

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

ROBERT GOLDBERG

Interviewed by: David Reuther
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is 15 September 2011. We are interviewing Robert Goldberg for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am David Reuther. Bob, can you give us some background of where you are from and where your family is from?

GOLDBERG: I was born in Baltimore and grew up there. My maternal grandparents were from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and my father's grandfather was from Russia. His father was born in the U.S. I am not sure where my paternal grandmother was from.

Q: When did they come to the States? Into the Baltimore area?

GOLDBERG: In my mother's family's case, her mother came sometime in the first decade of the twentieth century. As did her husband.

Originally I think my maternal grandmother went to New York where her sister, my Aunt Bertha was, and stayed there for a few years. She settled in Baltimore a short time later and I've never been certain, but I think started out as my grandfather's housekeeper.

Q: How about your father?

GOLDBERG: My father was a salesman, and he spent maybe five days out of seven on the road traveling. He died when I was 14. I didn't really know him all that well and my memories of him are largely of Sunday outings. I have only a few photos of him.

Q: And your mother?

GOLDBERG: Up to the time when my father died, she was a housewife. Thereafter, she was the rock, the mainstay of the family, working split shifts in a doctor's office as a medical receptionist.

Q: Did your father serve in World War Two?

GOLDBERG: No. My father got a deferment because, at least early in the war, if you had child, you weren't called up. I think this was fairly common. Of the six males in my father's family, only two went into military service during WWII. One was my Uncle Alfred who subsequently became the historian for the Defense Department and served in that capacity for 35 years or so. The other was my uncle Harry who served for three years in the European theater.

Q: Baltimore was a pretty active military-industrial town on the East coast. What was it like growing up there?

GOLDBERG: I didn't encounter any of that as I was growing. I had a very sheltered childhood, going to schools that were supposedly integrated but segregated within the class. My contacts with non-white people, even through college, were not terribly extensive. I didn't discover a broader community of color until I went to grad school in Chicago. The south side of Chicago in the late 60s and early 70s was a very diverse community, a place where you dared to be – and perhaps dared not to be - socially active. The shocking thing to me in my first two years in Chicago was the murder of two students and the rape of a number of women, including one who lived nearby. So much

was going on – kind of reminded me of the Bob Dylan line “and you don’t know what it is, do you, Mr. Jones?”

Q: Starting out a little bit earlier, you were in high school when Kennedy became president in January 1961. Did that for you generate the excitement we have always heard about?

GOLDBERG: No, I was relatively apolitical. I don’t really remember the debates all that well. I realize that for a 14 year old at that time I probably should have been a little more politically aware, but 1960 was a really difficult year in many ways for us. My father passed away in August of that year. He had been sick since February and our family turned inward. The Kennedy story - all of this talk of New Frontiers - was crowded out by family issues. I guess I only recall two Kennedy events. One, I was sitting in front of the television set as he announced the blockade of Cuba on October 22, 1962, wondering whether I’d live through my freshman year at Gettysburg College. I had lots of conversations with friends about the end being near; in some respects it was nearer than any of us thought it was. What was so amazing was how quickly that fear dissipated after the crisis.

My only other memory of the Kennedy years was of course the day he was assassinated [November 22, 1963] – everyone fifteen or older recalls where they were that day; I was putting up signs for a fraternity party at Gettysburg. There was a great sense of lost opportunity. In the years since, with all the information that has come out on the Kennedy years, the revisionist history and the re-revisionist history and all, it just strikes me that here was somebody who became president well before he was prepared to be president – which given the nature of the job is undoubtedly true of just about all of our presidents - and didn’t have enough time to learn the job. So when he was assassinated and Johnson became President, I thought we’d see the Kennedy agenda, such as it was, lost as a hard nose Texan took over.

I was wrong, of course. On the domestic side of the house, Johnson fulfilled the promise of the Kennedy years, which I suspect Kennedy would not have fulfilled himself. But at the same time, we now know only too well, Johnson was hamstrung by the desire not to be the first president to lose a war and that eventually cost him his Presidency and I think cost the nation the chance to move further down the past toward social justice.

Q: Going back to high school for awhile, what were your favorite subjects?

GOLDBERG: Well it was history. History, history, and history. I liked history. I liked English. I liked writing. In fact my kids complain that I liked writing so much that I wanted to be the final arbiter of everything they wrote. So there were times when they were applying for their college applications that I edited their essays as well. To a lesser extent I liked studying other languages. I was never very good in science or math.

Q: What do you recall reading that really got your interest at the time in high school?

GOLDBERG: It was the equivalent of the great books that we worked on in high school. A lot of history, starting with the classics, Herodotus and Thucydides. Moving forward I read most of [Edward] Gibbons [The History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire] at one point or another. I read [Oswald] Spengler [The Decline of the West]. I hate to acknowledge it now, my kids will probably suggest that I should be embarrassed, but I read Will and Ariel Durant's multi-volume histories of the world [The Story of History, 11 volumes]. I appreciated how valuable the classic historians were – how they went about gathering information, how they marshaled their arguments, how they filled in the gaps when they didn't know something. What I didn't appreciate was just how fantastic some their speculations were. So at an early stage, I was studying the historian's craft, which I carried through in to college.

Q: Now you graduated from high school in 1962. Then you went to Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. How did you choose Gettysburg?

GOLDBERG: Process of elimination. We didn't have much money and they offered me a sizable scholarship. There were other places I would have rather gone, but there wasn't any money out there. I wouldn't have gotten an education without the assistance.

Q: What was your major?

GOLDBERG: History. Actually, in my freshman year, I was pre-med(icine), the classic course of study of the young Jewish male. But as I said, I was never very good in science and math and I recognized the error of my ways fairly quickly. So in the second year I switched to history. I had a very good mentor there, a young historian who had studied at Indiana University with Teng Szu-yu. His name was Roger Stemen. He didn't do much as an historian, in fact I can't even remember an article that he wrote, but he was a terrific mentor. He was the one who suggested I go off in my junior year to Princeton in the Critical Language Program, which was funded by the government to train people in languages like Chinese and Japanese and Russian. The idea was that I would come back to Gettysburg in my senior year and complete my degree before hopefully going to graduate school.

Q: Now talk about that Princeton University critical language program. Was this one of the NDEA?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, it was an National Defense Education Act program, which recognized the need to train Americans in languages and the history of countries about whom we knew little. I was one of the first series of students who went to Princeton. It was a great year. Actually the best course I had wasn't even a China course. At that point James Billington, who is now the Librarian of the Library of Congress, was teaching a course in intellectual history, a combination of literature and memoirs, films and music – multimedia before any of us knew what multimedia was.

Q: Obviously this wasn't just language training. There were other courses.

GOLDBERG: I also had took a course in Japanese history with Marius Jansen, a very famous professor of Japanese history and a few political science courses. So it was a well-rounded program.

Q: Where did your China interest come from?

GOLDBERG: I used to say that studying Chinese was like investing in the stock market - it was an academic growth stock. You put your time in and your investment grew as you moved up the ladder, particularly in the academic world; it paid dividends. I had no idea that this was going to turn out to be a lifelong passion.

Q: Now you were at Gettysburg College as you said, during some of the more interesting times in American history, the Kennedy assassination, Vietnam. How would you describe the campus? Conservative? Small?

GOLDBERG: Extremely conservative. It was a Lutheran college where a few years before I arrived had compulsory chapel at 4:00 every day. But I got a good education. On the social side of the house, life revolved around fraternities and going to bars on weekends. You needed a good ID to get in to the bars and I never looked the part – too young. I can recall getting into trouble a couple of times with fake IDs.

Q: How big was Gettysburg at the time? Was it bigger than your high school?

GOLDBERG: At the time it was probably no more than 2000 people. I don't know what the student population is now. My graduating class was under 400. So you got to know a lot of people, but with one or two exceptions, I have stayed in touch with hardly anyone from that time

Q: During the mid-1960s Vietnam begins to boil and come to people's attention. You are already interested in Asian things. Did this...

GOLDBERG: I bought into the line in my undergraduate years about the importance of confronting communism. It was at graduate school that I started thinking about larger issues .

Q: You had your junior year at Princeton (1964-65) and then you came back for your senior year. What kind of courses did you finish up with in your senior year?

GOLDBERG: Senior year, mostly seminars. I wanted to teach and I thought about being an historian of historians. I took two historiography courses which was one more than you needed. I was able do a private tutorial in Chinese to try to keep up the language that I had started at Princeton.

Q: What was that senior thesis about.

GOLDBERG: You know I knew you were going to ask me and I can't remember, but it wasn't China related.

Q: Now how did you choose the University of Chicago for your graduate work?

GOLDBERG: Here too it was a process of what the offers were in terms of financial assistance. Chicago covered everything.

Q: Who was there at the time

GOLDBERG: Tsou Tang was there. Ho Pingti. I don't know if you remember him – he did extraordinary work on China's civil service in Ming and Qing China – a great contribution in terms of scholarship. A remarkable mandarin. And arrogant. I don't think in the last 40 years there has been as well thought-out work a piece of work in this area as Ho's, though perhaps I'm wrong, given how poorly I've kept up in pre-modern Chinese history. The old guard at Chicago was on its last legs – Herrlee G. Creel, who had done work on the oracle bones, and Edmund Kracke, a gentle, scholar of the Sung dynasty. Tsou Tang and Ho Pingti were starting to work on a seminal two-volume study of the early stages of the Cultural Revolution and the coming era of the new socialist man. Way too optimistic about the infinite perfectibility of mankind. There is a wonderful story about Tsou and Ho. Tsou's father, Tsou Lu, was the historian of the Kuomintang or Chinese Nationalist Party and he was a revolutionary figure in his own right. When the Kuomintang was forced to move to Taiwan in the late 40s, Tsou Lu moved the archives there and most of the documents ended up in a small town, Tsaotun, about an hour bus ride out of Taichung in central China. This was part of the critical dispersion of important documents. I recall this quite well because I used to go out there when I was working on my thesis. Tsou Lu remained the archivist and senior historian until his death, a respected and at times feared scholar bureaucrat. Ho Pingti used to chide Tsou Tang, the son, and call him the singular example of downward mobility that he had met in his life. Which is a statement about the relationship between the two and Ho's hubris rather than Tsou Tang's work itself. I don't know how we got on to that.

So when I got to Chicago, the old guard still ruled the roost and some scholars were starting to grapple with what was going on in China during this very tumultuous time. I wasn't really sure that I was going to focus on China, so I hedged and took some courses in diplomatic history. By the time I got back from Taiwan in 1970 the whole program had changed. Creel and Kracke were on their way out. Phil Kuhn had just arrived and his book, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China*, was a few years away – it was to become a trend setting study furthering the rethink about how internal forces, not the response to the West, drove China's development in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Akira Iriye was also there; he was a diplomatic historian, and was doing some really terrific work. And Tetsuo Najita taught Japanese history – he was a scholar of the Tokugawa period. That is getting ahead of the story. Suffice to say, when I got back to Chicago after studying in Taiwan, the East Asian Department was transformed.

Q: What was the subject of your master's thesis?

GOLDBERG: My master's thesis was actually in intellectual history. It was an effort to meld literature and history by looking at how a famous postwar German author examined the pre-war years to show the trends that would lead a certain kind of fatalism among the German people toward their future. I used the early novels of Heinrich Boll as a springboard and was tutored by Samuel Halperin. It was only later that I really committed to East Asia as an area of concentration.

Q: How did you go about making that decision?

GOLDBERG: You know in retrospect it was just one of those things you slide into. Everybody who was a China person in Chicago at the graduate level recognized that they were not getting what they needed in order to do research in Chinese. We weren't going to be able to read, nor were we interested in reading oracle bones. Unless you wanted to be a Sung Dynasty historian and read "Wen Yen" or classical Chinese, chances were you would not be able to do solid research in late 19th and early 20th century China. So after two years at Chicago, we were all dispatched the Taiwan to study at the Stanford Inter-University Center, which is now affiliated with Berkeley and located at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Six or seven of us ended up in Taiwan, including a fairly well known Sung Dynasty historian, Brian McKnight and Cliff Pannell who became a well known geographer. Mike Finnegan, who joined the Foreign Service a few years after I did, did PhD work on the Sung Dynasty. Gene Levitch, with whom I roomed in Taichung when I was working at the archives, did work on Lee Tsung-ren of the Guangxi clique – I think he finished his dissertation some twenty years after he started and got a book out of it. Also Greg Kaiser, who taught for a while in Peoria (Editor: University of Illinois) and went into business consulting later, was there. We were the Chicago clique at the Stanford Center in 1968. Of some interest, I met Don Keyser there – one of the best China analysts who ever served at State and who, as you know, ended up some forty years in a difficult security situation that landed him in jail for about a year.

Going to Taiwan and learning how to read modern Chinese texts was helpful. When I finally decided on a dissertation topic I realized I probably should have spent more time on classical Chinese because a lot of the writing of the people that I studied was strongly influenced by literary Chinese, particularly with lots of four character phrases or "chengyus."

Q: Let's talk about these two years in Taiwan, 1968 to 1970. Where were you living? Were you on your own?

GOLDBERG: The first year, or a little bit more than the first year, I was in Taipei. The Stanford Center had a school on the Taiwan University (Taida) campus. I was a 15 minute walk to school – living off of Heping Dong Lu near Taiwan Normal University. I just crossed a couple of big streets and then walked through the Taida campus to get to the Stanford center. Taiwan University provided a building, but it wasn't near many of the student classrooms, probably because we had access to some "communist" Chinese documents and newspapers. Remember Chiang Kai-shek was still alive and it was still a

pretty repressive society. There was a big police and military presence in the area in which I lived and on campus.

Q: Were the security types interested in the foreign students?

GOLDBERG: No, they didn't care about us. I don't even think they minded our interacting with the university community. Maybe some did, but not all. Remember the elite studied at Taiwan University and they were always talking about going to grad school in the U.S. and even settling there. So we did get to meet people and exchange learning experiences which I thought was very helpful.

