

I remember particularly Charlie Wick because he used to wander around the ambassador's residence practically all day long in his pajamas. That's how he was comfortable. And they would rent a piano when he was there, because he loved to play the piano. So you were very likely to come into the ambassador's residence and find Charlie Wick in his pajamas at the piano.

Their allegiance was to Nancy. One of the things that I became involved in that very first year was the dedication ceremonies that they wanted to put on for a statue that the Swaebes, Geoff and Mary, commissioned from a Los Angeles artist to put out in the middle of the rotunda. It was at the entranceway to the mission, and it was a statue that was called Peace, which is very fitting for the UN and Geneva, kind of reminiscent of the Matisse picture with the dancing figures. And the statue was dedicated to Nancy Reagan, not to the president. So you could really see where the inner politics were.

The Swaebes were wonderful people. They really became friends. Geoff was a businessman. He knew what he knew and he knew what he didn't know but he was also an excellent manager. He figured out how this mission worked. The mission, it's called a mission 'cause it's not in a capital, it's not accredited to a country. It was accredited to the specialized agencies of the United Nations, all of the ones that had their seat in Geneva and the vast majority of the specialized agencies are in Geneva. He figured out what the mission was and what needed to be done. I think he was a very good ambassador. He was an excellent delegator and a good common sense sort of person.

Mary never really got involved in the workings of the mission, the way we classically think the wife of the ambassador is going to do. So I had a kind of tough row to hoe because I had two roles. I became the information officer in USIA, which meant that I dealt with disseminating information and dealing with the press. And at the same time I was the DCM's wife. The ambassador's wife wasn't doing all those things that one was at that time at least accustomed to having an ambassador's wife do for the community. So I somehow felt that I had to do that as well.

*Q: Also, as the DCM's wife, this is what often happens. Were you having to play two roles?*

VAN HEUVEN: Absolutely.

*Q: Because if the ambassador's wife isn't playing the game, it's usually up to the DCM's wife.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right. So it was very tricky. And I didn't have as much time to devote to the latter as I might have liked, but I tried. And I think we had a reasonably happy shop.

*Q: You're fortunate, because the ambassador to Switzerland and the ambassador to Austria are particularly renowned in the Foreign Service, almost always going to political appointees. Some have been abysmal or almost next to being crooks, wanting to milk it of all sorts of perks and all that. And so to get a good competent manager as an ambassador is a great plus.*

VAN HEUVEN: It is, and he was. Marten had a lengthy period as chargé after the Swaabes left. During that period we dealt a fair amount with the ambassador to Switzerland, John Davis Lodge, ex-movie actor, ex-ambassador to Argentina, and his wife Francesca. And Francesca was one of three daughters of a socialite family, all of whom married very well. But I know she was very well known to Paul Nitze. They were in Bern and they invited us up to events at their embassy once or twice. This essentially consisted of dinner and then going downstairs and watching screenings of his movies from the 1930's. And Francesca was a delightful, somewhat fey person who was not always there anymore. John Davis Lodge was well over eighty, and she was around that same age, and sometimes she wasn't really with you.

We had actually one of these horrible anecdotes that happen in the Foreign Service. They came down for a Swiss event and came to our house to rest and to change. They drove down from Bern. It was an evening event and she had this black taffeta gown that she had to change into. They took a nap and then they came down and they had a drink with us before their driver took them off to whatever their event was. We had a youngish Labrador retriever who we had put away in the garage because Marten had just heavily dosed him in flea powder. You just needed to keep him out of the way until that issue was resolved. And somehow he got out. Did one of the servant open the garage doors, did one of our daughters? Who knows? Anyway, the next thing you know there we are having this drink with this elderly couple and in rushes the dog. Of course he immediately makes a beeline for Francesca and her black taffeta gown. She absentmindedly pets him, spurring the white powder all over. She couldn't see that well, either. So she either was being extremely classy and pretending nothing had happened or was simply unaware of it. As they got up to leave Marten was rushing after her and kind of brushing off her dress so that she left without any of the signs of disaster on her. One of our better moments with our diplomatic dog.

In any case, I was to be essentially the press officer. My other major duties were handling the international visitors program and putting out something called the Daily Bulletin. This was a compendium of the articles that I decided were the most interesting for the Geneva and the international press out of the daily wireless file that comes out of USIA. These are articles with a lot of background and really policy pointed to explain American policy on issues. That was a daily activity the whole time that I was there.

*Q: You were there from when to when, by the way?*

VAN HEUVEN: Marten actually arrived in August, I arrived end of August '82 and we left in November of '84. When I was still in college I remember that J. Robert Oppenheimer came once and spoke. He had a wonderful answer to a question that some student asked that I still remember very vividly. I don't remember what the question was but it had to have been something like, "Well how do you reconcile the enormous damage of"

*Q: You're talking about Oppenheimer*

VAN HEUVEN: The nuclear scientist. "Where does religion come into this, where does God" something of that sort, what they must have asked him. And what he said was, "Well, when you get to the frontiers of scientific knowledge you recognize that you're really dealing with a circle. If you start from the beginning of scientific knowledge and you come around to the frontiers of scientific knowledge, you see that that's another whole half and that half is the mystical, the unknown, the religious, the transcendental." That was such a lovely image, I thought. And such a lovely way for a scientist to describe this tension that I see that same example for my experience being in USIA in Geneva. I think one of the main things I came away with was the understanding of how important the whole public relations or public diplomacy aspect is, which we didn't pay a lot of attention to back then in the State Department because that was USIA's job.

We were dealing at the U.S. mission with so many different aspects of UN efforts and specialties. There was the ILO, the International Labor Organization; there was the WHO, the World Health Organization; there was UNCTAD, it was trade and development; there was ITU, the International Telecommunication Union; there was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; there was the Human Rights Commission, which was actually not a specialized agency, that was just some staffers from the Secretariat who resided in Geneva because twice a year that's where the Human Rights Commission was held. There were other international organizations that were not part of the UN *per se*, like the International Committee on Migration, that worked with UNHCR and the ICRC, which was actually a Swiss organization, the International Committee for the Red Cross that deals with prisoners, deals with the Geneva Convention all around the world. There was one with an unfortunate acronym. It's called WIPO, which is the World Intellectual Properties Organization. Each of these had at least an annual meeting with a major delegation that would come out of the United States and most of them had a back-up section that followed their issues within the mission.

The PAO and I dealt with them all. We also dealt with other entities in Geneva that the U.S. mission had nothing to do with. Most of the time we had six or seven ambassadors in Geneva. We had Geoff Swaebe, to whom I reported, but we also had General Rowny who was the head of the START delegation and had ambassadorial rank. We dealt with Paul Nitze, who headed the INF talks. We dealt with Mike Smith, who was the U.S. trade representative to the GATT at that time, the precursor to the World Trade Organization now. We dealt with the head of the SCC, which was the SALT Compliance Commission.

That was a verification organization to see that the agreements under the original SALT talks were being carried out. They met regularly with the Russians in Geneva. And then there was one more ambassador, Lou Fields, who was accredited to the CD, the Committee on Disarmament, which dealt primarily with chemical weapons.

And all of the arms control delegations were not in town all the time. They came and went according to the rhythm of their set of talks. So START and INF, for instance, were in Geneva for two months. Then they would go back and so would the Soviets, go back to their capitals, regroup, get ready for another session and then two months later they'd be back, start up again.

The person who was the PAO who really didn't want me to come, left shortly after I got there, which was probably a happy event. The new PAO was the person who had been his deputy, a fellow named David Michael Wilson. He was a wonderful, energetic person with whom I worked with great pleasure and enthusiasm. We really knew what was going on everywhere. I knew more about what was happening all over Geneva than Marten did as the DCM.

*Q: Yeah, because you were dealing with the issues rather than*

VAN HEUVEN: I learned how important the public diplomacy and public information dimension is to our policy efforts across the board and how it is, just like that Oppenheimer circle, it's the other half that helps you to succeed in the half that you see and work with everyday. Or keeps you from succeeding. Many years later, during my tenure in my last assignment in Milan, we had the integration of USIA into State, which was highly unpopular among USIA folks and I think pretty much ignored among State Department folks. I think in the long run it's going to be a very salutary thing. As the Information Cone becomes available to political and economic officers who are dealing with the same sort of substance, they will gain a far greater appreciation of all the dimensions of what our work in public diplomacy should be.

*Q: Well, two questions. One, did these delegations bring with them any press type people? And the other one is what sort of press? Who were you working with on the media side?*

VAN HEUVEN: We were dealing with the Geneva press. AP, UPI, all of the major press networks had representatives in Geneva who became expert in all of these issues and reported on them. There was a small Swiss press dealing with Switzerland. The New York Times had a stringer, the Washington Post had a stringer. They had a press room over in what was called the *Palais des Nations*, which is the term for the UN headquarters in Geneva, and there were about forty or fifty press reps. Obviously TASS was there. There was an Indian press representative. From all over the world, the bigger players had representatives. And those are the people that we dealt with on a regular basis for all of these UN issues. However, in terms of the international press, and people who came in from out of town, and in terms of the interest, I would say that when the START and the INF delegations were in town, that was 90 to 95 percent of my effort. The interest

in those disarmament talks was overwhelming, by comparison with day to day Geneva events.

*Q: Well, at that period, in the early Eighties, what was your impression of where these things were going?*

VAN HEUVEN: They were plugging along I guess is the best way to describe it. With benefit of hindsight, they both ended up with positive conclusions. However, during that period you never knew. Actually, in the end, General Rowny did [bring his own press spokesman] and it's a little hard to explain why because in fact they held a common line, Rowny and Nitze, and that was there would be no press briefings, that there would be no information given out on what was happening in the talks. I think that was actually really wise and they had learned from earlier negotiations. Of course by then we'd had two sets of SALT talks and a first round of START talks as well. What they learned was that if they talked to the press you ended up negotiating in the press. And that ended up being a disaster because the press played

*Q: And you had to take street positions to satisfy your*

VAN HEUVEN: Domestic constituencies, right. So they were going to hold the line and they did hold to it.

*Q: I would have thought, General Rowny was considered very much a hard-liner and quite difficult for some of our negotiators. How did you find him, though?*

VAN HEUVEN: He was unfailingly polite and courteous to me and to our operation. They were very different people. Nitze was a patrician. Rowny was not. Nitze had a colossal ego and a real will to win and Rowny came across as somewhat insecure. He was a real hawk. That assignment, we're talking the early Eighties, was, to me, the first signs, as a Foreign Service Officer, of the incredible partisanship that we deal with in politics today in the United States. I grew up in an era of bipartisan politics where you got together and you did things for the good of the country. And all of a sudden, in that assignment, I was struck over and over again, it was not only Rowny but virtually every head of a delegation to whatever the organization was, was a political appointee. And over and over, either as the press officer but more likely as the wife of the DCM, I would end up going to their lunches or their dinners. They would get up and they would make their speeches and they would always talk about the president's agenda. They would always talk about their personal loyalty to President Reagan, which was kind of shocking to me. What happened to the U.S.? Weren't they representing the U.S. people? It was different and it was strikingly different.

And with that background I would say the same thing about Rowny. He had an agenda and he distrusted those who might possibly not share his agenda. If you weren't wearing your political affiliation on your sleeve so that he knew whether you shared his views or not, you were suspect. So he always came across as suspicious and holding his cards close to his vest for trust reasons. I think that was a lot of the problem with the delegation

was that a lot of the members didn't necessarily know where they stood with him. It was an unhappy family there. They all represented different agencies. He represented the hawks' line. I think Jim Goodby, who was his deputy, was a saint who managed to hold things together. He was a professional and kind of kept things moving along.

That said, you were asking how was Rowny. I would corroborate what you were saying. At the same time I had a very decent personal relationship with him. He was always very decent. Rather distant. When I say it was kind of strange why he ended up having his own press officer. He certainly never used me. But he didn't use his own, either. I never saw anything that his own did. So I think it was: I have to have a staff aide and I'm going to cut off any request at getting involved with press by having my own person that I have picked.

*Q: I would have thought there would have been a problem if there was international interest in these START talks and the other and that everyone had agreed not to talk about it. I mean you would have a ravening press outside the door trying to pick up bits and pieces from members of the delegation and since they're from different agencies, again one thinks of the old adage, like trying to herd cats. Did you get involved in this?*

VAN HEUVEN: You know, here's the thing. There was not a boss. In other words, this was not the kind of thing where there was a DCM or an ambassador that could say anything to Rowny. He was his own man. So to the extent that anybody talked to him about this it was my boss, the PAO. And all I can say is, it worked. It is true that if there was any overt connection with a public group or somebody in the press it was handled through me or through my boss, David. But was Rowny talking to people of his own persuasion in private? If so, we wouldn't have known and he might have had that person handle that, although I would say there was never a sign of it in the press. There was never an article where we could go back and say, "Hey, where did this come from?"

*Q: Well, did you find yourself in a press duel at all with the Soviet Union representative?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, absolutely not. If Rowny was talking to anybody in total private and we didn't know about it, Nitze was, too. Because during all of that time Strobe Talbott was coming to town on a fairly regular basis. He was with the *New York Times* and he was writing a book. And he somehow got to Nitze. Nitze, I think was looking for his record in history. So on the one hand he was absolutely not going to have any press but on the other he's willing to talk to somebody who had promised to publish this book after the end of the negotiations. And those were the only meetings I never sat in on. He did occasionally, and actually pretty much at our urging, once in a while talk off the record with people from the news media and I always sat in on those. But I only found out tangentially when Strobe Talbott was in town and when he left.

The international press would tend to come to town for the openings and the closings of sessions. It was always, "And they've left and nothing has happened" or "And they're arriving and will something happen this time?" And then the rest of the time it was just the Geneva press that followed the issues. Essentially what I did most of the time was



atmospherics. It was like what you always see with the press person saying, “And here’s what they’re having for lunch.” Just give them whatever you’ve got, which is not a lot. The atmospherics were interesting enough to write a, “They came to town, they were there, they were going to be there for two months, they were going to go home, they were going to regroup.”

They met alternately at the American headquarters and the Soviet mission and ACDA actually had their own building, the top three floors of a Geneva office building. So on U.S. hosting days the meetings were held there in this huge room with one big table in the middle. All the Soviets sat on one side and all the Americans sat on the other side. The Soviets faced the door and the Americans faced the windows and this splendid view of the Alps, gorgeous view of the Alps. And you would think, “How unfriendly!” But there were two little side notes there. The first is that apparently, according to Soviet custom, you always have your invited guests face the door because that’s where the enemy might come in and so they’re going to be the first prepared to deal with things, to protect themselves from whoever the enemy is. But the other, to me the really ironic twist, was they were not only facing the door but they were facing this big wall that had a huge LeRoy Neiman painting. LeRoy Neiman is a famous sports artist and he did a painting of the U.S. team defeating the Soviets in ice hockey at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics. And so that’s what was facing the Soviet delegation, day after day, when they were in our headquarters.

I never sat in, obviously, on the negotiations, but I went to enough of their evening cocktail to get a very fine feeling for how agonizing those negotiations were and how tedious. There was so much suspicion. There was so much politics between the Soviet Union and the United States going on that it’s really kind of amazing that they ended up with agreement. Most of the people who were there were dealing through interpreters. So you go to the cocktail parties, and if you were not standing right next to an interpreter, and if you don’t speak Russian, they sure don’t speak English. With the exception of the Russian ambassador, who spoke a lot more English than he was usually willing to let on, you would have these strained conversations. These reminded me very much of when we were in Berlin. Marten, as the legal advisor was in charge of Spandau, the prison where the last of the Nazi war criminals were. Every fourth month the guard changeover was from the Americans to the Soviets. On the first of the month, with the changeover of troops who were guarding the prison, there was always a lunch after a changeover ceremony. So for the whole time we were in Berlin I used to go with Marten to this lunch every month. In the Soviet month there you were faced with a whole lot of people who spoke only Russian and one supposed translator who was really the leash. He was really there to be sure they all stayed in line, so his command of English was really extremely poor. Luckily a couple of them spoke German, and of course we did, but in desperation I started learning Russian. You just can’t describe how forced the conversations were and how hard, when you hear about people saying, “Oh, you know, diplomats, striped pants, cookie pushers, cocktail parties.” Well, it was such hard work and the only thing that I can compare is I remember seeing an American businessman dealing with three Japanese businessmen and the looks on their faces. I thought, “It’s exactly the same. Nobody

understands each other and you're trying so hard to find something in common, some little level of civility to ease the process that you're trying to accomplish."

The one time where we really did end up getting actively involved with the general press was on the arms control talks in the fall of '83. It became quite obvious that the Soviets were threatening to walk out of the INF talks. They were very good about letting me know when something was really going on at the same time as I was never privy to the negotiation details. Which was a good thing. And they were protecting me, because I was bombarded by the press. It was a protection not to know a lot. But they did call me in and say, "Okay, the Soviets are threatening to walk out. We don't know what's going to happen."

What Nitze did was, he wanted to get an agreement. He was going to get an agreement. They were threatening to walk out. The normal rhythm was a two-month set of talks. That meant that the U.S. delegation got home from that fall session in time for Thanksgiving. And Nitze said, "We're not going, because if we go home they may never come back and we're going to get an agreement." So nobody got to go home. Nitze's deputy, Mike Glitman, had his wife along but the rest did not. So, they had long separations from their families, they weren't getting to go home for Thanksgiving, the tension was really building. I eventually managed to convince them that it would be smarter to alert the Geneva press that this may be in the offing. Then they would be prepared, there was going to be a better explanation, than if it came across as a huge crisis, the Russians have walked out. In other words, we already know about this. So with their permission, sometime after Thanksgiving I went over to the press office in the *Palais des Nations*. I just walked around and talked to everybody but I talked to the ones that I happened to find there and I knew that the word would spread pretty fast from there. I told them this had to be totally off the record but I wanted them to be prepared and to be ready for the possible eventuality that the Soviets might walk out. Within days the international press was there. Those last weeks were a zoo, in the sense that that little lobby on the ground floor of the building where the ACDA offices were was just full of photographers and TV. And I used to have to go in and clear a path so the Soviet delegation could get in, with the press screaming at them, "Well, is this the day?" But in the long run I think it was the wise thing to have done.

Anyway, the tension was getting higher and higher and higher. And it was getting closer and closer to Christmas. By golly, if they had not actually walked out, which they did, a couple of days before Christmas, I'm sure Nitze would have made everybody stay. So once the Soviets walked out, the delegation was not going to spend a lot of time in picking up their papers. They all wanted to get out of there. And that very night they had a spaghetti dinner in the room where the negotiations always took place. During the day, the morning, ten to twelve I think were the negotiations. So that afternoon all these people worked up skits and they put on the most fabulous entertainment. It was a real tension blow-out. You could see what I had seen all along. This was a group of people who may not have always agreed but they got along. It was definitely a happier delegation than the START talks folks, much less rivalry. On the other hand, these are people who had worked together for a number of years and they were all going to their

home agencies and they may never see each other again. So it was a nice and a fun evening and some of the skits were really very, very clever.

I really was bombarded by the press and I remember one of the more unpleasant ones was John Vinocur from the *New York Times*. I said, "Well, I can probably see if I can organize a meeting with Ambassador Nitze. I'll see what I can do but you have to understand that this is completely off the record." And he was very, "What do you mean? You don't play with me like that. I'm different! I'm the *New York Times*!" and so on and so forth. And I said, "Well, you know, no tickee, no laundry." And he would say things like, "Well, we can have this come out with a dateline out of Brussels, so no one will know that it came from here" etc. There was a lot of that kind of pressure. In the end he saw Nitze and Nitze was very good about saying a lot and saying nothing so that I think those few people who did get in to see him felt that they'd met Nitze. They could at least write a piece about him and what kind of person he was.

To get back General Rowny for a minute. He was Ambassador Rowny but he preferred to be called General Rowny. I actually in the succeeding years have run across him quite a bit in Washington and he's always been unfailingly polite and come up and said hello. His wife had had a severe stroke and was heavily incapacitated and he was wonderful with her. He took her everywhere he went and took care of her. I had a lot of respect for him although he could have been a different kind of head of the delegation for professional reasons, but as a person he had a very human side as well.

Nitze was not the kind of person that you ever developed that kind of personal relationship with and I don't think anyone did. He was very inscrutable, but he knew what he was doing and he knew where he was going. When the Soviets walked out, that was the end of the INF talks during my duration there. They eventually came to an agreement a number of years later.

When they walked out, the START delegation also refused to name a date for when they would come back. The Soviet Union was playing a bigger game than just INF. But they did come back that spring and START talks continued during the rest of my tenure in Geneva.

That whole year, 1983, when the INF talks were still in progress, there was another huge element to my dealing with, not the press, but the public because INF deployment in Western Europe was going forward during the talks.

*Q: This was the response to the SS-20. We were putting in the GLCMs and the Pershings.*

VAN HEUVEN: Intermediate range nuclear missiles, right, Pershing IIs and cruise missiles. There were huge groups of demonstrators and protesters that came regularly to Geneva and it was my lot in life to receive them at the U.S. mission. Somebody else took care of them at the Soviet mission, obviously. And we had a really big conference room and sometimes there were 400, 450 protesters who had all come to Geneva with one group or another. One of those groups was about 35-40 German mothers who walked all

the way from Mutlangen, one of the bases where weapons were deployed in southern Germany, to Geneva. So they walked from their hometown all the way to Geneva. They were put up by like-minded people all along the way 'til they finally got to Geneva and I got to talk with them. They held hands in a circle and they said a prayer and I received their token gifts which they brought on behalf of the delegation and they brought a loaf of bread in a beautiful basket that somebody had woven, covered in an embroidered cloth that somebody had embroidered, and a bottle of wine. So it was the stuff of life, symbolically. And I told them that, as I told all of them, that I would pass their thoughts on to the delegation and the delegation was really working hard and appreciated their interest. And in this case I said, "And I'm going to recommend that they save the bottle of wine and drink it when there's a resolution to the talks."

Unfortunately it was a very busy period and I left the basket with the loaf of bread and the bottle of wine under my desk for a couple of days. And one day I'm sitting there and I keep hearing [a noise] and I think, "What's going on?" And finally I think, "Oh my gosh, there's a mouse in this basket eating this stale bread." And I pick up the basket. My office was on the ground floor and it was not too far from the main entrance lobby. So I'm walking the basket with the loaf of bread in it through the lobby, wanting to throw it out of doors and halfway across the lobby the mouse jumps out of the basket onto the floor. I give a huge shriek. The Marine behind his glass there in the lobby sees the wife of the DCM giving a huge shriek in the lobby and comes rushing out and I said, "It's a mouse." You could see the mouse so he got there fast. And he's running after the mouse with his baton. Somehow the mouse, as mice will, found some little chink somewhere and squeezed himself into it. I did eventually get the cloth and the basket and the wine bottle over to the delegation. I think I dealt with Mike Glitman and I said, "Look, here's my recommendation. You all put it aside and when the talks come to end, here's your bottle of wine." And by golly, three or four years later, when they got back together and they concluded an INF agreement, the ACDA admin officer found me, wherever I was and said, "Okay, is it okay to drink the bottle of wine now?" And I said, "Yes!" Funny, they felt they had to get my permission.

*Q: Well these demonstrations that you were getting, did you feel, were they sort of I won't say neutral but were they directed against the Americans or were they against the Soviets, too? Because so much of the peace movement was saying, "Let the Soviets do what they want, including introducing these missiles, the SS-20s, but it's up to the United States not to do anything. Did you get a feel there was a certain neutrality in these movements or was it pretty much against the American stand?"*

VAN HEUVEN: I don't know what they said when they were at the Soviet embassy. On the other hand, some of them were organized. Some of these demonstrations that I dealt with, and they tended to be the most difficult ones, were organized by something called the World Peace Institute. There's a lot of evidence to show it had communist backing, an effort on their part to organize opposition in the Western world. And I think that many of the people who belonged to the World Peace Institute had no connections with the Communist Party. They were simply do-gooders who felt passionately: ban the bombers. I learned so much from that assignment in terms of public relations. One of the things I

learned is that you are virtually lost in a public argument if you can't put your argument on a tee shirt. The emotional arguments tend to win against the rational or the scientific, if you can't explain and distill the rational or the scientific argument very quickly. So you can put "ban the bomb" on a tee shirt but the arcane reasoning why deterrence worked and why deterrence worked for so long and gave us this Cold War which now historians call the "long peace" are very hard to make to an emotional group of mothers, for instance. So basically you have to share in their emotions, which is a legitimate concern and try and get in as much of the rational argument at the same time. But you can't say, "You're wrong!" It was very tough. Some of them were very hostile and were very anti-American but I don't know what they said when they were at the Soviet mission.

We had so many European assignments and presidents tended to come to Europe a fair amount and I ended up over my career being in the same room with virtually every president during those years at some point or another. One that I neglected to mention was Richard Nixon. I was at that point actually a wife trailing along behind my husband and hadn't reentered the Foreign Service. But Marten was the desk officer for Romania and Albania in the State Department. Nikolai Ceausescu, who was the leader of Romania, came to the United States on an official visit. As the desk officer, Marten and I were invited to the arrival ceremony. This was the classic head of state arrival ceremony. They came in in a helicopter and walked across the lawn in the back of the White House to where everyone was lined up on two sides with a little podium for the two presidents in the middle. You even had little signs on the grass to show exactly where you were to stand. And after that official arrival ceremony was over we were invited inside to a room upstairs, I guess in the outer private apartments, where the Nixons served coffee. It was a morning ceremony, so coffee and doughnuts, brioche, something, little things to go with coffee.

This would have been the spring of '74 and my memory is that it was shortly before Nixon resigned. But the air was full of it. Things were really, really bad and what I will never personally forget is the appearance and the demeanor, both of the president and of his wife, Pat Nixon. They looked like zombies. They were gray skinned. They never smiled. They were going through the motions of this ceremony that was part of their duties but you could tell that their persona was elsewhere. And it was very sad to see how physically evident it was, what a huge amount of stress and trouble they were going through at that point. I remember talking to both of them but it was like talking to someone who was not there.

A major portion of my work during that assignment had to do the arms control talks. One of the other things of huge public and therefore press interest that I was quite involved in was the GATT ministerial in November of '82. That was actually a preparatory meeting that was called which ended up, eventually, as an effort to establish parameters for a new global tariff-cutting round. The last round had been in the early Seventies, which was the Tokyo round and this GATT ministerial opened the way to the Uruguay Round. It didn't last that long, because it wasn't actual talks. It was simply an effort on the part of all of the members of the GATT to establish what the parameters for future talks would be.

The big thing we were pushing for was to get some kind of a framework in place to also discuss agriculture, because up until then most of international tariff-cutting efforts had been about industrial products. From the point of view of the United States, it was fine to have that part, but a huge portion of our exports were agricultural and we wanted to get these into the framework of the talks as well.

I'm not an expert on the history of the GATT, but my sense at the time certainly was that this was one of the early efforts on the part of the developing countries to have their issues put on the agenda, too, and what they saw as a lot of protectionism on the part of the wealthier countries. One of the big symbolic things was that both the president of the IMF [ed note: the title in the IMF is "managing director"] and president of the World Bank were there. They were scheduled to be opening the talks by setting out their parameters for what was going on in global trade and there was a big effort on the part of the developing countries to get the UNCTAD representative on there on that first day, too. UNCTAD was one of the specialized agencies in Geneva, the UN Committee on Trade and Development. The point being that right up there up front would also be the issues of developing countries.

To me the most interesting thing about that GATT ministerial was how it repeated the pattern of all of these really difficult talks. Nobody wants to give. This was accentuated by the fact that the EU really was still in that mode where the only way they ever reached agreement was on the last day of the last meeting which ended up turning often into at least a midnight meeting, if not an all-nighter. And that is in fact how that GATT ministerial ended. It was an all-nighter on the last night. Jacques Delors led the French delegation. He came in, and literally said, according to everyone that I talked to later, to his whole delegation "There will be no partying, there will be no drinking. Everybody is going to stay [word unintelligible] for that last night, so that we're really ready to negotiate." And they were. You could see how simply the ability to outlast others, how people got tired, and their will to push through on a lot of things began to crumble.

I remember around three o'clock in the morning of that last night, where it looked like the whole thing was going to fail, leaning over a balcony. We were up on the fourth floor, where we had space and where I was actually Xeroxing 400 copies of Bill Brock's speech. He was the U.S. Trade Representative at the time. He'd been a senator from Tennessee and then Republican National Committee chairman when President Reagan was elected. From there somehow he became the U.S. Trade Representative. Everybody was really pretty discouraged and I was leaning over the balcony and I looked at him and I said, "Hang in there!" And he did. It wasn't an all doors were opened and all problems were solved, but they did end up with an agreement and the cute thing was he wrote me a note of thanks.

I had talked about the negotiations with the Soviets, which were different. These were, I would classify them as straight European negotiations. At that point, the big players still were the developed countries.

*Q: What was the point of the*

VAN HEUVEN: It was trying to get agricultural products into a trade round. They hadn't been included in the past and they ended up, in a small way, being a part of the Uruguay Round.

We had two visits from Bush, Bush the father, both times as vice president. For some reason one of his interests had always been chemical weapons and trying to get a chemical weapons control regime, which was the job of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. The first trip he came with Barbara and they just basically stopped in Geneva for a day. A good friend of his was Sadruddin Aga Khan, who for a very, very long time was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. So they would just stay with him and came through on other occasions privately as well. And this second visit, which was in '83, was at a time where it looked like we were really close to getting a chemical weapons agreement and he came in the hopes of putting a final punctuation onto it. As a press officer, obviously this was a big press event for me. He had his own press person along from the White House but I had to go in and help her because first of all I knew how to get around the Palais and definitely she needed help.

I found it particularly remarkable to see him in operation. It seemed as if he knew virtually every ambassador in that room and he'd been an ambassador a couple of times and one time at the UN. So there were obvious connections and he knew how important those connections were. He didn't stint, he went around the room, before he ever got to the podium where he was supposed to be making his speech. He shook hands with half of the forty countries represented. It seems to me that he shook hands with at least half of the people that were there and took a minute to make that personal connection with each one of them.

Those two visits in Geneva, dealing with the advance party, dealing with everything associated with his visit, were far and away the easiest in my Foreign Service career of any vice president or president who came through. I'm sure that was partly because he had been in our role. He understood and made it somehow clear to his folks about being courteous and understanding other peoples' needs. He knew we were telling them stuff not to be difficult but we were telling them stuff to grease the skids and make their visit more successful. And it was so. There was a much more cooperative and positive dialogue that went on associated with his visits.

I have mentioned that sometimes the interests of being a wife and an officer at the same time was a problem. There was one such instance connected with his arrival on that trip. Marten was the chargé and had been the chargé for quite a while at that point and all of a sudden Vice President Bush was coming on this trip. At any given time there were six, seven, eight ambassadors, counting the ambassador to Switzerland in Berne. The rest of them were all in Geneva and they all wanted to be at planeside to greet the vice president when he arrived. So it fell to Marten, far and away the least ranking, because he was the DCM and the chargé at the time, to say, "Okay, here's how this is going to work and here's where everybody is going to stand." Lou Fields was the ambassador to the Committee on Disarmament, felt it was his meeting so he should be at the front of the

ladder and Ambassador Lodge, as the ambassador to Switzerland, said, "It's my country, so I should be at the front of the ladder." I honestly don't remember how he finally worked that part out, but one of the things he did, here is this ridiculous entourage of eight ambassadors, he said, "No wives." And there I was. I was a wife, but I was there as the press officer. I wasn't, obviously, lining up but I was out there on the tarmac and Lou Fields walked in with his wife. His wife was a charmer and she was obviously not going to not be there. And Ambassador Lodge drew himself up to his full significant height and said, "What will I tell Francesca?" his wife. And of course the next day there was a picture in the Herald Tribune of the greeting with Kitty Fields front and center and Lodge totally lopped off of the picture. It was a difficult situation and at one point Marten came over and whispered in my ear, "Stay far out of the way!" The situations out of which our lives are sometimes made. Then there were issues over who got into which car. It went on and on.

But Bush himself was a delight to work for.

There were always talks going on in Geneva and most of the time they were quiet talks. It was one of those anonymous neutral places that came to mind almost immediately as the place to get together as quietly as possible with as little public attention as possible, to try to iron things out. In fact sometimes we didn't even know who was there. It happened a couple of times, once with the ambassadors and once when Marten was the chargé at our residence, that there would be a call to get ready to host a lunch for people to get together and we had to clear out, it was all so hush-hush. Well the first time, Ambassador Swaebe called Marten over the next day to the residence and said, "Come on in and look." He had just told his staff, "Get ready for a lunch. I'm not going to be here but you just get ready for so many people" and they did their thing. The people walked in and they sat down and they left and the staff put the guest book out and they all dutifully signed their name and the same thing happened at our house. We forgot to say, "Don't put the guest book out!" So even though it was hush-hush, we ended up knowing who had come and gone in those two cases.

There were things close to when I left that we did get involved in. I think it was one of the very first sets of talks on orderly departures out of Vietnam. Prisoners, not our prisoners but Vietnamese political prisoners that we wanted to help get out, Vietnamese spouses of Americans who somehow were still there, children. Those went on for quite a while and because they were really quiet, we helped them, we got involved but there wasn't as much of a press interest.

Another set of talks that I personally got quite involved in was one of the many efforts to patch things up in that long period of civil strife and rivalry among the various factions in Lebanon. This would have been '84, so it was after the Israelis went into Lebanon. It was after Hezbollah blew up our marines. About a month after the Israelis went in we sent forces as well and the Marine barracks were blown up and then later the embassy took a hit and a number of people were killed. And then Gemayel was finally elected president and was assassinated less than a month later. I think his brother took over. But their party, the Christian Phalange, never quite had the strength to bring all those warring factions



together and there was an effort that was made in that spring of '84 to bring them all to Geneva. I'm sure there have been many other efforts and there were many that followed, but this one was probably symptomatic of many of those sorts of efforts. They were all going to stay in the Intercontinental Hotel and we were helping to set up the room and the table where they were going to talk. As always seems to happen when nobody really wants to talk to anybody else, the big fight was over the table, what the table was going to look like, who was going to sit where. The person who came over from the Department to head these talks was Richard Fairbanks and in the end he gave up the effort. He finally gave up and I ended up staying involved for the simple reason that he didn't speak Arabic and he didn't speak French.

I don't remember whether it was because they wanted to keep this quite quiet or whether it was a very last minute thing but he didn't bring an Arabic interpreter with him. He might have been able to find one in Geneva but there was no effort made. So because I had a 4+, 5 in French, he asked me to come along and interpret into French. Lebanon had been a French protectorate for a very long time, so they all spoke French. And that's how we ended up going up and down the fire stairs between floors in the hotel and each one of these clans had a whole wing of the Intercontinental Hotel for their leaders and their bodyguards and their hangers on and we just kept going from one to the other.

Those talks amounted to nothing. He was very much in a listening mode and I don't remember that much was proposed. Certainly all they did was tell their positions for the umpteenth time, including the standard about pushing the Jews in Israel back into the sea and the 400 years of occupation. There was no give or ability to elicit any give, either. It was another type of various negotiations that over the years take on a color of their own, that tell you a lot about what the possibilities are for their success or not.

That pretty much covers Geneva. We left early because Marten had been the chargé for a very long time, and a new political appointee, Gerry Carmen, came to town. He had been the head of the General Services Administration in Washington and was named out of that job to be ambassador in Geneva. He needed to establish his own credentials without having a DCM where all of the other ambassadors said, "Oh, yes, you have a fabulous deputy who did such a good job!"

So it was time to go and we left in November. That was the last time that the State Department broke an assignment for me, because it would have been very awkward for me to stay on when Marten left and I had also been the wife of the DCM. It was ironic. USIA had not really wanted me and then there was this big fight, did I finish out my assignment to USIA in Washington or did I go back to the State Department and the State Department eventually won. While they were working that out, I was on the rolls on Central Complement again and I spent probably six weeks back in my old office, the Office of Citizens Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, where they gave me a couple of projects.

They had a court case where a private citizen was suing the State Department. They needed somebody to pull it all together in order to know how to pursue this suit. So I just

went through and came up with a chronology and put out all the salient facts and said, "This case has no merit!" They said, "Thank you very much."

Once the decision was made that I would stay in the State Department, one of the things that I bid on was the Operations Center. I actually got that assignment and I became a SWO, a Senior Watch Officer, beginning in January. Back then, anyway, they had I think two people who did January to December. It's a one-year assignment and the rest were assigned in the summer cycle, so you had experience, you weren't all new together.

Back when I was in the Bureau of Consular Affairs the first time, I ended up being sent up to the Operations Center to participate in a number of task forces. So I had become familiar with some of what the Operations Center did and thought that was really very interesting. One of the task forces that I participated in was the Falklands War and that was very interesting, because usually when you have a task force there's a crisis somewhere. The bureau where the crisis is located heads the task force and the head of the task force tends to be somebody from the political end of things, either a DAS or the head of the relevant office. Then the other components will be every other interested party and the Bureau of Consular Affairs tends to be one of those. So we most times have somebody up there to talk to all the families that are calling in, "Is my son safe?" and "How do I find out whether my wife is there?" etc. There was a lot of discussion because back at that time the bureau was still called ARA, American Republics, whether it should be the Latin American contingent because it was happening just off of the shores of Argentina or whether it should be EUR, the Bureau of European Affairs, because the Falkland Islands were a British possession. They ended up like that image of dancing class where the little boys are on one side and the little girls are on the other. You had two people, one was Ken Pendleton for EUR and the other was Bob Service for ARA. They took turns sitting at the head seat in the middle but it was a semi-antagonistic atmosphere. Each saw the priorities as being very different and there was a lot of maneuvering for what the result would turn out to be. The task force started before the war started and went on after.

The Secretary of State was Alexander Haig. He went down to talk to the Argentine generals and came back into the Ops Center and debriefed the task force on the way back and apparently one of the things he said to the generals was "What are you going to do when the body bags start returning?," said like a good general. And in fact, in a lot of ways that war ended up being the breakup of the generals' sway in Argentina.

Anyway, I became a Senior Watch Officer in the Operations Center.

*Q: Which was when?*

VAN HEUVEN: January of '85 and '85 was a very troubled year, particularly in the Middle East. I got the nickname "Typhoid Mary" because it seemed as if every time I walked on the watch some new thing would happen. One of the wonderful things about the watch, in all of my jobs in the Foreign Service you took your job home with you. People called you at night and you called people at night and you came in on weekends.

But in the watch you had long hours, your shift was nine hours and you had to get in a little ahead to read in on what was happening in the four corners of the Earth and you had to stay to debrief the next crew, but, boy, when you went home it was over. Somebody else was in charge and that was a very unique feature.

Anyway, I walked in and on my watch the TWA hijacking began which skipped all around the Mediterranean and ended up parked in Beirut for a while. That was the year many American hostages were taken in Lebanon. There were already a couple when I started. Two were kidnapped, or we learned of the kidnapping of two, on my watch. The Mexican earthquake happened on my watch. On my watch the Egyptian airplane that was flying out of Cairo was diverted.

*Q: This was part of the Achille Lauro business.*

VAN HEUVEN: After the *Achille Lauro* hijacking.

*Q: These were the hijackers, were on that plane.*

VAN HEUVEN: One of the hijackers was on the plane and we had fighter jets which forced that plane to land at Sigonella, which is an air base in Sicily.

There was so much going on. Everybody had more than their fair share and I got to know fairly well a lot of the junior to mid-grade officers who were in NEA, the Near East and Asia bureau. Many are now the assistant secretaries and have been the chief negotiators all these years of issues, because most of these issues were in the Middle East and they were the desk officers. The Lebanese desk officer used to come up to the watch once a day to talk on the secure line with Reggie Bartholomew, who was ambassador in Beirut. My memory is he had to actually go outside of the embassy to a phone booth that was in the courtyard that somehow was secure to make these daily phone calls to keep them up to date on what was happening at that point. All of those guys stuck with Middle Eastern affairs through their careers. I think once you become a specialist in that area you tend to stay. Bill Burns, David Welch, Arnie Raphael, who did actually a lot of South Asia as well, were there all the time.

The Secretary of State was George Shultz and he was a wonderful man to deal with, from our perspective. We had a little phone right on our console with a red button. When that red button lit up it was the Secretary calling us and he tended to do that when he was at home or at night or he was away from the office and he needed something. Most of the time it was getting him through on the phone to somebody. Sometimes it was something he needed. We became almost like staffers for him.

We had a phone we could pick up to call him at night at home to alert him to something. You didn't do that very often. When I arrived on the watch, the story was the first time after he became Secretary of State when he picked this phone up the Senior Watch Officer was not at his or her desk. What's called the OA, the operations assistant, the lowliest person on the totem pole, was the nearest person and she picked up the phone.

Normally it's supposed to only be the Senior Watch officer. Our habit at that point was that we just always used our first names. It was an impersonal thing, you didn't use titles or anything like that. So even when I answered, I always said, "This is Ruth." Not just on the Secretary's phone but in general when you picked up your phone. And this gal's name happened to be Angie, so she picked up the phone and she said, "This is Angie" and the brand new Secretary of State said, "This is George. Can you get me" whatever, which is kind of cute. But he was like that, he was very human, very personable.

And he was a very sound sleeper. I probably called him three times during that year at night. Diplomatic Security was called SY and they have a post in the Secretary's house, a control post. So you had to call them and say, "Please go up and knock on the Secretary's bedroom door and wake him up and tell him I'm about to call." One of my colleagues actually said he called once, got SY to go up, knock on the door, called back and Shultz went right back to sleep. He had to repeat the cycle and have SY go up and keep knocking until he could hear him answer. Back then it was our instruction and it was our habit to monitor phone calls. So when he talked to anybody, we were on the line and we took notes that became part of the record that we would pass to his senior staff. Charlie Hill was the head of S/S, which is the Secretary's inner office.

*Q: He was very close to George Shultz.*

VAN HEUVEN: Extremely close and they used to talk to each other on a very regular basis, in the evenings when they went home, before the next day, or over the weekend. I will never forget those conversations. The description of Charlie Hill as a professor at Yale just brought it all back, "he's a man of few words." But so is Shultz and they were obviously very comfortable with each other, because they would have these conversations of very few words and then long silences and they were both comfortable with silence. There was no need on anybody's part to fill that up with chatter. If I say that a conversation would be "Yep." [long silence] "Well, I guess we could follow up on that." [long silence] But they didn't sit down and rehash. They both knew what they thought, so it was just "Are we going to bring somebody in?" "Are we going to let this sit on the back burner?" "Are we going to" in very few words, but over a half an hour. You could be doing all kinds of other things while you were listening. You didn't have to take many notes at all.

Years later, shortly before I joined the OIG and we actually inspected the S/S/O, which was the Operations Center and a number of related offices something had come up where essentially the decision had been made that it was illegal to listen in on a conversation without letting people know. So they then would always say "I will stay on the line until you tell me to get off." And pretty soon they changed that to "I will hang up now unless you tell me you want me to stay on the line." I remember a friend of mine saying when I was in that job and I was trying to describe what you did, he would always say afterwards, "Oh, yeah, there's Ruth, with all ten fingers plugged into the world." Trying to keep that going while you were trying to follow six or seven other things at the same time was not easy, so I think people were really kind of happy when this ruling came out which made it easy for them to gradually drop out of the process entirely.

*Q: The story is apocryphal, probably, but George Shultz, when he first arrived on the scene, somebody called in the middle of the night and said, "Mr. Secretary, there's a crisis in Suriname." And Shultz said, "Thank you very much for that. Where the hell is Suriname?"*

VAN HEUVEN: I never heard that one, but it's entirely possible. Like the story of the person who was called and asked if he'd like to be ambassador to [someplace] and he said, "Yes!" and then he called back and said, "Where is it?"

The world kept getting more complicated, as we had all those crises that year, as more and more issues filled the plate, it all got faster and faster. Probably the habit of listening and taking these nice notes went back to a more leisurely time when one could do that.

When you think about it now it seems odd but we're talking '85. That was my first experience at working all day long with a computer and we had those early Wangs. That was when all telegrams were still in hard copy and it wasn't 'til ten years later, I remember when I was an office director in EUR, that we switched from hard copy telegrams to electronic ones on your computer.

But we already were starting it in the Ops Center. We were exhorted over and over, which wasn't that hard for me because I didn't have as much of a habit to break, not to save paper, just to work with the electronic version and since you were not going to be in charge of that subject matter later, our major function there was to look at something and decide, did somebody need to be alerted, did somebody need to be briefed, did somebody need to get pulled in, in terms of coordination. Once you decided that, you were on to the next issue.

That was the first place I ever saw one of these wonderful map clocks, where you could see which part of the world, so you knew am I waking somebody up in the middle of the night or am I calling a place that is in daytime? You could see from this clock which part of the world was in the dark and which part of the world was in the sun at any given time.

All of this now, you think, "Sure, that's old hat" but it was new. A big television monitor but you also had two smaller insets so you could essentially follow three channels at once and you could always switch if you saw what looked like breaking news to one of the smaller insets. It was early CNN, but very often we learned of a crisis from CNN before we got a phone call from a post or before a flash cable would come in.

Essentially the whole year we were in remodeling. There was a lot of upgrading of all of the facilities to bring us into the more modern era. That was the very beginning of videoconferencing, secure videoconferencing. So the Secretary didn't always have to go over to the NSC, which he did in the beginning but I think they had a few test videoconferences by the time that I left at the end of that year. But eventually you got to where you could have everybody in their home base on a secure videoconference, which also vastly simplified the coordination of major events.

We had a system I'm sure has been upgraded now that included the Ops Center in the CIA, the Department of Defense Ops Center, our Ops Center, the NSC and a number of other places where we could give each other an early alert that something was up that maybe the others didn't know about yet. If it looked like you might be the first person to get the news you would pick it up. Most often it was the CIA or the NSC that would initiate the call. All you had to do was pick up the phone and the phone rang automatically at the desk of the senior watch officer in these other places. So you'd be in this cauldron. People were rushing around and things were happening and there were a couple of things where everybody that was there would yell out loud, so that they were sure somebody was paying attention to it.

One was the Secretary. If the Secretary's phone rang, somebody would yell "Secretary!" if you were two feet from your desk. I actually initiated an interagency Ops Center alert once and this was that very short period in the Soviet Union where they didn't have long tenured senior leaders. I wondered sometimes if what happened wasn't that in picking those successors they didn't deliberately pick someone who was (a) rather elderly and (b) maybe in ill health, to be sure that they weren't facing another fifteen year reign. You can make that argument about the selection of a number of popes, that they picked somebody that they thought wouldn't be around too long and wouldn't be too adventurous, either. But, anyway, this was during the very short reign of Chernenko, who replaced Andropov and one of the early signals when you knew something was wrong was when on the Soviet radio they would start playing funereal music. And that was already out there. "Uh oh, what's up? They're playing funereal music." And then we had to patch through a phone call from somebody who was accompanying a Soviet trade delegation out in California. The Soviet trade minister was the head of the delegation and all of a sudden they let our folks who were taking them around know that they had to cut short their trip and they were going back to the Soviet Union, like two days early. So I called and I let the other Ops Centers know, "Hey, here's sign number two, the trade minister is hop, skip and jumping back." Of course it did turn out that Chernenko had died.

But those were some of the many different things, we had to get information from all over.

I said you got to go home at the end of your shift but one time I didn't. That was during that standoff in Sigonella. After our fighter jets persuaded the EgyptAir plane to land at Sigonella, the Italians surrounded the plane. Then we ramped into quite a long period of trying to persuade them to let us have access to that hijacker who was on the plane. The Ops Center had to set up all the calls. So we were setting up the phone call between our Secretary of State and the Italian minister of foreign affairs and between I think the president and the president of Italy and Casper Weinberger, who was the Secretary of Defense and the Italian minister of defense. Those are the ones that I remember.

The reason we would get involved, why wouldn't DOD patch Weinberger through, was that we had to get an interpreter on the line. So we had to call down and get somebody patched into this phone call who could interpret back and forth. It was rare that an Italian

in government spoke English. It was *sine qua non* that you were going to have to have a translator on the call. We ran out of people. By now this was nine or ten o'clock at night and so I ended up staying on, because I had Italian, being on the phone call between Weinberger and Spadolini, who was the Italian defense minister. Luckily, the embassy was able to patch somebody in at the other end and we two-teamed it; he translated for Weinberger and I translated for Spadolini.

A year or so later, when I was no longer in the Ops Center, Marten was the office director for the part of the Bureau of European Affairs that followed Italy, among other countries. George Shultz was a big tennis fan and so one day, the year I was in the Ops Center, he brought his friend who he was having lunch with, Ivan Lendl, by. He used to bring people, friends from his other life, by just to show them the Ops Center. When Marten was in charge of Italy and France, Jacques Chirac came on a visit and the Secretary gave a lunch for him in the State Department. He invited another friend of his from California who was the chef from his favorite restaurant in Palo Alto, which is actually a very famous Chinese restaurant, and I happened to sit next to him at that lunch. And another person who was at the same table was Spadolini. So I was saying to him, "Do you remember that phone call? I was the person who was on the phone translating." He said, "Yes! Wasn't that awful! I wanted to help so badly, but Craxi wouldn't have it!" It was funny to have those moments where you came back and actually saw someone that you had never met before.

It was a very tough year. We had many terrorist incidents. It wasn't just *Achille Lauro* and the TWA plane that kept flying around the Med and the hostages but there were terrorist incidents that just kept succeeding each other. There was a decision made in the middle of this remodeling that we actually needed more task force rooms, because there were times where we just couldn't keep that many task forces going at one time. The environment I felt was always very positive, very upbeat and very professional. I think it was a very good training ground as well for the other members of the Ops Center.

*Q: Time in the Ops Center was considered sort of a stepping stone on the way to more responsible positions.*

VAN HEUVEN: It certainly was a huge learning experience for me because what I came out of that with was an understanding of what was important to the Seventh Floor, because you didn't handle only crises. We were the fast paper end and the Secretariat, S/S/S, they were the slow paper end. They were the ones that did all the position papers and the policy papers and got ready for the various visits and so on and so forth. But you got involved in that part during the night, when things had to be finished and all the day people had gone home, if you were on a night shift. And you knew how to get things done, because the other people that you dealt with on a very regular basis were the staff aides to all the assistant secretaries. The aides always came up to get the hot paper or to catch their people in a task force or whatever. So it was a tremendous learning experience.

In Geneva I had a lot of pressure cooker jobs in a row but somehow that job didn't feel like it. I think part of it was not only that you didn't take it home with you but you changed your shift after every two days. So you had days when you didn't go to work until three o'clock in the afternoon, which gave you plenty of time to have doctor's appointments and go to see your kids in school or see your kids' teachers or go to a museum or just sit home and read the newspaper in a leisurely fashion.

Or the same was true when you were on the night shift. You went in at midnight, you were finished at eight. Well, you didn't get a lot of sleep. You probably didn't sleep much past noon, but then you had your whole afternoon or your early evening to get together with friends or to do all those things that normally in our professional lives we had very little time to do.

So, as that assignment was coming to an end I got a call from Mike Newlin, who I'd actually gotten to know first in Geneva. He was now the principal deputy to the assistant secretary for consular affairs, Joan Clark, and he asked me to become the office director for the Office of Public Affairs in CA. I thought that what I wanted was to flesh out my consular career. I'd had a fair amount of experience in American citizens services and I really thought I needed to go into the visa office and get similar experience on the home side in the Visa Office. But he kept pitching me and eventually I said, "Oh, okay!" He kept saying, "Listen, this is an office director job. You shouldn't sneeze at that." So eventually I agreed and I became the office director for the Office of Public Affairs.

They were making a big search for somebody because this was the end of the era of the vestiges of Frances Knight. She had been the head of the Passport Office and it took forever to integrate Passport Services into the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

*Q: I remember Barbara Watson*

VAN HEUVEN: Trying

*Q: Saying that it got to the point that they didn't speak to each other.*

VAN HEUVEN: I think Joan Clark was really very wise, I'm assuming she made this decision herself, 'cause she certainly had a lot of administrative and management background. She decided to amalgamate the public affairs offices in Passport Services and Consular Affairs. So I came into that job and there were three of us. There was the head of the office, the press officer and a secretary. And when I left we had two secretaries, two FSO's, we had one civil service continuity person who did a lot of the programs, some of which already existed. And we ended up with eight civil service people, most of whom came out of the Passport Office. Luckily, the people didn't come. The positions came.

So I learned a lot in that job, too, because I had to write position descriptions. I learned so much about the Civil Service in that job and the hiring process and a whole lot of things



that in a normal Foreign Service career, unless perhaps you were in the admin cone, you never would get to. And this was very helpful in future assignments, as well.

So we absorbed the whole information to the American traveling public function that used to be run out of the Passport Office, which included publishing a lot of booklets and putting out a lot of information on the various passport offices. I got to know a lot of the passport directors in the process as well. In large part that was because of an ongoing program that a predecessor had started, where every second year our office organized a trip around the United States, a briefing trip.

We really had four audiences. One was the general public. Another was travel agents. Another was student advisors at universities. And the last were staffers in congressional district offices.

We would usually start with a briefing here in Washington for staff workers in offices on the Hill and then we would select six or seven cities. In the beginning they went only to the states where there was a passport office, because the local passport office then helped a lot with the organization. But our messages to the staffers was how can you help your constituents, how can you help us in getting information out to them on the best way to proceed, how can you be the intermediary between the citizen whose son got arrested in Bangkok and doesn't know what to do.

The message to the travel agents was similar on the traveling American front: how can you help us warn people about not getting into trouble, tell the college students before they go to Mexico they can end up in jail, just like in *Midnight Express*. That was very helpful. You could just say the name of that movie and that gave people an image of the possible problems.

And the student advisors, our message was twofold. It was also how can you help your own students on study abroad programs not to get into trouble and how can you help foreign students that want to come and study at your university get visas to come to the United States. At the places that we went out around the country and did that visa portion, there was almost always an INS office in the same town. So we would do it together, both INS and State, in helping people figure out how to work the whole visa process in terms of their constituents' families or whatever the interests of the congressional staffers was, in those cases.

We also went once a year to the annual conference of the American Society of Travel Agencies, did the same thing. Did a seminar, had a booth there, travel agents could come in and ask for information.

I think it was a really worthwhile effort on the part of the government to get out in a proactive way to the general public, in order to make our work easier and to make their work easier at the same time.

We took over from the Passport Office all of these little booklets and we expanded that program. In fact, the first new one that we did was called *Safe Travel Abroad*. It was also the period, this was the beginning of '86, where terrorism was becoming a bigger and bigger issue. I had just been through that year in the Ops Center when all the airplanes were being hijacked and the hostages were being taken. So there was a lot of fear out in the public and a lot of generalized questioning. We came up with this booklet that you could then just send people, that gave much more information than you could give in a telephone call or in a short letter.

From the booklet we went on to do a video. The video ended up doing quite well, but our big hope had been that we could sell it to the airlines to put on their airplanes. We hoped that people on their way to a foreign country would have this 15 minute, 20 minute reminder on watching your baggage and stowing your money safely and making a photocopy of their passport identity page and all those little things like that.

We found the airlines were very reluctant, first of all because we had a portion in there about what to do if you lost your baggage. Of course they didn't want to have anybody focus on the fact that their baggage might get lost. So we offered to take that part out, but in the end I think they just felt it was not good p.r. to talk about possible problems related to travel.

I understand it's still in circulation. The narrator was Paul Anthony, who's a local figure here in Washington, he turns up on PBS a lot, a fabulous voice.

*Q: You were in CA from when to when?*

VAN HEUVEN: It would have been from January '86 until the fall of '88.

*Q: As you went on these trips around, did you find any sort of global hostility to the State Department?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, no, it was not a problem, but of course these were selective audiences. To the extent that there was, I tried to do as many interviews with local papers as I could at the same time as talking with the general public. There sometimes you had the kind questions that indicated a lack of knowledge. Our major goal was to get more information out there so people would understand better what the framework was within which we could work and within which they could work successfully.

But the other audiences, first of all we were repeating things that had been done before us, so that many of the travel agents already had exposure to what we had to offer. The congressional staffers often were new, because those were the kinds of jobs for entry-level young people. Every once in a while you had a little bit of a whine, "I tried to do this and ..." But I think generally the encounters were really quite positive. Student advisors tended to be people who had done this a long time and they had very specific, good questions. They were a very easy audience.

*Q: Did you get involved in any major incidents or something, a firing squad of publicity or interest?*

VAN HEUVEN: Often. A big portion of the job remained the press. These were the years of the Contra wars. There were ongoing terrorist affairs. There were local cases from all around the country of arrested or missing or whatever. So, yeah, there was a great deal of that.

*Q: Mexico always has a significant number of arrests and all that.*

VAN HEUVEN: I remember fighting over the press guidance at great length with my colleagues in what back then was called ARA, Latin American affairs. There was an American pilot downed in Nicaragua. His name was Hasenfus,

*Q: It was a German name, yeah.*

VAN HEUVEN: That was one of those very high profile cases at the time.

One interesting sidelight was an American woman whom we had helped. The Swiss were the protecting power in Iran for us, because our embassy at that point obviously was already closed. She escaped from Iran and got back to the United States with her daughter. Her name was Betty Mahmoody. She was helped to flee to Turkey. She had no money. She literally walked out the door of her house with her child with nothing and promised that the people who helped her that she would send them money as soon as she could when she got back to the United States. The way she got the money together was to write a book about her story that was called *Not Without My Daughter*, which was later made into a movie.

*Q: A Sally Field movie.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's right. Betty was asked to go on the Phil Donahue Show. Someone was looking for a theme, her book was out there, they thought this could be interesting and they got together a number of other American women who had married Islamic men. Betty was very concerned at protecting the identity of the people who helped her. In fact she was still in semi-hiding, because she was very worried that her husband would come to the United States and try and take her daughter back. There was just one person within CA who was her contact and knew how to find her. Anyway, she called that person and said that she was willing to go on the Phil Donahue show. It would probably be good publicity for the book, but more so the message was one that she was concerned about getting out. She was concerned that she might be asked questions that she didn't want to answer, so could somebody from the State Department come along? Basically they decided that I should be one to go, as the PA person. I did.

It was a very interesting day. Obviously, the message that we wanted to get across, and I did end up speaking briefly on the program, was that American women considering marrying Islamic men born not in the United States should think about this very

carefully. They should go and visit those countries first before they married and should recognize that there were very strong cultural differences that they may not be that aware of. Most American women, at least at that point, who were marrying Islamic men were ones that they met as students at universities. That was an American atmosphere, American rules were in place

*Q: Young lads, had quite bit of money and*

VAN HEUVEN: Very good looking and had that extra charm and mystery of their different background. They should think twice, think thrice. All but one of the I believe it was five women who were on the program basically had that same message in one way or another. There was a young African-American who married a Saudi and went and lived in Saudi Arabia. She did not have trouble leaving, the way Betty did, because there were no children. In other words, generally the problem was, everything was fine as long as they stayed in the United States, but when they went back with their husband to live in the country of their husband's origin suddenly these men changed. They were back in the bosom of their families, under pressure from their parents to stick to their own cultural traditions. These young American wives were no longer treated the way they were accustomed to being treated. They were supposed to stay in the house, they were supposed to wear heavy veils if they went out. In Saudi Arabia you weren't allowed to drive a car. Suddenly their entire independence disappeared.

*Q: Their mother-in-law was the queen.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right, but their disenchantment, generally, at least in the cases I'm aware of, tended to become a common disenchantment with the husband as well. Generally, if they said, "This is not for me" the husband was willing to let them go, but if there was a child, there was no question of the child leaving with the mother. That child became part of the husband's family.

So this one young African-American woman, she had exactly the same story to tell, she had no problem coming back to the United States. The husband was willing to let her go and I think she was leaving behind nothing but memories.

Another person who had also married a Saudi, she was a case I was already familiar with. There was a double kidnapping. She was in Saudi Arabia, she was really unhappy. The family took a vacation in I believe it was Kuwait. She took the opportunity when they were in Kuwait, where you more freedom of movement, to go into the American consulate to ask to have passports made for her two daughters. The consular officer who there helped her get the passports and get on a plane and get out of Kuwait with her children was then PNGed by the Kuwaitis, who had to be concerned with the concerns of their neighbors the Saudis. This woman went back to the United States and after some period her husband came and re-kidnapped the girls, took them back to Saudi Arabia. As far as I know this case is still going on, although by now probably the girls are grown up and probably the mother has given up. But every American ambassador, at least once a year, seemed to bring the case up. Finally the Saudis allowed her to come once. She was

allowed to see her children in a room where her ex-husband, several lawyers, a doctor, all were present. She said she wasn't even allowed to hug them. She was just allowed to talk to them across the room and they were scared silly, really tragic.

The one exception was, actually, an American woman who was from a very well to do, very well educated family. She was a Biddle. She was a professor in her own right and I believe at the university she met her husband, who was a Palestinian. Also, I believe, a professor. They had no children but they were also living in the United States. Now she did say that they went back every year for a few months. I believe that was also Kuwait. She had a total headdress, even for the Phil Donahue Show.

It was really striking. On that show, they have a warm-up. Everybody's there and Phil Donahue comes in and he talks to everybody for a few minutes, so he gets a feel for how he wants to play the program. And during the period before he came in, but also while he was there, the Biddle woman brought her husband along. He was the only Islamic man who was there. By our lights he was jerking her around on a string. He would say, "I don't like what you're wearing! Go and change!" And he did that three or four times during this half hour. She would just get up without saying a word and leave the room and she'd come back in some other long, draped affair.

When the program started, he was supposedly alone. I remember Phil Donahue laying the ground rules, "You are just along to accompany your wife because that's the way it's done in your culture but you are not going to be part of the program." He said, "Yes, yes." As soon as we saw the little light that you were on the air, he stood up and he started reciting verses out of the Koran. I don't speak Arabic, so I don't know exactly but he was reciting something. And the interesting thing was, when I asked for a copy of the tape afterwards, if you look at the tape you realize Phil Donahue had total control over the room because he controlled the mike. So all you could hear was a little bit of murmur in the background, which was this man shouting through the whole auditorium.

Betty's part went beautifully. When the program was over they had a car to take us to our various airlines and I got in the same car with this gal whose children were re-kidnapped back to Saudi Arabia and she was telling me more of her story. That was when I heard the part about the children being across the room from her and her not even being able to give them a hug. She was dropped off first and then the driver was taking me on to my airline, which was a little further. As soon as she got out of the car, the driver turned around and I think he told me he was from Pakistan. Of course he had been hearing the whole conversation. It was funny because he basically reinforced exactly this point of the huge difference in cultures. And he said, "And I will not marry an American woman, because they do not make good and faithful wives and I will not allow my children to be taken!" Here again was another example of this huge cultural divide that people need to know about.