Q: What was covered in this program constitute? Was it all language classes?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, it was all language classes. You could audit courses at the University if you attained a certain level and received permission, but I never got to that level. I feel like it was a missed opportunity for me personally, but I knew two or three people who did it. And their language was significantly improved. We had five or six hours a day of language study, and were expected to put in five or six hours a day at night to prepare for the classes the following day. Some students came with a better than average conversational ability and were able to spend time reading, which was essential for research. Others like myself spent most of their time trying to learn how to speak. As a scholar, reading is key. As a Foreign Service officer, the speaking is the most important thing.

Q: Basically language at the university level is for research purposes, to be able to read documents. Now was this explicitly a two-year program?

GOLDBERG: No, it was a one-year program. I stayed on a second year and moved to Taichung where I did research on post-1911 Chinese intellectuals and their views on governance. You may recall in the late 60s and early 70s there was a period when generational biography was in vogue at universities. So I was planning to do a biography of the generation of intellectuals after 1911 and what their impact on the political process was. The person that I focused on the most was Song Jiao-ren who was assassinated by warlords in 1913. As I neared the end of my research – wouldn't you know it – a bio of Song was published in English. So I shifted my emphasis to people like Tsai Yuan-pei, who was one of the regents, presidents of Beijing University. I really thought I was on to something as I started writing about intellectual ferment and transformation in that first decade after the revolution of 1911.

Q: So your first year was basically on language training and the second year was application.

GOLDBERG: Yes. What I would do was maybe three times a week I would take the bus from Taichung out to the Kuomintang archives. There were a couple of others studying there at the time and we were all trying to get documents that might be relevant. Just about everything was classified top secret. Of course what I discovered after I had

finished my time at the archives was that the archivists were starting to publish a series called Geming Wenxian or Documents of the Revolution which became available after I got back to Chicago.

Q: At the end of that research then in 1970 you returned to Chicago.

GOLDBERG: I went back for a couple of years and wrote the first draft of my dissertation. I have always looked back on it as one of the more disappointing episodes in my career because it just didn't have the stick-to-it-iveness or the desire to finish it. I recognized at that point that I probably wasn't cut out to be an academic, so I started to think in other directions. In the meantime, members of my dissertation committee like Philip Kuhn were giving me innumerable comments about changes I should be making in the dissertation; the generational biography.

Q: It would be interesting, another way to look at the times was the influence of the Japanese on the Chinese revolutionaries.

GOLDBERG: Well, here too I was focusing on the indigenous sources of revolution. Not all of them but a considerable number of people I looked at did have overseas experience. A lot of them were reacting to what they had seen coming out of the self-strengthening movement and later, to the Sino- Japanese War. My research ended around the time of the May 4th movement [Ed: started by student demonstrations in Beijing on May 4, 1919, protesting the Chinese government's weak response to the Treaty of Versailles] and the increased disenchantment with the West, the way China had been treated – many of the people I was reading about were again looking for indigenous sources to justify what they were doing.

Q: So you finished your master and then...

GOLDBERG: I finished my masters; I did that in 1968. When I came back I was already working on my Ph.D. And I did do this first draft, which I guess I had for many years and carried around with me for many years. I ended up throwing it away a few years ago.

Q: Ouch.

GOLDBERG: Yeah. It was not worth the paper it was printed on, and it was printed on some pretty bad bonded paper. Besides as I used to say to my wife, who kept encouraging me to take another look at it, just about everything in it was already in the public domain and the analysis, which would have been good in 1970, was frighteningly poor for 2010.

Q: During this time would you have gone to the annual Association of Asian Studies meetings?

GOLDBERG: One of them. I went to one of them in Chicago. I was part of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars in Chicago. But I wasn't a good match for their views on China and Vietnam – I wasn't as critical of U.S. policy in Vietnam, nor as

sympathetic to the great Chinese experiment in transforming people went to China in 1971 and like John Reed in Russia had seen the future. It struck me as a pretty superficial view

So I withdrew from CCAS. This was the period when the young Turk scholars and the older establishment confronted one another over an unbridgeable ideological divide. Now of course the young Turks are in their 60s or older. They have been challenged by other generations of students who listen to their own muse. Youth has to be served.

Q: Now at the time you were working on your dissertation things were moving along in China, and I am thinking Kissinger's negotiations.

GOLDBERG: I still remember watching the announcement that Nixon made about the Kissinger visit and his upcoming visit to China in February 1972. It was extremely exciting. My God, this was Richard Nixon after all.

Q: Your bet on China was paying off.

GOLDBERG: Maybe. At that point as I said, I was wondering whether or not the academic world was the world I wanted to be in.

Q: What was the role of the Concerned China Scholars with regard to China? When was it organized and what were they doing.

GOLDBERG: Organized in late 60s. Remember the book Alive in the Middle Kingdom which CCAS did after its trip in 1971? I think in retrospect it has to be viewed as an embarrassment to most of those who participated in the visit. They took what they saw on the surface as what was happening in reality in China. So as with many people who go to China, they didn't think critically how ill-served the people were, just accepted slogans like "serve the people" at face value.

Q: At what point did you decide to put the dissertation aside and look for something else.

GOLDBERG: Well, when I left Chicago in 1972, I wasn't putting the dissertation aside. In fact I was heading off to Taiwan on a Fulbright. I had met my wife in Taiwan in the late 60s. As I was considering another Taiwan sojourn, she was working at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. So I moved to New York and we talked about getting married and going off to Taiwan. You'll recall that earlier I had said I wasn't sure I wanted to be an academic, but I kept thinking that I'd done all this work and it would be a shame to throw it away. What it came down to was that my future wife wanted to stay in New York and in her career and I wasn't all that committed to mine. My wife knew Jan Berris who was at the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (and is still there forty years later) and I got a job as a program assistant. I stayed there for a couple of years, gave up the Fulbright and stayed there for a couple of years until my wife was reassigned to Washington in 1974.

Q: When did she start in the Foreign Service?

GOLDBERG: In the 60s. As I said we met in Taiwan. Her first overseas assignment was the equivalent of an OMS [Office Management Specialist, i.e., secretary] in Hong Kong, and then she professionalized.

Q: During this period Vietnam dominated the news. What was the impact on the National Committee for U.S. China Relations? What was their opening; what was their interest?

GOLDBERG: If you recall at that time there were three groups. There was the U.S.-China Business Council. There was the Committee for Scholarly Communication with the PRC, which did science and technical exchanges. There was a National Committee, which was doing educational programs in the 60s. They eventually got into the cultural exchange business. When I got there they had just finished hosting the visit of the Chinese ping pong team. Afterward, they really became the go-to organization for handling these kinds of high-level exchanges. When I was there, they did gymnastics and other sporting exchanges. The Shenyang acrobatic troupe also came to the U.S. during that time. But the die really was cast by the increasing ideological polarization with the gang of four in China from 1973 to 1976.

Word was passed that it would be good for the National Committee not to be involved in scholarly programs and seminars, which could possibly be critical of China. So the Committee Board decided to move almost completely into exchange work. In the 60s, I think the committee was established in 1966, the organization had published two books on Taiwan and U.S.-China relations, collections of essays based on conferences. Neither book found favor with the Chinese. So as a condition of working with the committee between 1973 and 1976, the Chinese kind of dictated what programs were OK and which were not. In fact, this was a fascinating evolution of an organization under pressure from the Chinese. I have often encouraged Jan Berris and Doug Murray, who was Program Director at the time, to write about their experiences during the period, but they haven't done it.

Q: What were some of the things you were responsible for doing?

GOLDBERG: I edited their newsletter. I did brochures for several of the visits like the gymnasts and the Shenyang acrobatic troupe. Actually the latter exposed me the first time to intellectual property rights protection because I did not properly attribute a lot of the stuff that was in the brochure and we had to do an awful lot of heavy editing at the end when it became clear that corrections and attributions were needed. I did a lot of the letter writing, internal communications, and even escorted the Chinese gymnastic delegation here in the States.

Q: What was it like interacting with the Chinese troupe as you took them around the States?

GOLDBERG: It was clear that they had been chosen more for their appearance and non-sporting skills than for their gymnastic abilities. This is not to say they weren't athletes because they were, but there were better gymnasts in China at that time. The ones they chose to come here could sing "Home on the Range," do minority dances, and give great interviews if they were asked to give interviews. They traveled with chaperones, so if they sat down and chatted with you there was always somebody else alongside of them taking notes.

Q: Did the group eat in Chinese restaurants all the time?

GOLDBERG: No, at that time all of the Chinese delegations that came had the equivalent of some sort of Secret Service protection because of concerns of threats against them or what they presumed would be threats against them. I can't really recall any threats but they had a full complement of security agents traveling with them to make sure there were no incidents.

Q: Chinese security agents?

GOLDBERG: No, mostly U.S. security agents. There were a couple of Chinese security agents along as well, but they were guarded. You know how for us when you have got a senior level delegation and you have got a secure floor in a hotel for the delegation, the same thing pertained at that point to the Chinese.

Q: Did any of them make any unguarded comments about what they were seeing in the States?

GOLDBERG: No. I can't recall a single comment that was not somehow or another filtered through the prism of how this would sound to somebody who was listening in. Whatever comments I thought might be unusual were generally critical of some of the things that they were seeing in the U.S. So again let me just point out how well chosen and carefully vetted and closely guarded they were in terms of their actions.

Q: You did this for a couple of years until....

GOLDBERG: 1974. Sally, my wife, was transferred to Washington. We talked a little bit about whether we should stay. There wasn't a long-term future at the Committee so we decided Washington for a few years would be a good place. We were about to have our first child anyway. I figured I would finish my dissertation – in which I still had some marginal interest - and take care of our son at the same time. Of course you know how illusory that notation is. I learned first hand what caring for a child was like during those first couple of years.

I took a job at the DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, I guess sometime in late 1975. My security clearance for DIA didn't come through for about six months so I worked at the Federal Research Division at the Library of Congress, which was part of the DIA. It does unclassified work for them, and that was OK as I waited for my clearance. I was at

DIA headquarters – which today is the National Foreign Affairs Training Center for State - for only about three months before Sally was assigned to Tokyo. Our second son had been born by that time.

Q: When you were with DIA, were you in one of the regional areas?

GOLDBERG: China military.

Q: So let's see, the Carter administration comes in 1977 and you are off to Tokyo.

GOLDBERG: We were off to Tokyo. It was a great three years. I studied Japanese. I worked at Simul International, which was at that time run by the guy who used to refer to himself as Japan's foremost simultaneous interpreter, Masumi Morimatsu. They were very nice to me. I was their English language re-writer. They had a group of Aussies and New Zealanders and one or two Brits who did the translations of a lot of Japanese language material. Then I came in and polished it up re-writing it. Most of my battles were with my fellow foreign nationals who thought my rewrites did not adequately capture the sense of the Japanese.

Q: So that is what you were doing.

GOLDBERG: I was also teaching at the University of Maryland extension school in Yokouska and that reenergized my interest in teaching.

Q: Where were you living at the time?

GOLDBERG: We had a house off of the compound, in Asaksa off of Aoyama Dori near the Emperor's palace. It was very close to the TBS tower and around the corner was the Embassy of North Korea. So this was 1977-1980. We used to watch the North Koreans meander through the streets. My older son always used to say there was a Black Guy coming down the street. What he meant was a guy in a black suit, who was North Korean. I was always tempted to walk over to the Embassy but never quite got up the nerve to do so. Probably not a career-enhancing move.

Q: What was it like living in Tokyo in those days?

GOLDBERG: It was a great experience. We had a full time housekeeper. I could study Japanese. I could go off to work. My wife really enjoyed her job. She was in the political section. At that time Tom Hubbard, future Ambassador to Korea and the Philippines, was a relatively junior Foreign Service officer. We knew the Hubbards quite well. I don't know if you knew Tom Bleha. He was there. Bill Sherman was the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] at the time. A couple of future ambassadors like Chris LaFleur, future DCMS like Dick Christenson. Obviously Mike Mansfield [served from June 1977 to December 1988] was at the beginning of his incredibly long run. I didn't have that much to do with the mission per se. A fellow who just recently passed away, Bob Immerman became a

very good friend. We had known Bob in New York when he was there at U.S. UN. We renewed our acquaintance with him in Tokyo.

Q: Now 1979 was a big year on the Sino-American front, Washington extended diplomatic recognition to Beijing. How did that go over in Japan?

GOLDBERG: Frankly I think the Japanese were expecting it; it was eventually going to happen. Of course, just springing it on them is what was unexpected. The Japanese in the office in which I was working just commented that “It is about time.” There seemed to be a lot of navel gazing going on the part of official Japan, like what do we do now, what about Taiwan, but I don’t think it was all that much of a “shocku” to use the Japanese term. I had already gone to China for the first time in 1978 with Bob Immerman and my wife Sally. We started off in Hong Kong and went in through Shenzhen, which if you recall at that time was really just a checkpoint. When I became consul general in Guangzhou many years later I used to tell the story of my first trip to China and note that Shenzhen was just a little fishing village of less than ten thousand people – and now was a city of over seven, eight million.

From Shenzhen, we went to Guangzhou, Guilin, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Nanjing and then on up to Beijing. We knew Charlie Sylvester who was the political counselor at that time and we stayed with him and his wife Evie in Beijing. It was a wonderful trip of a little more than two weeks. I guess as with most people who traveled in those early years you were basically seduced by what you are seeing. This country had been closed for so long and you were finally there. It was clear that something was happening, change was around the corner, that sort of thing, but little had happened yet.

Q: The facilities in Beijing were pretty basic still at that time.

GOLDBERG: They were. The Sylvesters were in the Jianguo menwai diplomatic compound where Americans had some apartments. There were a lot of people who were still spending six-to-nine months in a hotel before apartments became available. As the political counselor. Charlie was at the front of the cue for housing. We did the tourist routine, riding away on flying pigeon bikes. My recollection of getting from the Sylvester’s to Tiananmen Square is of the barrenness in between – there was, in fact, nothing in between. And people didn’t talk to you. In Guangzhou, you were drawn to the English language corners in the park and were immediately surrounded by people. When was the first time you were in China?

Q: I finally got there in 1987.