*Q: How responsive, when you had problems and all, did you find the posts abroad responding to questions and things of this nature?*

VAN HEUVEN: They were good. With the whole press operation, if we were calling posts abroad, that was press driven. Otherwise, it would obviously be officers in the Office of Overseas Citizens Services that would have been dealing with issues. I served there, too, and I always found everybody to be very, very helpful. But the preparation in the Department of State worked really well. Everybody knows that there is a crunch deadline, which is noon. You have to know what the story is in time to get it put together and to get it cleared all around the building and to have it ready in time before the call, which goes between the White House, our press office, the press office at DOD and all the other major players that have to deal with the daily news, so they, too, could work out who was going to talk about what and does everybody agree with what it was that we thought we were going to say.

*Q: You were doing this until when?*

VAN HEUVEN: Until the fall of '88.

*Q: And then what?*

VAN HEUVEN: In the fall of '88, I went to the National War College, '88 to '89.

*Q: How'd you find war college?*

VAN HEUVEN: I enjoyed it a lot, in many ways. It was an opportunity to take a year off and to do a lot of reading and to learn a lot about the military and the defense side of the whole equation that is national security affairs. Originally, the whole idea of the war college was George Kennan's. I think he was thinking very much of State and Defense. You had to get those two players working together to get the kind of end product you wanted and to understand each other better. By the time I got there the mix at the National War College here at Fort McNair was 150 students: 40 Air Force, 40 army, 40 navy and marines and 30 civilians. And of the 30 civilians, about 20 were from the State Department and the other ten came from the rest of the government that had to do with national security affairs. So we had a couple of people from the CIA, a couple of people from the NSA, and we also had the Treasury, Customs, Coast Guard, USIA obviously at that point still a separate agency.

*Q: Had you felt that by this time the military establishment, had they adjusted to women or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: Of the 150 students there were 11 of us and I would say probably they had adjusted more than Defense had, at least at that officer level. I laugh because towards the end of the year we had a day when we did skits. We did two skits, as a group, the women. One referred, among other things, to the comments that had been made by Don Regan, who was chief of staff at the White House. He famously said, "Women are not interested in things like throw weight" which is a term of nuclear art, nuclear delivery art. We went out and we got tee shirts that said, "Real women know their throw weight."

We also did a skit on the women's locker room, because the women's locker room was a little bit like what you're hearing nowadays about the outpatient facilities at Walter Reed. If you ever peeked into the men's locker room, it was huge, it was modern, it was clean, it was beautiful. I remember asking one day, "How many showers do you have?" We had this tiny space, not big enough for real lockers, and up on a platform with a ragged plastic sheet in front of it, one shower. It was very different. Each year the class gave a contribution to the war college for something, and our guys voted to use our money to improve the women's locker room. Later, apparently, the admiral came back, I was overseas at that point, but the admiral came back and said there's no way they could do it fiscally, use it for maintenance, or whatever the allotment was that this expense would have come under, and so they negotiated some other use of our gift. But I remember hearing from somebody who went to our twentieth reunion, I was overseas and missed it, and she said, "The guys still remember. The subject of the locker room came up again and we all went to look at it and it has improved."

So, yeah, it was early.

*Q: Well, then, '89, whither?*

VAN HEUVEN: I went to Zurich as our consul general and I was there from '89 to '92.

*Q: A very exciting time you were there.*

VAN HEUVEN: It was.

To go back to CA/PA. I had mentioned a fair amount about our efforts at outreach, with publications and seminars and briefings and so on. We also participated in a White House conference on drugs, which was a first. Now that we had more officers we could do more things. After that video on safe travel abroad, we did another video for the passport agencies. We were looking at ways to get the public going so they didn't need to ask as many questions over the telephone or ask as many questions of people in the line. This was so that things could move along faster and so you could get more done with fewer people. We set up these kiosks at the entrance to the passport agencies. It was a three minute video that said, "Before you get in line, be sure you have" and showed people what the forms looked like and where they had to go and who was eligible and who wasn't and whether you had to have your child along, what age the child was and so on and so forth. And that worked very well in some places and less well at other agencies. But it was one of the many efforts that now are commonplace but then were just starting to find ways to use technology to replace people.

*Q: Well how did you find, this is a period of time, working with the passport agencies, because I go back to the days of Frances Knight, where the passport agency was the equivalent of Albania, Consular Affairs really didn't have diplomatic relations*

VAN HEUVEN: She had her own fiefdom. She was careful to keep it that way.

*Q: How did you find it when you got there, the difference between you might say the passport people and the Consular Affairs people who tended to be a different breed of cat?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, that atmosphere already existed earlier. When I had my first assignment in CA/OCS, the Passport Office had already been brought very firmly under the assistant secretary for consular affairs. So there were quite a few ex-passport people who were then working in OCS. I think there are two things that you become very aware of as a consular officer working in the Department that you aren't necessarily [**aware of**] if you're in a regional bureau, because of the sheer numbers. I was very aware, almost I would say from day one, that there was some kind of a divide between Foreign Service Officers and civil servants. That was the first cultural divide and I think that exists to this day. I hope we're getting better at it and I know a lot of people have taken a hack at it and some things are better. But I was also very aware of the divide between CA and Passport, because everybody knew in the first breath whether they were from Passport Services or from CA. When I got into PA that was one of Joan Clark's efforts, where we're going to integrate everything. No one from the old Passport Office of public affairs came over to my office. Those people either left the government or they found jobs doing something else.

So it was not something that I got much heat about, other than to a small extent from some of the old passport directors. Some of them needed a little time to get used to a new person back in Washington, what they could do for them. But that was not really a big fissure.

Another thing that took a lot of time and effort was we put in the first automated answering system. People curse me to this day. You push the button and you get thousands of questions answered on visas, thousands of questions answered on passports. We set up a whole separate system for travel advisories, where people could call if they were going to country X and find out the situation. These were the years where everybody suddenly was very aware of the possibility of terrorism and we had a whole system of red travel advisories and green travel advisories and yellow travel advisories. It's sort of like now alerts. That's gone by the boards and of course technology has taken several leaps since, because you can now get travel advisories on line on the internet, so you don't need that cumbersome telephone system. But at the time, that was the first bit.

And that took a long time. One of my biggest problems was with the Visa Office, trying to get them to reduce the amount of words. They were always looking at this from the legalistic point view and they wanted to be sure that everything was covered. And I kept saying, "If somebody's question is really complicated, then you're going to end up talking to them on the phone." That took a lot of time and effort.

*Q: At this time, did you make an effort to put the questions in English and Spanish?*

VAN HEUVEN: We did do the videos for the passport agencies in California and Texas and Florida so you could punch a button and have a speaker in English or in Spanish.



There was a huge interest in child abduction at one point and NBC wanted to do something on it and of course they wanted to do an interview with Joan and Joan is a very private person, very much of an introvert and not comfortable in that role. I said, "This is entirely up to you. If you're not comfortable with it, we won't do it. On the other hand, it's an opportunity to get a lot of information out. They would like to have you, as the top of the agency, do it and you can do it." And so she finally agreed, but it was not easy for her and she was much more used to congressional testimony. I could just see what was happening. The interviewer was trying so hard to get to the person.

*Q: Was she, I've had trouble warming to her but then*

VAN HEUVEN: If you knew her really well you could.

*Q: I never knew her well, but I've had appointments with her many times and she was pretty stone-faced*

VAN HEUVEN: She was, or she could be. If you got to know her better, but finally this woman interviewer said, "Well, does it bother you when one of these kids is taken?" and Joan turned to me and she said, "Can I say so?" I said, "Of course you can!" And she said, "Yes, it bothers me." And that was, of course, the twenty second clip that they used. That was the sound bite that they were looking for. So they had her being human, which was wonderful.

Another really interesting program that we worked on during those years was the beginning of this annual lottery for immigrant visas. I don't know who came up with the idea to redress the fact that virtually every available immigrant visa was going to a family member. Therefore we weren't getting the diversity from around the world, nor skills that would make sense. So Congress decided that we would have this annual lottery where people could just write in and if they won the lottery they could get an immigrant visa, if they were eligible, obviously and come to the United States. So we had to do all of the publicity that first year, when people were asking from all over the world, when posts were asking. We had to come up with a package and in fairly short order that would work. The p.o. box that everybody had to write to actually was at the Brentwood postal station, out in northeast Washington.

And I thought, "We are going to get a lot of questions about this and I am going to go along." There were two people from the Visa Office who were responsible for this who were going to be there to see how the post office handled the process and I went along. It was absolutely incredible. There we were, inside this huge postal station where the mail is totally automated. Mail drops into little boxes that shuttle along and then drop into big boxes, according to the zip code and then those, were pulled around by human beings to probably the trucks that then took them away. And of course we were concentrating on this one little laundry hamper that was P.O. Box X, which was going to be receiving all of these lottery applications. It ended up being about a square yard of envelope sized boxes that were the first x thousand that were going to be looked at. The number was I

think thirty percent higher, assuming that some of them would not be eligible, that would be the first to be considered, until they got up to the number of people who answered and said, “Yes, I’m ready.” And it took six minutes. So if by chance your envelope hit that post office within the first six minutes after midnight on the day of eligibility, you had a chance of getting an immigrant visa. Really had that feeling of a hand from up in the heavens coming down and somehow touching a certain applicant. But it was very well done, it was very professionally handled. There was no question those were the ones that randomly came through the pipes.

I mentioned we worked on the first White House conference on drugs. Besides the Safe Trip Abroad, besides the student advisors and so on, we actually worked on a program of developing these thirty second, one minute public service announcements that television programs put on for free. We were negotiating with the actor who does *Miami Vice*, or did, to do the dubbing. That fell through at one point and we ended up, I think, with Stacy Keach, who did one for us. They were a very good device because people really watch television and they’re really interested. The only problem is, television stations, they had to do a certain public service quotient and they tend to do them in the middle of the night, not on the programs with the highest number of viewers. But nevertheless it was another interesting effort.

We also worked on a lot of op-ed pieces on the issues of the day that we managed to get out and around. I ended up doing a lot of public speaking, too. I would say probably our priorities in terms of urgency were the press and then getting out public information to the maximum extent possible. I spoke a couple of times on the Travel Channel.

I spent a fair amount of time on the Hill as well. There were several immigration issues that I ended up having a fair amount of face time with people on the Judiciary subcommittee on immigration. There was a new and a fairly big program that at the time was called SAW, which was Special Agricultural Workers. It was version 101 of the effort to find ways to legalize migrant workers to keep the oranges picked and the lettuce picked.

*Q: There was something similar in Eisenhower’s time.*

VAN HEUVEN: Way back then?

*Q: The program’s title meant “arms” in Spanish or something.*

VAN HEUVEN: Braceros, whatever. SAW’s lasted quite a while. Now they’re searching again, just like a sine/cosine curve, where we teeter between the effort to totally close our borders to illegal immigrants and then the effort to help the businesses that depend on illegal immigrants to survive. If you’ve been in consular work, as you have and as I have, over the years you see that it goes up and down, over and over and probably will never find its equilibrium.

*Q: Ruth, how’d you get to Zurich and then let’s talk about what you were seeing there.*

VAN HEUVEN: I bid on Zurich, among other assignments, during my year at the War College and was lucky enough to get that assignment. It was my first time at a consulate. I was the consul general, which may sound bigger than it was. This was a very small post, which had already come up once, two years earlier, on the list of consulates possibly to be closed. It had survived but was getting death by a thousand cuts. If they didn't close a post, they tended to reduce the number of positions and the resources available to it, so it continued to be harder and harder to justify the existence of the post.

That was probably my major challenge in the time I was there, to make do with less. That period in the later Eighties was one of huge budget problems in the State Department; that whole "do more with less" slogan was everywhere. I remember that being a big issue in CA/PA as well when I was still in the Department before I went to the War College.

I ended up having one more assignment at a consulate, in Milan. It was in many ways similar to Zurich but in some ways very different, because Milan remained a large consulate. I think consulates exist in countries where we have strong relations generally, for a variety of reasons, and they are always in cities that for one reason or another are not the capital, because the embassy is always in the capital, that the U.S. government feels it can't quite cover its interests from the capital. Once in a while it's because of large American citizen populations to protect. In fact I think the consulate in Florence remains open to this day for two reasons: one is we own the building, so a huge rent is never one of those items under the beady gaze of the financial wizards who have to figure out where to cut. The other is that in any given year we tend to have something like 25,000 American students in Florence, some for a four week program, some for two semesters.

Zurich actually ended up being closed, but not in my tenure. I managed to fight off another effort at putting it on the list while I was there, but my successor's successor was the last consul general in Zurich. I see that as a loss, not just because I have a personal stake but I think all over Europe we closed, during those years, the Eighties and the early Nineties, many consulates. I think that stands to our detriment today, where we have lost so much credibility and so many friends in Europe. I speak only for Europe. I'm sure one could make the same argument for consulates closed in other parts of the world, but this was the area of my major experience.

Among other reasons for consulates besides, say, American citizen interest or large military bases that we need to provide support for, probably the most important one is influence on public opinion. There are others: there's commercial and trade centers promoting U.S. business interests or exports, but public opinion I tend to think it was really most important, because what is the reason for our being in other countries but to try to gain cooperation and to protect U.S. interests in all of these countries. And in a large country sometimes, as with Zurich and Milan, they're the "New York" of their respective countries. You can't call Rome a backwater, but you can call Berne a backwater. They are nowhere near as important in terms of the politics of the whole country, as the major media center, the major financial center, the major industrial and

commercial center, as is the case for Zurich and for Milan. So having a presence there is extremely important and I see the loss of all those consulates. When we were in Berlin and Bonn we had six consulates in Germany. They are virtually all gone now. Italy had five or six when I was in Rome on my first assignment and it's down to three and Florence really is a teeny, tiny appendage at this point. If you look at the amount of credibility and influence that we have lost in Europe in this century, in other words in the past six years, it's just the time when we should still have those outposts and those connections, particularly as the American military has been disappearing from the European scene.

*Q: What was the prime business of the consulate general in Zurich?*

VAN HEUVEN: Pretty much what I've been saying. It was influencing public opinion and the media, keeping in close tabs with the banks. It was a major banking center for the world. It was export facilitation and promotion. We had a fairly large commercial operation, even though Berne was only an hour and a half away by train. It was the general operation of any consulate or embassy, in terms of providing consular services and political and economic contacts and for reporting, as well.

It had one quirk and that is that I was the representative accredited to the principality of Liechtenstein and, interestingly enough, that became a big job, during the years that I was there.

*Q: What was going on?*

VAN HEUVEN: Liechtenstein was also a fairly large financial center and particularly for people that wanted to do business in places that had very few controls. So we had an increasingly large interest in money laundering that was taking place through Liechtenstein. Those years were the beginning of something called the financial action task force, that was a U.S. government-wide effort. So I had to do a fair amount of demarches and reporting on their behalf.

Then the Gulf War started during the period that I was in Zurich and I was really gratified. This was the middle of my second year there. I'd made lots of contacts. Normally I had to get in a car and go two and a half hours to get to Liechtenstein. But I was able over the phone to talk to the person who was in charge of finances for the government and get him to agree over the phone to freeze all Iraqi assets in Liechtenstein, which were fairly substantial.

When I first arrived, this whole idea that there should be pressure from anywhere else to change anything about their lovely financial haven was stiff armed, but probably it was simply the nature of the intervention. Iraq invading Kuwait, that made him say, on the phone, "Okay, we'll do it!" And they did, overnight.

*Q: For decades Switzerland, as well as Liechtenstein, had these secret accounts, a haven for money for good and nefarious purposes both. By the time you got there we, really, I suppose, other countries, too, were beginning to take a long look at this.*

VAN HEUVEN: Also for tax reasons.

*Q: For tax reasons. I would think the United States, France, other countries, would really lean on them, say, "You can't do this." It wasn't as though they were really free agents. We had some help, didn't we?*

VAN HEUVEN: In fact, even back when we were in Geneva, which was in the early Eighties, obviously you go to a country, you settle in, you have to establish a bank account in order to take care of your daily business, pay checks, pay bills. I remember being impressed already when we were in Geneva by the scrupulousness with which the bank made it clear to us that they were going to have to report our transactions to the United States in terms of our tax liabilities to the United States, which we thought was kind of funny. It showed there had been a lot of pressure by a lot of people before.

*Q: So, we had reached that point?*

VAN HEUVEN: It had already reached that point, in terms of Swiss compliance with U.S. pressure, yes. In all of those countries, Luxembourg is another example, it's only done under pressure. And for Liechtenstein, financial deposits were a major source of revenue.

*Q: How were relations between the Swiss and the United States?*

VAN HEUVEN: Relations between the Swiss and the Americans were very, very good. I would say, in general, back then we still had a honeymoon relationship. The Swiss were very likeminded politically, although on some social issues far less liberal than we in the United States. In fact a few years later they put out a book called *The Sister Republic* showing all of the similarities between the United States and Switzerland. And historically there's a lot to be said for it. We inherited the idea of a republic from the Swiss. They inherited the idea of their 1848 constitution from ours. There's a lot of lending back and forth of institutions and political values and ideas.

On the other hand, there's a lot of pragmatism on the part of the Swiss. Like a number of countries in Europe, what counted was getting your business done. So they see themselves, to this day, as having a huge interest in smooth relations with the United States.

*Q: Were they part of the European Union at all?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, they still are not. The central nugget of their sense of themselves is neutrality. Starting from that point, there was no way that the average Swiss voter, who gets to agree on absolutely everything that happens in Switzerland through a highly

sophisticated system of initiatives and referenda, virtually every major item is brought in some form or another to the voters to decide on. The political leaders and the financial leaders had been trying to get Switzerland to join the European Union since before I got there in '89. The voters have turned it down every time because they don't want anyone else telling them what they ought to be able to do in their own backyard. You see some of that in the Scandinavian countries. You saw this in the Dutch and even the French turning down the proposed European constitution, because they felt the European Union and the Commission, particularly, were beginning to get too invasive in their own domestic scene.

But the Swiss were never going to buy in. They didn't feel they needed it. They felt that they were doing perfectly well and why should they be circumscribed by the dictates of others that very often were considerably more left than their really rightist kind of politics.

*Q: How would you describe Swiss politicians? Was there a political class or was it sort of in and out a lot?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, in some ways you would say the political scene is incredibly rigid, like a very slow moving glacier. There's only changes very slowly. They have, pretty much since the Second World War, had a social contract between five or six streams of political thought that started out echoing the various streams of economic endeavor. So today it's very little different from, let's say, the early Fifties. You have a Socialist Party which is very similar to social democrats in every country in Europe. You have a party that contains farmers and small shopkeepers that is extremely conservative, not open to the outside world, extremely protectionist, anti-immigrant, similar to the anti-immigrant, protectionist movements in most other countries.

*Q: Like Le Pen?*

VAN HEUVEN: Not quite as vociferous, because, again, the Swiss are fairly measured, in every party. You have a Christian Democratic Party based on Christian values which, like in most other countries in Europe, as people become less religious is somewhat waning in power. So there is a certain waxing and waning among these different parties. You have a Liberal Party, in the European sense of liberal, which is the pro-business party, you could say the *Wall Street Journal* party, which is very strong, because business interests are very strong throughout Switzerland.

*Q: Is there a Communist Party?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. There probably are a few but there's never been one elected to public office.

The political and even the economic makeup of Switzerland, it's a social contract. There is an agreement to get along. It is a highly diverse, in some ways, seemingly with such common values, but you have the German-speaking north and east of the country, you

have the French-speaking south and west of the country, you have the Italian-speaking extreme south, one canton out of the 22. And then you have a valley and some pockets that are part of the biggest canton, which is Graubünden or the Grisons, which is the St. Moritz area, where they were so cut off from transport and commerce throughout the ages that they speak something called Romansh. That's the fourth legal language of Switzerland which the closest living language to Latin. The Romans were the last to come through and have an effect. It's not that different from how Latin scholars think everyday Roman people spoke, whereas the educated spoke the Latin we learn in high school.

So the very different cultures, four languages and then, through the 1600's, deep religious wars between the Catholics and the Protestants. I remember when I visited in the immediate postwar period as a child, those religious wars so alive, just like if you went to maybe deep Mississippi or Alabama the Civil War would still be part of people's experience.

So how does a country like that, where are the centrifugal versus centripetal forces going to meet to keep this a cohesive whole? It's a common agreement that they're better off sticking together and therefore they are going to compromise on all of the issues, in order to stay together.

Government is not like what we're familiar with. They decided that these streams were all going to be represented in government and more or less in line with what their voting strength was. I think there've been two adjustments since 1950. The seven federal councilors that run the government are one hydra, one head and each year one of the seven becomes the president, supposedly the executive head but in fact really the king or queen or ceremonial head for state visits, all that sort of thing. And then they decide in common on what policy is going to be. Every once in a while there will be a switch in the offices but the formula stays the same. The big parties get two, the smaller parties get one. It works out to seven.

*Q: Switzerland, in fairly recent years women got the vote.*

VAN HEUVEN: There's no such thing as a loyal opposition. The opposition is the people and the way they measure whether they're reflecting what's going on is when the next initiative or referendum comes along. In other words, they have a policy. The people either agree to it or they don't agree to it.

*Q: Before we get to the gender issue, one of the prime things that Foreign Service Officers do is political reporting. It's in our Foreign Service genes. How do you report on what's happening in Zurich, your area, when you've got this consensus system in place?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was talking about all of these budget cuts. One of the things that happened which I certainly saw, in spades, years later when I was the office director for Austria, Germany and Switzerland, is we don't do as much political reporting as we once

did. Maybe 10, 15 years ago the embassy in The Hague simply stopped reporting on Dutch politics, because the reality became what is the European Union deciding to do.

Now, in the case of Switzerland you can say there's more of a reason for it. The audience in Washington is certainly still there among the different agencies. But you tend much more not to do straight political reporting in the old sense. You report on something the United States cares about and how internal politics will affect it, as opposed to sending a telegram saying "The government has changed!" Unless you can say "This is going to make a difference."

*Q: Did the gender issue come up at all, or was that dead by the time you got there?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. One canton gave women the vote while I was there and there's still one that hasn't given women the vote. Many things about the makeup of society very much encouraged women to remain at home. This is very similar in Germany. Children came home from school if the teacher didn't turn up. There's no such thing as a substitute teacher. So the assumption was the mother would be home. Well, once you knew that assumption is there, you have to be at home. You couldn't take on outside obligations, unless you made arrangements for the possibility that the children would be sent home. That was a powerful disincentive for women to get work outside the home.

In Germany the school day was over at one. In Switzerland it was a bit later, but still you really had to work to find a way to take care of your children. So the whole social and political assumption was that women were in the home. Among the more conservative of these parties, for instance that farmer and small shopkeeper party, there was a sense that it would not be good for women to go into politics. They worried that the women who would then go and vote and do something about politics were the leftists, which tended definitely to be called "communist" or socialist parties and that would skew the whole Swiss system of governance. So it would not be good for women to vote was the argument.

On the other hand, in big cities there were many women who did work and there were more emancipated views of the woman's role in society. I think that has changed somewhat in Switzerland. It's changed more in Germany. I understand just recently that the laws about the school structure have been changed to be more accommodating, because, at least in Germany, they're beginning to recognize that it's also important for their economy for more women to be able to enter the job market.

*Q: Was the problem of World War II Jewish funds and all that, did you get involved in that?*

VAN HEUVEN: I got hugely involved in that in a future job.

*Q: How did the Gulf War play in Switzerland?*



VAN HEUVEN: There were some demonstrations. We did a fair amount of preparation for that at the consulate. In fact the war went off fairly peacefully. The major issue was, I described my activities in Liechtenstein but I was very involved with the Swiss banks as well. I was asked by Washington to do a fair amount of reporting on what Swiss banks thought about the banking situation throughout the Gulf. In retrospect I think this was probably the beginning of our understanding of the need to “follow the money.” The Swiss, of course, are involved in banking throughout the world and, as I said, are very like-minded with the United States, I think, socio-politically, in many ways, not all, obviously. But they were very good interlocutors and they were very willing to help and share their opinions, which kind of surprised me in the beginning, since you think of the whole Swiss banking situation as being so closed. They obviously would be closed if they thought there was any kind of commercial advantage going on there. Bankers, because of the importance in their work of risk, are very interested in exchanging opinions on political and social developments in other countries, stability of other governments and so on. And they were very helpful, both in establishing contacts throughout the banking systems in the Gulf and sharing some of their observations. So there was a big involvement for me with the Swiss banks in the run-up to the Gulf War.

There was a big p.r. involvement with the media, once the war started. I would say that was how we worked it in Zurich.

*Q: Were there reverberations associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall and then the collapse of the Soviet Union?*

VAN HEUVEN: That was my baptism by fire. I arrived in September of '89 and things were already in motion. Hungary was cutting the barbed wire and allowing people to get into Austria. And then, in probably mid-, late October, there was a lot going on in Czechoslovakia and in Poland. We have hundreds of talk shows on American television. Well, in the tiny country of Switzerland, with four languages, there was one sort of definitive talk show, which was on the Swiss German television network. It was on Friday nights and I was asked, it was late October, if I would appear on that program two weeks hence and they were going to talk about the events in Czechoslovakia and Poland. I thought I was lucky and I had plenty of time to prepare and I got in touch with the Czech and the Polish desk officers and the office director for that and said, “Okay, what is it you would like me to say in addition to whatever occurs to me?” And I was I thought fairly well prepared to go on.

The morning of that day, Friday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, was a holiday, the U.S. federal holiday for Armistice Day. So I got up Friday morning at home, not having to go to the office, turned on CNN and the East Germans had broken through the Berlin Wall. And I thought, “Forget Czechoslovakia! Forget Poland! This program is going to be about only one thing and that is Germany! And how am I going to reach anyone on a federal holiday?” But I was extremely lucky, because within the next couple of hours I just sat there in front of CNN and the President spoke, the Secretary of State spoke, so I had the party line, so to speak and thought, “Okay, I have what I need.”

It was a very interesting evening. This was in German and I was all prepared with the vocabulary on Czechoslovakia and Poland and luckily I had a number of FBIS pieces at home, so I could run through them and find words that would probably be helpful to me. They had, obviously, the people that they had previously scheduled and one happened to be from East Berlin, a woman. One was a Czech and one was another German, an academic from southern Germany. There was so much electricity in the air, this was so exciting. Obviously, the two from behind the Iron Curtain came at this from a very different perspective than the two of us from the West. But the most interesting part probably was, the habit on this program was when it was over they offered you a glass of wine and you sat around for a few minutes and finished whatever conversations. This was a program normally on from eight until nine. We were there 'til one o'clock in the morning, just really realizing it was one of those historic moments, like when man hit the moon.

I remember so vividly and what a forewarning it was, the woman from East Berlin coming in already that evening and she was expressing nostalgia for their "utopia" in the East. That is still happening in Germany today. The idea of individual equality is a much bigger part of the European equation than it is for us here in the United States. We put a much heavier weight on the freedom aspect. They put a very heavy weight on the equality aspect. That's one of the things that, to this day, there's a real nostalgia in East Germany for ordered, predictable, equal outcomes, despite all of the problems.

*Q: Did you have any problems with Americans getting into trouble in your district?*

VAN HEUVEN: Some. Not many at all. We had an excellent consular section and I can't remember a single case that was so bad it came to my attention.

*Q: Was there much students going to the United States to study or did they prefer to stay at home:*

VAN HEUVEN: The Swiss are probably among the biggest travelers in the world. It seems to me when I'm out as a tourist I can be in the tiniest little place in the United States and there will be a Swiss tourist there. And that's certainly true of Swiss students, as well. They do get outside of Switzerland, go elsewhere. Let's say 15, 20 years ago most of them went to the United States and now they're far more adventurous. They go to other countries. They don't come to the United States that much anymore

*Q: The embassy in Berne, did you feel the hand of the embassy much?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. I think I was very lucky. Other than admin, where I felt the hand considerably, again because of resource problems. I had an absolutely first rate ambassador, who was a political appointee. He and I arrived pretty much simultaneously. His name was Jay Gildenhorn, a real estate developer but a real presence on the Washington scene; he's now the chairman of the board of the Woodrow Wilson Institute and active socially.

*Q: People who've been American ambassadors to Switzerland, most of them*

VAN HEUVEN: He was a prince. I was so lucky. We had lunch in Washington before we went. He knew he was going, I was going and he made the effort to seek me out. Shortly after I arrived he and his wife invited me for dinner in a restaurant. He asked me, sort of point blank, "Now, tell me, what do you think of political ambassadors?" We had most of our careers in Europe, so we had dealt mainly with political ambassadors and in fact one of the few career ambassadors in my Foreign Service career to Switzerland was a flop. So career ambassadors can be a flop as well. What I said was that it had been my experience in my career and my husband's career that we'd seen very many and that they very often brought quite a lot to the equation that we Foreign Service officers didn't, namely high contacts in the U.S. government. If there was somebody that could get an appointment for a foreign cabinet minister with the President, it tended to be the political appointee who had friends in the White House and not we FSOs working through the office director or the assistant secretary in the State Department. And very often political appointees had a lot of business savvy and business connections that could be helpful to Americans or people in the country we were in. "Very often," I said to him, frankly, "Their personal wealth allowed them to entertain on a scale that we couldn't and they were nice enough to leave representation money over to the rest of us, that was very helpful in getting our jobs done." Anyway, I think he seemed to appreciate the fact that I was frank about it. So we had a really good relationship and his wife was a peach. She was just terrific. They were a very good and very effective couple, I think.

Again, the Swiss are so slow to get to know anybody and to consider anybody a friend that as I made my rounds, the people I tended to hear about were the two ambassadors that had been there for seven years, which was unheard of but by then they had been around enough the Swiss kind of accepted them. And the Gildenhorns were not there that long but they made their mark.

*Q: Is there anything else we should cover about your time in Switzerland?*

VAN HEUVEN: My feeling was and remains that influencing public opinion is a huge part of the job and also making all of those connections, going out and making all those contacts that can be helpful. You don't always know, is this going to be the one or that going to be the one where I'm going to have pick up the phone and ask a favor that will help American interests. I was lucky, again, because there were so many existing fora that were Swiss efforts to maintain relations with the United States. Already existed, I didn't have to go out and help make them.

So there were a lot of speaking engagements, lots of times when I was asked to speak to, for instance, the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce. Now you would think, oh, the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce is some little thing. It was a social thing, where all of the big tycoons in Swiss industry belonged, where the Swiss media always turned up, where they got fabulous speakers, not to include myself, but where I had the opportunity to speak as well to an extremely influential part of the Swiss business, commercial and media environment.

There was the Harvard Club in Zurich that had monthly meetings that I was invited to go to and spoke to once or twice. Again, where all of the business and financial moguls spoke at one time or another. You were asking whether the Swiss studied in the United States. These were all Swiss. There was barely an American in the Harvard Club. So these were all the people who 15, 20 years ago had studied in the United States, wanted to keep that connection with the more expansive American way of doing things and used that as a framework to meet, where they made their deals. Again, I was lucky enough to have that pre-made forum out of which to work.

I must have spoken to at least twenty Rotary Clubs in the time I was there. Everything was kind of organized around business, but, again, that was an American-made institution.

The other obvious part of any consulate's work is consular and we were heavily involved at one point in the crash right near the Zurich airport of an Alitalia plane that had American citizens on board. I had two consular officers and there weren't many Americans there, so the whole consulate, including the commercial section, everybody pulled together and did what we had to do, which included my having to call the family in the United States in the middle of the night and break the news. No fun. About a year later the Zurich airport organized a memorial and put up a stone at the site of the crash and a number of the American families came and they came to the consulate afterwards and we had a chance to meet them and help them in their grief.

It also was a time of considerable turbulence in Africa. The State Department used Swissair in three cases to evacuate American citizens, because Swissair had regular routes to those countries and no American airlines did. So Americans were brought out to Zurich and then transferred to an American carrier for onward travel to the United States. So we went out and organized the reception area. Again, kind of all hands on deck. We just closed the consulate. I remember one evacuation was from Monrovia and one was from Mogadishu. The airport was terrific. They gave us a whole area and collected food, water, diapers, the works. It all happened so fast that the arrangements were still being made with the American carriers. They didn't have to all go back to Washington. They could go to other places in the United States if they wanted to. So that became a big part of it.

Those were non-everyday consular events.

Back to public opinion, I also ended up having a lot to do with the universities. Sometimes I went out to them but often it was they who asked for help on something or asked me to come and lecture or whatever, not just in Zurich but in other parts of my consular district. Again, just as in Geneva, the fact that Switzerland traditionally has been such a meeting ground for international efforts of one sort or another meant that there was a lot else going on that was not necessarily Swiss related. So during my tenure there the annual meeting of the IISS, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, which is based in London but is an organization that all national security gurus belong to, had its

annual meeting in Zurich. I took that occasion to invite a lot of people who attended to a reception.

The World Economic Forum took place every year in Davos, which was part of my consular district. I would go to that and ended up being lucky enough to put people together. It was way outside the normal Zurich sphere, but introducing the president of AT&T to [inaudible], so they could go off and get goodness know how many hopefully worthwhile things done. You have to remember, these were the early years when the Iron Curtain was just breaking down. Nobody really knew how the new world was going to be formed and the keynote speaker was Zbigniew Brzezinski. I remember he started out by saying, "I have just returned from Dushanbe and maybe you don't know where that is, but you will." The other major point that he made, besides that the world has turned upside down and all kinds of countries are now going to be part of the mix, was he said, "The world is going to be very messy" and he was right. That was probably five or six months after the wall came down and he could already see that we were heading into a period of huge flux in international relations in general.

I guess the last thing that I would say about that assignment in Switzerland was, to go to when I first joined the Foreign Service, it was a very different world in 1962. It wasn't that long after Senator McCarthy. I have spoken earlier, in answer to some of your very first questions, about the fact that I was of Swiss heritage and my family was born in Switzerland and I had relatives there. In 1962 I never would have dreamed that I would ever be assigned to Switzerland, because that was not done. The Foreign Service did not send people back to a country where they had relatives or close contacts. The same thing happened, in fact, some years earlier to my husband, when he was assigned in 1975 to Holland. When he was asked whether he would like to have that assignment he said, "Are you sure you really want to send someone who was born in Holland to Holland? I thought you didn't do that." Don Norland, the office director for the Benelux countries, said, "No, I think it's a tremendous advantage to have a Dutch speaker go there." Don had actually served in Holland. Again, I was somewhat surprised when the office director asked me if I would take the Zurich job, even though I had bid on it. And he said, "I think that the fact that you speak Schweizerdeutsch," which is the dialect of all of the part of Switzerland that I was accredited to, except for Ticino, which is the one Italian speaking canton.

It did turn out to be a huge advantage, because, as I said earlier, the Swiss are hard to get to know. Their English is excellent but you don't get to know them the same way when you're speaking English to them, because they're making an effort with a foreigner. And somehow if you speak their own language you immediately become more trustworthy to them. Even put McCarthy aside, I think that Congress has always to a certain extent been suspicious of Foreign Service Officers getting to know a country too well and therefore seeing things from their point of view. That would also be true, my goodness, if you spoke the language and had relatives there, you would be immediately tainted. But I think as long as you are grounded in your own society and know what your government's interests are there, you probably have a huge leg up which, given the shortness of our tours.

To me the crowning complement was that in my last year, in April of '92. I was invited as one of the honored guests in a traditional parade in Zurich. This was one of these wonderful European things which was historic, went back to the time of the guilds and people, sort of like marching societies in New Orleans. People belonged to a guild which somehow was passed down through their heritage or they were invited in newer times because they became an important person in Zurich. They would all go along in their costumes of 1500's, 1600's: artisans, shopkeepers, farmers, traders, so on and so forth. Each one of these 15 or 16 guilds would invite two or three honored guests each year to march along with them. Often they'd be somebody from the Swiss government. The British consul got invited every couple of years. The director of the opera was invited with me, I remember marching along with him. I was the third woman ever to be invited. It was an old Zurich, Zurich only, men only, situation and I was the third woman ever to be invited as an honored guest and the first foreign woman to be invited to go along, which was a real honor. And part of the tradition is, first of all you march along in this parade and then you go back with them to their guild house and have dinner and you have to make a speech. The three honored guests each had to get up and make a speech. I went out to get advice and I was told by everyone that I asked that it's very important to be funny. Not that easy, as a foreign diplomat and in another language and so on, but what I ended up saying was that I considered this a real honor to have been invited and to be the third woman to have been invited and I only hoped that this was not going to be a bad omen for my stay in Zurich, because I did hope to stay until the end of my assignment.

And the reason for saying that was that the first woman that they invited was the first Swiss woman to become one of the seven federal councilors. She was from the business party and very soon after she marched in that parade she had to resign as the result of a scandal. The second woman who was invited was like "Nancy Pelosi," she had the most important organizational role in the lower house of the Zurich canton parliament. She, too, had to resign, not because of a scandal but shortly thereafter she left. And they all howled. And the next day a Swiss banker that I knew who was not there came up and said, "Is it true that you said that?"

*Q: What was the guild?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was actually the guild of the noblemen, which was supposed to be the classiest one, obviously, because it was the noblemen. They were therefore all dressed as hunters, with hunting dogs, because only the nobles were allowed to hunt.

*Q: Well then, were you able to stay on longer?*

VAN HEUVEN: I did, yeah, I did through 'til the end of my tour. No scandals and the consulate didn't close.

*Q: What was Marten doing?*

VAN HEUVEN: That really worked very well for us. It was our first split assignment. It was the end of five years in the U.S. I had to go abroad. He was on loan to the Central Intelligence Agency as the National Intelligence Officer for Europe. So he was making a lot of trips to Europe and he would come and spend the weekend in Zurich before or after wherever it was he was going. So that worked out quite well.

One of my daughters came and spent a summer and actually got an internship at Citibank. I forgot to mention that there was also a huge American community and what used to be an American men's club became the American Club. GM, for instance, had a huge headquarters in Zurich. IBM, a number of other companies. I was on the board of the American Club, sort of an honorary board member, and the Citibank president, who remains a friend to this day, gave one of our daughters an internship in his office.

*Q: Did you get at all involved at all with the glitterati on the ski slopes, the Americans, or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. The only place in Switzerland that's glittery is St. Moritz and people that are there are wealthy enough so that they solve their own problems. We never had any of those sort of problems.

*Q: How about boys or girls schools? Were they a problem?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. They're mostly in the French speaking part of Switzerland, which is handled by Berne. There's one really good international boarding school, again not too far from St. Moritz. We didn't have any issues there, either.

*Q: You left there when?*

VAN HEUVEN: In September of '92.

*Q: Whither?*

VAN HEUVEN: To become an inspector.

*Q: You inspected from when to when?*

VAN HEUVEN: From September of '92 'til September of '94. That was a two-year assignment. That was a Department assignment, but of course I was on the road a great deal. The year was divided into quarters and you tended to do a domestic inspection in the summer, so that everyone could be home when their children were out of school. And then inspections at embassies, missions, consulates abroad in the fall quarter, winter quarter, spring quarter.

*Q: On this two-year time of inspections, were there any problems that came up, incidents, stories, or anything?*

VAN HEUVEN: A lot. An assignment with the OIG is a huge learning experience. I have tried to explain to people what it is you do. Obviously you're out after waste, fraud and mismanagement. The old canard is the inspectors arrive and they say, "We're here to help" and the post says, "We're glad to see you" and neither one means it. But I really meant it and I think many of my colleagues did. In some ways it is like college or school accreditation. You send out this big formula in advance and it's a self-study. The post looks at it all and says, "Yes, we're doing this. Yes, we're not." But it also gives them a chance to pull up their bootstraps before you get there and fix things that maybe they weren't doing. And then part of what you're doing when you're there is seeing whether they really understood, whether they really did it or not. And part of it, obviously, is looking for waste, fraud and mismanagement.

In my experience, a lot of it is really more like management consulting. Out of your own experience, as you continue in this process, you learn at each post out of the experience of other posts you've seen. You spent a lot of time saying, "Well, have you tried this?" or "Why don't you ...?"

And you have individual assessments, interviews, with everybody. Everyone in the post has and you have individual appointments, interviews, with everybody who is in "your" section of the inspection, unless they refuse. They can obviously say, "I don't want to talk to you," which is very rare. That did happen in one inspection, which was my second year. We inspected all of S and my portion was the Operations Center. I had worked there earlier but it happened to be right after an OIG investigation. Another part of the OIG does investigations and there had been an allegation of wrongdoing and the investigators came in. That had left a lot of bad blood in the Operations Center, because they had told investigators things and they were assured that it would be in confidence and it ended up not being in confidence. So there were a number of people who refused. I felt badly about that, having worked there and not then being from OIG, but nevertheless that possibility exists.

Particularly in smaller posts, where people are just thrown together and maybe they get along and maybe they don't, there's a huge amount of venting that goes on. My sense always was that this was very healthy for them all to vent and the things that appeared serious you tried to do something about. Again, you had to respect their confidentiality, unless they said it was okay. If you were talking about something that could be traced back to only one person, you had to be sure that it was all right with them if you talked about it, that they weren't fearful of retaliation, for instance, if it concerned a superior. That was the part where you went home at the end of the day feeling like you were the lightning antenna that everybody had dumped on.

*Q: I go back to earlier inspections, when inspections really, you kind of looked forward to them. This was where you could talk over personnel matters and it somehow was a little bit like traveling psychiatrists.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's exactly what we were, yeah. The only thing that was different, I think, too, was that Congress began to feel that it was too incestuous.



*Q: A cozy relationship.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's right, because it was Foreign Service Officers understanding each other's problems and not being tough enough. So they tried to put in all kinds of things to be sure it would be tougher. I think that the OIG began to hire so there was a better balance between Foreign Service and GS. But they actually honed in on very tough types. So the process did become more confrontational.

*Q: I remember articles saying "Don't believe it! You don't need a lawyer."*

VAN HEUVEN: I think that those young officers in the Operations Center felt that way, when I got there shortly after

*Q: There also seemed to be a heavy emphasis on accomplices, looking at the books, when actually when you think about the poor old Foreign Service, we really don't have much room to mess with money. There are money problems, but it's certainly not of the magnitude there would be in a domestic*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, when I retired I was taken on the rolls as WAE by the OIG, having worked there before. I still remember people that I'd worked with that were still there that asked me to do that. And in the last couple of years I have been asked three times now to go to Baghdad and I have refused, for a number of reasons. But my understanding of it is, I am not an accountant. A major portion of the inspector general effort in Baghdad is finding where the money went. So for that, you definitely need accountants. You need a manager, too, you need a leader of a team.

And it's a good example, actually, of why you do need the accountants all along the way. It doesn't have to be the size of the money in the first place, but it's our government regulations being met. Are you getting bids on every contract and nine times out of ten picking the lowest bid, unless you can somehow justify the reason why a higher bid was actually a much better value? And that's what wasn't happening in Baghdad. That's why it's such a mess, is that it was outside contractors who were not putting contracts out for bid with other companies.

*Q: This goes back to Caesar's time, or Hammurabi's.*

VAN HEUVEN: All the bets are off.

*Q: I've seen, in Vietnam, a very sleazy crowd is attracted, as well as very patriotic and very courageous people, but also people, this is also where used car dealers who can't make it as used car dealers. Eras change and certain things gain prominence. I recall, just about the time you were doing this, this is when sexual harassment was high on our agenda, was it, or not? I never hear of it anymore but*

VAN HEUVEN: Oh, it was a huge, huge, huge issue in one of the inspections that I did as a WAE. I think when I was an inspector it was more the other way around. We made the assumption that there was adequate consciousness of sexual harassment as a no-no within our society, that this wasn't something we had to make a big issue of with Americans. And the question was on everybody's personal questionnaire: "Have you been sexually harassed or are you aware of it?" So we gave people an opening to discuss it with you in private. But we did, in every post, when you first arrive, you speak to all the Americans: "We're here, these are our faces, come and talk to any of us, we will be thorough, here's how we work," all of that to make people a little more relaxed at the beginning.

But we also ask to have a meeting with the FSN's. And one of the things that we said with every FSN group was, "You're working for the American government and as one of our employees you, too, fit under these rulings and here's one we want to discuss with you. Sexual harassment is not permissible in our offices and if you are aware of any or if you have been." They don't do the personal questionnaires and you only incidentally may pick out some FSN's to talk to, but it's not a requirement.

I think you're right, this was early in the ascendancy of EEO.

*Q: During these particular times, any cases that are sort of interesting or point out something?*

VAN HEUVEN: My first inspection was France. We had Strasbourg and Marseilles and Bordeaux, which closed later but was still open at that time. The whole team would do the embassy and then some people would break off to do a consulate. Not all six of you would turn up in a tiny consulate. There were some management issues at two of the consulates that required a lot of counseling. In the embassy I don't remember anything that didn't fit the classic mold.

And then that winter quarter we went to Africa and we did Nigeria and Niamey. Some of the interesting issues in Nigeria had to do with the fact that Nigeria had suddenly decided to create a Brasilia or a Washington, DC, which is Abuja. So there were huge administrative problems having to do with setting up a whole new embassy out of a going concern in Lagos without extra personnel. And there was one consulate in Kaduna and there was some issues there with it just being too small, too isolated a consulate to do many of the things that it should have been doing.

I actually got sick in Nigeria. I was terribly careful about what I ate, but one night, having picked all things in the restaurant that I was sure were going to be all right, obviously something wasn't. And as we left Nigeria and went to Niger, we were actually doing three posts. We were doing Nigeria, Niger and Burkina Faso. So the team split. Half of us did Niger and the other half did Burkina Faso. I went to Niger and on the way we had to change planes in Ivory Coast, which back then was still one of the pearls of West Africa and the regional doctor was there. The head of our team said, "Okay, I've made an appointment for you with the doctor and either we're going to send you home or he's

going to fix you up and you're going to come on to Niger." I had gotten a parasite. I saw the regional doctor and he said, "Okay, well, I don't have time for the tests to come back, so I'm going to give you an all-purpose blockbuster. It's not going to do good things to your stomach and it's probably going to take you x months to get over it." But I felt better two days later, so whatever he gave me worked.

There were, again, some huge management problems in Niger and we did a lot of counseling.

And then, in the spring I did Korea. I was the consular inspector and the consular situation in Korea was just horrendous, inhumane in terms of working conditions and the workload for the many, many junior officers that were there on the line in the visa section and for the FSN's as well. I wrote it up as I saw it: they had .6 seconds to make a visa adjudication, if you narrowed it down mathematically and that this was neither the way visa adjudication should happen nor something that you could ask a human being to do for two years.

That was the other learning lesson of being an inspector. Congress got something right when they said maybe Foreign Service Officers were being too kind to their colleagues. What I learned is I burned all my bridges with CA. One of the people who was in CA/EX at the time, who were the people that had to see to it that all of the recommendations were then followed up, had served in Korea just before and had vested interests and was very unhappy and felt that I was entirely wrong.

*Q: I was consul general in Seoul 1976 to '79*

VAN HEUVEN: I did know.

*Q: Actually, we were dealing with the problem at the time. A lot of fraud, but that was endemic.*

VAN HEUVEN: But you would have been shocked if you had seen the little booth out of which the consular officers were working, that was probably before glass, when you were there, wasn't it?

*Q: They were just putting glass in.*

VAN HEUVEN: And this sea of humanity pushing and shoving in front of them, five or six hundred people.

*Q: Of course the Koreans themselves are not the most obsequious people.*

VAN HEUVEN: They're very insistent. In fact, I remember when I was in Zurich, saying to the consular section, "There are always going to be people who are going to get to you. If you feel that you are starting to get upset and you may not be able to handle this calmly and courteously, step back and have somebody else take over. Lots of time the second

person saying ‘no’ already helps a lot. And we don’t have a lot of people here. If you’re really stuck, you call me. I will step in.” And once I happened to be in the consular section when two Koreans were talking to our American citizens services officer. Their voices kept rising and pretty much they were shouting and she just turned around and looked at me and I said, “Okay.” And I had a hard time not raising my voice, that very confrontational mode is tough to handle.

I think the time in the OIG was very valuable experience. Most of my assignments had to do with Europe or with the whole world in a much more general sense. For instance, when I was in the Ops Center and when I was in Consular Affairs in jobs in Washington. This was really the first time that I got out and saw a lot of other parts of the world and particularly of the developing world, which was a big experience. And then of course learning from the experiences and problems of all of the posts, in terms of management and admin. It was all very helpful.

As an example of the developing world, I think that the next inspections were, first of all Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia and Tirana, which I inspected in the fall of ’93 and that was interesting in a more general sense.

In ’91, just when all of the eastern European countries were having elections and becoming new societies, freed from the Warsaw Pact and domination by the ex-Soviet Union, I was still in Zurich. But I made a trip in the fall of ’91 with my younger daughter, who happened to have an internship for the summer in Zurich. We went to visit Foreign Service colleagues in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. So I was keen on her seeing that world as it was disappearing, because we had lived it, most particularly in Berlin, going to East Berlin and just visually seeing the differences between the communist world and the Western world. And I wanted to see it before it disappeared pretty much entirely. We definitely did see that in Yugoslavia and even more so in Sofia, going into a store where you’d see long shelves but nothing and then 70,000 hammer heads but no

*Q: Shanks.*

VAN HEUVEN: And nonexistent or rude and totally non-service oriented help. More potholes in the streets of Sofia than there was pavement, on main streets. Incredible disrepair from decades of no maintenance.

So to go back two years later in ’93 and see the incredible changes and how things were beginning to be spruced up and painted and actually the streets of Sofia were paved and there was the beginning of Western sort of commerce, small shops, entrepreneurs, good little restaurants. It was dumbfounding in two years to see that big a change and I’m sure if I went back now I wouldn’t recognize it.

Then next, in the winter, I participated in an inspection of New Delhi and the various consulates there and Nepal. And I have to say I was stunned by the poverty. I don’t think if you haven’t seen it, on television it isn’t as real, somehow, as it is when you are there. For example, most of the posts that we inspected we could walk to work, had quarters

fairly near the offices. I remember in Bombay, which is now Mumbai, that you had to step over people on the sidewalks to get to work. You couldn't walk in the street, because the traffic was so ferocious, it was far too dangerous. But a lot of families lived on the sidewalks and had their little braziers and different cooking utensils and diapered their babies and slept on the pavement at night. And it was very difficult navigating your way to work.

Possibly Calcutta was a little worse, particularly the traffic. I remember when we took a cab and came in from the airport to the consulate compound. I was so sorry I never took a picture of it. Driving along, the traffic was coming at us from both sides. There was no such thing as left hand drive, right hand drive. It was colossal and how they avoided accidents I really don't know.

I met Mother Teresa, who came in one day to the consulate, looking for visas for some of her sisters who were going to the United States. She invited us all to come down to her mission, which we did and which was very impressive. The funny thing is I remember her as quite a big woman. In fact, she was tiny. So, somehow, she made such a magnetic impression on you. She had huge hands. Her hands were totally out of proportion with her body.

One of the sidelights of being an inspector was that on weekends we could do some visiting in countries that you otherwise might never have been able to see. On that trip to India and Nepal, I spent a weekend in a game reserve on the border between Nepal and India, where we rode elephants to see rhinos in the early morning mist. And the reason we rode elephants is that they are about the only thing that rhinos are afraid of. And in fact we had an unforgettable experience where we came around a corner and there was a baby rhino with its mother directly in back. There was an electric moment where the rhino knew she was about to attack and the elephant knew she was about to attack and the elephant raised his trunk and came out with that sort of cry that you might remember from Tarzan movies and the rhino turned around and waddled off into the distance. That was one of my more memorable Foreign Service experiences.

The other more memorable, again anecdotal, experience was in the next inspection, which was Israel. We did the embassy in Tel Aviv and then the consulate in Jerusalem. When we checked into the hotel we discovered that we shared phone numbers with the other inspectors so we could find each other. We also discovered that we were all on in final rooms, one floor above each other. We drew the obvious conclusion that we had to be careful what we said on the phone or about leaving things around in the rooms. The only other time when I was an inspector where that was an issue was when we did Paris, where we were told not to leave anything in our hotel rooms.

The memorable experience in Israel was in Tel Aviv. We started out there, did the inspection, went off to Jerusalem for two weeks and then came back at the very end to write the final report for the whole country. I was the editor and it was one of those posts where we were all in one room, six desks in one room. It wasn't very easy to work there during the day, especially not if you were the editor and you had to think about how you

were going to meld everybody's product together into one report. So I got in the habit of leaving at five, four thirty, having a very early dinner and then going back and just working 'til ten, eleven in this quiet room. And towards the end I did the same thing though I stayed a little later because I was trying to finish. It was eleven, eleven thirty and here I am halfway around the world, typing away. All of a sudden a door flew open and in the door were not one, not two, but three Marines in the classic ready position, with machine guns. I thought I heard little clicking noises. And all I could do was react and I said, "Holy expletive!" and then they immediately relaxed, because I had said an obvious Americanism and I looked like an American.

I really didn't find out much of it until the next day, 'cause here are these 18, 19, 20-year-old marines following orders who were not very communicative. But what they told me was there was an alert in the building and they had to shut the building down. They were going through all the floors and there were obviously motion detectors in the building and there was motion. So they thought this was where they were going to find whatever the alert was about. I said, "Okay, give me two minutes to lock up my desk" because my report was classified and I couldn't leave without locking it up. And they said, "Ma'am, this is live, ma'am! This is live! You have to go down to Post One." They took the desk with me, went down to Post One, and it took almost an hour for them to clear the building. So I just lay down on this leather sofa and got a nap until they came back and said it was okay and I could go back upstairs and lock up and go home and actually get some sleep.

It turned out the next day that obviously at the change of shift the marine that went off duty didn't say there's someone in the building. The new marine who took over was brand new. It was his first week at post, and he thought he saw against one of the back fences, it looked like an oil drum that was right next to a chain link fence had been knocked over. So he thought, "Somebody's trying to get in here" and then he looked and sure enough, there's a motion sensor going in the building. So he called in the Marines and then they all jumped in the car and in from the Marine House and went through what I've just described. But it was an electric moment, like on the elephant with the rhino.

The ambassador who was there as we arrived was Ed Djerejian. In fact I think he had already resigned and he was packing out. He had been offered a job at Rice University by Jim Baker and took it. I'm sure for his personal career and fortunes it was a very good move but it was a very unfortunate move for the United States. He was a good ambassador and we need good ambassadors. It took quite a while until he was replaced, which was unfortunate. The inspection went along without any huge problems but one thing I would point out that is, if anything, a bigger problem today, we were obviously looking at a workforce point of view. But it was very telling also, the relationship between the Israelis and the Arabs, even in the spring of '94, we actually had a split office situation in Jerusalem.

The consulate is in Jerusalem. The consular section is in a building on the other side of what then was called the Green Line and I believe now is a physical wall, in West Jerusalem, in other words in the Arab section. Right across the street was the American

Colony Hotel. The FSN's were of Arab origin and a large portion of the clientele was as well, although most of the visa applicants actually came from Jerusalem and were Israelis. One or two days a week the FSN's could not get to work, because some sector was closed off for some security reason. And they tried and sometimes they would try for hours and they'd maybe drift in at eleven or leave early because the word was out that something was going to be closed again. Even back then there was very little civility or predictability about the process. So this is not a recent phenomenon. I think it was ever thus. Somehow the consulate limped along and everybody worked very hard to make it work, but you can imagine how disruptive it must be today for the entire society, when I think of how disruptive it was even back then.

I think that covers whatever highlight from the OIG.

So in September 1994 I arrived in Suriname as the DCM.

*Q: You were there from when to when?*

VAN HEUVEN: '94 'til about September of '96; two years.

*Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: Roger Gamble. I think he had most of his career in M. He was a financial guru and I think maybe even the equivalent of the chief financial officer at one point for the Department. I thought he was a good ambassador. He certainly was extremely good to me. He delegated and I had a lot on my plate and he let me do it and only from time to time give me a tip on this or that, "You might try" such and such. But essentially he gave me a lot of responsibility and I learned a lot from it. It wasn't just that he was shoving everything on my plate, but he also nominated me for DCM of the year and showed that he supported and appreciated what I did. So we had a very good relationship.

*Q: In '94, when you got there, how would you describe the situation, one, playing in Suriname, politically, economically and socially and then our relations with Suriname?*

VAN HEUVEN: I arrived in a sort of honeymoon period. In many ways I was very lucky. Suriname, the former Dutch Guiana, became independent in 1975 from the Netherlands. The Dutch had decided, somewhat precipitously, to grant Suriname independence and did it, I don't want to say overnight, but very quickly. It wasn't as if there'd been a huge movement in Suriname for independence and in fact as they gave them independence they gave everyone the possibility of picking up Dutch citizenship and coming to Holland, if they didn't want to stay in independent Suriname. In fact about half the population took them up on the offer. So the population had been about 400,000 and 200,000 went to Holland in the next few years and have become very integrated into Dutch society. A couple of Surinamers are now members of the Dutch parliament. The other half stayed and went through a time of troubles for a good twenty years thereafter.

You may possibly remember they had something akin to a Sergeant Doe of Liberia. His name was Dési Bouterse, who had been in fact a sergeant in the military, a military sports instructor. He eventually, as a result of a military coup, became the leader of the country in a form of dictatorship. The culmination of this time of troubles in a lot of ways was in late 1982, December, when 15 human rights activists who had been protesting the dictatorship were murdered at night in the prison in Paramaribo, the capital. Right around that same period, Maurice Bishop who was a kind of dictator in Grenada came to visit. There were some indications that he talked to Bouterse and said, "You're not being tough enough. You've got to be ..." And shortly after that these murders happened. And shortly after that we went into Grenada, because of some of the things that Maurice Bishop was doing there.

*Q: Bishop had been killed by that time in Grenada, I think, but the New Jewel Movement was, nasty things were happening and we were concerned about Americans there.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right, which was why we went in. I think one of the U.S. interests in Suriname remained "let's not have any military coups again," nor any relationships with Bishop-like characters in the Caribbean. That was something that Washington remained very interested in, more than they necessarily needed to be.

Anyway, a later hiccup of all of this in the early Nineties was a jungle insurrection on the part of one of the many groups that make up Suriname's society, which was called the Bush Negroes. They just turned the country into an anarchical situation. If you look at Suriname geographically, it's between Venezuela and Brazil, at the eastern end of all of the Caribbean islands, below them, between British and French Guiana and part of the Amazon basin. So there's a twenty mile strip along the ocean that is fairly built up and habitable, in the sense that because it's so close to the ocean breezes it's less susceptible to all of the vicious diseases that kill people further inland. 95, 98 percent of the population live in that twenty mile strip and there's one road. Paramaribo is not exactly in the middle but sort of in the middle, the capital and then there's one main road that goes up to Nickerie from which, across the river, you get into British Guiana and one main road that goes down to Moengo, which is on the river that divides Suriname from French Guiana, which is actually a department of France now. And what happened in this jungle insurrection was that they took over those two roads to the extent that they were not safe to travel. So everyone was hunkered down where they were and didn't find it safe to go outside of their cities or their villages.

When I got there they had finally reached a peace accord, just months before, so the post had had horrible morale. It was very isolated and people couldn't go anywhere, couldn't do anything. Inflation was horrendous. The currency had no international value so they couldn't import anything. You brought your consumables, you brought everything with you, except for the few things that you could buy on the local market. And a former ambassador, prior to Roger Gamble, had said that the embassy personnel would buy things on the local market according to the official rate of exchange, which was probably at least five hundred to one what it should have been, so nobody could afford anything, either.



And as I arrived first of all the jungle insurrection was over. For the first time we could travel again. Secondly, a new government just entered power with one of the first presidents, President Venetiaan, who most people felt was honest, and a really good finance minister who brought in a whole series of austerity measures, not popular, but within a year they had so many currency reserves they could start importing things. Life started looking and feeling a great deal better. So people were quite happy.

The point I was going to make about the road was as we were able to travel, it was safer and we drove along, you could see that what these rebels had done. They were afraid that people would come in on little planes and land on the road to chase after them, so they went through with heavy machinery and dug huge grooves and big potholes in the road, so that it wouldn't be possible to land the planes. So you could drive but it was an adventure of real dimensions. There were little bridges over the various small rivers; on the big rivers there were ferries to cross. You held your breath and hope, kinds of bridges. It was primitive in that sense.

But it was a far better time for Suriname. Things were looking up. There were opportunities for democratic reforms and for economic reforms and for some kind of stability. So I was very lucky in that sense.

*Q: Did we have any interests in the country?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. I would say our strategic interest went back to the Second World War, in terms of geographic position. We built the airfield in Suriname and it was one of the major departure points for supplying first North Africa and then southern Europe. Suriname is almost at that outer point. There were some airports in Brazil that were used as well that were a little above that, but it was a distance from Suriname across to the Azores that planes, cargo planes, could manage without having to refuel. And we built a highway out to the airport which was, in my day, anyway, the only highway where you could ever get your car into fourth gear, where you could get above let's say thirty miles an hour. And then there was this sense of strategic interest in terms of Caribbean stability that remained.

Another major interest was that one of the biggest investors and employers in Suriname was Alcoa. Suriname has huge bauxite deposits. In fact, the roads are practically pure bauxite. They're bright red. The ore is just there to be picked up and refined. Alcoa had whole villages for its employees and remained very interested in its interests being protected, even though after independence they negotiated agreements with Suriname. It was no longer called Alcoa, it was called Suralco. It was a combined effort, that was still refining and exporting the bauxite.

The ambassador called me before I ever got to Suriname and said, "Go over and get briefed at the NSC, because I'm giving you this project." Remember the Haitian boat refugees? The fellow on the NSC who was honchoing this operation went around the Caribbean. He looked for countries that were willing to have us come in and build what

they called a safe haven camp. Then we could pick up the Haitian boat refugees in the water and take them to a place where they would be safe until things were stabilized in Haiti and they would never get to Florida. Suriname had agreed to be one of these countries. It would allow U.S. forces to come in, to give them some land, halfway to the airport, where they could build a base. The U.S. contingent, about 500 troops headed by a Colonel Huddleston, very dynamic person, a sort of a Colin Powell look-alike with a lot of charisma and leadership, had arrived and the problems were just beginning. They had the typical American can-do attitude: we're going to get this done overnight. Here they were dealing with a Third World country that didn't do anything overnight, where there were many, many different groups and interests, where there was endemic corruption and where it took forever to reach consensus on anything. They were dealing with huge ambiguity and getting very frustrated very fast. The Ambassador said, "This is going to be your project."