GOLDBERG: 1987, was more open and I suspect you didn’t have the sense that people were very wary of talking to you. When I got back and was working at Simul, there was lots of talk, as I say, about the normalization but it was mostly it was a good move and what now.

Q: You departed Tokyo in 1981?

GOLDBERG: 1980. We had two kids and a third was on the way. So we brought our housekeeper back with us, a lovely woman from Taiwan who spoke a very heavily accented Chinese thickly flavored with Taiwan words. She had been educated in Taiwan during the Japanese period so she spoke very good Japanese. That was why she came to Japan when we were there, and I think, of all of us, she was the saddest about leaving. Our hope when we returned was that she would get to the States early enough for the boys to keep up their Japanese language since my elder son had gone to a Japanese nursery school. It didn't work. Within two weeks of their return they were speaking in English to one another, and when she got there they had no interest in being different from their friends and speaking Japanese. A great opportunity missed I think. After I got back I did some writing, but that wasn't terribly productive so I started looking around for another career. Didn't really get on track until I sort of started at INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research] in November of 1981.

Q: Now how did that opportunity come to your attention?

GOLDBERG: Well, some people Sally knew passed Mort Abramowitz my résumé and Mort passed it on and I was interviewed at that time. The INR/EAP [Office of East Asian Pacific Affairs in the Bureau of Intelligence and Resource] office director was Weaver Gim, who became one of our Consuls General in Guangzhou some years later.

Q: So actually your first job at State was on the Civil Service side.

GOLDBERG: On the civil service side. I did that for 14 or 15 months and was a foreign policy analyst of Chinese affairs. The senior analyst at that time was Carol Hamrin. She was very good, but we had a few others. Daniel Kiang was in the office. Daniel just recently passed away.

Daniel was in the office, and Lou Sarris who never tired of talking about fighting the good fight on Vietnam, was the deputy director. Galen Fox was the INR/EAP senior Northeast Asia and China person. Towards the end of my time there, Galen left - he subsequently left the Foreign Service and went off to Hawaii where he became a state legislator for a period of time – and was replaced by Bob Randolph, who was a gracious individual who let us pretty much write and research whatever we thought important. I remember doing a piece based on Chinese foreign ministry guidances about the third communiqué in 1982 and making some folks on the China desk unhappy. The desk director at that time was Bill Rope. Scott Hallford was his deputy.

Q: What was his concern?

GOLDBERG: We had found some comments that suggested the Chinese were happier with what they got in the third communiqué that we had thought and that they might have settled for us. In retrospect, knowing what we know now about these guidances and how much propaganda was involved, maybe the Chinese just wanted to play this up as part of

their public line to their own population. I suppose some of what I wrote did not accord with the China desk agenda for selling the communiqué government wide.

Q: Now INR as the name suggests is intelligence and research. You are not dealing with daily things. You are supposed to look at information and thinking of trends over a longer time frame.

GOLDBERG: You know in those days so much of what I did was spot analysis. The longer pieces were few and far between. So we were really doing a lot of spot analysis that was sort of a snapshot of China policy at a given moment. The INR product at that point was divided into two areas – front of the book and back of the book. I don't know how it is divided now. Front of the book was maybe five or six, or maybe even more, one paragraph pieces drawn from intelligence sources that spoke to issues that would be of concern to the seventh floor state department principals. Then the back of the book was two or three pieces, each limited to no more than one page. As analysts, we always felt the editors destroyed our work

Q: For the researcher who might be interested in the book, would you describe it a little bit? Was it a daily?

GOLDBERG: This product went to the Secretary and others on the seventh floor. It probably was not more than four pages. A daily brief for the secretary. Was Al Haig interested in this stuff? Yeah, I think on the China side he was. Was George Shultz interested? Yeah. I think he probably was as well. But with everything they had to read, including the Presidential Daily Bulletin, I never had a sense that the INR contribution was all that critical. In subsequent years INR developed a reputation for critical thinking and did some great work on Afghanistan and Iraq and their analysts at times dissented from the common wisdom that passed as the sense of the intelligence community. This was especially true when other agencies were being pressured to produce intelligence that “confirmed” the views of policymakers rather than challenged those assumptions. INR didn't face the same constraints when I was there in the early 80s. It was interesting work; don't get me wrong. I enjoyed it. It was a terrific re-introduction back into China issues, but I never got the sense that much of what we on the China side did was well regarded or closely read.

Q: This topic is interesting because this is still the initial period of formal relations.

GOLDBERG: What you have got was a very powerful desk in the Bill Rope years. And an embassy - with Art Hummel out there as ambassador and Chas Freeman as DCM - that was offering a lot of very good analysis and information. There was very close coordination between Freeman and Rope about the line that they felt ought to be taken by State with regard to issues in China. Nineteen eighty-two was a very difficult and significant year in terms of the last of the three communiqués; the stakes were very high in terms of the relationship. We were mainly observers in INR, rather than players and, of course, we didn't want a sound policy derailed because of some flawed analysis on our part.

Q: Because of how were you casting the issue?

GOLDBERG: I wish I could remember exactly, but the conclusion may well have been: can we depend on the Chinese to honor this particular agreement. If you are questioning Chinese intentions with regard to the agreement, you are creating some waves. But it was a tempest in a teapot. It was a little four or five page paper with citations and stuff. It surfaced at a time when people were very nervous about the communiqué and I'm probably suggesting it was more consequential than it really was.

Q: After this spirited baptism in INR you moved to join the Foreign Service. Did you take the exam or was it a lateral transfer?

GOLDBERG: No, I took the exam. I recognized early on that the things I wanted to do couldn't be done from an INR perch unless that's all I wanted to do – and you know as well as I that the Foreign Service, especially at that time, existed for the Foreign Service Officers. Directors and deputies, even unit chiefs like Galen Fox and Bob Randolph were Foreign Service officers. So as a civil service officer, you were basically limiting yourself in terms of what you might do over the course of 25 or 30 years. I wanted to do something different. I wanted to go off to China at some point and live and work there. So it was sort of thinking that I might not be able to broaden my horizons and meet different challenges without being an FSO.

Q: At this time in State Department procedures they did the written exam and then there was the interview?

GOLDBERG: No. Actually this was the beginning of the full day assessment.

Q: Ah, what was that like?

GOLDBERG: The assessment, I think, was a post-1980 Foreign Service Act reform procedure. I remember talking with Harry Barnes about this when I became his staff aide in 1984. Barnes had been the Director General who ushered in the 1980 Act. He said State managers knew that they needed to have a different way of measuring a person's capability on the exam, not just through interviews, which were important. Interviews couldn't tell you how a person might handle a negotiating session, or evaluate and prioritize information in an in box. I know it is different now, but this is the assessment that I took. So this was a day long process, six or seven hours. You did a negotiating session. You wrote an essay.

Q: Was this you yourself or a team?

GOLDBERG: The negotiating session was six people.

Q: Who earlier had passed the written exam?

GOLDBERG: All of us had passed the written exam. So you negotiated with five other people who were similarly being evaluated for their suitability as Foreign Service Officers. You wrote an essay on a topic on one of three topics that were given to you. As I said, you did an inbox exercise where you had maybe 25 or 30 items which you had to read through in 90 minutes or so and respond to as many as possible. You had to recognize which required immediate action and which you could set aside. Next was interview with two examiners, which lasted maybe an hour or 45 minutes. It was a very intense day. Then you were in limbo for a couple of weeks as papers were evaluated. I think it was about three weeks later I heard that I had passed. I was more fortunate than others because I already had a security clearance so I got on the register fairly quickly and was offered a position in the January 1983 class, one of some 35 people.

Q: Do you recall the backgrounds of some of these people? Were they all coming from academia?

GOLDBERG: Actually it was a fairly young class. I think I was one of the older people coming in; I was 37 in a class with average age of 28-29. The youngest was Marcia Wong who was 22. A couple of people went on to become ambassadors like John Beyrle, who was until the end of 2011 our Ambassador to Russia. We had a woman mid-level entry woman who became a DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary] over at Commerce and another who became Ambassador to Lesotho. Ed Howard, does that name ring a bell? Edward Lee Howard. I sat through class after class with him. You might not know his story.

Well, Edward Lee Howard was one of the [Central Intelligence] Agency officers integrated under deep cover in the A-100 course. He was going to be sent to Moscow under cover. Before he even left, he had some personal problems, drinking and drugs and he failed his polygraph, and was dismissed from the agency. There was a concern – correct as it turned out – that he had been in touch with diplomats and others from the Soviet Union and he had offered them his services. So he was placed under surveillance when he moved back to New Mexico. I don't know how he got away from surveillance – the story in the paper was that he went out his back door and his wife picked him up somewhere along the way – and made his way to Europe and then to the Soviet Union. He may have been given up by the Soviets to protect Aldrich Ames, another famous agency spy. Ed died 8-9 years ago in a fall in Moscow or Leningrad or where ever he was living at the time. He was our most famous A-100 alumnus.

Q: Now you have a very extensive background already of travel, writing. How would you characterize the A-100 Foreign Service orientation?

GOLDBERG: Well, it was elementary. I used to company notes with Kathy Fitzpatrick, who was coming into the class from INR. We got an introduction into cable writing, life overseas, mission organization. I pretty much coasted through it. But for a lot of other people this was their first exposure to the Foreign Service, and so they asked a lot of questions. I could understand and appreciate the need for them to get a handle on some of the things they were going to encounter.

Q: The training would have also included consular issues.

GOLDBERG: Well, after the A-100 course, then you had ConGen [Consulate General] Rosslyn.

Q: Oh it has been set up by then, OK.

GOLDBERG: It was separate from the A-100 course itself. You could take it after language training, or before language training. They encouraged you to take it after language training and before you went out to post as a consular officer because you needed to be very current on the Foreign Affairs Manual and consular adjudications. So I took Hindi straight out of the A-100 course for five months and then ConGen Rosslyn and afterward went out to New Delhi.

Q: How did they go about giving people their assignments?

GOLDBERG: Same way they do it now – they give you thirty posts and you rank order your preferences. New Delhi was my number one choice. I suspect the reason why we were able to go there was they were able to make a match for Sally as well as for me.

Q: So when did you arrive in New Delhi?

GOLDBERG: July of 1983. I went straight to the consular section. Frankly I wasn't suitable as a consular officer. Years later, as a mission manager, I tried to give new consular officers a sense of why the job is so important – and so difficult, especially when you have to say no. Somebody once compared it to being a second lieutenant in the Second World War where you were expendable. You led your troops into battle and if you got shot it didn't really matter. I treated the work much too casually. When people tell you that you are the interface with the community in the country in which you are serving, well, that is absolutely the case. How you handle that is absolutely critical in terms of soft diplomacy.

Q: Now the consular business covers two kinds of visas, immigrant (IV) and non-immigrant (NIV), and also provides assistance to Americans. What were your responsibilities in New Delhi?

GOLDBERG: I did it all at one point or another. Because at that time in New Delhi, we had two junior officers who did just about all the interviewing. We had a deputy who was uncomfortable on the line. The senior consular official, the consul general when I was there, only liked to issue visas and do third or fourth interviews and run visas through the visa machine. We did eventually get a third officer, who was only comfortable doing American citizen services. New Delhi was high volume and fraud post.

You just got very tired of hearing the same stories over and over again. I was on the line in 1984 when the first group of people came out of Iran post-revolution. One of the few places they were allowed to travel was to India. So they would get on a plane in Tehran

and they would fly to New Delhi where they were picked up and bussed over to the American Embassy consular section where they would be refused en masse. I got interesting bribes from the Iranians, like nuts and raisins, the very best in the world. But all we could do on the spot was refuse them as Iranian cases had to be referred to Washington. The only Iranian visa issued in my time in Delhi – that I know about – came through the intervention of Betsy Barnes, the Ambassador's wife. She had taken up the case of a young woman who wanted to go to the States to become a doctor. Looking back, I regret just how cavalier I and my other FSO junior associate were. On some days, our refusal rate averaged 80%, which was unconscionable, really. We used to talk about it. Our mantra was: they have got other options, and as a matter of fact that was true, but I think we could have handled our work and ourselves better.

Q: Was your assignment one of those rotational ones through the various sections of the embassy?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Before I went to the front office in July 1984 I was actually acting consul general. Remember, I was like one year out of A-100. The consul general had left and the deputy had gone on leave and the guy I was working with didn't want to take on the responsibility. I was full of myself. So I took on that responsibility. Of course no good deed goes unrewarded – it turned out to be the busiest period for us in terms of consular work - Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated [October 31, 1984] after the assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar and parts of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh were burned. We had a lot of Sikhs coming into the mission asking for visas because they feared they would be killed if they remained in the city. The political section officers would come down to the consular section to talk to them about conditions in the Punjab.

Q: How did Mrs. Gandhi's assassination affect your work or the environment you were operating in?

GOLDBERG: Most of the Sikhs we used to see were Punjabis who were going out to California and Washington state farms through marriages that were not strictly legal. In fact in one of my IV interviews I found someone who actually married his sister. Not his cousin sister which was a fairly common term for a close relationship in India but actually married his sister in order to get to the States earlier than would have been possible legally. Now, what we had was a significant increase in Sikhs who were trying to get to the States on NIVs. There were no scheduled appointments in those days so we just tried to work though whoever came in during the course of the day.

Q: Why would the assassination affect Sikhs, the Sikh community in that way?

GOLDBERG: Well because it was her Sikh bodyguards who had been involved in Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. The outrage in New Delhi in particular was considerable. In fact there were blockades on some of the roads we used to travel to get back to our home – the specific purpose was to yank Sikhs out of their cars and beat them up. The AID [Agency for International Development] deputy director at the time Mrs. Gandhi was

assassinated was on his way back from a visit somewhere in Uttar Pradesh and along the way he had seen some Sikhs being very violently assaulted and beaten to death.

Q: So you rotated out of the consular section.

GOLDBERG: I rotated out of the consular section in July 1984, I think, and went on to become a staff assistant to Harry Barnes [who served as Ambassador to India from November 1981 to June 1985] who had been Ambassador to Romania and was the Director General of the Foreign Service, when the Foreign Service Act of 1980 was passed. He brought the “up and out” ethos of the military, transformed the way we brought people in, increased the diversity of the Foreign Service, and the way we evaluated officers. He was a very thoughtful individual. Harry is still around. He must be 85 or 86. I haven’t heard from him in about 25 years.

Q: What kind of atmospherics did he project in the embassy?

GOLDBERG: He was sort of distant and aloof. I mean he was one of these giant figures of the Foreign Service. Dean Hinton was the ambassador in Pakistan, and he and Barnes were reporting very different perspectives on South Asia to the Department without engaging one another in a dialogue – it reached the point where the Department sent out a notice to both posts to cease and desist from the bickering and urged – well frankly directed – them to coordinate some of the things they were sending in. Divergence of opinion, sure, but outright sniping, no and the arguing seemed to suggest each had a vested interest in demolishing the arguments of the other. Reg Murphy was the Assistant Secretary for what was then the Bureau of Near East and South Asian affairs at the time and he tried to mediate.

Barnes’ DCM before I got to the front office was Marion Creekmore who was approachable, a very easygoing guy, well-liked by everyone in the mission. Barnes might not have interacted well with the embassy community but Creekmore more than made up for this in terms of that management, mentoring, and lifting spirits. Grant Smith was the political counselor at that time. Grant eventually became ambassador to three of the “-stans” after the breakup of the Soviet Union. George Kenney, an older and old style FSO, was the economic counselor. I got to know him a little bit when I was staff assistant. Grant left in July 1984, as did Marion. Marion was replaced by Gordon Streeb whom I liked immensely, but who was clearly in Harry Barnes’ shadow in a way that Marion wasn’t. Grant was replaced by Stan Escudero.

Stan was a wonderful briefer, had this wonderful voice. The briefing that he did in the aftermath of Mrs. Gandhi’s death and a few other things, they were just first rate. I don’t think he got along all that well with Barnes because they had some differences in analysis. Stan could never be as well versed on South Asian issues as Barnes; he came in cold, thought he knew the issues and in fact needed a bit more humility in dealing with someone like Barnes. When you think you know the issues but don’t’ really, it’s probably better to listen, which Stan didn’t do very well at first. But I liked Stan a lot. He was a terrific person.

Q: From your perch there in the front office, what feeling did you get about U.S.-Indian relations?

GOLDBERG: A time of great possibility. Mrs. Gandhi had been essentially anti-American for a long time. Harry Barnes was the “Black Hand” who was trying to sabotage India in the Punjab area. Shortly before I got there the Embassy had put out a notice about Americans not traveling in the Punjab. Barnes had a very difficult relationship with Mrs. Gandhi and her ministers. When she was assassinated, there was a sense that Rajiv would be a very different prime minister, somebody who had a broad perspective on the world. I don’t know how we got that idea because all we knew about him after his brother had died in a plane crash – the brother was the heir apparent – was that Rajiv liked to fly planes – he was a pilot – and had little interest in politics. But we had a vested interest in portraying him as a progressive and a reformer. Meanwhile Dean Hinton in Pakistan was arguing that this guy is a lightweight and not to be trusted. It turns out that he was an incredible lightweight.

But as I say there was this sense of possibility the year that I was staff aide, and Barnes tried his best, as did other members of the mission, to interest Rajiv, India’s ministers and governors in a better friendlier relationship with the United States. The whole time I was up in the front office we were working in that direction. I subsequently came to view Rajiv as incompetent. He was easily manipulated by Congress party politicians right up to the time that he was assassinated [May 21, 1991]. Barnes had reasonably good access and talked about how American and India could work together to enrich the lives of the people of India.

Q: As a junior rotational officer in the embassy, what were your specific duties when you were in the front office?

GOLDBERG: Much of it was monitoring the paper flow before it got to Barnes, carrying messages to the sections that he wanted transmitted. The last four or five months I wrote four or five speeches for him, and that was great opportunity. And I traveled with him on three of his trips, so it was a very productive period for me. When we left, Barnes had a farewell lunch for Sally and me at which he said he hoped I would become a South Asian hand. Sally blanched at that idea. We never did get back to South Asia.

Q: There are three consulates in India: Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras at that time. Did the ambassador make it a point to visit those places?

GOLDBERG: At least twice a year. He was very good about that.

Q: How would he get around? Did the DAO [Defense Attaché Office] have its own airplane?

GOLDBERG: No, we flew commercially. I accompanied him to Calcutta and to Bombay. Those were great trips. I also accompanied him on his ill-fated trip to

somewhere in Uttar Pradesh where he fell and broke his shoulder. They had to do the X-ray in the veterinary office because that was the only machine that was working. To his credit he continued with his trip with his arm bound up before we got back to New Delhi. He was in great pain at the time. But he was well aware of the need to get out and about in the country. Was he similarly attentive to the needs of others in the American community, even the unofficial American community? I never got the sense that he was. I know in fact on our trips I can only recall one time when he addressed the Embassy staff.

Q: One of the big events for any embassy is the July 4th party. Being up in the front office you must have gone through one or more.

GOLDBERG: Yeah, one. Actually there were two events on that occasion. One was an Embassy function. Then the other was a broader community function. I worked on the Embassy function, which was funded through donations made by officers and their families. The embassy wasn't that large at that time. I mean it had a fair number of officers, but it wasn't that large – maybe fifty State, and however many more from other agencies. We had the equivalent of a community liaison office. I don't really recall that as a separate office at that time. We did have volunteer spouses working on that event

Q: As the junior rotational officer you did consular, front office, was there a third rotation?

GOLDBERG: No, those were the only rotations that I had. And I spent most of my assignment in the front office. I was there for 24 months, ten months in consular. That was long enough for me, and I think it was long enough for the poor Indians who had to endure my boorish ways. But the front office was really terrific work.

Q: After India, how did you get your next assignment?

GOLDBERG: Well Barnes encouraged me to apply for the OpsCenter [Operations Center, S/S-O] and gave me a very nice recommendation, called a few people about me, and it just seemed foreordained that I was going to do it. I had also been offered a job as staff assistant in Tokyo, which my wife really wanted me to take. I thought long and hard about it, but knew doing two staff aide jobs in a row was not a good career move. Lo and behold - the OpsCenter turned out to be is a department-wide staff job, bordering on secretarial work. I am not sure the fit was all that good. Twenty-five years later my son was in the OpsCenter. He just finished a few months ago. It is a very different place now than when I was there.

Q: So in July of 1985 you came to the OpsCenter. Can you describe the OpsCenter and who was the boss?

GOLDBERG: Well the director of S/S-O was Jim Collins, who subsequently became Ambassador to Russia. The deputy director Wayne Griffiths went on to become the senior counselor official in London. I came in with a guy named Mark Falon, who left the

service in the early 90s and came back subsequently as one of Colin Powell's speechwriters. We both got the same best and brightest speech from Wayne and after that speech we both realized we were in for a year of trying to figure out how to be the best and brightest.

The OpsCenter was a much smaller place at that time. In addition to the senior watch officer or SWO, you had one watch officer. You had also an ops assistant who handled faxing and teletyping - a civil servant, a military liaison, and an emergency action officer, EAO.

This was before the Department went to task force groups or working groups at the drop of a hat. Now if something happens around the world, a task force group is organized, somebody is appointed director, and all of the action moves over to rooms adjacent to the OpsCenter. The Department has fitted out these offices with all sorts of technology for the task force. If you could manage an incident over three or four shifts you could do it without a task force. Moving so quickly to task force staffing probably maximizes efficiency but it certainly makes the OpsCenter even more of a glorified secretarial service than when I was there and it also takes away good training opportunities for younger officers. Also in those days we used to listen in on conversations with foreign leaders without their knowing about it, a practice that has since been eliminated. Now it is fairly standard practice that ops will drop once the connection is made.

Q: Now in 1985 what was the image of the operations center? What was it supposed to be doing?

GOLDBERG: Well, it was the brain center for the department in terms of incoming and outgoing information. Put your leadership in touch with every event that was going on. All senior level contacts were made through the op center. What you needed most were good telephone skills. Beyond that, you had to brief an item if someone called in. The OpsCenter at that time also put out two products a day. One was the morning summary; a one page document that the editor did. We did a second thing, which isn't done anymore - a NODIS summary. We would summarize important "no distribution" cables that might be of sufficient interest to seventh floor principals. Distribution of "NODIS" cables was the responsibility of the OpsCenter.

Q: Now the secretary of state during all this period has his own travel schedule. What is the relationship between the OpsCenter and the secretary when he is traveling?

GOLDBERG: Same thing. A party calls in for so and so, and you connect them. You are sending cables to the secretary's party called "TOSEC" and receiving cables from the secretary's party called "SECTO". You have to make a determination as to whether something is of sufficient importance to go out to the party. The watch officer may make that decision. A bureau may make that decision. You are also sending memoranda out into the field. Twenty-five years ago, we still sent information from the OpsCenter to be transmitted through pneumatic tubes to what was the equivalent of the information management system folks who then transmitted it electronically. Nowadays you just

press a button on a computer and it is gone. Briefings about the Secretary's activities were not done in the OpsCenter. Senior officials might call back to the Director of the Secretary's Staff or the deputy. The OpsCenter might place the call; it would be routed through the OpsCenter, but we weren't doing any of the actual briefings.

Q: In terms of the development of your career, what did the OpsCenter experience provide you?

GOLDBERG: Well it is supposed to be a leg up isn't it. It was a wash for me.

Q: How did the Achille Lauro hijacking come down and impact on the work of the OpsCenter?

GOLDBERG: We were notified that there was this problem via a cable and got in touch telephonically with the Embassy. We connected people government wide. We would convene what was called the "wash group" which is a Washington interagency committee to talk about the incident – all fairly typical for a crisis. The State desk in charge would also play a role; the OpsCenter would play a role with notifications to senior level officials. We were involved in the information gathering, information processing, information sharing.

Q: The next job that you get in the summer transfers of 1986 is the China Desk, EAP/CM [Office of China, Mongolia Affairs, Bureau of East Asia Pacific Affairs]. How did you get that job out of the OpsCenter?

GOLDBERG: Well, I knew Dick Williams who was then the desk director. I also knew Chris Szymanski who was Dick's deputy. I went down and interviewed with them. I interviewed for a couple of other jobs – including the Japan desk - but I want to get back into China. So I decided on the China desk, but did not get the specific on the desk that I really wanted - the external political job. That went to Ken Jarrett - a good friend whom I met when I was on the desk. We subsequently served together a couple of times in Beijing - in the late 90s – and then Ken was CG [Consul General] in Shanghai when I was CG in Guangzhou. Probably the better person got the job. They ended up offering me one of the econ jobs on the desk, and there were at that time two econ officers and a deputy director for economic affairs whose job, the first year I was there was Joan Plaisted. She later became Ambassador to the Marshall Islands and continues to do some stuff for EAP, including, for a number of years, the EAP coordinator at the UN.

The other person on the desk who was a real economist - also named Robert Goldberg. The two "Bobs." And lots of confusion. When people called up and asked for Robert Goldberg, they would ask either for the trade Robert Goldberg, or the investment and science and technology Robert Goldberg. Even then people were talking about a bilateral investment treaty. I noticed just the other day the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Dave Camp asked why we hadn't negotiate a bilateral trade and investment treaty with the Chinese. And at that point, in 1986, the Chinese were also

starting to make a major commitment to the design and operation of the Three Gorges dam. There were discussions about the role that the Army Corps of Engineers might play.

But it wasn't as interesting or fulfilling a job as I thought it might be, and so I took on a couple of other things. I was my default choice as control officer on the desk when Winston Lord who was Ambassador in China would come back and for Peter Tomsen who was Win's DCM. Also I assisted in putting together books of briefing papers for seventh floor principals who were heading out to China. Standard grunt work that any junior officer does, and I was of course a relatively junior officer. But you learn a lot. You learn about the Department clearance process, which still remains overly cumbersome as far as I'm concerned. You learn about what seventh floor principals need. Control work of that sort has not changed terribly much over the last 25 years. I liked it because it kept me busy when so few of my own issues were in limbo. It was an opportunity to learn from some more experienced professionals.

Q: Now the Embassy was reporting at great length at this time on China's economic reforms. Who was following that, and what was the view in Washington of how China was doing?

GOLDBERG: The three of us, Joan, Robert, and myself would follow those issues. Others on the desk – and elsewhere in the interagency community – were far more interested in the political dynamics of what was happening. Even then, we were trying to engage the Chinese in broader strategic discussions about what was happening in East Asia. You have to recall that this was a key period of political reform in China – many analysts thought party reform was inevitable. Not that China would be democratic, but it would have a different system out of necessity, i.e., giving a voice to those who had none. The DOD had a very wide-ranging series of discussions with the Chinese, which led us to consider selling advanced weapons systems to the Chinese. All that was brought to an end, that sense that China was moving in a direction that would converge with U.S. interests, in Tiananmen in June 1989. And our discussions haven't again approximated the sense of possibility that existed in the relationship in the late 1980s.

Anyway, we did look very carefully at issues of economic reform. The desk is fundamentally operational. We do briefings, which are more descriptive than analytical. We might do analysis if they ask, but for the most part, writing about, thinking about economic reform, those were still being done in places like INR, the [Central Intelligence] Agency, which has a pretty good cadre of analysts; although today they seem to be younger and younger and lasting for a shorter period. I think that is probably just my old age talking.

I think the important take away here is that there was a sense of possibility in the relationship, a sense of not operating on parallel tracks, but in a way that suggested there was an increasing convergence.

Q: Now the Assistant Secretary for Asia Pacific at that time was Gaston Sigur. How did the front office look to the China desk? Were they particularly interested? Who was the

Deputy Assistant Secretary that your desk was reporting to, the atmospherics at that point.

GOLDBERG: The key person really was Stape Roy. Everybody admires and respects Stape for his analytic skills. Stape was not a mentor to me, but I have always considered him one of those legendary figures in the Foreign Service. He knew how to get things done; he got them done in ways that did not leave ill feelings behind. If you went up against Stape and you had a counter argument, you not only had to have all of your facts straight, you had to have enough allies to carry the day. Very rarely did it happen to Stape.