I arrived. Suriname is six degrees north of the equator, so it's almost exactly twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of night. It was dark by the time I got to my assigned house and the next morning, eight o'clock, I was in the foreign ministry negotiating on this base agreement and how we were going to get all the permits and all the agreements and all the cooperation that we needed. The troops were there a little more than four months and they had done their job. They had built what they needed to build and did a snappy job. They had signs up in the Haitian patois, how to get from here to there, what this center was and what that was. They really did a beautiful job but then all of the ministries that didn't feel that they'd gotten their fair share said, "Wait a minute, this permit isn't there" or another ministry wanted to show that they were doing something, all of the natural things that happen in a Third World country, just kept the military from being able to say, "We're ready to accept refugees." And that was a very frustrating period, particularly for Colonel Huddleston, trying to keep his troops gung-ho.

He did a really super job. He just found other things to do. He was very helpful to us. There'd been all these military coups. There was now an elected government. There was still Dési Bouterse sitting off in the jungle, manipulating a lot of what's going on and still having quite a bit of influence over the military and the military having memories of their glory days during his dictatorship. He did a lot of professional training for the Suriname military, about civic responsibility, about the interface between the military and democratic government, about how to train and professionalize your troops, instill confidence in them. And we managed in fact to get, through his money, a fair amount of human rights training, as well, on human rights standards for treating not only prisoners but civilians and so forth.

But he wanted to get back to the real business of the army. He was out of SOUTHCOM and I was still negotiating about each obstacle that came along. It was really unfortunate for the government of Suriname. One of the big attractions of being part of this was economic gain. They certainly did get some economic gain in terms of contractors and providing the supplies and some of the heavy machinery for building the base, but the big money would have been afterwards, in terms of employees, supplies to feed all these Haitian refugees and to maintain them while they were there. I kept saying, "Look, this

window of opportunity is closing and you've got to get through these last hurdles." I would say to the president, "You've got to crack some of these heads together and make it happen, or you're going to lose out." And sure enough, that was when we invaded Haiti and that was the end of the need for those safe haven camps. They closed everywhere and sent the people back to Haiti. Now that isn't to say that it might not happen again, but within 24 hours our troops were gone and within three weeks so was everything but the cement at the base camp. Neighbors just came and walked off with pieces of chain link fence or the wood that made all of the huts, sinks and toilets. It was all gone in very short order.

*Q: What did the Suriname government do? Were they being sort of dog in the manger, "It's your fault" and that sort of thing?*

VAN HEUVEN: About this? No. I think it was more embarrassment. It wasn't something that we talked about afterwards. They were still very new at trying to make things happen. There were so many shifting coalitions politically, and Venetiaan definitely, let's say at that point, definitely was not on the take. He was an honest man but probably not the most powerful nor the most charismatic person. So you had all of these ministers who had their own fiefdoms and not any history or much of an impetus to work together to get things done. They were on a long learning curve.

*Q: During that period, what was Bouterse doing?*

VAN HEUVEN: I guess it's fair to say the Dutch slowly closed the vise on Bouterse. I think they probably hoped for quite a while that the courts in Suriname would eventually call him to task, for his responsibilities for murder, if nothing else, but it didn't happen. Again, there was this powerlessness of never having a strong enough figure that could bring all these disparate elements together and make something difficult happen. Eventually, way after I left, in 1999 he was convicted in absentia in Holland of cocaine trafficking. There was an outstanding international warrant for him, which essentially makes it impossible for him to travel. On the other hand, he tried several times to get back in power. There were the first free elections in '87 and he resigned at that point. In several subsequent elections his party ran, they still run, they still have a following but he never got a majority. So he retreated to what had been his ranch in the jungle. I think everyone's feeling was that he was making money and exerting influence again in much narrower fields, primarily drug trafficking. Certainly that was a big interest of ours, so we were always following that as well.

In fact, just to illustrate the kind of murky politics, Surinamers are just the nicest people in the world and they all want desperately to get along with each other. So you don't have a lot of the old Dutch cultural influence on governance. It's more how can we all get along?

If I can go back historically, the English were the first to settle Suriname, in the 1600's. That whole area of the Guianas, between Venezuela and Brazil, was called the wild coast. It was jungle up to that last little strip along the ocean. My yellow international

vaccination card was full. I had every injection that you'd ever heard of to go there; this was after several hundred years of sanitation. Back in the 1600's it was very inhospitable, except for that tiny strip along the ocean. The English traded Suriname, their section of the Guianas, half of it, because they kept British Guiana, which today is the independent country of Guyana. The British traded the lower, the southern half to the Dutch for Manhattan Island. You think of the Dutch traders as really negotiating the best of the toughest deals but this one you really have to ask yourself about. In fact, it probably made a lot of sense in the seventeenth century, when the economy was totally agricultural and Suriname had all of these wonderful tropical things to offer and Manhattan had beads and Indians. But in retrospect it's kind of funny.

So the Dutch took over in 1667 and Dutch families came to establish plantations along the coast. The things that were terribly attractive were the pineapples and the bananas and the coffee and the cacao and oranges, but they had to have people to run these plantations and that was the slave trade era. So most of the early workers on the plantations were African, in fact mostly from what is now Ghana. They were not as successful as we were in the United States at retaining those slaves. The difference, again, was the inhospitable interior of the country. So the slave owners tended to send out posses to bring the slaves back and punish them so severely that it was a deterrent to many others from trying. The difference was that in Suriname all the slaves had to do was to get up river. The rivers were all unnavigable, because of a series of rapids. So all you had to do was to get a bit into the interior, get above the rapids. Within ten miles you were in territory that no white man was going to go to, because he knew he would catch cholera or dysentery or yellow fever or typhus or you name it. So they didn't follow them and by self-selection these people had survived. So they rebuilt their existence in the interior to the point there are little villages and to a point where today anthropologists who want to know what life in Accra was like three hundred years ago go to Suriname. They say these are the same kind of games that were played, the same kind of huts, so on.

There are 23 languages spoken in Suriname. The indigenous people were Amerindians and there are three main tribal entities, all of whom speak a different enough dialect. That's three languages right there. Besides the white men from Europe, there were the Negroes that became the Bush Negroes as they escaped into the bush and redeveloped their existence. There are three or four of those tribes, all of whom speak slightly differently. Then the Dutch plantation owners. Holland actually abolished slavery the same year we did, 1863, but well before that in Suriname they started taking indentured servants from India, mainly Hindustanis. Boats went down the west coast of India and then across the east coast of Africa. That's why you have a fairly large Hindustani colonization all along the east coast of Africa and the indentured servants they didn't manage to sell off there went around Cape Horn, first to Brazil and I think ending in Trinidad. V.S. Naipaul, the very famous Trinidadian writer, is obviously descended from those indentured servants.

Just like in East Africa, as soon as they had worked off their indenture, the Hindustanis left the plantations and went into trade and commerce. And to this day most of the trade and commerce in Suriname is run by Hindustanis. They have their own political party.

Eventually the Dutch turned to the Javanese from their other colony in Indonesia. The Javanese, in particular, were farmers. They really were tied to the land, so they came and they ran the plantations until basically the plantations ended. Now you have small subsistence farming run mainly by the Javanese and you have a fairly large sized part of the people from Indonesia, principally Java, who speak Javanese, so that's another two languages added to the mix.

Later the Chinese also came and the Chinese, as in Africa, became the small shopkeepers and the restaurant owners. So the Chinese New Year is a huge thing in Suriname and there's another language.

Talking about what a melting pot the culture is, you have a fair amount of intermarriages. Not so much the Indonesians and the Hindustanis, but just about everybody else. I've left out one major influence, which were the Creoles that came down by sea from the Caribbean. With all of the intermarriages it's a country of Tiger Woodses. It's this wonderful blend and, again, a sense of harmony, wanting to get along with each other. But you can't have this tremendous sense of harmony and much drive at the same time.

So the official language, and that's actually I think how I ended up being sent there as DCM, is Dutch, which I had from our prior assignment in the Hague. The newspapers are written in Dutch. The news on television, at least when I was there, was still in Dutch. Here and there you were starting to hear the local language, which is called Sranan Tongo, using that on radio and on television as well and that is this wonderful mix of everything in their history. There's a little bit of Brazilian in there, quite a bit of English, a lot of Dutch and quite a bit of Creole. But quite simple grammatically. At least that part is easy.

*Q: It sounds like, the airfield's no longer*

VAN HEUVEN: Important.

*Q: And bauxite, it's no longer, how did that work?*

VAN HEUVEN: The last of the American managers had left before I got there. I did talk to the Alcoa people before I left to go down there and they seemed to be very happy. They had people who probably worked for them for their entire career, so they had the benefit of the training. The CFO was American

*Q: Chief Financial Officer.*

VAN HEUVEN: But certainly during the period that I was there it was a going concern and there didn't seem to be huge problems.

Another big interest to Washington that remained for my whole period there was the anti-drug effort. Suriname, it wasn't just Bouterse. It was a significant drug transshipment

point for Europe, more than for the United States. So in that sense it was more a European concern but it was also a transshipment point to the Caribbean. Most of the drugs in the Caribbean headed to us. So it was something we followed with some interest.

*Q: What did we do about it?*

VAN HEUVEN: We did send people for training, people who were charged within the Suriname government with the anti-drug effort. We sent some of them to the United States for training. I was getting our regional customs attaché out of Bridgetown to come down when they actually caught a Surinamer. They were able to directly relate it to drug trafficking. And he came and helped me to galvanize setting up a system for regular consultations on cases of this source, where contacts were made with people. Two DEA agents in Curacao also covered Suriname. They came, so we got a much more active dialogue.

But the other principal effort during the time that I was there was a UN-led effort to establish international agreements throughout the Caribbean. We kept encouraging Suriname to join. They slowly began to participate in this effort. It was a very new effort. All of the Europeans involved anywhere in the Caribbean plus the Canadians and the U.S. were quite heavily engaged in it during that period.

*Q: At that time, was there any particular regard to Guyana and to French Guinea?*

VAN HEUVEN: No. Jonestown had happened earlier. We did have some exchange with Guyana for the simple reason that both Guyana and Suriname were very small posts. This was the beginning of what we called the Small Embassy Program and so we shared some officers. Of course this happens throughout the whole Caribbean Basin. The customs attaché is in Bridgetown, DEA is in Curacao, our USIA officer was in Trinidad. Our regional security officer was in Georgetown. He would make periodic visits. So we had a little more exchange with Georgetown.

We had zip with the French. I actually made an official visit to Cayenne, which is the capital of French Guiana, because our consular section covered French Guiana. It's a department of France but it was ludicrous for any emergency situation to have to deal through Paris. So the Department, in its wisdom, said, "The consular section in Paramaribo would be geographically the closest and would cover." And in fact about once a month there would be a charter bus that would come up from Cayenne with people who wanted visas. Our consular section was run by a junior first tour officer.

It was really funny. We left a very third world country, took a ferry. Immediately, in the ferry, you knew you were entering a new world, because everything was ship-shape and functioned. We crossed and the street signs, everything, you thought you were in a slightly poor section of the French Mediterranean coast. We went by these schools that looked like schools someplace in France and you knew that they were on that day turning their page in their textbooks to the same page as students in Paris were.

There's a huge French Foreign Legion contingent there. And we visited the gendarmerie as well, visited the airport to get a report also partly on how they tried to handle watching out for narcotics shipments out of the airport. We actually were able to time our visit to be there at the launch of the Ariane, because that's where the French launch their satellites, just outside of Cayenne. Most of the consular business that we had had involved American businessmen who either got ill or lost their passports visiting from Hughes Corporation, which had a big interest in that launching site for commercial satellites. And we developed a good courier system with somebody who worked for Hughes there, for handling those passports.

*Q: Why was the French Foreign Legion there? In Africa they used it as a fire brigade all over the place, but I can't think of any French Foreign Legion actions in Latin America.*

VAN HEUVEN: We visited the gendarmerie. They had offices, air conditioned offices, just like what you would expect to see in southern France. The Legion is much more adapted to operating in jungle terrain and living in those kinds of conditions. You have a lot of nefarious things going on in that river basin: drug trafficking, just like in Suriname.

The other big ore in Suriname, besides bauxite, is gold. Those gold deposits are in French Guiana as well and they're mainly being gone after by adventurers who have their little stake. As soon as they get enough gold together they go out and they spend their money in some flashy way and probably lose a lot of their money. So there's a lot of

*Q: A little bit frontierish?*

VAN HEUVEN: Very frontierish.

*Q: And the Legion is sort of Fort Apache out there?*

VAN HEUVEN: Very much so, yeah and running up and down the river, sort of controlling the traffic in these little rubber rafts [on] these virtually unnavigable rivers.

*Q: Did Devil's Island come in your purview at all?*

VAN HEUVEN: We visited there. Each year my whole family came down for Christmas. One of the luxury industries in Suriname at that point was early eco-tours, where foreigners would come and get to go into the jungle. You could visit, for instance, one of the Bush Negro villages I was describing. One Christmas we went into the interior in one of these tiny planes. You land on a grass strip in the middle of an ocean of trees. It's not until the last minute that you see the little notch where you're going to land. It was one of the Amerindian tribes, in huts that they built. That was very interesting, saw how they lived, their dugout canoes, made out of trees, basically. Interesting, too, from the point of view that their dancing, their singing was so similar to our American Indians. You could see that this was a culture that just sort of kept going down, but had at one time all come from wherever they came from and hadn't lost much of their common origins.

The other Christmas we went to Cayenne and stayed in a hotel, visited the city in more tourist-y fashion and one day we took a boat trip over to Devil's Island. There is also a labor camp in the city of Cayenne that we visited. It was very interesting and you could see in fact the signature of the fellow who wrote the book Papillon. And if you looked in the distance, you could not see the South American mainland from Devil's Island. It's amazing to think that he was able to escape.

*Q: Was there any sort of foreign policy business, UN or anything else? How was the foreign ministry apparatus?*

VAN HEUVEN: Very small, extremely small, but we've talked now several times about what were the principal interests of the United States in Suriname. And a new one developed while I was there and that was environmental, saving the rain forest. During the period that I was there, three Asian consortia came in and were able to buy their way into three separate two hundred million acre land grants to harvest tropical lumber. You had to assume this was going to be slash and burn. A number of international environment and conservation organizations really geared up to fight this, as they had been trying to fight it in Southeast Asia as well. In fact, the timber removal started in Southeast Asia and it was such a big success that they decided, "Where else could we go?" And presumably through the Asian connections in the Suriname government they were able to get these concessions.

My memory of it is that the two largest international groups were Conservation International and World Resources International. They started coming down regularly and they were obviously also beating on the door of the White House. There was a strong government interest in our helping them in any way that we could. When I emerged unbroken from the Haitian safe haven project, this almost seamlessly rose as another major preoccupation.

The third issue that also got me into the interior very frequently was I negotiated with the government of Suriname to get a Peace Corps agreement. We had the first and the second Peace Corps contingents come in and all settle in the interior, as a way to take a little bit of economic development to the interior that was not harvesting of lumber.

*Q: Let's stick to the lumber side first. Here are people with very deep pockets coming from Asia to a poor country and they've got all this lumber which essentially not only they have a use for but world has a use for. What could we do?*

VAN HEUVEN: Remember, this was a former Dutch colony. We were not the bad guys! The Dutch were the bad guys that, if anybody was going to resent anyone or the hegemony of anyone or the efforts to push them in certain directions, it was the Dutch. And I kept saying to myself, "We'll never have this again anywhere!"

If you look at it from the point of view of the government, our position clearly was that the Dutch were in the lead here. The Dutch had a huge development program in Suriname and the historic ties they had established, the schools they had established, the sanitation



system they had established, the hospitals, etc. So clearly, if there was a government that was going to step in, our assumption always had to be that it was going to be the Dutch first.

On this one, that ended up pretty much in a very tricky position diplomatically, because this was a much bigger interest back then. Now, I think the Dutch are probably more ecologically concerned, certainly, that this administration in the United States is but then, this was early Nineties, this was not a burning issue. This was pre-Kyoto and they had so many issues on their agenda that was just not a top burner project for the Dutch embassy in Paramaribo.

So what I ended up doing was pulling together a sort of coalition, first of all of the international donors who were active in Suriname. This brought the Dutch DCM into the equation and then eventually his development person. In other words, the fellow at the Dutch embassy that ran their development program came to these meetings. I started them by just having a lunch first of all at my residence and then once a month we got together and everybody talked about what they were doing and we started going into a more concrete action program. And I always tried before or after to talk with the Dutch development head, "Now which things do you want to concentrate on and which things would you like me to try to pick up and push?" We got quite far in that effort and we were able, the U.S., one of the huge efforts was to try to beef up the Suriname government effort.

Again, we're talking about a government that is not strong. It is divided into ministries that all do their own thing, that have little coordination. And it's terribly common in a lot of Third World countries that government employees are paid so little that they have to supplement their salaries. So maybe their government position gives them a certain amount of title and aura but their money has to come from somewhere else, if it's not corruption. So they tend to spend a max of two or three hours in their government job and the rest of the time you can't find them if you call them and it takes a couple of days to connect. The fellows who were responsible for their environment program, for their forestry program, or that whole portion of the ministry of the interior, the two, were really very good men who really cared and I felt were really honest but they were overwhelmed and they had no resources to call on. They had no one that could go out and patrol the forest. What was developing was that raiders were just going in and you'd come back and thirty acres were gone. No one would know how it had happened.

So one of our initial efforts was to beef them up. Maybe the Dutch could pay for one more position. You're talking, what can you do, in a huge and new crisis. We managed to get a little bit of development funding from our Forest Service and twice they paid to have one of their experts come down to help these two men write the law. So at least there would be a law about what was possible and what was not possible. He was very helpful and then once more he came and the Dutch paid for that trip. Then there was a woman that I worked with in the U.S. Geological Survey who was very helpful in terms of mapping, because there were not good maps. What exactly were you dealing with? Where were these supposed concessions? And she sent people twice. We brought

someone from some federal service that dealt with highways who was an expert on how you got roads into virgin territory without destroying too much of it, so you at least had some way of controlling what you were dealing with.

So this was very early efforts. There were a whole bunch of different organizations, probably the most powerful one was IADB, the Inter-American Development Bank, that had a representative in Suriname, who was a big actor. He was very helpful in getting all of his programs done but meshing them, making sure we weren't duplicating each others' effort. The UNDP was very active as well and became very helpful. So was the local EU rep.

*Q: Peace Corps in Suriname, what were they up to and why?*

VAN HEUVEN: Why? I honestly don't know the answer. By the time I arrived I was informed that there were plans to establish the Peace Corps there. I don't believe that this would have been an embassy request prior to that. It's possible it was in response to an embassy request. If it was, I really don't remember that. I suspect it was just the Peace Corps that was looking at places where they were not and decided to give this a try. They did send in the eventual Peace Corps director and an assistant about six months before the first volunteers arrived to look over the situation, go out and they were literally going on their own criteria. It wasn't part of our mission program plan. It was just they were going to come and we were more than happy to support them in that endeavor.

What they did, which made all the sense in the world, was to concentrate on the interior. That twenty-mile stretch of coastline that I've been describing to you where certainly the entire civilized portion of Suriname lived had, still dating back to the Dutch colonial period, a fairly high level of education, hygiene, economic activity. It was definitely a Third World country but it was probably on the higher end of success as a Third World country. Once you got into the interior you were dealing with first of all the indigenous Amerindian tribes. They were still living with just the hints of civilization added to their existence by the occasional visit from the ministry of health or the ministry of the interior and the same for the Bush Negro tribes. What Peace Corps decided to concentrate on was establishing regular links with civilization on the coast and particularly to see if there were some ways that they could help stimulate a little bit of economic activity in these villages in the interior.

I think one of the first decisions that the future Peace Corps director made was that the places where they were thinking of putting Peace Corps volunteers were so incredibly isolated that they would only take couples. I don't know if that was a first for the Peace Corps. You think of the Peace Corps as the sort of thing that people do when they're still single, off to have an adventure in another part of the world right out of college. But as a result, the first group of volunteers that came in the second year I was there tended to be more middle aged. Some were young couples, but there were quite a few middle aged couples as well.

The ambassador designated me to be the liaison for the Peace Corps director and did most of the negotiations with the Suriname government to welcome them and to provide that assistance and those agreements that they required in order to open the program. They did a lot of the negotiating with individual villages themselves, going in and explaining what they could offer, what their rules were, what the parameters were. But there were one or two instances where they asked me to come along, just because they really didn't feel they were quite getting through. They seemed to get along very well with the Amerindian villages. They were very receptive to the idea and didn't seem to have a fear of outsiders coming in.

But that was somehow culturally not the same for the Bush Negroes. There's a lot more suspicion about what was involved here. In one case, I went along to a Bush Negro village. I was told in advance that the elder would be hiding behind a screen, because he didn't speak to women and that I would be dealing with his go-between in front of the screen. In fact, when I got there it wasn't like that. The fact that I spoke Dutch broke that barrier. It still was such that the elder spoke and then the interpreter said something in Dutch and then I would answer in Dutch or I would say something in Dutch and vice versa. But it was obvious that the elder understood, he smiled at all of the appropriate times and so on. In the end, we even shook hands. So I think it was one of those Third World devices for giving him the time to think over what he was going to say and save face in the situation by being able to hear it all twice.

*Q: What were they doing, the Peace Corps?*

VAN HEUVEN: I believe the Peace Corps philosophy is that you go in and you get buy-in by having the village tell you what they want. And since they don't know what they want in most cases, I only saw the first two groups that came in and they were coming, becoming part of the community, being in some ways role models by their different behavior on possible alternative ways of accomplishing things. But I went once or twice during their orientation period, which lasted about a month in Paramaribo before they went to their villages, while they were learning Sranan Tongo and learning as much as they could about the country. There was obviously a really strong emphasis in their orientation period of listening, offering and letting the villagers come up with what it was that they wanted to do as a project or as several projects. I know that the first group in particular immediately started teaching people English. Easy to do, it's your own language, it's a way of having one on one relationships, it can be helpful in terms of literacy. English was, even in Suriname, as useful an international language as Dutch for their purposes. I remember that one volunteer in particular immediately started setting up a library, getting people to contribute books from the town she came from in the States to make it bigger.

But they were living in extremely primitive conditions. You hear about a lot of places the Peace Corps comes in and it puts in a well and it makes a huge difference to a village. Well, Suriname is full of rivers so that there was no village that had a water problem. They just were searching for ways that they could improve the standard of living, essentially, of the people out in the bush. I've been interested since I left there in reading

articles here and there about how that whole region, because of connections with the internet, is now coming up with home industries, primarily by the women in these communities. For instance, selling hammocks. I wonder if some of them aren't in fact from those villages where the Peace Corps was. They haven't started doing anything with computers. Most of these villages didn't have electricity, but that could be changing over time as well.

*Q: Did you have any major health problems, those out in the hinterland?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, they were vaccinated against all of those endemic tropical diseases and I do not remember in that first year that there were any problems. There was one evacuation, or let's say resignation, of a Peace Corps couple, which I think was really for psychological reasons. I think this was one of the middle aged couples, on the older side of middle age, and I think she was very committed, in fact it was the one who established a library. She was very committed to the idea and the process and I think her husband was probably far less so than she was and he came down with a horrible case of hives, rashes and I think it was probably at least as much psychological as that he had an allergy to something. And so finally after a month or two they decided they better go back to the States. That was it. I don't think there were other emergencies. I went out a couple of times to visit a few of the villages and they all seemed to be very much enjoying and having good relations with everybody in the village.

To give you an example of how primitive it was, what we started doing in the embassy was saving our particularly larger receptacles, big cans or jars with lids, for them to use as containers to store basic staples in, because they had nothing. In the Indian villages, it was the sort of straw hut the Amerindians lived in and a hammock. And in the Bush Negro villages it was some sort of a lean-to hut and a bare floor. So they were building a fire to cook their food and they had to buy a pot in Paramaribo before they went out but they soon discovered they had no way to store any staples. So we started a basic collection for them.

I had said I arrived in Suriname in a honeymoon period. Things had been very bad and they suddenly got quite a bit better and then they continued to get better over that first year, year and a half that I was there. So I had a very positive experience there and I think so did everyone in the embassy. I think they had been in an embassy that had had a lot of morale problems because of some of the hardships of that jungle war and a number of other issues. But as I left some of this was coming just about full circle.

First of all, we had a second round of downsizing. It was before I got there that Suriname had been designated one of the early Small Embassy Program posts. So we were doing with a great deal less personnel and in response supposedly we were going to be relieved of a number of requirements. Well, they didn't relieve you of a lot of requirements. You just had to learn how to make do with the resources, both human and financial, that were left to you. In that second year we went through a second downsizing. We lost our marine detachment and we lost three more officers. So there was a lot more soul searching about what was really important and how to get the major things done.

And at the same time Suriname had another national election. It was about two weeks before I left and we had several observers come in to participate in the election process. I went around that day as an observer as well and it certainly looked as if elections were going off in a very orderly, unquestionable way.

Unfortunately, what happened immediately afterwards, once the results were published, one of the parties that had been part of the coalition lost a substantial amount of support and that was the Javanese party. And the leader of the party struck a deal, because they were going to have to put the coalition back together again. This more honest president who had been elected ended up not becoming the president, although that is the way the cards looked from the election results, because the Javanese party leader went to the party of Dési Bouterse and negotiated a deal with him. In exchange for their support of his being part of the coalition government he would support their having a role in the [new] coalition government as well. So that Bouterse, even though he never came back into power, his party and as result a whole lot of more corrupt elements came back in.

That changed again later. Venetiaan is the president again now and I hope that will lead to a more positive outcome. I've corresponded with a number of people over the years and I think that's probably pretty much the case.

But in looking back at that period, I would say, having spent most of my career in Europe or dealing with European or more global issues, these were all situations where in essence we as diplomats were tinkering on the margins far bigger than the government to government relationship: family relations, business relations, academic, media, global relations, where we did our thing and we did make a difference and we did go home satisfied with some of our smaller triumphs. But here it was a government-to-government relationship. There were few, aside from Alcoa, big business relationships. There were some American missionaries. There were two or three other American businessmen settled in Paramaribo. And there was the embassy and it made for a much more direct and immediate relationship where, at the end of the day, there were a lot of days where you could look in the mirror and say, "I made a difference!" It was very satisfying.

*Q: Then, in 1996, where did you go?*

VAN HEUVEN: I left at the end of August. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September I started in EUR as the office director for Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

*Q: You did that how long?*

VAN HEUVEN: It's generally a two-year assignment. It was that in my case.

*Q: Which of the three, Austria, Switzerland and Germany*

VAN HEUVEN: It's really four. The office is called AGS, Austria, Germany, Switzerland but it also includes Liechtenstein. Put a small "I" in there somewhere. All the German-speaking European countries.

*Q: I would think Germany would be the 800-pound gorilla, wouldn't it?*

VAN HEUVEN: That's what I thought, too. I had a couple of offers and I was interested in taking this one, partly because it meant going home; I would not be on a separate assignment any more. My husband was still working in Washington. But also because I thought it would be a very interesting job. I thought, Germany, major ally and Austria and Switzerland will be my dessert.

I arrived about the second week of September. About the third week in September a British parliamentary report was issued on the Tripartite Gold Commission. This was established at the end of the Second World War to decide what to do with the Nazi gold which had been either discovered hidden in caves or was retrieved from the Deutsche Bank but also from several other countries that had become repositories, primarily Switzerland. And that was it. For the next two years I dealt primarily with what came to be called the "Nazi gold" issue and Switzerland and Germany was my dessert.

*Q: Okay, what were the issues?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, there were major issues in all three countries, assuming now we're talking about Nazi gold. There were real questions that were brought up by this report out of London about whether there had been any sort of real equity in how the gold was divided and how it was used. But this quickly became part of a much larger issue which was, I guess the best way to describe it, a generational revision of the post-Holocaust issues. Had they been handled appropriately in 1945 and in the succeeding years? Did the various claims commissions and the various restitution processes do enough? Was everybody covered who should have been covered?

And this fairly quickly got tied together with another effort which was being led by Stu Eizenstat. At that time he was Under Secretary of Commerce for international trade and he was the government lead, he took this work with him from job to job. Back when he was ambassador in Brussels to the EU, he began an effort to organize restitution for the countries that had been behind the Iron Curtain. When the original agreements were made, the Soviet Union said, "We don't need any of this. We're not taking any of this." So victims of the Holocaust behind the Iron Curtain never received any restitution. So historically, this is just my understanding, Stu took the lead for the U.S. government in efforts to establish some kind of restitution for the newly independent countries that had been behind the Iron Curtain. Then he came back to the United States, went to Commerce, and he took that role with him.

And when suddenly new questions arose concerning arrangements in the West, it just seemed logical to bundle it all together. So he took the lead in the West at looking at how we had done things in the immediate postwar period having to do first of all with the

gold. Then very rapidly this became a much larger issue, which was a sweeping review of all of the restitution arrangements. By October, weeks after I got there, I became the State Department liaison for that effort.

So I started being a regular at these meetings that would be held in one of Stu's meeting rooms that just grew and grew. In the first week or so we realized this was a historical effort. There was no one, or virtually no one, in government who had any historical memory of what had happened at that point. So very soon State's Office of the Historian became a participant. The Historian of the State Department, Bill Slaney, became a member of this little ad hoc committee.

There was, in fact, one person in Washington and I remember going by and talking to him in his home. He was Seymour Rubin and he had been a negotiator at those immediate postwar talks. And there was one employee in L, the Office of the Legal Advisor, who was in his fiftieth year in the State Department, Eli Mauer. Eli had been a young assistant to the people working on these talks out of L at that time, so he had some historical memory. Sy Rubin certainly did as well.

Pretty quickly Stu took the lead in saying, "Okay, we need to start by putting together a report. What has happened so far? And then only can you figure out what needs to be redressed or what still needs to be done." It was a very dynamic thing. There were, every day, people coming out with new things that needed to be done or be looked at and it was a very emotional effort.

*Q: I would have thought the gold would have essentially been distributed, maybe poorly, right after the war. Is gold still sitting there?*

VAN HEUVEN: Here we were in the late Nineties, '96, looking with another generation's eyes at things that had happened fifty years before, in 1946, and making other judgments on how they should have been done. At the time, you're talking about gold bullion. This was money that had been taken from national banks, because national banks kept bullion as backing for their reserves. So the sense was at the end of the war this goes back to those national banks. So the big effort was how do you divide that up?

But what then came out was all the other gold that the Nazis confiscated, particularly from Holocaust victims. That was the emotional part, and didn't this get commingled, and to what extent did the one category wash into the other. There was also a sense, which I certainly agree with, that an awful lot was swept under the rug in '46. All of Europe was devastated and people had to quickly move on and get societies and industries and businesses and countries back on their feet. And a lot of things could have been done better even back then, but with 1996 eyes even more should have happened.

The eventual negotiations with the Swiss became heavily focused on bank accounts in Swiss banks, where holocaust victims had deposits and would tell their family, "Don't worry, there's money in Switzerland." If they died and their heirs tried to claim it and didn't have the cipher number or couldn't prove that they were the relative -- what

apparently happened in x number of cases was they couldn't provide a death certificate. Without a death certificate the bank wasn't going to give them the money. Of course there was a great deal of outrage at how could a person who was killed in a concentration camp have a death certificate?

It all started with the national banks but one of the early mushrooms of this whole re-look was bank accounts. One of the ways of dealing with that became establishing a commission here in the United States. It was, however, an international commission, headed by Paul Volker, former Federal Reserve chairman, to look into Swiss bank accounts and people who were still making claims or had been refused in the past. They were all encouraged to come forward again. It was around the time I left when we reached a settlement with the three major Swiss banks for 1.2 billion dollars, which then a separate commission had to figure out how to divide among a larger group, which was the holocaust victims in general that had any claim.