Q: What kinds of issues would come up in this way?

GOLDBERG: At this point in the Reagan administration, the central policy conundrum was how far did you go in terms of working with the Chinese. As I said, for most people who focused on China in my generation, the sense of possibility lasted until Tiananmen or a bit earlier, with the demonstrations that took place in China in February, March, April of 1989, when the first President Bush went out there. We kept asking and Stape kept asking: to what extent are they changing. How much reform is actually going on; what can we do to move China in the right direction – probably not the best question since China was going to move in a direction of its choice. The real difference of opinion at the time was the pace – accelerate or keep it steady - and what we actually thought we might be able to accomplish.

Q: In the 1980s the administration as a whole, and the Department in part, started to become distracted with Iran/Contra scandal. So I would suspect that decisions on China policies floated down to Stape's level and Gaston's.

GOLDBERG: But we did have the sense that we had good and experienced who could handle those issues.

Q: At the time you were on the desk here from 1986 to 1988, did any particular Taiwan issues of note arise?

GOLDBERG: I mean Taiwan was always an issue in terms of Taiwan lobby. Arms sales were a perennial. Some still thought of Taiwan as an unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Pacific, so if our China relationship did not work out, we could always use Taiwan as a bulwark against a resurgent mainland. During the time I was on the desk, until in the early 80s, Taiwan was not front and center in U.S. relations with China. Of course, the Chinese were disappointed over continuing arms sales, and I can't believe they ever really expected that arms sales would "wither away" so to speak. There were similar threats similar to the ones we see today in the aftermath of arms sales where the mil-mil relationship is downgraded.

Q: Now you are describing the desk as very operational. During this period, were there any particular Chinese delegations you got involved with or major U.S. delegations going out to China?

GOLDBERG: Someone looking at papers that are being thrown away on the desk or archived is a better person to answer that question. It's one thing to put together books as a low level junior functionary, another to be asked to do high -level briefings. Delegation handling was at several levels above my pay grade as a relatively junior officer.

Q: Did you have any frequent contacts with the Chinese Embassy?

GOLDBERG: It was very different Embassy at that point. They didn't socialize aside from the sort of holiday events they might have – a national day or army day, for example. Chinese diplomats were less outgoing, less confident about their ability to interact. Few officials at my rank did any outside activities. It really wasn't until the mid to late 90s that the Chinese started coming out of their shell a bit. Some of it is recognition that they had to do things differently so there would be lunches with political counselors, DCMs with the Assistant secretary, Deputy Assistant Secretary and ambassador with his counterparts. At the time, the Chinese really pretty much kept to themselves.

Q: My impression was that they were pretty thin on English speaking officers too.

GOLDBERG: That is a very good point. The more experience that they have had over the last decade or so, the better the overall officer corps has become. I think they took a leaf out of what other Asian countries like the Japanese and the Koreans have done, sending their junior officers off for training abroad after doing language training at their Foreign Languages Institute. So they are more professional today and better educated and more confident in their interactions with us. As either deputy or as desk director, I would see my counterparts on a fairly frequent basis, not just when they came in to demarche on an issue that was contentious. Over time, the Chinese became more relaxed with regard to demarches, and they started doing them over the telephone rather than schlepping all the way from the Embassy to the Department. On the most consequential matters, however, they always insisted on coming in.

Q: Speaking of training. After two years on the China desk your next job in the summer 1988 rotation was taking the FSI economics course. Was this the six-month course? How did you decide you wanted to take that course?

GOLDBERG: Actually, I took the nine-month course. At that time if you didn't have an economic background, and I didn't, it was mandatory so you would understand or better yet, have a nodding acquaintance with, economic speak. So it was a natural progression. The Department slotted you into that course. Let me rephrase that. The very strong recommendation at this point in your career was to take this course. It was such a rigid rule that we even had a PhD. economist who coasted through the nine months.

Q: What kinds of subjects were covered in the course?

GOLDBERG: Oh everything - we did micro, macro, we did regression analysis which I always thought was the equivalent of mumbo jumbo. I could never understand and still don't understand how you used dirty data to come out with clean conclusions. I always thought of the limits of such analysis was a one week module on the Soviet economy in 1988-1989. We arrived at the conclusion that the Soviet economy was humming along pretty well. Actually at that point it was rotting from inside. The module we did on China, for example, indicated that China really wasn't going to have a takeoff anytime soon. Our regressions could not account for the non-data driven intangibles that lead to results of an unexpected sort. In the Soviet Union case, collapse brought about more probably by political issues than economic one.

Q: But in essence these modules were in fact regular college level courses in economics.

GOLDBERG: Well they said that if you do the nine months program, you get a four-year economic education. Maybe that was the problem with the course. It covered things on the surface but not with much depth. What they did do effectively was to give you a week and a half at the end of the course to do a case study in which you brought the skills you'd learned to bear on a specific problem. I found just getting to that point extremely painful.

Q: This last week and a half case study, was this on a subject you chose or everybody did the same?

GOLDBERG: You chose the topic and you could choose to work with somebody else, which most people did. Most people worked in teams, put together a power point presentation (or whatever passed for power point at the time) and then did a briefing for the class. I thought that was very useful. But as an operational fellow seeing how all of these things eventually cohered was extremely useful. I was never particularly good at some of the more fundamental things that economists do, but in terms of what the State Department needed - which was to be literate on economic issues, and understand the context in which decisions were being made and then being able to explain - that I was able to do. And that's essentially what I got out of the course.

Q: Now you were saying at this time they were treating this course as an important career enhancement. Who else was in the class?

GOLDBERG: The Ph.D. economist fellow I was talking about was John Sammis, who was in Beijing at one point as economic counselor. He was also economic counselor in Berlin. Ann Derse was subsequently ambassador in a couple of the "-stans." Robert Griffiths is now Consul General in Shanghai. Brian Goldbeck is now CG in Guangzhou and Eric Benjaminson, who served in Beijing later on, is now an Ambassador in Africa. So it was a good group of people to be working with.

Q: So there were different regional representatives in the group, some Asia guys, Africa guys.

GOLDBERG: It covered the gamut as you would expect. About 30 people were in my course. Eventually I think they realized you didn't force PhD. economists into courses like this. When macroeconomics is taught using purely mathematical models, math-averse people like myself are lost at the get-go. So I got lost periodically in the course. The course gave me good tools, but I didn't much appreciate the process of acquiring them.

Q: So this was to transition or open the doors for you. What did you do after the FSI econ course?

GOLDBERG: I was preparing to go to Taiwan in the summer of 1989 for a year of language study, but before that June 4 Tiananmen took place and I spent about a month on the Tiananmen task force group, doing talking points, drafting papers, and stuff. Dick Williams, the Chinese desk director, was the director of the Tiananmen task force group and again was my boss when we finally got to Hong Kong.

Q: What was the job of the task force?

GOLDBERG: Basically to provide real time information on what was happening in China. The task force started as a small working group and grew, as we sought not only to brief principals but to account for all Americans in China at the time. We kept asking where do we go from here. I recall Jeff Bader who was the deputy director on the China Desk at that time putting together a paper about actions we could take to show the Chinese how serious we were about condemning the massacre – that's what we called it then and some people still do today – in Tiananmen. So we adopted sanctions that we thought would be short-term, but which – in a number of cases like riot control equipment – exist 22 years later and limit some of the things we could do to enhance bilateral cooperation. Tiananmen had a negative impact on a whole generation of China specialists such as myself, but we understood right away that we needed to find a way to talk with one another. For the Chinese, the conversation was often when are the sanctions going to be lifted. For us, it was seeking an accounting for those who had died during this period.

Q: Who manned the task force when it was going?

GOLDBERG: Dick and Jeff were the day-to-day leads, with Stape, who was still EAP DAS at that time. As in other task force groups, we had consular affairs officers engaged to respond to American citizens, military coordinators who needed to plan in case something of a more serious and ominous nature occurred. But for the most part it was EAP and the China desk that staffed the task force. I was really an add-on. I had some time in between the end of the Econ course and the time we departed for Taiwan for language training. It was a good experience in terms of crisis management.

Q: Your next assignment is to Chinese language training, but my recollection is you only go to language training if you are already assigned to a slot. So you had already been assigned to Con Gen Hong Kong.

GOLDBERG: Well I had studied Chinese before, but as I liked to say I was such an outstanding performer at the Stanford Center so many years ago, that one and all recognized how helpful it would be to have another year. And it was helpful in terms of doing my job in Hong Kong – that was one of the two slots in the mainland watchers unit. That unit was eliminated when Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 and we lost a significant amount of contacts that were helpful in rounding out our analysis of what was going on in the mainland. During the year in Taiwan, I had four or five hours of class a day and then three or four hours of study - listening to tapes, reading articles and things like that. It was a very good program. Tom Madden was the director of the language center at that time and is today director of the program in Beijing.

Q: In the early days of the relationship with China the hope was we would establish a number of consulates and if we are going to man all those consulates we are going to need a large Chinese-speaking cadre so the number of people going through the program by the 80s grew steadily. How big was your class, do you recall?

GOLDBERG: I don't think it is more than 20-25. We actually had a couple of people from other countries there. One Australian and one Brit, and we had people from other agencies who were not going to serve in China. So the total number who were going to be doing China-related jobs was probably 15 or 16.

Q: In the early days of FSI in Taipei there was always a concern that when they taught simplified characters used on the mainland this would present a political problem on Taiwan. Had that sensitivity been resolved?

GOLDBERG: More or less. When I started learning Chinese in Taiwan, I studied traditional characters, so my reading was always better than my spoken ability. For me the trick was matching the simplified and the traditional. On Yangmingshan, which is where the language school is, outside of Taipei, we had access to simplified character articles and books and we were able to take them home and read them. My wife was also a language student for the year. It was a very demanding year as you know from having studied difficult languages.

Q: Part of the curriculum at FSI was field trips from time to time. Did they still do that?

GOLDBERG: We didn't really do field trips. We did practicums. Those were practical exercises where for a month, usually December and into January, you would find an activity and you would work in a company or an NGO. I had met someone, a Chinese American, who worked at Metropolitan Life and so I worked at MET Taipei for a month. One of the things they wanted me to do was to help edit English language versions of Chinese language reports. So I was able to use my reading ability to check and polish translations – all in a Chinese-language speaking environment where you picked up a lot

of street talk. My wife worked at an NGO that was involved in historical preservation. She had less of an English language component to her practicum than I did. Her association with that group was deeper and more meaningful and longer lasting than mine was with MET. I found it refreshing to get out of the classroom, take a bus, walk around, meet a lot of different people. A lot of the people I worked with were quite generous because their English was far better than my Chinese but they were willing to help educate me.

Q: Excellent. Who else was with you in the class?

GOLDBERG: Steve Young who is currently Hong Kong Consul General, which is chief of mission status. Steve Schlaikjer, who subsequently was econ counselor in Beijing and my boss on the China desk when I was the deputy for econ affairs, one of my many incarnations there. Mort Holbrook a good friend who was consul general in Shenyang for three years and with whom I have stayed in contact for many years.

Q: While you are in language training changes are taking place in China. You have got Tiananmen Square, the European and American reaction. Scowcroft makes two trips to China to try and coordinate how the two countries are going to work their way out of this. So by the time you are in Hong Kong then as econ officer, Hong Kong reporting is probably pretty important to try and figure out what is happening in China at that time from let's see, you probably arrived in June of 1990.

GOLDBERG: That sounds about right, June or July 1990. My predecessor was Bob Wang who was my successor in Beijing as DCM and who is there now. That is an interesting story in itself. Scott Bellard was the senior China Watcher. I worked for him; and Gil Donahue was the political/econ chief. We didn't have that many people doing reporting. Starting in the mid-80s, much of what was coming out of Hong Kong was commentary on what was going on in the mainland – we weren't first with the story, but we were pretty good at providing texture to the story.

I had some interesting contacts. The most interesting one was the secretary general of Xinhua, the news agency which was running Hong Kong for Beijing. He was reputed to be China's spymaster in Hong Kong. At my first meeting with him, he came right out and said, "A lot of people think that I am a spymaster. That is not the case." These meetings were always very interesting because he spoke in a very thick Cantonese accent which was very hard for me to understand, so he brought along a very polished person whose mandarin was impeccable and who at times had to translate from accented Cantonese Mandarin into Mandarin and occasionally slip in an English word. A lot of the work I did wasn't really mainland watching per se but was looking at the mainland's penetration of Hong Kong. So I did a series of reports on mainland companies in Hong Kong and what they were actually there to do. We had the ability to actually go in and talk with directors in the companies. Scott and I would go out together and meet with people who traveled to the mainland frequently and wrote prolifically like Willy Wo Lop Lam and Ching Chung. Ching had been red guard cultural revolutionary in Hong Kong, and he was then editor of one of the more interesting magazines being published there. He was subsequently

arrested on the mainland for spying or getting access to information that he shouldn't have. I guess he was imprisoned for three or four years.

Q: We were talking about contact work. Contact work is the bread and butter of any post overseas. When you arrived did you have a hand off with your successor?

GOLDBERG: Bob Wang was very generous in terms of introducing me to a lot of his contacts. I understood these people had their own agendas in terms of dealing with us, and one in particular was kind of interesting, given his association with Wang Yungching of Formosa Plastics who was thinking about building a major plastics project in Fujian province. I spent a year or so meeting with this guy every couple of weeks to talk about what was going on. That project never came to fruition.

Another major area of interest was what the Taiwanese in Hong Kong were up to and how they were facilitating economic contacts on the mainland. I was close to people who in Taiwan business associations in Hong Kong and spent a fair amount of time chatting them up. At that point Hong Kong was also moving all of its textile factories to the mainland and the Taiwans were cooperating with Hong Kong companies to access mainland labor, land etc. We couldn't compete with what was being churned out on the mainland, but we had some significant areas where we could make a contribution in terms of understanding south China economic integration.

We talked with a lot of American companies as well. The Amcham or American Chamber in Hong Kong was a very important window for many American businesses seeking access to the China market.

Q: You were saying that the Chinese companies were coming in to Hong Kong. Was this also the time that Chinese provinces set up offices?