It went on to include something that was also starting while I was there. It happened to be Austrian art that was on loan from a national museum in Vienna. Relatives of the original Jewish owners brought a court case asking them not to be returned to Austria because they were the legitimate heirs of the family who perished in the holocaust and then the Austrian government took over these art works. And that case went on I think for five or six years and they eventually were

*Q: I recall one was a very beautiful one, had a lot of gold in it*

VAN HEUVEN: You're thinking of the Klimt. What happened was, the original one was confiscated and then this, too, mushroomed and in fact there are art restitutions happening all over Europe to this day that all started from that effort. There was a whole effort in Paris to return apartments to heirs of French Jews who were sent off to concentration camps and never returned and the French government then took those apartments and actually turned them into apartments for government employees and those are now

*Q: Became quite a scandal, I think, became part of the perks of government.*

VAN HEUVEN: But all of these were scandals. As I say, it was a generational review. Another huge one was insurance. While I was there, all these commissions, the only one that was resolved was the Swiss banks, because the Swiss handled this with such difficulty. I think other countries then fell quickly into line and the Swiss had to go in this whole process first and everybody figured out this is not the way to do it and so it became a lot easier in the other countries of Europe. The Swedes did a particularly good job of going back and re-looking at all these issues and making greater restitution.

After the banks and before art, the next thing was insurance. It turned out that many, many relatives of holocaust victims were denied their claim to life insurance that had been held by the victim, again because they couldn't establish the tie because they couldn't come up with a death certificate, whatever. So we established another



commission to look into life insurance claims, with 17 or 18 European insurance companies. And that, I just read in the paper last month, it's finally come to a close. That commission was headed by Larry Eagleburger of the United States and, again, it had a number of members from other countries. So art works, apartments, insurance, banking accounts and some of, I think not as much as Stu had hoped in the beginning, some of these general restitution funds, where we couldn't find a beneficiary, went to other holocaust victims, particularly those in the East who had never had any kind of compensation for their suffering.

But that was definitively what I spent most of my time on for the next two years. The only time in my entire career where I was in a position where we added positions was back when I was in CA/PA and they amalgamated two offices. But when I came into the job in EUR, this was immediately post-Dick Holbrooke, who cut a pretty big swath through EUR personnel. He decided that the system was too top heavy and you had to get the younger people to do the work and so the first thing he did was to abolish all of the deputy office director positions. So there'd be an office director and then a lot of Indians. Also, before I got there, the office lost three of nine positions. I had to have a deputy, because the regular business of the office had to be looked after as well and I had to be the one who went to all of these meetings with under secretaries and assistant secretaries, so the Dick Holbrooke method bled us dry.

So I took the gal who was the German desk officer, the biggest portfolio in the office, and I made her the deputy director and the acting director, really, of the office for all practical purposes. There were so many cabinet ministers from Germany that would come through all the time. There were some things you just had to do, so I did go along to a lot of those meetings and write a lot of talking points for Pickering and Albright and sit in on those meetings as well, including the first visit of Gerhard Schröder to Washington, back when he was a candidate for office. This was where he was going to establish his international credentials, so he got to call on the Secretary of State and other leaders in Washington. That's kind of interesting. He really did not speak English and neither did Kohl, before him. He seemed ill at ease and didn't quite know what to do. I'm sure he learned over time but it was an awkward visit. One would have thought, we had a Democratic administration, he was from a party of the left, that there would have somehow been more obvious synergies there, but there weren't. That may have had something to do with the fact that there never was a really strong relationship developed when he became chancellor.

*Q: What role did J.D. Bindenagel have in all this?*

VAN HEUVEN: J.D. had been my predecessor as the office director once removed. I got to know J.D. fairly well because in the very beginning he was the DCM in Bonn when I was the office director, so we talked fairly often. And in the end, as this whole holocaust revision kept mushrooming, and I kept pleading for resources and wasn't meeting with great success, I finally said, "You need to open a separate office. This is more than a one person portfolio and it isn't going to go away." There's now a huge office, which is bigger than our office for Austria, Germany and Switzerland was at the time. As they

were creating it, they came up with someone to head it who didn't work out. Everybody was searching around for someone else and J.D. came by my office one day and I said, "J.D., do I have a job for you?" And I essentially convinced him to bid on it and he became the first real head of that new office as I left. We didn't overlap and he was in process to become

*Q: You mentioned the Swiss made so many problems. What was your feeling towards the Swiss? Were these bankers trying to hang on to their money or what was it?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was a bit of a Greek tragedy for me, in the sense that my family was originally from Switzerland, I had served in Switzerland, I knew the Swiss quite well. In fact I knew a number of these bankers. From my perspective, I could see a way that we could get through this and make it a win-win situation: where the wrongs that needed to be redressed could be redressed, the Swiss could take some credit for it, at the same time as we took credit for having started the process, and you could have achieved the historical revision on the part of the Swiss people of their role in the Second World War and everyone could have moved on. I think this historical revision happened in every country in Europe in one way or another, some with larger success and some with lesser success.

The Germans, obviously, saw early under the leadership of Adenauer and some of his successors, that they had to make major restitution and they did so. In fact, that was one of the interesting things about Schroeder, was he was the first postwar generation chancellor. Perhaps part of the draw was he was the first one not to have guilt right up there as one of the first things in his credo every time he met with us. But even so, when Marten and I served in Bonn in the early Eighties, the series on the holocaust played on German television, in everyone's living room, because it was the first time that a lot of Germans came to a realization on a personal level of what had happened in the Second World War, because their schools never got that far. It was just not addressed. It wasn't addressed between parents and children. So that was very seminal for Germany. In France, *The Sorrow and the Pity*, the documentary on the Vichy government, which made it clear to a lot of French who hadn't been addressing this either, that not everybody was in the Resistance, that there were a great many collaborators.

That has never happened in Austria and it hasn't really happened in Italy, either but in most of the other countries it has in one way or another. In Switzerland it hasn't happened and it could have happened then. The Swiss saw themselves as tremendous heroes and the nurturers of the democratic flame in a world in which they were menaced surrounded and all of that is true. But, in order to survive, they had to make accommodations. They did let German troop trains through and it became clear in this process that they served as the exchange house so that trade and goods could be exchanged. Now that had some humanitarian purposes. It also had some commercial gains. And they accepted a great deal of gold from the Nazis and they kept it, as they did for other countries. Now, they saw this as the function that a neutral country provided and didn't see a moral aspect to this.

That was a lot harder to understand in 1996 than perhaps it was in 1946. There were a number of comments in the report that was published as a result of this historical study that we went about in determining what needed to be done. One was that they served as Hitler's bankers, which they found to be very insulting. Another was that their neutrality, which was and remains part of Swiss mythology, that's what they're all about, they're neutrals, so they can serve the rest of the world. But the report said it also served their commercial interests and suggested they were more interested in their commercial gain.

What the Swiss then did was to also mount a historical effort. They commissioned a Swiss historian who had excellent credentials who spent the next couple of years working with a number of historians, including international, not Swiss, Jewish historians very credible, evenhanded report. But by the time they came out with it I don't think anyone in Switzerland read it. I think they were so insulted and so wounded by some of the assertions in our report that they just closed down. So an opportunity for that sort of historical revision that has happened in other countries hasn't happened to this day in Switzerland, which is unfortunate. If you look into a greater panoply of things which have been achieved I think a lot of good was done.

*Q: Did you find yourself doing a lot of hand holding of the Swiss*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes. I certainly think that we managed to attenuate some of the problems, but there could have been a better, I personally regret that I wasn't able to be helpful in having a more positive outcome, because it could have been.

*Q: By the time you left your job, that hadn't been fully resolved yet?*

VAN HEUVEN: The first settlement was in. That was supervised, actually, by a judge in Illinois, as a result of class action suits brought by specific holocaust victims. That money was then set aside to satisfy the claims of people who had something specific at issue. The effort to find, to match, essentially, which was what the whole insurance effort was, it dealt with matching claimants with actual cases or accounts, that took, I think that was finished

*Q: I want to ask you about Switzerland and its ambassadors. We seem to have ambassadors that cause problems, often ambassadors that we send to Switzerland. Talk about the care and feeding of ambassadors there and also in Austria. Also, in Austria, were you there during the time of Haider, the sort of neo-Nazi.*

VAN HEUVEN: I was lucky during the time that I was there that we had a very competent ambassador who by strange serendipity actually spoke Schweitzerdeutsch, the Swiss-German dialect. She was the former governor of Vermont, Madeleine Kunin, who after Vermont was Deputy Secretary of Education and from there was named to be ambassador to Switzerland. I'm sure, this was not ever anything we talked about but I'm sure she had a similar reaction. I came into that job thinking, "Wow, Germany, big issues" and ended up

*Q: She was dealing with “Where’s all of the money?”*

VAN HEUVEN: Right, but in fact she had to go through quite a rigmarole to become the ambassador, because she was a dual citizen. She was also a citizen of Switzerland. She actually, I believe, was born in Germany and her parents fled to Switzerland before the war started, because they were Jewish, to escape the Nazis. But somehow one of them must have had a claim to Swiss citizenship and she, through them, became Swiss and lived in Switzerland long enough or kept it up through her mother. It was possibly through the mother that she spoke very credible Swiss-German. The mother, before the war started, decided even Switzerland wasn’t safe and she took her two children, who were then ten and twelve, something like that, to the United States. So Madeleine went to I think the end of high school and college in the United States, eventually settled in Vermont, became the governor and then was nominated to go to Switzerland. Well, in order to accept her as the ambassador the Swiss said she had to give up her Swiss citizenship, which for international reasons made sense, and she did that.

But the thing that I’m sure was dismaying to her, thinking that she was coming and could have a honeymoon relationship with the Swiss, it turned out to be anything but. In fact when the whole issue of the bank accounts and claims that were denied came up, she discovered that her family had had a bank account, which she had never known anything about. So it became a very personal issue with her as well and she had very sharp political instincts on how this ought to be played. There were one or two times where, since I was the person that had to pass her instructions from the Department, she wasn’t particularly happy with the instructions, but that was very different from what you’re talking about. She was a very competent representative who took a strong position.

*Q: What I’m, of course, referring is we’ve had sort of scandals. We had one person died at post, it turned out that he’d lied about his military service and was involved in other things. Somebody before him, this was under both parties, was essentially renting out the residence.*

VAN HEUVEN: There were so many.

*Q: I must say what I picked up, both with Albright and with Rice, people looked forward to this, fresh approach and all and have been frankly rather disappointed.*

VAN HEUVEN: I thought Condi Rice did an excellent job in the beginning. She had a big town meeting. She said all the right things. She got people up there on the stage with her, but I wonder and, again, perhaps I’m saying this from the perspective of a token woman, getting into jobs at that elevated stratosphere, these women simply had not had the amount of experience in top level management jobs that many of their male predecessors had had. And both came out of academia, where you don’t management anything.

*Q: At the UN, too*

VAN HEUVEN: That was the first place where she had an opportunity.

*Q: Jim Baker had a group around him, which included women. Margaret Tutwiler, who was extremely powerful, but the competence of the group that he had around him was such that you really couldn't say, some of these are just people who were almost, essentially groupies or somebody who'd gotten power. James Baker, his people, they're still going on, doing things, because they were so, he really had a very powerful*

VAN HEUVEN: This is someone who had so much experience in positions of really high responsibility that he had developed a group of contacts. One of the really lamentable things when Condi Rice came in and had so many vacancies was how long it took to find anybody to replace them. If you haven't been working in this atmosphere, you don't have those levels of experience.

*Q: What was the situation, would you say, both in Austria and American-Austrian relations?*

VAN HEUVEN: Austria was a latecomer to the EU. So if you ever wanted to see an example of being forced to do things that politically, domestically otherwise would have been very difficult, how the result could make you almost instantly prosperous, Austria was a terrific example. I had been there as a tourist infrequently, but I remember it as a grey, sad, dingy country. I was stunned later to see how quickly the prosperity was evident. They had politically a situation really rather similar to what you see in France.

You were asking about Jörg Haider. Jörg Haider was one new element on the screen that did kind of shake the system loose for a while. He was a phenomenon that you really could see in most other countries in Western Europe: of traces to the backlash against the incremental increase in immigration -- particularly from countries that were harder to assimilate than the immigration that most of Western Europe had known before.

*Q: Particularly from Turkey and Muslim countries.*

VAN HEUVEN: Turkey was already big in the 1960's in Germany. I'm not sure at what point exactly the Turks arrived in Vienna but certainly historically the Turks would always be very difficult for the Austrians. But a lot of it was Yugoslavia and further east. So a big element was anti-immigration but another element, I would argue, was more responsive government to the little person. The Haider appeal was very similar, in terms of who would vote for him, to that of Le Pen, for instance, in France. It was the little shopkeepers, it was the little people who didn't feel that anybody was listening to them or cared. There was a promise of efficiency and responsiveness which under that paralyzed government over all those decades just had never been there. So he gave people hope for something fresh.

On the other hand, he was tainted and he made extremely exaggerated statements, just like Le Pen. So the majority of Austrians saw him as a danger, more than as an opportunity, but by the time I got to Italy, which was my next assignment, I could see that

there was an almost identical figure in northern Italy. His name is Umberto Bossi. He was the absolute counterpart of Haider, but in a place where it was more obvious that the efficiency and responsiveness of government, which was even more missing in Italy, had a huge appeal to a lot of people, particularly in the north.

*Q: Austria sort of had the reputation of being more Hitlerian than Germany during World War II. Many of the excesses and all you could trace to Austrian officers in the German Army and SS and all.*

VAN HEUVEN: The worst concentration camp was in Austria.

*Q: So when something like Haider came up, we'd already gone through Waldheim, sort of a Nazi taint kept coming up. You must have found yourself*

VAN HEUVEN: That was the taint I'm talking about. His parents were members, or at least his father, was a member of the Nazi Party, so he grew up in a household

*Q: Did you find yourself having to deal with, you might say the Nazi issue*

VAN HEUVEN: In Austria? Only tangentially, in the sense that unresolved World War II issues began to come up there as well. A huge Austrian insurance company was also involved. Art works, that started with the Austrians and went on to other countries as well. Austria is one of those few countries that has never had a historical review of its behavior in the Second World War. So if you talk to Austrians, their myth is that they were victims and that myth remains, to the best of my knowledge, to this day.

*Q: There weren't real efforts to teach the holocaust in the schools? Were there any issues, you've mentioned some of the restitution problems, were there any other ones at all?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, we had the restitution issues. The biggest other issue was child abduction. There was a mother who lived in the United States, was separated or divorced from her husband, and left the United States with the child, while a U.S. court had jurisdiction over the custody issue. She took the child back to Austria and the Austrian courts, despite the fact that Austria was a member of the Hague Convention on child custody cases, the domestic court ruled in favor of the mother. The child was within its jurisdiction. We brought up this case every time we got together with the Austrians. To the best of my knowledge that child is still in Austria.

*Q: Germany, this is the 800-pound gorilla, how involved, you said you found yourself much more involved in other things.*

VAN HEUVEN: There are huge institutionalized fora for exchange with the Germans. You had state secretaries of the foreign ministry turning up from time to time, because we had an agreement that we would have these regular exchanges. There were also regular

high level defense exchanges and I used to participate in those as well. I would be the State rep every time there was one of the defense exchanges.

This was a period of real change. I remember that one of the issues that I tried very hard to work on was increasing exchanges between young people, because this was essentially my third time of dealing with Germany. When we were in Berlin in the 1960's a substantial portion of the population was American, mostly American military. Then when we were in Bonn in the 1980's you still had hundreds of thousands of American troops all over Germany and seven consulates dispersed throughout Germany. You really can't underestimate the importance of that many Americans living in German neighborhoods and getting involved, the way we do, in communities. It was a huge level of exchange and understanding between Germans and Americans. By the time I got to this job in the late Nineties we were drawing down all of our bases in Germany and in fact by the time I got to my next assignment, in Italy, we had more troops at Italian bases than we had in Germany. The Italian bases were poised towards the Middle East and towards the Balkans where you needed to have your people. The Berlin Wall had come down. You weren't having these big military exercises anymore because you didn't think that the Russians were going to come streaming through the Fulda Gap.

So that huge drawdown in Germany was heavily in play and we were losing those day-to-day contacts that had meant so much. A lot of consulates were closed as well. So the American presence in Germany had dropped very substantially during that period.

If you had been posted in Germany during these years you would have also physically just seen the signs of this huge American presence: not only all the signs on the highways for all the bases here, there and everywhere with the little American flags, but the special license plates for U.S. forces in Germany, etc, etc. Very interestingly, by then there were probably as many Germans, primarily air force, training in New Mexico and Texas as there were Americans in Germany. As that German presence swelled in the Southwest, I think the German military took umbrage: "Look at all the things that we let you do in our country and why is this all so difficult for us?" So they wanted their own license plates, they wanted their own this and their own that. The cars were one of the biggest issues. I remember trying to explain, "Yes, I understand that we got it from you so therefore you have a feeling that there should be absolute reciprocity but what I have to keep explaining is there is no way we could deliver. We could make this promise but there is no way we could deliver. It would actually be detrimental to your troops if they had this strange license plate and wanted to go to Michigan. Maybe the county where the base was in Texas would get used to that license plate, but the policeman in Michigan wouldn't. No amount of notification on our part would ever get to the point where your people wouldn't be stopped regularly." So we kept working on what I was calling asymmetrical reciprocity, which was ways of giving them something that was important to them but feasible.

*Q: I imagine that part of your time was taken up with you might say care and feeding of big wheels traveling back and forth, our secretaries of various departments and their ministers and all this?*

VAN HEUVEN: I participated in a lot of meetings in Under Secretary Pickering's office and Strobe Talbott's office and Albright's office for all of those people, as they came through. On that same note, to go back to Austria, one of the things you do when you're an office director is you take care of your foreign embassies in Washington. You're the person they come to if they want something. I think I must have had a weekly call from the Austrian ambassador, because, like the Swiss, the Austrians or certainly the Austrian foreign minister at the time felt that his country simply wasn't getting enough attention from the United States. He wanted a state visit to Austria and he was willing to settle for a visit from the Secretary of State, in other words his opposite number. Again, there's always a coalition government, we figured it was probably partly for internal rivalry reasons, to make him look good. So regularly, like once a week, the Austrian ambassador would call me and say, "How are we doing on getting a visit from the Secretary?" I told him, "Look, I can bring this up only so often. It's out there, but I would not get your hopes up." I think his career was dependent on delivering. And guess what was the compromise that we finally found? We got Hillary Clinton to go.

*Q: Probably even better!*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly. She was freer than the Secretary of State was but it gave him shine or glory and I got to go along to accompany her on that trip. She did a splendid job, really splendid job. So Austria got, in the end, more than they asked for. I found her extremely impressive.

They say opposites attract and I had met President Bill Clinton before that trip, because I had to accompany a new Swiss ambassador to present his credentials. You may remember that the Clinton Administration was not big on those kinds of ceremonies. It took a very long time to convince them that this was important. Then they had such a lot of catch-up to do that they scheduled I think once a month sessions. They would have ten ambassadors and their families come and there would be like a little reception while they all waited 'til it was their turn. Then you would go in with your ambassador and you would have ten minutes with the president. There were probably 15, maybe 20, people in the room for that ten minutes in the Oval Office, and it's really true that he connected with everybody in the room. Everybody knew that he knew that they were there. There was a magnetism to that personal contact. And he was all over the lot, in terms of what he discussed. There was this feeling of the big picture being extremely evident and huge personal contact.

She, in my experience, was sort of exactly the opposite: hugely focused and all intellect and very, very competent on whatever the issue was she was addressing. I think the way that we managed to work this out so it also became an official visit to Austria was that she had an invitation from the Salzburg Seminar to make a speech. She accepted that speech invite and then we just added the official visit on to that. That was a much bigger group. I saw her in that visit on little one-on-ones, which is really like ten-on-ten, visits with the president of Austria, with the prime minister and with the foreign minister and she did that superbly. I used to write talking points for Madeleine Albright all the time.



She would have the cards on her lap and she would be reading off of them. Hillary Clinton would walk in, not a sign of a note, but everything that I had given her was delivered and she made it much better. It became part of her and she integrated it into other concerns that she had. She's a class act, really.

*Q: That's what I hear. Also, there's not much, she isn't arrogant. People around her*

VAN HEUVEN: Not at all!

*Q: People who work for her, she wants to get the job done but there isn't this sort of over-demanding of personal attention or something like that.*

VAN HEUVEN: They were very protective of her. There was that same element of the group having a kind of shield. But she was very direct and absolutely not arrogant in any way. And this larger group she addressed at the Salzburg Seminar, she did a beautiful job there as well in drawing everyone in. At the end of the Clinton Administration I thought, I don't think she's electable, because of that very intellectual focus and a certain lack of warmth. I thought, "She doesn't have that people touch that her husband has. She won't be elected." And she was as a Senator from New York.

And she has obviously learned, because if you see, there's a lot more smiling, a lot more radiance, a lot more outgoing. She's a fast learner.

*Q: Of course it's always there but it was particularly difficult, I think, during part of the time you were there, the trafficking in women, many coming out of the former Soviet Union and a lot of them were headed towards the fleshpots of Western Europe. They were recruited to be au pairs or*

VAN HEUVEN: They were made all kinds of promises about what their role was going to be.

*Q: I would have thought that European countries, particularly Germany and maybe Austria, would have been dealing with this. Did you get anything about that?*

VAN HEUVEN: I do not remember that this was an issue that hit our screen during the years I was in the job, but it was a huge issue by the time I got to Milan and we did do quite a bit

*Q: One of the things that strikes me, my first post was Germany, at one point I was baby births officer there, I was issuing something like 300 consular reports of birth abroad a month at Frankfurt, gives an idea of the immensity of what we had there and almost any man my age probably served time in the military in Germany. There was this close tie. Now, I hardly ever hear of people going to Germany as tourists, even. There's an unfortunate problem. I don't think Americans are familiar with Germany, any more. Were you noticing this?*

VAN HEUVEN: You still have visits from retired military going back who had an assignment there, but I think you're right, there simply isn't the level of tourism. I alluded to the change in the relationship with Germany earlier, when I said I sat in on the very first visit of Schroeder, before he was elected chancellor, and there was a distance that had never been there politically before. That was an omen. I think I said that he seemed ill at ease, maybe not that secure yet. Schroeder definitely came into office saying that it was time for some of these relationships to change. He was more vocal about the change with France, that that very close German-French connection needed to be reexamined. But I think that was also true, less with the British but certainly with America. It was time to move on. It was fifty years after the end of the Second World War. Germany was now a sovereign country, the biggest and economically the most important in Western Europe and it was sort of let the Germans be German. And that transition continues. I think that with Frau Merkel, having grown up in the east, being from the conservative party, is probably coming back from that a bit. But that is probably as it should be. You can't have nostalgia for old times. The world has changed and there are times we perhaps forget that and aren't adjusting as quickly as we could.

I was going to tell you another anecdote. I worked extremely closely with Stu Eizenstat during this whole period and there's another class act. This man took on a Herculean amount of work and I know exactly how he was able to succeed. He had very long arms and he reached out throughout the government, not only in his own offices, to pick up the phone and call a friend and say, "Can you help me with this?" or "Can you help me with that?" And on every issue that I saw him working on, because I spent so much time in his office, I saw a lot.

For instance, Kyoto, where at the very last minute he was called in to take the place of the U.S. Trade Representative. The meeting was already taking place and he was parachuted in to finish it. He had this incredible secretary and she would find space and these legions of people would get involved in preparing the briefing papers for him. He probably slept three or four hours a night, because he looked over every briefing paper and made changes and sent them back. You would redo them. And he would get on a plane with a briefing book that was eight to twelve inches thick and he would sit up all night on the plane and internalize it and never looked at a briefing paper after that. But he had, during this process, a huge array of people providing him with all of the material. By the time he got into the meeting he was ready to negotiate and he's a really fabulous negotiator. He was very good at making everyone feel that he understood their position. And then he would just keep coming back to whatever his two or three points were and things happened. But he expected of everyone else the time and that intensity of effort that he put in.

I remember one of those trips to Davos. He always went business class. They got me a business class ticket, too. He wanted me to be right there at hand, so that when he got to page x if he had questions I was there and could answer them. Unfortunately, two things happened before we got on that plane. The first was that I went skiing with my family out in Jackson Hole and I ruptured a tendon in my leg, the ACL it's called, so I was on crutches. I remember this little hospital in Jackson Hole. I was very lucky because I had a

doctor who was one of the doctors for the U.S. Ski Team. I felt like he knew what he was doing and I said, "I have to be on a plane in a week and I have to go to Switzerland. I'm going to Davos, where there's a lot of snow and ice." He gave me a pair of crutches with cramp-ons on them, these little clips that would stick in ice and wouldn't slip. So I got on the plane with these fabulous crutches. Unfortunately I was in the window seat and there was a very large man in the aisle seat. Stu had the whole aisle of business class, which were free. I wasn't smart enough to instantly ask the rather large man if we could switch seats. Then he fell asleep and stayed asleep for the entire flight. So every once in a while Stu would say, "Ruth" and I would have to, with my crutches, work my way across this sleeping man to get to Stu and discuss whatever the issue was. This was the flight from Dulles to Zurich and I would say probably 75 percent of the people in business class were going to the World Economic Forum and they all knew him. You could see how he was able to reach across government lines and get all the help he needed for whatever the issue was. They all knew him and they all made a point of coming over and saying hello to him. He was absolutely incredible in what he was able to achieve. If you look back on what we were talking about earlier, what all got started in that process, I think he deserves a huge amount of credit.

The other real class act was Tom Pickering, who was under secretary for political affairs. I don't even know if he read my talking points. He was on a global level and he would talk with these state secretaries or ministers or whoever came through and there wasn't a part of the world where he hadn't been ambassador, that he didn't intimately know what all the issues were and could talk about. He had a wonderful way, as well, of coming across with great humility but at the same time with great wisdom and letting the visitor get his message across and finding very subtle ways of getting his own message across. I thought he was really spectacular.

Strobe Talbott was Deputy Secretary. He came out of journalism and was definitely not a bureaucrat. He had his positions on things that had to do with Russia and the newly independent states but he was very unbureaucratic. I remember one time he was scheduled to meet with the state secretary of the German foreign ministry. Everybody in the State Department wanted to get something into that briefing paper for Talbott. They wanted to bring their issues to Talbott's attention. Other bureaus, other offices and we struggled to get this down to the most important points. We ended up giving him an issues paper that was probably 12 pages, way too long. One of his aides called me and said, "Could you come up? Strobe would like to talk to you." Thank goodness I had the presence of mind to grab the issues paper and take it with me. As I got to his office he said, "Oh, there you are! Come along!" He was just getting into his little private elevator. So I got into the private elevator with him and we shot downstairs and got out of his elevator and there's his car. He said, "Come on. We're going off to get a coffee." So we went across town to a Starbucks, which was next to a store where he picked something up for his wife. So he wanted to go out and do an errand and he was going to use that time in the car to get through this. And he said, "This is 12 pages. Tell me what's important. What do I need to know?" So I had ten minutes going and ten minutes going back to leaf through and say what's most important and he had an oral brief. Then he asked me a question or two. I smiled to myself when I thought of all these people that had just been

force feeding stuff in there. I thought that they'll never know that not all of their do or die prose that didn't make it.

*Q: I interviewed one man who was an assistant to Secretary of State William Rogers and he said that he got ready to brief him and all he did was talk about his golf game and all. And one time, he said, Rogers was talking to the Japanese foreign minister and was making a point when the Japanese foreign minister said, "Excuse me, I think what you want to say is ..." He'd gotten the wrong side of the issue.*

VAN HEUVEN: Strobe Talbott wasn't like that. He was very sharp. This was making a subtle point to me, too. Maybe we should have fought back harder and slimmed this down even more. I got to do it on the spot. It worked out very well.

During the whole Swiss venture the ambassador that I took in to present his credentials was probably the first non-career diplomat from Switzerland. He was actually a protégé of the then-foreign minister of Switzerland, who was a journalist. I believe that these issues were already beginning to come up before I got into the office, because the Swiss foreign minister, whose name was Cotti, sent this journalist to New York to be the Swiss consul in New York. One of the things that he immediately did was to make contact with the various Jewish organizations, most of which were headquartered in New York. He did a really good job at that and so when things started to fall apart the ambassador of Switzerland who was in Washington, a career diplomat, sent a telegram back to Berne, the capital, saying in very forceful terms, "You have to pay attention to this. This is going to be a big issue." I don't remember what his exact words were, but he used a lot of militaristic metaphors in his cable. He was an officer in the Swiss military. Most people that rise in any field in Switzerland have been officers in the Swiss military and there is this sort of clique where they talk to each other and get things done, sort of the way I was talking about Stu Eizenstat being able to reach out in our system. That cable got leaked in Switzerland, probably by Cotti, and immediately hit the press and immediately hit the fan here in the United States. All of the militaristic, "this is going to be a war, this is going to be a campaign," etc. inflamed passions on both sides. So Cotti used that to terminate the assignment of that ambassador and he then moved Alfred Defago, who was the consul in New York, down to Washington. The way that it was done was unfortunate.

Defago was the right man at the right time in Washington to eventually find ways to smooth over the feathers and establish again more harmonious relations. I very much appreciated the relationship with him. We didn't have easy things to say to each other but we always understood that our general interest was somehow to get the bilateral relationship back on some kind of even keel, which I think by today it is. I don't think, as I've said before, that it was resolved as well as it could have been but nothing's perfect in this world.

On one of these trips to Davos, on the margins of that meeting I met with another one of the seven cabinet ministers, who by that time had taken over the foreign ministry portfolio from Cotti, and we talked on the margins as well. He was saying, "Why?" and so on and so forth. And I said, "Everyone's starting from their own perspective and not

seeing, there isn't enough dialogue on what's important on both sides, so as to try to find some common ground. For instance, there never has been any revision in Switzerland of the original that everybody was a hero. What could make a huge difference might be if Kohler were to get up and make the kind of public apology about some of the mistakes that happened in the Second World War that other countries have done." And he did, in fact, do that. He did get up and make a public statement, saying that mistakes had been made and it helped for a little while but [inaudible] a new phenomenon, which I would call the CNN and the internet effect. Diplomacy couldn't achieve any more what it once could. In the old days you could have private talks and you could come up with something. Now it would be trumped day by day by newspaper articles within hours in Washington and New York, all of the private interests were reacting, usually negatively, to whatever was being said in Switzerland. And a lot of what was being said in Switzerland was said for domestic reasons and vice versa, what was being said here in the United States, again for effect to domestic audiences, was being picked up and broadcast on the evening news in Switzerland. So you could calm people down as many times as you wanted to, but eventually each side just wanted to be angry and there wasn't a lot we could do about it.

*Q: You were in Milan for how long?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was there for three years, this was 1998 to 2001.

*Q: And then what?*

VAN HEUVEN: And then I retired. I actually hit my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, in the month in which I retired.

*Q: Let's talk about when you were rehired to do inspections of Political-Military Affairs Bureau and of the Legal Office. This was in about*

VAN HEUVEN: The first one would have been in early 2002 and the second was in 2003, in the fall. When I retired, I was picked up on the WAE rolls of the Office of the Inspector General, where I had had a prior assignment. They had called me a number of times and asked if I could come and help out and that first time was with the inspection of the Office of the Legal Advisor. What was going on in L at the time was the march up to the beginning of the Iraq war. L was under huge pressure to come up with the international law rationale for this endeavor. I don't want to comment, really, on the internal inspection of the bureau, but what was interesting, I think, was to see the huge political pressure that there was at that time. Certainly by the end of the inspection, or let's say before the rationale was complete, a lot of troops were prepositioned and ready to go. You couldn't really pull back any more, once you have that many troops there, without losing a huge amount of face.

But the observation that I would make is not so much in L, where everybody is very concentrated on the legal brief. In inspections you go around and you talk to other offices in the Department that have to do with the office that you're inspecting. How are

relations with, are you getting from them what you need, etc. My impression was that most people looked glazed, like they had been run over by a steamroller. It was so clear that the Department of Defense was calling the shots. There didn't seem to be, no matter what people, for instance in the office that dealt with Iraq-Iran affairs, no matter what they had to say, no matter what other people in NEA had to say.

A year later, when we were very actively at war, I inspected PM, the Political-Military Affairs Bureau. I found to be in huge burn out by then, because this is the part of the State Department that handles 95 percent of the interface with the Department of Defense. It didn't have the bureaucratic flexibility nor the reserves to punch up to a huge workload that this war created, yet it still had to somehow keep its fingers plugged into the rest of the world. A very difficult turn for the people in that office, again, I think, because they had extremely little say. They simply had to try to cope and they didn't have the personnel that they needed to do it and because [inaudible] a protégé of Armitage's. Armitage had put him in the job and he brought with him a young gal, a lawyer from the law office he had been in before, who went out and did the speaking but simply had neither the experience nor the bent for management. So there was a heavy focus on getting along with DOD, but it was really dysfunctional for the bureau at the time.

And one of the things that was extremely evident, which is a subject of discussion in the newspapers now, was that there was a real problem about any kind of planning for postwar reconstruction. In fact, PM was the bureau in the Department that was designated to come up with civil emergency planning and reconstruction and stability efforts. Halfway through the inspection a new office was created up in S that was given to someone named Carlos Pasquale. He didn't even stay a year. Supposedly the office in PM was abolished, because first there was no need for it because DOD said they were going to do it all and then my impression was that we were told that Carlos Pasquale was going to take it over. It was obviously going to be quite a while for his office to get in gear and in fact it never did. The plans that were already on the shelf that were sent out to Iraq, DOD said thanks but we don't need them. And one is left with that question, was it just nobody was paying attention to the need for this or was it just an unfortunate set of circumstances that never got a smooth transition from whatever it is that DOD was doing to what State then had to take over.

*Q: One comes away with the impression that essentially this was Rumsfeld and company. One, they didn't want the State Department to get in and, two, they "knew better." I just finished an oral history with General Tony Zinni from Central Command. He said four people who'd had the command before him, going back to General Schwarzkopf, had all talked about if we go into Iraq what do we need? It was 400,000 soldiers. There would be all hell breaking loose and you would need a lot of troops in there to stop unrest from occurring and all that. This was, in his words, essentially thrown out the window because Chalabi and his group, they would take over, flags would be flying in the streets and there would be kisses and flowers.*

VAN HEUVEN: That was certainly the impression that I got during this inspection, that DOD was totally running the show and the State input was not

*Q: Were you picking up discontent, unhappiness, whatever, with Colin Powell. Everybody thought he was great for the troops, but his leadership was completely outclassed by the Pentagon, or did that penetrate?*

VAN HEUVEN: I was not picking that up, no. I would say from my own personal impressions he was, as a leader and as an internal manager, he was probably one of the best things that ever happened to the State Department, in terms of bringing us almost into the modern age, in terms of computerization, in terms of leadership training, the emphasis on training and in terms [inaudible] into some kind of shape and spending some money on facilities, that hadn't happened. Money always went to personnel, which was needed but in terms of what the personnel could deal with, he did a super job in all of those ways. I have never heard within the State Department talk about regrets. I personally wonder. I thought the most shocking thing that I ever read in the newspaper was that [inaudible] to talk to the president to make that one last plea to go back to the UN. When I was in the Ops Center, the Secretary picked up the phone and talked to the president whenever he felt like it. And that was very symptomatic of someone who had been put in a corner, the best way that I could describe it.

I left virtually exactly on my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, in May of '01.

*Q: Let's talk about Milan, not just Milan but also your consular district. At that time, how would you describe it?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was the whole north of Italy. Once upon a time we had five or six consulates in that area and gradually these consulates were closed and Milan took over. The first consulate to close was in Venice, 25 years earlier and then most of the others hung on for quite a while. Trieste, Turin, Genoa and Venice, I guess there were five, including Milan. So the consular district went from France to Slovenia, on the west and east, and from Switzerland and Austria down to Tuscany and Emilia down to the south. Florence had also been 17 times on the chopping block but survived, I think for two reasons: one, we owned the building, so there weren't as big savings as there were in other places and because we had a staggering number, 25,000 Americans, studying in Florence for up to one year, in any given year, an enormous amount of American citizens to keep an eye on out of Florence. So they covered Tuscany and Emilia and there's still to this day, besides the embassy in Rome, a consulate in Naples.

*Q: Let's talk, before we get into sort of what you were doing, what was the political situation in the north when you were there? It's an interesting period. Berlusconi, was he in power at the time?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was still Prodi, who is in again prime minister, now. Then I left government. Fairly early in the period I was there they had elections. Berlusconi had been in government before I got there. That first Berlusconi government was when he cobbled together a coalition that he called the "polo", the pole, an alliance. It had three elements, each of which had a certain questionability about them.

One was the late Umberto Bossi. You were asking, when we were talking about Austria, about Haider. Bossi was the Haider of Italy, whose entire base was in the north and in fact his party was called the Northern League.

*Q: What was his seat of power?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was really Lombardy, which is the province of which Milan is the capital and right up. He came from near the Swiss border.

Then there was Berlusconi, the media king, who many will tell you came into government at least in part to get immunity from all the prosecutions that he was already fighting off for one form of corruption or another. And the third leg of the tripod was Fini and the *Alleanza* which was the remnants of the former Fascist Party.

After a really brief honeymoon period I think that Bossi started recognizing that he was suffering from having to make compromises in government and that he wasn't going to get everything that he hoped he was going to get out of the Berlusconi government. So he left and pulled the rug out from under

*Q: So he was seeing that he wasn't getting anything out of this?*

VAN HEUVEN: Bossi, like Haider, like Le Pen, I would say like Rove, all politicians who had a great appeal to a certain segment of the voting public because of their enormous ability to simplify and to make strong statements. He was not a compromiser. In that first government that came in, about '94, the first Berlusconi government, Bossi came to parliament with 50 deputies, from zero to fifty, so he was asking a really big price. He wanted lots of ministries.

And Fini was rather clever. He'd been in politics all along, through the years, back when the Fascist Party was still called the MSI, seen as a Fascist Party. So he laid low and he said "I'll just take whatever ministries you want to give me." Bossi was in there hammering away and Berlusconi said enough is enough. The government didn't last long, but the primary reason for the breakup was Bossi.

*Q: Okay, you got there in '98. Firstly, who was the ambassador?*

VAN HEUVEN: The ambassador was Thomas Foglietta, who was a congressman from Philadelphia. He had a very difficult, changing district in Philadelphia. I think the Democrats were afraid that he would lose it and they wanted to put another person in and offered Foglietta the ambassadorship in Rome and he accepted it. He was of Italian origin, as many of our ambassadors to Italy were. He was from Molise, which is in the southeast of Italy and he was in Rome the entire time that I was there.

*Q: From your perspective, how effective was he and what were his interests?*



VAN HEUVEN: Many political ambassadors take a while to adjust and figure out that some of the stuff we're telling them really makes sense. Some of them end up being really very effective and very often bring things to the equation that we as Foreign Service Officers don't. For instance, I would name two that we served under. One was Kingdon Gould in the Hague and another was Joe Gildenhorn, when I was in Switzerland. But I don't think that Foglietta rose to that. I think he was primarily there to have a good time and would do some of the things that we said really needed to get done but a lot he just said to his DCM, "Well, you do it."

*Q: Who was the DCM?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well the first DCM was Jim Cunningham, who then went on the UN. I think now he's consul general in Hong Kong. The State Department put him forward for an ambassadorship but the Congress didn't approve, partly because of things that were going on at the UN when he was there. So he ended up as consul general in Hong Kong. He's a very good officer. I think Foglietta got there a couple of weeks before I did. I had met him and been interviewed by him in Washington when he was still on the Hill but knew he was going. So Jim was there the whole first year that Foglietta was there.

Then Bill Pope came and took his place the next two years. Bill really did all of the things that the ambassador should have done and ended up making the econ counselor the acting DCM, because he simply couldn't do it all.

*Q: Did the ambassador make any trips up in your area?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yes, he came from time to time. He seemed to just not want to do all of the sort of the social, representational things that the diplomatic world expects of ambassadors. So if there was a large reception and we asked him to go he might stay five minutes and then go off and have dinner with some buddies. So the planning was extremely difficult for any sort of

*Q: A certain number of political ambassadors, particularly with Italy, where a good number of politicians of Italian descent come out of essentially very peasant backgrounds. As we know, Italy is a rather stratified society and somebody who speaks Italian, equivalent of a hillbilly, doesn't cut much ice with the ruling elite. How was your ambassador*

VAN HEUVEN: You've hit the situation on the nose. He was one of those and you're absolutely right, *bella figura* is everything in Italy. You have to play the role and look the role and part of the role if you're going to be an ambassador of an important country like the United States is that you speak educated Italian and if you don't, it's cultural. They become a joke.

*Q: What were you doing for the embassy and did the embassy supercede you or take over certain elements, because you have the sort of major area of Italy. How did this work out?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, I had two consular assignments and in many ways they were very similar. Zurich and Milan were really important in terms of covering the whole country, because like the relationship between New York and Washington, Rome was the government but Milan, Zurich as well, in fact, were the media capitals of the country. It's fading a little here in the States but it's still very much so there. The banking center, in other words the financial center, the industrial and economic centers of the country. So there were an awful lot of people that we needed to know and have influence with that were actually right there, very often, in the city of Milan. Now you have a number of other focuses of power in the north as well. For instance, the Veneto, the region of which Venice is the capital and Turin, again, Fiat and a lot of big banks are in Turin as well. So to cover, really, the economy of the country and to influence public opinion through the media, there were a lot of things the consulate had to do, simply because of geographic proximity, for the embassy. I did the same thing in Milan that I had done in Zurich, to also make the consulate a platform for people from Rome who wanted to come up. I'd give a dinner or a lunch or whatever for whoever they wanted to have closer contact with. But a lot of it we just did because we were there.

The other I think major focus, certainly during the time that I was there, which is often the reason for having a consulate in a city other than the capital, is we had several American military bases. Two of them were operational. They were very important in terms of, there was an army base in Vicenza and an air base in Aviano, as platforms for everything that was happening

*Q: We fought a war out of there.*

VAN HEUVEN: We fought the whole Kosovo action out of Aviano while I was there and that was a primary focus of attention and involvement as well.

And then, interestingly, another thing that absorbed a lot of time was export promotion. Milan vies with Hanover as the top trade fair in Europe. It depends on whether you count size in terms of geographic area or number of visitors, but they rank up there together.

In Milan we had over a hundred personnel, ten agencies when I was there. Some left while I was there and some new ones came. The commercial section was very big and very good. And we focused on helping smaller American businesses to exhibit at these trade fairs. In other words, we had an area, we provided the computers and all the equipment at the stands. Usually on the night before whatever that particular fair was we would have a reception at my residence and include a lot of people that were potential contacts for them, so they could meet people in advance of the fair.

And we had this wonderful, very inventive, head of the commercial section, a senior Foreign Commercial Service Officer, George Ruffner, who's now in Germany. He would give everybody, most of them were first time exhibitors, give them a little pep talk in advance and say, "Here's what you can expect, here's a list of people that are going to be coming here tonight, we'll try and get you all together." He had a lot of really good ideas.

For instance, one of the biannual fairs in Milan was the jewelry fair. Of course, northern Italy has a big jewelry manufacturing business. And he brought over a fair quotient of American Indians to show American Indian jewelry and at the same time to do some dances and turn out in costumes, which really attracted a lot of people.

Many of the fairs were every year, but a biannual one was the pet fair. You wouldn't think that American pet products would, why would people come all the way to Italy to sell, but one of our major exports to Italy was pet products. With advancing prosperity all of a sudden Italians were into pets and it was a fairly new

*Q: I have to tell you, I used to walk the streets of Naples and I developed a theory, because I walked almost every street in Naples and you could tell if you were in a wealthy area, because the bigger the dog droppings the more wealthy it was, because the Italians never cleaned up after their pets, so you had to watch.*

VAN HEUVEN: Now they do, at least in the north. That's a very good indicator.

There's always a great deal of ceremony in Italy. At the opening of the fair, you have the Carabinieri who turn up and the mayor and the president of the province. Then there's this procession through, a viewing of the fair as it's opening, and George said, "Bring your dog." So we did, 'cause I was there to help open the fair and our dog, Max, a big chocolate Lab, came along and he was part of the procession and, again, George had this great instinct. Max was the attraction. And people came running out of booths to give Max stuff. He was in dog heaven! He couldn't figure out what was happening. Somebody came along and thrust a rather huge piece of a dog, if you can believe it, birthday cake at Max. It was some corn product, I think, but it was painted in those kind of garish, awful colors to look like a birthday cake. Here I am, having a conversation with the mayor and looking down I see my dog with this huge thing in his mouth and slinking down, the way dogs do when they're feeling slightly guilty and thinking to himself, "I know I'm not supposed to have this and any minute somebody's going to take it away from me." But, then, noticing that he was being ignored, finally starting to take little chomps at it, because we got stuck in a long conversation. I'm sure that was one of the highlights of his life.

*Q: Where was Milan politically? I always think of Bologna as being part of the Red Belt and all that. How about Milan at that point?*

VAN HEUVEN: As everywhere in Italy, but particularly in the north, you had what was called an anarchist movement. They were basically anti-authoritarian, I would say. We have this idea of anarchists from the Twenties. They still exist in Italy and they're the squatters and they're the people who turn up dressed in hippie things at [events] where everybody else turns up in a business suit. They're anti-authority and you still have it there. The Red Brigades in a way came out of that same movement.

*Q: And these are the ones who would turn up for*

VAN HEUVEN: Professional demonstrators. And they're still there. In fact, I left, as I said, in May of '01, just weeks before the G-8 meeting in Genoa, which was a disaster.

*Q: This was when, I think, a policeman killed one of the guys who was trying to brain him with a fire extinguisher.*

VAN HEUVEN: A number of people were killed. Quite a few people were wounded and bashed up and it was quite ferocious. So they existed in Milan as well. And we had, I think regular is saying too much, but we had sporadic demonstrations in front of the consulate for whatever the cause was, by these types of groups the entire time I was there.

*Q: Let's talk about the political environment. Italy was changing. The Italy I remember, I wasn't that much of an authority on it, but by this time the Christian Democrats had lost*

VAN HEUVEN: That was the point. You were asking what was the climate like there. There had been in Milan sometime before I got there, in fact it was in the late Eighties, early Nineties, something that was called *tangentopoli* in Italian. It was like "bribeville," if I were going to translate into English. And it all started with someone, a businessman, who just got tired of paying the bribes that he was supposed to pay in order to build his building and he sued and it came into court and out of that unfolded case after case after case. The Milan prosecutors really went after corruption for the first time on a scale that got not only national attention but international attention. Many people of somewhat prominent stature ended up being prosecuted. Some even ended up going to jail. It continues to this day. The Milan prosecutors still are going after corruption. In fact, not only corruption. They are the ones that are now prosecuting the CIA agents who are accused of taking Abu Omar out of Milan. Similar to a judge in Spain who does a lot of extraterritorial judging.

You were asking about the climate when I got to Milan. So that was part of the background as well. To try to put this in a bigger context: if you look at what was the appeal of a Bossi and why is it that all of these cases were taking place in Milan? There's a huge north-south issue in Italy and always has been. People culturally are quite different. They have very different histories and a variety of reasons: industry and greater prosperity has always been located in the north; agriculture and a great deal of poverty has always been centered in the south. And there's always been a resentment on the part of the much more efficient and industrious northerners to being ruled by a government that was in the south and peopled mainly by bureaucrats from the south, many of whom, after many years of one party rule by the Christian Democratic Party, were on the take.

The appeal of a Bossi was, we are not going to pay our taxes to this really corrupt government down south that doesn't do anything and we see none of the benefits of our thrift, our industry. Certainly in Lombardy, in most of northern Italy, part of the reason for this still strong cultural difference I think goes as well to the fact that the Austrians occupied most of that area for over a hundred years, going into the early 1800's, up until sometime before the unification of Italy. And when you look at a city like Milan or a lot

of the other cities up north, they look like Central Europe. The architecture looks almost more like Vienna and Budapest than most of the rest of Italy.

So you had a lot of political stirring and a lot of dissatisfaction that was becoming more evident already before I got there and was still very visible and very classic in the years that I was there.

*Q: How did we, say the American representative, feel about all this, because, in a way, we had learned to live with the CDU, the corruption. We made noises about being opposed to it but we certainly, we'd always seen this in terms of keeping the Communist Party out and all, but by this time things were shaking up. Did you sense almost an unease with our policy, people were used to the old status quo and this was no longer working?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, first of all, the Christian Democratic Party had already imploded by the time I got there. It didn't exist anymore. All of these fragments kept coalescing and re-coalescing and trying to form governments, just like the present Prodi government is another effort. The other thing that had already happened by the time I got there was the demise of the Communist Party. So a lot of the people who were in that Prodi government when I arrived, ministers, were ex-Communists.

We certainly had a responsibility in many ways in that we intervened very strongly both in '48 and '52 in seeing to it that the communists didn't get into government. Back when I talked about my assignment in Rome, I said that the Communist Party, we didn't deal with them in the Sixties when I was in Rome. But by the time I got to Milan we had already had the first ex-Communist minister come on an official visit here in Washington. So the situation was still in flux but the major explosions had all happened before I got there.

In a way, it was harder for the ex-fascists to gain respectability than it was for the ex-communists, because there had always been an element of protest in voting for the Communist Party. Again, I would suggest that it was often an anti-corruption protest. When one political party has been in government for that long, we can see that here in our own country, if you have the same political party for too long, people start to lose their sense of responsibility to the general public and get tempted into side deals.

There was also an anti-Church element. The Catholic Church had had huge temporal authority in Italy until at least the *risorgimento* and well into the period after that. The way to protest against the Church, against corruption, for many people, was to vote for the Communist Party. That was the alternative.

So many supporters of the Communist Party throughout this postwar period were not Marxists. They were protesters. These younger people, who then were ministers in government by the time I got there, were some of the most efficient, the cleanest and the most forward looking and reform oriented.

I had a conversation with Gianni Agnelli, the “prince of Italy” and industrial magnate who was the head of Fiat. For many years Fiat was one of the principal industries in Italy and a forerunner of a lot of change in Italy. The first huge migration of southern Italians to the north to people the factories was to Fiat. So Fiat was the laboratory for social change in many ways. It was also one of seats of early labor unrest in Italy.

One of my early courtesy calls was on Gianni Agnelli. I was asking him for insight into how Italy had changed and what was happening and what could he foresee. He said something which I found a useful analytical tool for me in the years that I was there. He said, “You know, everyone in Italy, to this day, is either a fascist, a communist or a Christian Democrat.” So that quite heavily polarized political system, even though it is moving in much more fluid channels politically and socially, still the threads of what people are looking for is either a lot of order and efficiency, a lot of social justice mixed with order and efficiency or a lot of social justice with a big *laissez faire* element to it. Now those were not his words, but

*Q: I can remember in the mid-Sixties, when I was in Tito’s Yugoslavia. We would drive into Italy and we’d see the signs saying “Vota Comunista” and we’d think “Are they out of their cotton-picking minds? But of course one learned that Italian communism really was quite a different communism. Well, as with I think Berlinguer later on and this Eurocommunism and it really was a different thing. But also it was a family thing. If you grew up in a family that’s where you*

VAN HEUVEN: Where you stayed, yeah.

*Q: Was that still holding true, except they were calling themselves different names or were things really splintering much more?*

VAN HEUVEN: The way I would describe what’s going on in Italy socially and politically is, it’s a little beyond the family most of the time. They talk about what they call *campanilismo* and the *campanile* is the church tower, so it’s the village. So the basic Italian instinct is anti-authoritarian, because they have had so much authority. Whether it was the Church or the prince, it was a fairly strong and unequivocal authority. So your basic instinct for preservation was family. There were very few examples nurturing a civic responsibility. Loyalties extended then to the extended family and then to the village and maybe, in certain places, to the province or the work community but little sense of any allegiance or responsibility outside of that sphere. So, yes, that tended to also mean that because you would have similar interests in that much smaller core that everybody would be of the same political persuasion, but not necessarily. You still have the same generational conflict, where sons rebel against fathers and the way you do that is to make a political statement.

*Q: How stood the Church and what were your relations with the Church and how did you feel?*

VAN HEUVEN: I called on several of the cardinals up in our area. Now of course we had an embassy to the Vatican. By the time I got there the second time, that was very ably run by Lindy Boggs. She really got around and that was her sphere, so I would always let her know before I did it. My interest in calling on a cardinal, again, was just, these were people who really knew their area. They were political creatures as well and stewards of a flock that was a huge percentage of the areas I was watching.

The cardinal of Milan was a fabulous figure. His name was Martini and he was seen actually as a possible replacement for John Paul II, who was already quite elderly when I was there. People were already starting to look at who was a likely successor. The thing that he had against him was that he was a Jesuit and the Jesuits are, and I think, generally seen by the politicians within the Vatican as too clever by half, so scary. So being a Jesuit almost disqualifies you. But he really had the common touch. He really was close to his flock. I remember going to a number of different ceremonies where you could just see that outpouring of love and connection that these congregations had with him. They would applaud after he spoke in church, which was pretty new to me.

I called on a priest who had been the personal aide to John XXIII, who was up near Bergamo, where John XXIII had originally come from. Again, just because he had a very historical view of a lot of the factions within Italy, he was a good interlocutor that I talked to more than once.

Then there was Tettamanzi, who was in Genoa. He also a very good person to talk with, in terms of getting another perspective on what was going on during that period.

*Q: In a way, was the Church at that time sort of under siege, because of political revelations, or was it trying to call a particular tune? How did we see the Church in that period of time?*

VAN HEUVEN: Neutrally. I don't remember that. I keep talking about anti-Church, as this is the feeling that is extremely strong within some Italians, because of the centuries of history; but in that period I don't remember, certainly we as a country had no feeling one way or another that I was aware of and to the extent that we would have, they would have been handled out of the embassy.

*Q: And the anticlerical movement was very strong in France, too, in a certain segments, because of past history.*

VAN HEUVEN: For substantial historical reasons.

*Q: Up around the Brenner Pass, at one time bombs had been going off.*

VAN HEUVEN: That was so quiet. That had been really huge, actually, when I was in Rome back in the Sixties. But the Italian national government had long ago made all of the deals that they made to have a quiet situation up there. Essentially, they lobbed a lot

of money so that the region of Alto Adige had huge autonomy and huge special perks and they're very happy that way.

*Q: Was German being taught in the schools?*

VAN HEUVEN: German has become the language for most people in that area. Italian is also taught in school, but the official papers are in German. The dialogue on the street is in German. When I went up and called on officials there, we spoke German. I had some interesting conversations with the woman who was the prefect, in other words the representative of the national government, who'd been there forever. She spoke German and there weren't that many in the Italian government, so they kept her there. I would say the success was 75 percent letting them do their own thing.

*Q: How about Slovenia and the overlap into Udine and Trieste and that place, 'cause Slovenia I guess is beginning to feel its oats, it was a very prosperous, small little country?*

VAN HEUVEN: Slovenia was not an issue. What was and I would expect remains an issue to this day is irredentism in Trieste and to a certain extent north of Trieste to Udine. What you had at the end of the war was an exchange of populations. We reached an agreement on where Yugoslavia was going to begin and Italy was going to end. And you have a great many people of Italian language and culture who lived along the Dalmatian coast who to this day call themselves Dalmatians who had to leave and move into what we know as Italy. It was a big question at the end of the war whether Trieste would go to Yugoslavia or not. I would say that to this day probably the most pro-American people that I met were the people around Trieste, who were so grateful because they feel that we saved them from being a part of Yugoslavia.

*Q: Clare Booth Luce of course was a prime proponent of keeping Trieste.*

VAN HEUVEN: Right. It was a factor in politics in Trieste, people who still wanted to get their land back in Istria, that's the very top of the Dalmatian coast.

*Q: Was that in Slovenia?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, that was in Croatia.

*Q: Which is a little harder to deal with, I guess.*

VAN HEUVEN: I think that geographically the borders of Istria are very flat, so there wasn't much ability to segment ethnic groups within natural boundaries. In Udine you're getting into mountains, so there wasn't as much back and forth.

*Q: How about the French border and all that?*



VAN HEUVEN: You have in the region of Aosta, which is on the border with France. There, too, you have not the money but the autonomy. They have far greater autonomy than most regions and there, too, there's a great deal of French spoken. There's more French in the streets and among the families, less in the government than the sense of German in Alto Adige. Actually, that whole valley of the Po headwaters is a very interesting mix of languages. You have a lot of French that comes down, especially in upper mountain valleys as you get towards the Alps. You even have one valley, Gressoney, which is right next to, the north-south valley to the east of where the Matterhorn is, which is literally on the border between Italy and Switzerland, where as you go up the valley, and it's a short valley, there are three languages. At the bottom it's mainly all Italian and then in the middle it's French, because you still have that whole influence of Savoy. At the top it's German, because the people from Germanic speaking Switzerland, just on the other side of the Alpine ridge, in clement years used to come over and look for bribes or whatever and sometimes stay. So it's a real hodgepodge up there.

*Q: Let's talk about Milan a bit. I would think that there'd be almost a problem in a place like Milan, because you've got this wonderful gathering of wealth and culture, it's a dazzling society and*

VAN HEUVEN: And design: fashions and industrial design and furniture.

*Q: I'd think you'd almost get absorbed into all this. It would be hard almost to break out and get into other parts.*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, my job was to cover the [inaudible] and so it took me the whole three years really to go out and get to all of the regional capitals and many of the more important provincial capitals. So you kind of just had to get to all of them. What I tried to do was take other people from the consulate along so it wasn't just me having a glass of something on a twenty minute visit. We did what I called "America Days." When we went to Torino, where there had been a consulate and there was still a core of people there to help us organize, very often an American school, so on, we would take people from most of the various agencies. We'd have a reception and invite all of their contacts as well as mine. So DEA got to talk to the drugs police and the Secret Service got to talk to *Guarda di Finanza*. Usually USIS got all the cultural people there, because the changeover was during the time that I was there. When I first arrived, USIA was still a separate agency. By the time I left it was integrated into the State Department.

*Q: How did that work out, do you feel?*

VAN HEUVEN: I think it was extremely difficult psychologically for all of the USIS people. To me, having had one assignment on detail to USIA, I say it makes all the sense in the world. I think the baby that got thrown out with the bathwater was the funding and the emphasis on culture, which is extremely important in Europe, in any case. That's how you get through to people, is through culture. That's how they're used to communicating.

I think it was very much of a congressional move to stop funding libraries, to stop funding

*Q: To me, the cultural outreach and the exchange programs are really probably the most important things we've been doing all along and I'm concerned, in that by putting USIS into the State Department, it can end up, particularly under the present administration, but other administrations, as a flack for whatever the government policy is at the time.*

VAN HEUVEN: That's right, losing that wonderful ability to distance themselves somewhat from the current administration's policies. That's a good point, too. But I think to have Foreign Service Officers be more exposed on a daily basis to the importance of public relations, public diplomacy, is very helpful. I do feel that there were some significant babies thrown out with the bathwater, though.

*Q: What were we doing, in that regard, during the time you were in Italy?*

VAN HEUVEN: We had a number of issues that we were really flogging at the time and Intellectual Property was one of them. I remember countless speeches on protecting patent rights. The big issues in Italy were films, CD's and computers.

*Q: We're talking about pirating?*

VAN HEUVEN: Correct. We had a huge country-wide effort but so much of the counterfeiting that was going on was also happening in the north. It was a big issue for me to follow up on.

*Q: What was accomplished? How do you stop this damned stuff?*

VAN HEUVEN: Not easily. I remember making a speech to what you would think of as being a non-hostile audience. There was a very active Stanford University Club in the Milan area. They asked me if I would come and speak once. Well, these were all people who had been at Stanford but I would say that 99 percent of them were Italians who had gone and done either undergraduate or often graduate work at Stanford and liked to keep up that contact with America and have a fair amount of knowledge of our ways. I remember giving this speech and this man in the Q and A period said, "Are you trying to tell me that if I have a copy of some software I can't just keep copying this into every system and give work to my sister and my brother?" And I said, "Yes." But it was so foreign to their mentality. It was a huge gap on the part of

*Q: I think there's a huge generational gap in the United States. What the hell, if music is out there and the software program's out there, it's mine and there's no feeling behind it that this is somebody's livelihood that you're stealing. Now did they feel the same way about Gucci bags or things like this, 'cause it's a pirating of that sort of thing?*

VAN HEUVEN: Unless you worked for Gucci, yes. I remember the whole movie industry was after pirating of American movies. Disney cartoons, that was a huge issue, copying

*Q: You're preaching abstinence. In sex, just don't do it! You were doing the Lord's work, you might say, but the birthrate kept going up, I guess.*

VAN HEUVEN: Another big issue that we were trying to get out through public diplomacy, through x number of speeches, was GMO. It was kind of, almost the beginning of

*Q: The so-called Frankenfood problem.*

VAN HEUVEN: All this genetically modified organisms and the Italians are, this is a very hard audience for anything of that sort.

*Q: This is true in France and in Germany. This is*

VAN HEUVEN: As well. The French are more rational. The Italians are very emotional. The Germans are certainly more rational as well. It doesn't mean they can't be against genetically modified organisms. But what's really interesting in Italy is that they have produced some of the foremost scientists in the world, excellent, excellent people in the field of science. Yet if you look at the percentage of university graduates in Italy that have a degree in some form of science and technology, it was a very small portion. Most people are in either the humanities or in law.

So their reaction to anything new, particularly in the field of science or technology, tends to be extremely suspicious and emotional. They don't think scientifically. So it's very hard to make the argument. I remember having this conversation, I was talking to, there was a big Whirlpool factory up in northern Milan

*Q: This is a big dishwasher*

VAN HEUVEN: An American appliance firm, right, that was selling a lot of electrical appliances throughout northern Italy. He was talking about how hard it had been when they were first trying to sell microwaves, to overcome people's instinctive fears of something new and unknown. Actually the light bulb, apparently in the early days of the light bulb people were afraid of what it could do.

*Q: Of course, when you're talking about food, one can obviously over-characterize, I watch French TV here at home. You can see, the French and the Germans and the Italians,*

VAN HEUVEN: You don't muck around with your food, right.

*Q: Food is very important and we go for the quick meals and really they look on this as being sort of barbarian. They've got a point.*

VAN HEUVEN: I think one of the best meals I ever had in my life was on the beach in Italy. It was just fresh anchovies, unsalted, and tomatoes that had just been plucked off the vine and a pasta with basil that had just been picked off the bush and it was fine.