GOLDBERG: Oh sure. Some of them had been set up before I got there, so I spent a lot of time with Guangdong and Guangzhou company enterprises, Fujian and Fuzhou enterprises; provinces and cities I traveled widely in when I was Consul General in Guangzhou. These companies were pretty successful in Hong Kong. None of them could compete with China Resources or China Merchants that had been in Hong Kong for many years.

Q: My impression was that one of the reasons for having the provincial offices in Hong Kong was to begin to educate the provinces in what was available and how the trading/capitalist system worked.

GOLDBERG: You would like to think that was the case. Maybe it was, but when I would have conversations with these companies it was all about the deal and about the money. Twenty years on, there is obviously a lot more sophistication about how you talk about these things. But 20 years ago, we were dealing with a lot of fairly unsophisticated people who clearly didn't understand how markets worked.

Q: Now were you there when Deng Xiaoping made his southern trip which is always described as the first time that reform had gotten back on track.

GOLDBERG: Yeah, I was in Hong Kong. Anytime Deng appeared somewhere and made pronouncements, it was noteworthy and you took a close look at it. We talked with our contacts in Hong Kong and their message was: watch this page carefully and see what happens.

Q: Could you give a broad brush coverage of the depth and breadth of the contacts you were meeting with during your time there?

GOLDBERG: Well, as I said, Chinese companies based in Hong Kong were a very significant part of the portfolio. The Taiwan companies and Taiwan associations gave us some pretty good insight into what eventually became a major concern of the Taiwanese companies and the Taiwan government's concern about the hollowing out of Taiwan's manufacturing. Before I even started my job at the Hong Kong consulate, after language class was over and before my family was settled, I went back to Taiwan for three weeks and did a paper on Taiwan companies going to the mainland; I met with a lot of the companies that I subsequently dealt with in Hong Kong. Contacts that I first made in Taiwan carried over to the mainland. There were obviously American business companies with which we talked. We always went to the left leaning magazines because they were far better than the right leaning magazines on mainland policy. We would see Wen Wei Bao journalists who were mainland directed. We also talked with Ming Bao reporters who were pretty objective. Apple Daily was pretty good but reported a lot of rumors that were made up out of whole cloth. Then I made several trips to Guangdong Province and Fujian.

Q: Now when was that? When did you do that trip?

GOLDBERG: The first one was in 1991 and took several days. The second in 1992 sometime. The 1992 trip was from one side of the Pearl River delta trip to the other, from Zhuhai up to Guangzhou and then to Shenzhen. Nowadays you can drive from Shenzhen to Guangzhou in three hours or take the train to Hong Kong in 2 ½ hours. The highways and the infrastructure are superb today, obviously designed so manufacturers can get their goods to ports or railroad stations.

The 1991 trip actually was more important than the 1992 trip because I met someone at the Taiwan Center at Xiamen University who put me in touch with the Xinhua source that was so important in my reporting.

Q: And I would think the PAO has another set of contacts with journalists, movie...

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. Later on as we moved closer to reversion, decisions were made that the real value-added in Hong Kong was the story of emerging Hong Kong democracy and Hong Kong's ability to retain its independence.

Q: When did the reversion discussion start? I forgot.

GOLDBERG: The British discussions? In the early 80s. The final decisions were made in the mid-80s. The Brits had always sent out as Governor of Hong Kong a Mandarin type who had significant China background. When we got there David Wilson was the senior British official, and then the last year I was there Chris Patton arrived and totally changed the conversation with the mainland. You may recall Patton saying he would not go to Beijing before he gave his state of the Colony or State of Hong Kong address and that really angered mainland officials. It took them a long time to get over it. They saw Patton as a latecomer who after a hundred years of British rule in Hong Kong was now insisting that Hong Kong deserved more democracy. The Chinese accused him of being anti-Chinese.

Patton rarely backed away from his efforts at pushing the envelope on democracy. I went as note taker to Dick Williams, our Consul General, on his first interview with Patton. It was fascinating. You were just bowled over by the intellect of Chris Patton, and Patton was happy to talk – and be admired. He was probably as smart as he thought he was, but he could have done a better job of stroking Chinese sensibilities. Regrettably, Patton didn't do that. I saw Chris Patten one other time, again as a note taker for some delegation. They too bought into the Chris Patton line about democracy and how we had to further democracy in the run up to reversion.

Q: The Chinese thought they were inheriting a colony and Patton turned it into a Trojan horse.

GOLDBERG: The Chinese thought that the “one country two systems” was the solution to all ills. And I think they understood that they approached reversion, people would recognize the need to accommodate Beijing's needs and requests and they would even start self-censoring so Beijing did not have to do it itself. But the couple of times I had serious discussions with people in Hong Kong after I left, they told me that they were wary of discussing their private worries publicly.

Many Chinese we talked to saw a British betrayal of an implicit contract with Beijing – to be stewards of Hong Kong and turn it over pretty much as it was, not with a fervor for promoting democracy over the last four years before reversion. You have to remember David Wilson and the people who preceded him were well acquainted with China's way of doing things and were just in a waiting pattern for reversion. Patton's mission was different; it was how do you provide some sort of representative government infrastructure that allows the people of Hong Kong to have a voice. It was too late. It really was; it was far too late. Again, I think the Chinese believed Patton did not understand China's broader national interests. Part of that was the desire for one China, two systems to work and be seen in Taiwan as a way of eventual reunification.

Q: Now you were in Hong Kong and the administration in Washington changes. Did that have any particular impact on staffing or...

GOLDBERG: No, not really. Staffing wise we have always had a professional as the consul general in Hong Kong. When Dick Williams left, Richard Mueller came in as consul general, but I was there for only a couple of months before heading back to the states. Everyone was thinking about what size staff and what issues we needed to consider with reversion – the creation of the modern Hong Kong Consulate, if you will, came with Richard Boucher who made the key decisions about issues the consulate should report on. Staffing-wise, the eventual drawdown wasn't really as great as you might think. By the time you get to 1997, we had gone from a defense attaché system to a liaison office staffed by military out of uniform. People in other agencies who watched China out of Hong Kong were starting to move those slots to the mainland. But that was a gradual process that took place over a decade. When I was desk director and making decisions about eliminating jobs in Hong Kong and putting them on the mainland, I experienced how bitter and drawn out these bureaucratic fights could be.

Q: Now wasn't the senior military person assigned to Hong Kong while you were there a naval officer?

GOLDBERG: Right because in Hong Kong, the main military function is to handle ship visits. Hong Kong is a major port of call for R&R [rest and recreation]. We used ship visits to attract Chinese officials to vessels for tours. It was a fairly substantial office, but after 1997 it was reduced in size. Our defense people in Hong Kong were also actively traveling to the mainland to look at the south China military regions. They had to notify the Chinese about the places they planned to visit; the Chinese followed them pretty closely. The information they collected didn't strike me as particularly significant – lots of license plate numbers, ships in harbor, but I suppose that information in the aggregate was significant to make certain judgments.

Q: Now you had an interesting turn in your own career to the extent that you go from an economic officer in Hong Kong back to Washington in the summer of 1993. How did you get that job?

GOLDBERG: I wanted to spend a year doing something other than State Department work and had heard that the [U.S.] Trade Representatives' office was a pretty good place to learn about negotiations and legislation. At the time, State had a couple of details to USTR and I was fortunate to land one of them. I made contacts that stood me in good stead for the remainder of my career. Some of the civil servants at USTR are still there, others have moved to the private sector. All in all, they were very savvy about how to get things done.

When I got there, Hank Levine, whom I had met ten years before when we both were doing part time work for the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations after I returned from Japan, was still in the ag [agricultural] office but preparing to move over to the APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] office. I inherited his portfolio.

Q: Can you put USTR into a policy framework? Who does it report to?

GOLDBERG: It is a part of the President's office. The trade representative Mickey Kantor, at the time, was a member of the president's cabinet. As was his successor Charlene Barshefsky, with whom I worked on China's WTO accession. USTR was the lead on trade negotiations writ large and the coordinator of trade policy. Interagency decisions and recommendations were routed to the White House through the chief of staff or his designee. It was a small agency, maybe 20 people then. You had an awful lot of authority in terms of chairing meetings and having the pen to write papers that represented the sense of the interagency community. What I learned was that no matter the economic rationale for doing something, the politics was always going to win out.

Q: USTR would be a major player then when G-8 summits came up?

GOLDBERG: Mickey Kantor was very close to Bill Clinton. He subsequently went on to be the Secretary of Commerce after Ron Brown was killed in a plane crash. Kantor was quite influential – and very full of himself given his connections. I had hardly any direct dealings with him; I sat on the back benches in meetings he chaired. I had more to do with Charlene Barshefsky in her role as the Deputy USTR handling Asia Pacific, and to a lesser extent with Rufus Yerxa, the Deputy who handled Europe, Latin American, and other parts of the world. There was also a third US Trade Ambassador in Geneva, and there still is one there today.

I really think USTR was far more influential at that time than it is today - Kantor had pushed through the NAFTA negotiated in the previous administration and was heavily involved in the Uruguay Round end game. He had ceded the China portfolio to Charlene who worked closely with a couple of deputy assistant USTRs – Lee Sands and Deborah Lehr. I had less to do with China at that point, though did work the last ever Section 406 action under the Trade Act of 1974, which assessed countervailing duties on imports of Chinese honey [Ed: published in April 1994]. I also worked on getting Pacific Northwest red apples into Japan and on fair market access for tobacco products. U.S. beef – an issue then as it is now – was also high on our trade agenda as other countries were using non-tariff barriers or NTBs to limit our access to their markets. Of all the issues I worked on, I guess I was least happy about helping write administration policy on leveling the playing field for American tobacco.

Q: Won't your USTR duties have allowed you to work with Treasury, Agriculture, and Commerce departments?

GOLDBERG: Treasury is another story, because Treasury is always jealous of its prerogatives. Treasury was less consequential on trade issues except when you are talking about financial services. So most of my contacts were with Agriculture, Commerce, and the State Department, which regrettably many years ago ceded commercial work to Commerce. I see where Secretary Clinton would like to wrench that back. The NEC [National Economic Council] had people sitting in on these trade policy discussions. CIA was an active participant in terms of providing analysis about specific negotiations based on information that they had collected.

Q: Now was that supposed to be a one-year assignment?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Some people extended for a second, some even ended up leaving State because the work at USTR was more interesting and you really were more actively involved in directing negotiations and were a more consequential part of the policy making. If you are an economic officer at State and are interested in trade, you really can't do any better than spend a year at USTR to learn how decisions are made.

Q: Now, there was an APEC meeting in July 1993. Would USTR have gotten involved in APEC issues? Did they send anybody?

GOLDBERG: Oh sure. I don't remember. I arrived at USTR after the meeting. In subsequent years, USTR has played an important role in APEC in terms of programs and outcomes.

Q: Now you were if I understood you, you were sort of characterizing the USTR as the NSC [National Security Council] of economic policy. That is a pretty high level.

GOLDBERG: At that point there was an NEC and Bob Rubin was head of it. Kantor and Rubin worked pretty closely together.

Q: Now in the summer of 1994 you go to your next assignment which was...

GOLDBERG: It was PIMBS, the Philippines Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore desk.

Q: How did that job come available?

GOLDBERG: Well in all honesty the other jobs I was interested in didn't materialize. I think PIMBS was probably number 10 out of 10.

Q: You would have put in your bid list for that almost a year earlier.

GOLDBERG: Yes, so there were other things I would rather have done, and those opportunities went to others. It was the only time in my career that I should have waited longer to see if a better job would have come along.

Q: Well how was this office organized? It covers five countries.

GOLDBERG: The office director the first year was Scott Butcher; Mike Owens took over in the second year. Janice Fleck was the deputy both years. There two Philippine officers – one would have been more than enough - one Malaysian officer, two Indonesian officers and one person handled Brunei and Singapore together. The reason for two Philippines officers was that we were still preoccupied with wrapping up our involvement in military bases there. The person who dealt with the political and military relationship was really the key officer; I did economics and it was kind of a dead end job.

But in January 1994, the Malaysian desk officer, John Heffern, went up on the hill to work for the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee in the House.

I stepped in and for eight months did John's job as the Malaysian desk officer. That was really great. John Wolf was the Ambassador in Malaysia and I got to know him well. Wendy Chamberlin who went on to become Ambassador and was there for the September 11 period, was his deputy. I arrived after John had spent a lot of time persuading the Malaysians to buy the U.S. F-16, a sale for which he won the Cobb Award. Towards the middle of the year, a new officer cycled in – Daniel Kiang whom I had worked with in INR as a civil servant – and I was asked to assist in U.S. preparations for the Secretary's participation in the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Post-Ministerial meeting. I went to Brunei as a note taker, and then on to Malaysia for three days - an orientation trip.

Since there really was no Philippines job to return to, I was asked if I'd be interested in serving as the EAP coordinator for APEC papers (Sandy Kristoff was our senior official for APEC), and afterward to work on Burma and India's membership in the ASEAN Regional Forum. So though I was a PIMBS officer, I was actually doing broader regional work. I also went out to Jogjakarta with Winston Lord as a notetaker at another ASEAN meeting.

Q: That kind of illustrates that sometimes you are sitting at a desk or you have an assignment and lo and behold something unexpected comes along.

GOLDBERG: I was always volunteering to do one thing or another. And having this broader Southeast Asia portfolio kept me interested in my work.

Q: Such as? What kind of economic problems or issues were coming up with Malaysia for example?

GOLDBERG: On the Malaysia side I ended up doing far more on politics per se than I did on economics. John Wolf's agenda was to try to attract American companies to traded and invest in Malaysia; he was a great salesman and we did a fair amount of advocacy. Southeast Asia was really low on the totem pole in the East Asian Bureau. Winston Lord was Assistant Secretary at that point and his focus was on northeast Asia, particularly on China.

Q: This just illustrates how a front office can get distracted on one subject.

GOLDBERG: If you go back you have got Dick Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary in the late 70s, doing all Vietnam all the time. Win Lord early on, all China all the time. Chris Hill obviously, all North Korea all the time. For Stanley Roth, East Timor in Indonesia was the defining issue. If it's not a problem, then it does not get any attention.

Q: I have to distract your attention for a moment. This was the time that Jim Woods was nominated to be director. Do you remember?

GOLDBERG: I remember Jim. Actually I remember Jim before he became director. I had some dealings with him. His stewardship of AIT [American Institute in Taiwan] was somewhat controversial.

Q: Well I never understood how he got that job. What was the background to it?

GOLDBERG: You know he was from Arkansas and a friend of the Clintons. Not sure there's much more to it than that.

Q: Well the first thing I remember is Dave Dean resigned, which was quite unusual.

GOLDBERG: Things were pretty tense between AIT Washington and AIT Taipei. Jim was intent on being in charge and he seems to have gotten into some difficulty requesting either campaign contributions or consideration of contracts for cronies. People questioned his judgment. I will leave it at that.

Q: So that two-year assignment to the PIMBS desk ended the summer of 1996. Then you started...

GOLDBERG: Well I knew I wanted to go back or I wanted to go to China. Seems I say that a lot. I went and lobbied very hard for a job that just opened up out there as the chief of the external economic unit in Beijing. The only other candidate was Bob Tansey. There was a disagreement between Washington and Beijing over who should get the job. Bob was in Beijing already and some people out there thought he should have the job. I received desk support and ended up being paneled into the position. It was an interesting three years to say the least, because almost everything I did was related to China's succession to the World Trade Organization or WTO.

Q: Can you give us a sense of what that office was like when you got out to the Embassy? Now they are still in Er ban?

GOLDBERG: San-ban was the chancellery where I worked. The Embassy does not move to new offices until 8-8-2008 [August 8, 2008]. When I arrived, Jack Gosnell was the econ counselor. But he had burned a lot of bridges and was not long for the job. He remained econ counselor in name only for a period of months before he was replaced by Bob Ludan, who was then head of the internal section and for whom I worked for two and a half years. Deputy Chief of Mission was Bill McCahill, an econ officer who had formed a pretty good relationship with Jim Sasser before being designated in that position. Bill became a very good friend. The econ section was relatively small at that time all things considered. I initially had three people reporting to me; by the time I left I had five. The internal section increased by one or two people as well. So let's say by the time I left in 1999 there were ten people. Today there are two dozen. Bob Ludan became the economic counselor and I was the nominal deputy. Bob Tansey headed up the internal section for a while before Steve Wickman – later a CG in Shenyang – replaced him.

Q: Now, the Ambassador, Jim Sasser, was a non-career ambassador. What were the atmospherics like?

GOLDBERG: Well he was terrific. Early on, after doing some remarks for him at an airport ceremony during which the remains of American servicemen recovered in Yunnan were being repatriated I became his speechwriter. So my relationship with him was quite different than that of other people in the mission. He was a politician – like Jon Huntsman for whom I also worked – and treated people at the mission like constituents. He wanted them to know he appreciated their work, and he was working hard for them. As a result, he got a lot of buy-in for his objectives and he had a number of officers – like me, I suppose – who were quite loyal to him. Sasser was far more interested in the politics of China than in economic policy. But overall, we were well served, given his contacts at the White House. He was very close to Al Gore. His wife had known Gore’s wife for a long time, Sasser had in fact driven Gore’s father around on his losing campaign to be returned to the Senate. He got to know Gore even more when they were both Senators from Tennessee. He knew both Clintons as well, so his entrée in Washington was unbeatable in all respects. He could call Washington and people would answer his calls.

He once said the best piece of advice he ever got was from Stape Roy, his immediate predecessor, who told him, “You want to go back to Washington to touch base at least three times a year.” Well Sasser went back probably four times a year to touch base. I accompanied him a couple of times on those trips, ostensibly as speechwriter. At that point, my wife was still working, and she was in the States so on trips back, I was able to spend some time with my family. Of course the trips were a fair amount of work because we were constantly shaping the presentations that he made. I also accompanied him to most of his meetings, though when he went to the White House to see the Vice President, I waited outside by the gate.

All-in-all, we were very busy in this very large mission. I spent most of my time working with USTR, which seemed to come out every other week, meeting them at the airport, taking notes or doing whatever had to be done. Occasionally they let us in as they brainstormed issues; Bill McCahill was particularly well responded. Working on the accession protocol to the WTO carried through the whole three years that I was there.

Q: What were some of the issues that were involved in that?

GOLDBERG: You name it. It was across the board - tariffs, the regulatory environment, the lack of transparency, negative lists, when certain things were going to be allowed, what China’s developing country status actually meant., the time frame for phasing in obligations. These were the nitty gritty issues under discussion. It was basically working out the “devil is in the details” aspects. It really wasn’t until the Bush II administration when Bob Zoellick was USTR and Jeff Bader was the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative handling China issues that they made the political decision that enough was enough. We had gotten 98% of what we needed. The remaining 2% was not going to happen. Some companies and sectors were going to be disadvantaged, but maybe we

could remedy that in the next round of serious negotiations - which of course are essentially moribund. You ought to talk with Jeff about all this.

We made a lot of progress in the three years I was in Beijing, but we were never really quite there. A host of Assistant and Deputy Assistant USTRs before Jeff kept trying – Lee Sands, Deborah Lehr, Bob Cassidy, Christina Lund, Don Phillips.

Q: I can imagine your experienced domestic lobbying.

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. No trade agreement takes place in the absence of the squeaky of business and industry.

Q: While you were in Beijing, in July 1997, Hong Kong reverts to China. How was that seen or did it impact on your work.

GOLDBERG: It didn't impact what I was doing. We were interested, of course, but the Hong Kong and Macao office rarely saw anybody from the embassy. Our ConGen Hong Kong people would come to Beijing once a year to meet with their counterparts; sometimes their counterparts were not prepared to meet with them. American businesses which still had their home offices in Hong Kong would come up and chat with us about reversion and about doing business issues in the mainland. But increasingly, on those matters, the Amchams in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou were able to speak for themselves about their business-related interests. I'd also point out that much of the lobbying on WTO related issues came from business home offices in the U.S. So USTR and the White House were listening to U.S.-based chief executives in terms of what they needed and then calling upon them later to support and sell this agreement to the Congress.

Q: One of the events that marked the re-normalization of the relationship after Tiananmen Square when that Jiang Zemin visited the United States in October 1997, and Ambassador Sasser accompanied him on that trip.

GOLDBERG: Well he accompanied him throughout the visit. I don't know if he flew on a Chinese plane or not. I know Sandy Randt did years later on Chinese leader state visits and Huntsman accompanied Hu Jintao on his plane in January 2011. When we had a Presidential visit, we ceded a seat or two on our planes to the Chinese - not Air Force One, but the follow on plane. On the Jiang visit - Sasser went back, thought it went very well, and he thought he had a good overall relationship with Jiang.

But Sasser like every other ambassador was frustrated by the asymmetric access he had versus what the Chinese ambassadors in the U.S. have. Chinese ambassadors in the U.S. see secretaries and White House officials, and members of Congress, even get presidential drop-bys and meetings when seeing the National Security Council advisor. U.S. ambassadors have long been relegated to dealing with senior vice-ministerial level people or the vice minister in charge of American affairs. John Huntsman, for example would see Vice Minister He Yafei or Vice Minister Cui Tiankai; when I was Chargé, I'd

more than likely just see the Director General for the Americas Zheng Zeguang. Sasser used to chafe at that. But he had a pretty good relationship with Jiang, who seemed to like Americans.

Q: How did he characterize the Jiang visit when he got back?

GOLDBERG: Oh very successful. But these kinds of visits are always successful – even before they occur – unless something out of the ordinary happens. They are so well scripted. Jiang Zemin staked part of his legacy on building up a strong relationship with the United States. Jiang wanted to be perceived as someone with whom the United States could work. We did think Jiang had a geostrategic approach.

Q: About this time the Chinese dissident Wei Jiansheng was released. Did that impact on anything?

GOLDBERG: Well, just in the sense the Chinese were happy to get rid of him and we were happy to check him off as a specific subject of concern. Human rights remained a pretty important issue.

Q: Now you are saying McCahill was your DCM. What was he like to work with?

GOLDBERG: Well for me, very supportive. Bill really studied up on WTO issues, and got to know Charlene Barshefsky quite well. She was at that time the Trade Representative, having succeeded Mickey Kantor. He worked well with Bob Cassidy, the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative and was viewed as a team member – more so than those of us who were on point, so to speak. Bill had a back channel to one of Jiang's most senior advisors, Zeng Qinghong, who eventually became vice president during the first five years of Hu Jintao's presidency. So if there issues that needed some political oversight, Bill had this back channel.

Q: By this time America's diplomatic footprint in China is fairly extensive. Did you get a chance to visit any of the other consulates?

GOLDBERG: I traveled a bit, not that much. Talking about America's footprint, one of the most important things that happened while I was in Beijing was the inspection of China posts in 1998 by Dick Hecklinger and his OIG [Office of Inspector General] team. The report that Ambassador Hecklinger did led to the "China 2000 ramp up" in resources – it was a recognition that we needed to think critically about putting more people, more money, better technology in China so that we could significantly enhance our capabilities there. I had an opportunity to spend a couple of hours with Hecklinger. The report was, as I say, key to the growth of the mission. Of course, it was a time when the State Department was growing again, resource-wise. My sense is that the mission today has grown beyond its needs – I know some will dispute that. But it was half or a third the size in the late 90s than it is today and we were never at a loss for work, whether it was preparing for groups coming out, supporting groups that were there, or doing the follow up work after the delegations had left. And then, on top of that, we were doing reporting,

trying to provide some sense of next step strategic thinking about the relationship and whither China. That was particularly true on the WTO side. We had a good team, people who understood the issues quite well and who were willing to work hard. I was lucky. I had Chris Beede who was the Mission interface on WTO issues with USTR. Afterward, Robin Bordie was in that role. Robin was outstanding. We also threw in anyone else who seemed to have time on his/her hands to work the issues.

Q: On the bread and butter issues, who were your contacts? Who were you dealing with on the Chinese side?

GOLDBERG: My contacts were almost all government because these were national level trade policy issues. I didn't have the kinds of contacts with thank tankers that would have been helpful but some of the officers working for me did. I saw a lot of people at what was then still MOFTEC, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, which morphed into the Ministry of Commerce years later. Also I saw a lot of people at the Ministry handling telecommunications – today's Industry and Information Technology Ministry. We also worked with the U.S. Treasury Department to make contacts with the People's Bank of China on tax issues and subsidies for state owned enterprises. Financial services didn't occupy a terribly large component of our WTO work. We coordinated closely within the mission with the Foreign Agriculture Service and outside with the U.S. Department of Agriculture since market access for U.S. agriculture was a significant issue in WTO accession. Not as significant as we would have liked it to be but still significant. One of the criticisms of my work at that time was that I spent more time doing speeches and presentations for Sasser than I did on the issues I had been assigned to go out and do. Probably true.

Q: Talking about handling visitors; in June 1998, the President visits China.

GOLDBERG: Yeah, and I had nothing to do with that visit. Absolutely nothing.

Q: How could you not?

GOLDBERG: Well Charlene Barshefsky was out there ten days in advance of the President's arrival and I was the control officer for Barshefsky. The Chinese were interested in having a WTO agreement ready to sign when the President got there. The last meeting I attended with Charlene was at MOFTEC about an hour before the President's arrival. She was sitting across the table from Shi Guangsheng, the MOFTEC Minister; sitting next to Shi was Long Yongtu - their senior WTO negotiator who was looking at his feet the entire time because he was embarrassed about Shi's pleading to get Charlene to sign a statement of principles. To his right was Yi Xiaozhun, who became a vice minister at the Ministry of Commerce and is today China's WTO Ambassador in Geneva. So there is Shi trying to get Charlene to sign this two page MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] and Charlene saying, "No. Can't do it. Can't sell it. The President won't buy it." We got up and left and stood outside the Ministry and watched the presidential motorcade go down Jianguo menwai toward the Diaoyutai state guest house where the President was staying. So when I say I had nothing to do with the President in

his visit, I literally had nothing to do except attend the President's meet-and-greet at the embassy before he left. Just my luck – by the time the President got to where I was on the rope line, his aides whisked him away.

Q: Why couldn't we sign off at that time? What were the issues?

GOLDBERG: A memorandum of understanding? The issue was that we had no agreement that spelled out chapter and verse what China's obligations were.

Q: So they were looking for an overarching something and we were looking for the details.

GOLDBERG: Yes that is where the devil is in the details. Again as I say it doesn't come until Zoellick and Bader decide enough's enough and we can conclude a deal.

Q: Well, actually isn't the next act in the WTO story Premier Zhu Rongji's visit to Washington in April of 1999.

GOLDBERG: He thought he was going to sign an agreement too and I think at one point the administration was prepared to sign. But then White House advisors kept at Clinton and told him we didn't have enough to justify signing. Nobody wanted to sign a bad agreement just to announce it at a high level meeting, and it would not have been as good an agreement as the one we eventually concluded. A lot of people think that Zhu Rongji was using the WTO as a way of making China's domestic industries and companies, particularly the state owned enterprises, more competitive. He wanted them to operate in a global business environment. I think there is a lot to that. Sasser said that Zhu was pretty disappointed that Clinton had backed off. It probably had a bit of impact on him politically, but I don't think it ever showed in his relations with the U.S. One thing – if an agreement is not signed before a visit of this sort, it's unlikely to be signed during it. But the Chinese really pressed during the visit, and it just didn't happen.

Q: One of the things the academics pick up at this time is the USTR publishes a list of what are considered Chinese concessions, and that publicity damaged Zhu's standing at home.

GOLDBERG: Undoubtedly, but I think the biggest damage was the failure to bring this to a close.

Q: Actually, finally it did come to fruition. When was that?

GOLDBERG: Well not until the next administration. So we are looking at the Zoellick-Bader collaboration, and it came very quickly. The sense was we had enough to sell the agreement and it was time to cease the bickering. Both sides were moderately satisfied with the agreement, though the Chinese maintain they negotiated under duress and at a disadvantage and the final outcome was not good for them. But ten years on, if you look at the outcomes, I think from China's perspective it has been successful, more so than for

us. And the tenth anniversary commemorations on the agreement have reached the same conclusion.