*Q: Talking about developments in the United States, we had a war going but even far more important was, how about Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinski and all that. You were there doing that time, weren't you?*

VAN HEUVEN: Yeah, they were like many Europeans, let's say. They couldn't understand the public outcry over what they saw as a totally private issue. The way I kept trying to explain it is that isn't the issue, although obviously you say that they're going to go for the titillating. The real issue I argued is we are a society that is based on respect for the rule of law and the person who was directing and presiding over our society lied in court and that is the issue. You can't have somebody exempting himself from the rule of law for personal reasons.

*Q: Was this at all something you were faced with a lot?*

VAN HEUVEN: How do you get out there in order to affect public opinion? As I said, you go out and you make all the official calls and talk to the chambers of commerce and the chambers of industry and so on. And every time the press wants to talk to you or they want you to appear on television you grab all those opportunities. The other thing that I found, both in Zurich and in Milan, to be really useful venues to get at average people across all sectors but educated enough so they're going to be receptive to your message was Rotary and sometimes even Lions Clubs. These were people that somehow were more in an American sphere, were interested in hearing from an American but where you can have these kinds of conversations. And this wasn't something I brought up. This was always in the Q and A, those kinds of questions.

*Q: Let's talk about the war in Kosovo. How did that play?*

VAN HEUVEN: It was I think in the second year that I was there that the whole operation took place and it was absolutely incredible. It was run out of Aviano. I knew the base commander quite well, because we had other issues we worked together on. The base had, by the time the operation actually started, 10,000 extra troops in Aviano that were either support or extra teams for the planes. The planes were in the air virtually non-stop; they'd just come back and refuel and then go again. They had a tent city of 10,000 people that they simply didn't have the quarters to house them all and it all went so peacefully. There were no problems.

*Q: No anarchists?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, the Italian police were extremely helpful in cordoning off the area, not allowing people to loiter outside and so on. But I was thinking actually of our own troops. They were all very disciplined and we just had no problems, which was wonderful and no demonstrations of any magnitude or they were very well controlled.

Actually, one of my biggest problems during that whole period was fending Washington off. Every congressperson, it seemed like, wanted to come and have his or her picture taken with the troops. Even the White House was putting a lot of pressure on coming out. I had to keep saying, "No, they are taking off and landing every thirty seconds. There is no room on the tarmac for your plane." The commander himself was flying missions every day with his guys and sleeping during most of the day, going out at night, and there was nobody that had the time to gather. They'd have to be sleeping or they're working. "You just have to wait until it's over."

There was a huge crush immediately afterwards, which kept us really busy. It was a four hour drive from Milan out to Aviano and I did that road a lot. After Kosovo, President Clinton came through twice immediately after it ended. The first time he came with Mrs. Clinton and it was a thank you to the troops. I had never seen anything like it, the roar of the troops for him and his thank you to them for what they had done.

They had somebody from the Italian ministry of defense that came as well. I was taking care of him. You could see the look on his face. He couldn't believe it. He had never seen anything like it, because of course, like in Germany, the Italian population still has mixed feelings about the military. So nowhere did you get this kind of support of the troops that he was seeing that day up in Aviano.

There's a funny story connected with Clinton. The first time he came it was in Air Force One. He came down the stairs and I was the first person at the bottom and I said, "I'm you're consul general here and welcome" and so on and we had a little chat. Three weeks later he came back. That was the beginning of what then transpired, which was that everybody started visiting the former Yugoslavia, in the various portions, once hostilities were over. Aviano was the last American base that a big cargo plane out of the United States could come to, a transatlantic carrier. They had to switch there and take a smaller plane that could land in Sarajevo and in Zagreb. The first one in immediately afterwards was the president and many others to follow. So three weeks later I'm at the bottom of the stairs again, and I said practically the same thing, and he looked at me with this slightly annoyed look on his face and he said, "I know!"

Of course, he did. He obviously prided himself on making contact with a number of people.

*Q: How did our action in Kosovo sit in Italy, your part of Italy?*

VAN HEUVEN: Fine. Italy had very strong ties throughout the Balkans. They were moving big time into Romania and Bulgaria for business purposes. The former Yugoslavia had always been a neighbor. They share all that water down the coast, across.

They were the only people that maintained diplomatic relations with Albania throughout the whole Cold War.

*Q: The Austrians did too, I think. I remember talking to my Austrian colleague when I was in Belgrade.*

VAN HEUVEN: I don't remember that. I remember the Italians as being the only ones which I think, but

*Q: Anyway.*

VAN HEUVEN: So this was in their back yard and there was not a lot of support for what became another public relations issue. Again, one of these issues where they had a very emotional reaction to modern technology. For a while some pilots, when they came back and hadn't managed to get rid of all of their ordnance, dumped munitions into the Adriatic before they came back and landed at Aviano. By this time our bombs and shells were coated in uranium.

*Q: It means that they're particularly hard and they can go easily go through things, yeah.*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly. So there was hysteria about the Adriatic being radiated that was very hard to dispel. Otherwise, there really were not a lot of problems on that front.

There were a lot of problems dealing with Aviano that had to do with an accident that happened before I arrived in Italy. I went in September. In February of that same year there was a Marine Prowler that supposedly was on a low level flying exercise in northern Italy that went through a valley in the Alto Adige and cut the cable of a cable car in a little ski area in which 26 people lost their lives. The name of the town was Cavalese. I remember opening the newspaper in February here in the United States and knowing that was in my future consular district and thinking, "Oh, no!" And that remained a huge issue for the time I was there.

*Q: How did you feel that we, as Americans and particularly the military dealt with that?*

VAN HEUVEN: When I arrived many of the initial actions and reactions were already in place but it remained a big issue for my entire three-year tenure.

There was a very deep valley and the village where tourists stayed who wanted to come to ski was on one side of the valley and the ski trails and the ski mountain were on the other side of the valley. So for technical and economic reasons they rigged a cable car that actually started part way up one side of the valley, crossed the trough of the valley and went on up to the summit of the mountain on the other side. So you have to picture a situation where I ended up standing every time someone came through that wanted to see the site and what had happened and that was standing on a bluff at the bottom of the village of Cavalese but at the station where everyone got on the cable car. When you stood at the edge of that bluff and looked down, you looked down 300 feet into the

valley. So the cable ran across the valley at that height and then went on up. The next pylon for the cables was above on the other side of the valley. It was somewhat similar to standing on the edge of a bridge and looking down at the water below you.

These four marines were in a Marine Prowler, which is a jet that does reconnaissance. It has two high antennas at the end of wings that jut up almost like ears. You hear about fighter pilots zooming under bridges to show that it can be done. These guys, who were on their last flight, who were all due to return to the United States, were taking what was booked as a low level training flight. They tried to go under the cable car and almost missed it but tipped it, the tops of one of those pods at the end of the wings.

They ended up being acquitted and we'll get to that, but if you stood there and looked down, this was an irresponsible place to be. That valley was so narrow, it was so tight, every pilot that I have ever talked to about it instinctively has said they were joyriding. All of the people that over the three years that I was in Italy who were associated with Aviano, either tacitly or explicitly, every one knew that this was a great temptation, that a lot of people would do it at one time or another. They were never found to have done this. However, you have to also ask yourself if this was a training flight, why were there two people in the back seat going along for the ride and the pilot and the navigator in the front seat And, most obviously, why did they destroy the tape when they landed in Aviano and before they got out of the plane?

There was a huge uproar, not only in Italy, but in the other countries who lost victims in that cable car. In fact, there were only three Italians among those who died: two from the Alto Adige and one who was the cable car operator. The rest were from a variety of other countries, some Dutch, some Czechs, Poles. But by the time I got there already there was an outcry everywhere for resolution: what happened and what is the restitution going to be? In any tragedy of that sort one of the things people really want is information and the information was very slow in coming out of the military. Towards the end of my three years in Milan I was asked to speak at the annual conference of the JAGs who were in the European Theater

*Q: That's?*

VAN HEUVEN: Judge advocates general, the lawyers for the various military installations around Europe. Apparently, they have an annual conference and this year it was right up there at Aviano and I was asked to come and speak. And I said that I hoped that they would take something out of this experience: that was the legal advice that they gave should take into account not only what is important in the court proceedings but what is important in terms of public relations. There's not only a trial that's going to happen to determine culpability but there's also a larger issue, not only of responsibility of the American government, but what is the American government trying to achieve. By giving very narrow advice to these pilots not to speak to the press, not to say anything, by giving the same advice to the commanders, there was never a public apology on the part of the U.S. government. If you've dealt with lawyers, they will always say, even if you have your own car accident, don't admit any kind of guilt, because the worry is defending

yourself against a suit. The closest that we ever came to any sort of apology was the ambassador, who went up very shortly afterwards, and here was something that he did very well.

With the instinct of a congressman and his own I think natural human instinct, he went to that exact spot I described on the bluff there and he knelt down and he prayed. That was a powerful statement to Italians. That was a picture that was in every newspaper. It made a big difference in the beginning.

And then I think that there was a natural trust in Italy, which we certainly encouraged, we said, "Well, we have go through the legal process. There is going to be a court martial and the court martial will go into all of this." Implying, you know, "Trust us." That took a very long time, the way most legal proceedings take, but the Italian government and Italian people waited that out.

In the meantime, one of the things that I tried to do was to get in touch with the embassies in the other countries where all of these people were from, to give them sources, the PAO's, sources of information, so they could deal with the press in those countries, because there was a great deal of negative press.

The big problem that developed was that we instantly had what I can only describe as the ambulance chasing lawyers. They turned up and made big promises to the families of all the victims that obviously there would be huge damages to be claimed and these lawyers were going to help the families collect. So expectations rose. The problem was that we have a SOFA agreement with Italy.

*Q: A Status of Forces Agreement.*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly, and that does several things. First of all, it says that any military representative of the United States is going to be tried in a military court by his peers, as opposed to in a court of that country. So that was issue number one. It was very difficult to explain to the Italian people why since this happened in Italy, an Italian should not be the judge.

But the bigger problem over time was another portion of the status of forces agreement. This says that if the military causes damages the damages will be paid by the host country, according to their scale of damages, and nobody seemed to know that. So, first of all, our ambassador, a recent congressman, seeing all of these inflamed expectations, went back to Congress, tried to get some of his buddies to come up with legislation to provide the money to pay for these damages. Well that was, of course, neither in line with our treaties nor was it in the larger interest of DOD, in terms of our SOFA agreements everywhere in the world.

It makes sense to me that those are the agreements, because then if an Italian military person has an accident in the United States, we're going to pay the damages, according to our system. If an American does it in Italy, they're going to do it. And that's going to



keep a certain lid in both countries on the size of the damages. I think that's probably how these agreements were made in the first place.

But it took a very long time, first of all, to turn off the expectations that there's going to be big money coming out of this. The Italian system of damages is very much based on background. So a poor person, with not huge economic prospects, his family is not going to get big benefits and someone whose family has lived on a higher scale is. So that was contrary to what people were being promised, first of all. Then the other thing was that it took a very long time for the Italian Ministry of Defense and court system to get in gear to start adjudicating what the compensation would be.

Before that had happened, so you still have all these very sore points going on at once, the court martial began. And the families of the four marines hired the same defense attorney to defend them. This attorney had defended a woman pilot named Kelly Flinn a couple of years before that in a few high profile court martial. The case got a great deal of press attention in the United States and got her exonerated. So they hired this same lawyer. To make a long story very short, the charges were dropped, in terms of negligent homicide. There was some penalty but they were acquitted of the main charge, which was negligent homicide. They were all dishonorably discharged, so there was some implication of fault but not what mattered to the Italians nor to the families of the victims in other countries.

And at that point the uproar was so huge in Italy and became such a high level political issue, that the U.S. government ended up sending a recently retired CINC, the admiral who had been in charge of the Pacific Command, Admiral Prueher, to come over and represent the U.S. in negotiation with the Italian MOD and the Italian justice ministry. He was actually already named to go as our ambassador to China, but did this on his way to China. I accompanied him up there, along with the Italian commander of the air force, to go and see the scene and for some of the initial discussions and gave him a briefing. And they ended up coming up with a political solution that eventually got the uproar to subside. As I left, three and a half years later, the claims were beginning to be adjudicated by the ministry of justice.

Two central agreements came out of the Prueher visit. One was that there would be no more low level training flights in Italy. And as I mentioned to the lawyers in that meeting towards the end of my stay, that has meant a huge cost to the U.S. government, because every pilot who is assigned to Aviano has to be flown back to the United States for his required amount of low level flight training, I think it's four times a year. And the other political adjustment was that the Italian air force general who commanded a very small unit that was attached to Aviano, but had been separate, became the base commander. The American general had to report to him, which succeeding generals have worked out. It hasn't caused a problem but it does cause a great deal more operational effort and slowdowns in all sorts of things. So the costs of not being willing to say in public that we were very sorry that this accident had happened were enormous. That was the point I was trying to make to the lawyers: Think Big! When a big thing like this happens, there are many, many stakes at play.

My National War College class still has regular reunions. I went to one when I was here last winter and saw someone who'd been a good friend. He was a Marine pilot and had been the commander of a base down in South Carolina. I was mentioning this whole issue to him, and he told me that he felt that he might have, unwittingly, been an accessory to their acquittal. The defense attorney who defended the pilots in the court martial was a friend of his and not a pilot and came to him and said, "Okay, now, what are various scenarios of what might have happened." And my friend kept saying, "Impossible! There was no way they could not have known. Impossible! There was no way this could have"

So in the end the defense attorney had an objection to every single officer that was considered for the court martial who was a pilot. He had only people with ground-based experience, which helped his case. So it was unfortunate. Did we survive it? Certainly. But there were a lot of lessons to be learned.

*Q: Well, we run across this again and again, at the time where we could have said something or done something quickly we dragged our heels. When we shot down an Iranian airliner, we were responsible and the military's not very good at this. Somehow or another, when the legal system kicks in, all of a sudden it turns into a case and once it turns into sort of a case everybody shuts up. As a nation we're not doing a good turn, whereas we should be able to respond quite quickly to a tragedy, say that we will look it, do it at two levels.*

VAN HEUVEN: I feel very strongly about this, as I'm sure you can tell. Having been a public affairs officer several times, I think one of the first things you learn and you see this now, for instance, in things that are playing out here in the United States with various congressmen who've been involved in possible corruption or, my other example, with Enron or all of these business cases, is admit right away. If there is a problem, if on Day One you say, "I made a mistake" instead of on Day 365. Martha Stewart is another example. There is an excellent chance people will understand and move on. But if you try to hide and if you try to obfuscate, it will be much worse.

*Q: You see this right now with the Attorney General. He got involved in a stupid political move that is not illegal, this is getting rid of Gonzales, this will be a footnote but the point is, it is sort of focusing opinion and it's casting aspersions on the whole administration, on something that could have been taken care of with, "Oh my God! We shouldn't have done it!"*

*Oh, well, let's move on. How about trafficking in women, because Italy, particularly since the breakup of the Soviet Union, my understanding is there have been quite an influx of women who are brought, many of them are brought to Western Europe for what they thought were legitimate reasons but actually they were being sent into prostitution.*

VAN HEUVEN: It was a big issue in Italy. I think that actually they came from as far away as the former Soviet Union. A lot were from the Balkans and from former communist countries further north. It was really more the southern tier of the Soviet

Union. And, also, in Italy, there were a great many African women who were just looking to get to Europe to earn some money. Exactly the same thing, they tended to be sold into sex slavery.

We had quite a project going with an NGO in Turin that was trying to reach out to these women to tell them what their rights were under Italian law: that if they came to the police that Italian law would protect them from these people who were keeping them virtual prisoners and threatening them with their lives or the lives of their families, which was the tougher for them to handle. And they came up with the idea of printing a booklet, a really small booklet, that they could give to women on the streets and they could toss in pockets very easily and read at their leisure.

And we got USIA to pick up the costs of printing. They had a big printing plant, actually, in Austria. They did the graphics, they did the translation from Italian into English, Ibo, which is a Nigerian dialect that was apparently a fairly common one and into Albanian, because many, many of the prostitutes were Albanian women and with a lot of pictures. And it was fairly successful. It was just coming to completion in terms of their handing out and acting for us to assist in printing as I was leaving. But it was a big issue.

*Q: What about immigrants, there in Italy? I go back twenty or more years, but by the time you were there were sort of immigrants from outside of Italy pretty much the hewers of wood and drawers of water or not?*

VAN HEUVEN: Italy was the bookend of my career. When I was in Rome from '62 to '64, Italy was a country of huge emigration for economic reasons. The waiting list for an immigrant visa was 14 years. That was a big backlog of people who wanted to go just to the United States, not to mention other countries. And by the time I got to Milan in 1998, it was a country of immigration but it was quite a new phenomenon. I would say it was less than a decade old. It was growing exponentially and it was becoming a really alarming issue, with not just social but political ramifications as well, because it was entirely new. The Italians simply weren't used to having people who spoke differently, looked different and had different cultural habit living in their midst. There were efforts at integration were only just beginning to be discussed. So you had these side-by-side cultures. You had ghetto-like circumstances and little exchange between all of these new immigrants and Italians outside of the workplace or the police station. And it was a subject of real distress and anxiety to the average Italian.

I tried to work this into my speeches on the speaking circuit. I said that I recognized this was a very new phenomenon in Italy. I said I just wanted to share out of our experience in the United States, that each new generation of immigrants from a new and different culture had been rather difficult historically for us to integrate. I said it tended to take a generation and then they were part of our society and that was in fact a secret ingredient to our dynamism, to our creativity, to our economic success. I said that having now had this experience since at least the late 1890's, in terms of seriously different cultures, we still had some objections to new immigrants in our country. It came in waves with each

new wave, but we had relaxed and recognized that with patience it worked and you had to work at the integration and in the end it's good for your country.

The Italian politicians recognized that they actually need this integration, because they have the lowest birthrate in all of Europe. But they haven't figured out yet how to sell it to the public. So they are going to be hit with the problem that every major European country and even we are beginning to talk about: where are the young workers going to come from to pay for pensions of the people who are now retiring?

*Q: Were you seeing a difference in the life style in Italy, particularly from the point of view of women, if they're having fewer children, was this they weren't getting married or they just weren't having children? Was something happening there that you were noticing?*

VAN HEUVEN: I haven't seen any statistics for that. I think that emancipation of women or women's liberation is a much newer phenomenon in Italy. Many more young women are entering the work force and it's not easy to have children and work. Their society isn't geared for it yet.

I was talking about the vast differences in Italy between my two assignments. Prosperity had arrived in Italy, particularly in northern Italy, and prosperity tends to have a negative effect on the birth rate. In really primitive societies children are your life insurance and your social security and you don't know how many of them are going to make it to adulthood, so you have to have a lot of them. Well as you become more prosperous and as women enter the work force, that does have an effect on the birth rate. Why it is so much lower in Italy, I haven't really seen anyone explore.

*Q: You see the same phenomenon, where the Catholic Church was so powerful, in Canada, in Quebec. All of a sudden it's as though if the Church's power was so great and it diminishes quickly all of a sudden it means that there's almost a rebellion.*

VAN HEUVEN: It is certainly true, though, that it has been quite a while that abortion was legalized in Italy. That would have had an obvious effect on your birth rate as well.

*Q: Y2K, could you explain what Y2K meant and what happened?*

VAN HEUVEN: This was the acronym for getting ready for possible computer glitches as we slid over to the new millennium and the fear that having to change all the databases

*Q: Most of the databases had been predicated on two digits, 19 something and in early computers provision hadn't been made for 00*

VAN HEUVEN: The Department seemed to be particularly worried about Italy and they kept sending cables: are the Italians going to be ready, go out and demarche. So this was a countrywide effort. I think many of us who were serving in Italy and were used to dealing with Italian officialdom thought that it was an overreaction on the part of the

Department, because Italian officialdom is pretty efficient. There are areas where for political reasons, because the government needed to make so many compromises, things are not efficient. It took forever to come to a political agreement. There are issues of corruption in some areas. But in technical areas or even law enforcement areas they're extremely efficient. I think a lot of us came to the conclusion that part of this was prejudice that came from Italian-Americans in the United States. Much of the emigration in Italy from the north went mainly to South America and northerners were, again, the more efficient and more organized. Emigration to the United States was very predominantly from the south, the poorer, less educated. After the Second World War it took some years until there was a requirement in Southern Italy to go to school beyond the fourth grade. So Italian-Americans felt that it was their children who got a good education in school and that things in Italy were very backward. And so the prejudice, fairly self-perpetuating, the Italians are not organized and they're not going to be able to do this and it's going to be a big problem and please go out and demarche and demarche and demarche to be sure that it isn't a big disaster at midnight on 12/31/99 to 1/01/00.

We worked so hard on it and we really were ready. We had our GSO and his staff down in the consulate building to be sure that everything worked at midnight. And those of us who had been really involved in this went and had a midnight party in the apartment of my admin officer, who happened to be on the twelfth floor of an apartment building, where you could see all over and of course it came and went so smoothly. The lights stayed on. The admin officer called Washington and reported that all is well in northern Italy. But we made a lot of good contacts throughout northern Italy in the process.

*Q: The euro?*

VAN HEUVEN: The euro actually started being used after I left but it was only months after I left. Probably four or five months before, there was a huge public education program to get Italians ready for the euro. First of all, it was an issue of huge pride to the Italians, whether they were going to get accepted into the euro zone. They made huge efforts economically out of Rome to meet the criteria and it was touch and go. There was a lot of opposition in a lot of other European countries, primarily the Germans, to having the Italians join, because they were afraid that they weren't going to be able to meet the requirements. Ironically, the people who later had the biggest trouble were the Germans. So that was issue number one. It was one of those points of principle.

Italy was gaining a lot of self-confidence and was becoming an accepted big guy and had managed to get into the G-8 and it was negotiating to get a seat on the Security Council, etc, etc. Being part of the euro was really important to them as another sign of that. And so they were having a big campaign to get their public ready.

Of course the public sell, which made a lot of sense to me in that period, was that this would end up being good for all the economies that joined in. You would end up having first of all economies of scale but primarily you would have transparency that would improve trade. You would instantly know whether a washing machine in Italy was cheaper than a washing machine in France or not and you wouldn't have all of those

currency exchange fees to be paid anymore. So it was going to be a big enhancement to trade, as well.

It doesn't seem to have really played out that way in the end. Subsequent visits and from reading newspaper articles, it seems that in every country, that's certainly what I heard from my Italian interlocutors, was that every businessman took the occasion to round up. So something that cost x and three quarters immediately became two euros and they wound up with a general inflationary push everywhere.

*Q: You were in an economic center. Were you getting any feeling about what this was going to do to the dollar? Were people there talking about concerns about what this might do?*

VAN HEUVEN: Italians? I think not only Italians but Europeans in general, if there is such a thing as European nationalism, which I think there only is in a very diffuse way, the euro was going to be a point of pride and it was going to be a point of competition with the United States. And there is always the sense of "how do we measure up against the Americans?" And the strength of the euro is always a huge issue and a point of pride to Europeans. In fact, from our point of view, a strong euro was actually a very good thing for several reasons: we're not subsidizing their exports the way we were with the strong dollar in the past and it really isn't healthy for the global financial system to have the dollar as the sole universal currency. It's much better to have several currencies doing that.

*Q: How about, I use the term 'Mafia' as a very general term, but criminality, what were our concerns from the viewpoint of Milan?*

VAN HEUVEN: Really, to the best of my knowledge, there was close to zero Mafia, if any, in northern Italy but there was quite a bit of criminality. The Italians are among the most gifted counterfeiters in the world. That's why we had an office of the Secret Service attached to the consulate in Milan. They're based in Milan but they cover most of the southern tier of Europe. They go after credit card fraud and document fraud as well, all of which is very sophisticated. Narcotics trafficking has always been a big issue and that's why we had a DEA office attached to the consulate in Milan. They were cooperating very heavily with the Italian police to try to keep tabs on what was going on and to dampen, which is I guess just about all you can do on drug trafficking, to the extent possible. I think this happens everywhere where you start having immigrant pressure, particularly where you're not making any effort to integrate these people into your society. There was a big increase in petty thievery, break-ins, in northern Italy that the police and the populace were becoming very concerned with.

*Q: Let's talk about the bombings. During the time you were there our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were bombed by Al Qaeda and that sort of sent shudders and waves throughout the Foreign Service world. What happened with you all?*

VAN HEUVEN: Well, actually, that happened in August and I arrived in September. From my briefings in Washington, I came to Milan with the idea that the security of the consulate and the people who worked there had to be my first priority. We were in a very shifting situation. There was a mosque where Abu Omar was a prominent figure right down the road from the consulate. So we spent a lot of time looking at how we could improve our personal security in our homes and our security at the consulate. I spent a great deal of time negotiating with the mayor and the various councilmen. We tried to get them to close the street in front of the consulate, which was a very narrow street. We were in a twelve story high building. And, interestingly, they did close the street the day after 9/11. And they did do a lot. They essentially cut the street down to one lane. They didn't give us a hundred feet, but they gave us fifty feet.

*Q: You weren't there on 9/11, were you?*

VAN HEUVEN: No, I had left. I left the first of May of that same year.

*Q: What about the Red Brigades, the Prima Linea and all? Were any of these organizations, anarchist organizations, extant during they time you were there, were they a concern?*

VAN HEUVEN: That was more an issue of the Seventies. The Italians did an extremely effective job of holding them down, rolling them up. Yet they remained a psychological issue. Whenever there was some sort of anarchist or semi-terrorist thing going on the phrase Red Brigades would turn up again. There probably were a few figures that had at one time been in the Red Brigades that turned up in other movements. So those movements continued to exist, but they were no longer under the aegis of the Red Brigades and they were differently oriented. They attracted the same kind of personalities but the Red Brigades were gone, even though you still heard about it.

*Q: You left there when?*

VAN HEUVEN: I left in May of 2001 and retired.

*Q: You sort of covered a very interesting era in the Foreign Service and that is the rise of women.*

VAN HEUVEN: When I first entered the Foreign Service in 1962 I was one of four women in a class of I believe 44 officers, so one out of eleven. I think that in succeeding years women arrived at about that figure, ten percent. It wasn't quite there when I joined and I can't say exactly when it became ten percent. So we were definitely in a huge minority. I remember that one of the questions that one of the interviewers asked me was, "What guarantee is there that you will not get married right away and that you will stay in the Foreign Service?" And I said, "Well, I don't know if that should be your question, because you have a pyramid." In fact, Wristonization had created a rather top-heavy higher structure and if anything we were a little top-loaded "and need to get rid of people as you go along and better to take in the most qualified people at the bottom and maybe

have some attrition.” And in fact I know that three of the four of us had left the Foreign Service within two or three years, so it was a legitimate question in a way.

I graduated from college in 1958. I was of the generation before the big social revolution of the early Sixties, before the women’s liberation movement really gained steam and just as an example, when I did get engaged and was getting married, I resigned because I was assigned to Laos and my husband to be was assigned to Berlin. I did go so far in early 1964 as to go into both offices to see whether there might be a job for me in Berlin instead, whether they’d be willing to change the assignment or whether there might even be a job for my husband in Laos. There was simply no elasticity of mind, let’s say, in the personnel system for that. That just wasn’t the way things were done. I never did go talk to personnel. I only talked to the offices that would have had that first say and this just wasn’t on anybody’s screen, that kind of flexibility, and I was told that you had to resign.

Now, interestingly, there were other women around that same time, many of whom did resign, just as I did, because we were told that you had to resign. But I know of at least one example, Elinor Constable, who went in and said, “Show me in the regs where it says that I have to resign” and they ended up accommodating her and letting her stay. And there was another woman, Melissa Wells, who simply made it easy for them, who got married but went off to wherever it was they were sending her and started her marriage with her husband halfway around the world. So there would have been several other choices there that I was not aware of and being from that much more conventional generation, it didn’t occur to me to do more than that first little foray

*Q: You were at the tag end of what was known as the “silent generation.”*

VAN HEUVEN: Exactly, where you accepted the existing authority structures.

*Q: I came in, too, in '55 and I'd been in the military, you kind of, the men weren't under the same strain but there were other things. You didn't say, "Is this a good career move?" You just kind of went where you were assigned.*

VAN HEUVEN: You saluted and marched off. Now that, obviously, changed and women’s lib came to the Department of State late, in terms of probably even the federal government and through a class action suit. I wasn’t one of the suers but I was a beneficiary and even at that you had to take the orals again, which I felt was legitimate. I didn’t go in immediately, as soon as the word came out, which was in I think late ’72. My two daughters were still rather young, so I actually didn’t apply for reinstatement until 1975 and by that time the hot breath of the court was no longer on the Department of State.

So there wasn’t maybe the same easy reentry that there might have been if I had gone in then and there. In fact for the next couple of years every time we were back in the United States, we were assigned abroad, I would go in and physically take my papers out of one office’s box and take them to the next office. A woman in personnel said to me, “Well, I don’t think you will qualify because you are not world wide available.” So even then and



by then we're talking probably close to '78, it was '78 when I finally came back in, so the tandem couple arrangement was still painful and new. And I had to go to the DG *Director General* to say, "Isn't this Catch 22?" and to get past that objection.

One thing that I did still have to do, it wasn't automatic, besides all the bureaucratic hassle, I did have to take all the orals again and I thought that was perfectly legitimate because I had been out, by the time I came back in, I had been out almost 14 years.

*Q: Yeah, to see whether you'd grown*

VAN HEUVEN: Or turned into a [inaudible], which was entirely possible. So I actually went back to work in Bonn and I became head of the consular section. My husband was head of the political section. We were a very token tandem couple. The whole tandem idea was still quite new and I remember that we leaned over backwards to avoid resentments or feelings that there was any kind of favoritism going on. I was not only the head of the consular section, I was the only consular officer, so he appointed his deputy to deal with me on any issues where there might be a conflict between the two sections. It worked but it seems to me that it was some time in the Eighties that the number of women really started to thicken up.

*Q: Get a critical mass*

VAN HEUVEN: Let's say that I became aware that there were more women. But the interesting thing was, it became easier for women to become consuls general but not ambassador, or to become DCM's but not ambassadors. By now the ambassador ceiling has also been broken. It was just beginning to be broken as I left the Foreign Service. But the biggest change, I would submit, is that the younger women that have been coming in, let's say in late Eighties and the Nineties and now in this decade grew up and were educated in a different society, not in that "silent generation." First of all in a much more assertive generation and secondly in one where, like it or not, there was a general public acceptance of equal rights. There are still more handicaps for women to succeed in the boardroom, because I would submit, you're asking me for my opinions and my experience, but the male model of how you operate is still the accepted one.

So the things that you have to learn as a woman are, first of all, to speak in a much lower voice, because if you speak in your normal voice people don't hear you. This is not only my experience. I've heard this from a lot of women peers of mine; you are in a meeting, you're the one woman. For three quarters or more of my career I was the one woman in the room. You mention something and nobody nods, nobody says anything. You go on around the room and three people later some man repeats, virtually word for word, what you said and everybody says, "Good idea!" or "Oh, we should look into that!" or whatever. What you learn is we have to use much more assertive tone.

Now, what is being recognized, I think, even in the business world, is that women bring strengths to an organization, let's say as team leaders as well. They're much more concerned with getting consensus and bringing people together, but that means that our

mode tends to be a much more tentative one. So what you learn is that that might be your preferred mode, but if you want anybody to hear you, you have to adopt this more male mode in meetings and sometimes even in one on one sessions with somebody, to get things done.

So it's not just that it has taken society a while to integrate women at higher levels, it's that women, particularly in my generation, have had to learn how to swim in an environment that was not geared towards their mode.

*End of interview*