Q: One of the events that came up during the time you were in Beijing was the May 1999 bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. That must have been interesting.

GOLDBERG: Well it was interesting; interesting is sort of an understatement. There was disbelief in the Mission that this had happened. You know the famous story - we hit what we wanted to hit but it wasn't what we thought it was. The defense attaché received a call in the early hours after the bombing and was asked whether the Chinese had an Embassy in Belgrade and where it was located. The mission hunkered down. The first day, demonstrations around the embassy were reasonably peaceful. We closed up shop and were told to stay at home. You could always get into the embassy by jumping over the wall between the Irish and American embassies and you could exit the same way. We had very good relations with the Irish.

But the demonstrations turned violent the evening of the second day after CCTV coverage of the bodies of the dead Chinese diplomats being flown home and images of bloody clothing. That evening, the Chinese government bussed in some hooligans likely from the Public Security Bureau or the Ministry of State Security, and they threw rocks and plastic liter bottles filled with urine at the mission. They busted almost every window in the mission, but they never broke one of our antiquated Wangs [Ed: and early word processing computer]. It didn't make any sense. Such extraordinary aim. When we finally got back in the mission, clean up didn't take that long and we were up and running pretty quickly.

While the demonstrations were going on, we were supposed to stay inside our apartments near the Embassy, but in fact, they were in such a limited area – with Chinese students who were bussed in to march around for a couple of hours or so – that we didn't feel any inhibition about sneaking out the front of side entrance and going over to Starbucks for a cup of coffee. Some officers met contacts there who provided insights about what was happening elsewhere in the city.

My last meeting in Beijing as note taker was when Ambassador Tom Pickering came out to explain what happened. The story he told was plausible and the narrative held together but it was still totally unbelievable and fantastic from the Chinese perspective. He acknowledged we hit what we wanted to hit. We thought it was something other than it actually was. Yang Jiechi was then a vice foreign minister and he sat across the table from Pickering. People have asked me if I ever saw Yang very angry and emotional. Well yeah I have. This was a rather magnificent performance. Because it was clear he wasn't paying any attention to what Pickering was saying but was rehearsing his reaction would be. It was truly over the top. I wasn't very good at taking notes that day because I was busy watching his performance. The only other performer I ever saw to top that was Madame Wu Yi who was Shi Guangsheng's predecessor at MOFTEC and who subsequently became a vice premier and China's most senior woman for a decade. She was a consummate actress. But whether Yang was acting or had really lost control was

unclear – it was just interesting to watch from a performance point of view. So when I was actually doing the cable of the meeting, and we had at that point the 24-hour rule to get it done and back to DC, I had to ask others at the meeting to help me recreate what had happened.

Q: I think Pickering was there on June 17, or something like that.

GOLDBERG: And I left at the end of that month.

Q: Ambassador Sasser leaves about the same time doesn't he?

GOLDBERG: Yes he does. I was actually on a trip when Sasser left. We went out to the northwest and did the Silk Route tour at that time. Anyway, as I say I very much enjoyed working for him; he had superb political skills and really knew how to work the Washington system. I think he did a good job out there.

Q: Is there anything you think you want to add to what your duties were at that time?

GOLDBERG: No, not really. I was very fortunate to be working for Jim Sasser and having an opportunity to help him out with his speeches and do a bit of travel with him, working on the WTO account. The Embassy was a great place to work and I made a lot of very good friends – though few among the Chinese we met. I learned an awful lot about mentoring people and have been fortunate over the last decade or so to have continuing associations with some extremely talented people.

Q: Let me ask this. You served in Hong Kong before, but this was your first inside China assignment. Did you have some assumptions about China or about your contact work that didn't turn out? I mean comparing how China looked at the start of your tour with how China looked at the end of your tour, what did you see changed perhaps in your own mind but more certainly on the ground?

GOLDBERG: Well I arrived there about four or five months after the firing of missiles in the Taiwan Strait – that was the Chinese reaction to our providing a visa to Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to speak at Cornell in June 1995. And I left in July 1999 after the Belgrade Embassy bombing. So two extremely difficult events bookended three years of a very positive relationship, one that was on an upward trajectory until Belgrade. Belgrade alone didn't sour the ties – there were concerns about China's military modernization program, differences over a wide range of global issues – and this will sound familiar – Iran and North Korea. We had concerns about trade policy. I'd say there a darkening of ties in 1999, but Belgrade put a period to the positive and gave us pause so we could reevaluate where we were. I don't think we really recovered and started having a productive – or more productive – conversation until after September 11 (2001).

Q: When you were in Beijing and you are interacting with your official Chinese contacts in your various ministries, did they seem increasingly sophisticated in their approach to some of the issues that came up?

GOLDBERG: Well the main issue that I dealt with, the WTO, the standard line was that the level of expertise was extremely thin, in other words, a mile wide and less than an inch deep in terms of sophistication about the issues. During the period, the Chinese were taking advantage more of the window on the world they had and they were learning a great deal. I would add that over the years we've seen an increased sophistication and confidence on the part of their diplomats.

Q: Your next assignment then is back to the China Desk and this is going to be the start of a long policy association with China. Let me start out by asking how did you get that next job?

GOLDBERG: Well, I was up for reassignment in the summer of 1999. Steve Schlaikjer who was then the China desk director traveled to China for meetings in the fall of 1998 and we talked about my coming on board as the econ deputy. We had been in language class together ten years before, although Steve was studying at a much higher level than I was. This was the best option that was available to me at the time.

Q: Now what was that job as deputy director for economic affairs? How did it fit in the office? There is an office director...

GOLDBERG: We were really firing on all cylinders insofar as economic issues were concerned. Although Steve was extremely well versed on the issues, Jim Keith who was the deputy for political affairs and personnel – a job I held later - wasn't. So a lot of interesting issues fell to me. I had a lot of interaction on economic issues that affected China within as well as without the department. One really nice thing as a deputy – and I had to acknowledge this really was kind a second deputy job, not as important as the one Jim had – was that I had an awful lot of autonomy. This was the time when we were working to extend to China PNTR or permanent normal trade relations.

Q: Let's go back to the organization of the China Desk. You have a director, Schlaikjer. You have a deputy...

GOLDBERG: Deputy for political and personnel affairs.

Q: OK, so there is one director and two deputies which are divided between political and econ functions.

GOLDBERG: The political deputy often does a lot of the administrative and all of the personnel stuff. In decisions with regard to economic officers, of course, the political/personnel deputy consulted with the economic deputy. But in terms of the efforts at recruitment, most of the responsibilities fell on the political/personnel deputy.

Q: How many people were working with you on the econ side?

GOLDBERG: On the econ side I had three total. Just two actually working econ issues, because the third was the desk officer for Mongolia. I had one person working on what was the equivalent of the ESTH, Environment, Science, Technology, and Health portfolio, and one person who was handling a variety of macro, micro, and trade issues.

Q: Give me understand the organization of the EAP front office. The assistant secretary at this time was Stan Roth?

GOLDBERG: Yes.

Q: Who was the deputy assistant secretary that handled China affairs? Was that Darryl Johnson or Ralph Boyce, I have forgotten?

GOLDBERG: Skip was doing Southeast Asia; we reported through Darryl. He was a classic political officer – I have a great deal of respect for him but he wasn't overly interested in economic issues. Nor was Roth. So I was EAP's voice coordinating China economic issues with E [Office of the Under-Secretary for Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs] and EB [Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs].

Q: Who would you have worked with from those offices?

GOLDBERG: Well internally almost any office EB, the economic bureau, but mostly the trade office. At that time Bill Crane was either the director or deputy director for trade policy. We did stuff with Wes Scholtz on investment-related issues. We didn't do terribly much with the monetary and finance people in large part because financial markets weren't as key an issue as they would become ten years later. We worked closed with the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs office Al Larson. Over the course of two years I got to know Al quite well, and worked pretty closely with him, again mostly on WTO and PNTR but on some IPR [Intellectual Property Rights] and other trade issues.

Q: Right, let's get to that in a minute. The observation I would like to make is that as an officer on the desk, a senior economic officer at that, what you have just described is the web of contacts certainly in the building that you worked with on a normal basis to get the job done.

GOLDBERG: And outside the building as well. We spent an awful lot of time at meetings over at USTR. I also sat in on a few White House meetings convened by the NEC to discuss about how we could move forward on our relationship with China.

Q: Now set the stage for me on the permanent trade relations issues. China had to have an annual renewal.

GOLDBERG: It was once called Most Favored Nation status. But we changed the name since every nation except China and a few others were favored. In order to accede to the WTO and have the benefits of the multilateral accession protocol, China needed PNTR –

and they had to extend that to us as well. Absent this mutual provision, a country would not enjoy the benefits of the accession - this is the problem we face with Russia

Q: Now one of the complicating problems if I recall on the political side of this issue is Tiananmen Square and congressional and lobby criticism of that to block or forestall the issue of China's accession to WTO.

GOLDBERG: Jackson-Vanik Amendment [1974] was not just simply anti-Soviet Union-related. It was also applied to all countries deemed human rights violators. It had to be waived or terminated in order to extend the WTO protocol to China. And the key here was the Congress. We spent a lot of time in meetings with Congressional staff. We also were doing papers for as many as two senior level meetings a week at the White House. Many of them were attended by Madeline Albright, the Secretary of State. Eventually they were so frequent, that she decided to delegate attendance to Al Larson in his capacity as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs. But Albright retained a whip hand by appointing her counselor Wendy Sherman to be head of a State Department supra working group. But Al was our public persona in the interagency process. There was a lot of give and take in our internal meetings. The president himself was very much involved in lobbying legislators and we were writing points for him as well. It was a very constant drumbeat of activity – good thing we had super copy on our computers' word perfect package. I should note that we also worked very closely with H [Bureau of Congressional Relations] at that time. Congressional relations provided strategies that might appeal to individual legislators.

Q: Did you yourself get up on the Hill and brief people.

GOLDBERG: I talked to staffers. At that point I did not talk to congressmen directly.

Q: Were those discussions political or economic?

GOLDBERG: I would say that at this point it was largely a political discussion more than economic. We focused on job creation what the benefits for American workers and farmers, American service providers and consumers. We had data on all of that which proved to have been exaggerated. A key feature of our argument was that China's accession to the WTO was going to change China positively so that it would operate in a rules based environment on trade issues. We didn't say that some of our worst trade tensions are with those countries with which we are the closest, like Canada and Europe; countries are perfectly willing to operate in a rules based environment and break the rules. They are prepared to have WTO cases brought against them and if found in violation of the WTO agreement pay a fine which is really less than the cost of doing business.

Q: Would you be able to characterize by party or leanings those who seem to be easily persuaded by these issues and those who were quite resistant on the hill?

GOLDBERG: It is easy to sort of say Democrats went this way; Republicans went that way. But it wasn't that simple. My recollection is that we had an easier time with Republican members on the Hill than with Democrats who were wringing their hands over human rights issues and were concerned that granting PNTR meant they would lose leverage by threatening annually to penalize the Chinese for their various sins. One of the ways around that was to use the money saved by sun-setting a commission and putting it in to two other commissions that had a China focus. This was the cost of getting Senator Byrd's vote. One of these was the Congressional Executive Commission on China, which was composed of members of Congress and members from the administration; the other was the Economic and Security Review Commission on China, a group of commissioners appointed by members of Congress. With regard to the latter, there were an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, with the chairmanship of that commission as well as the deputy chairmanship being rotated each year or two between the two parties. The Commissions put out a fair number of reports each year and the Chinese always find something to criticize in them. I've always thought it was a pretty good gig to sit on one of these Commissions and ride whatever hobbyhorse you were on in to the sunset.

Q: So that was sort of the price for moving the process along.

GOLDBERG: Yes, and as I say they are still around ten years later.

Q: Now you were on the desk from 1999 to 2001. A number of things happened in the world at that time, but the first thing I want to look at is you have a new administration come in in 2001. Now normally the desks in Washington do transition work in the November, December period before the inauguration. Here you have some very important issues with China, so I would assume this transition business quite occupies the desk.

GOLDBERG: It does, but you will recall the administration coming in was very critical of the Clinton administration's policy towards China. It brought in people at the Deputy level like Rich Armitage who said it was time to rebalance America's East Asia policy and refocus on Japan. Our colleagues on the Japan desk were under the gun to come up with creative ways we could use to re-establish that relationship. It didn't take long for China to hit the headline, particularly in February, President Bush "mis-speaking" himself – as his press spokesperson said - with respect to defending our ally on Taiwan. Taiwan was not an ally and that led the Chinese in Beijing to conclude that something different was in the offering in terms of the bilateral relationship. Then of course there was the EP-3.

To get back to your question, the transition team – and I think this is true of all transition teams – wanted to find ways to distinguish the incoming Bush administration from the Clinton era and to come up with a new Asia Pacific policy. It's always back to the future in these situations rather than forward and let's build on what we have already. This transition was complicated, as you recall, by an election that was unprecedented in American history. You didn't have the final tally on who would be the next president until mid-December.

Q: Oh that is right. So the transition team wouldn't be there ready to go.

GOLDBERG: Exactly, so you are dealing with multiple transition teams and multiple agendas writing papers that are trying to satisfy – and take in to account – the biases of the next administration. But I do recall that when the decision went for George Bush, the air got sucked out of the China side and we figured that all of the action would go elsewhere in the Asia Pacific – as I say focusing on our alliance structure, re-establishing the U.S.-Japan relationship, emphasizing the competitive aspects of our relationship with China rather than the cooperative ones.

Q: Now as you were saying on April 1, 2001,, a Chinese air force plane crashed into an American EP-3 off the coast of China and our plane landed on Hainan Island. This started a very intense period of interaction with the Chinese. That certainly would have dominated work on the desk even on the econ side.

GOLDBERG: Well actually at that point I really wasn't even functioning as an economic officer. During the ten days standoff between the U.S. and China, David Sedney who was the political deputy at that point, and I were a two-man working group switching off every 12 hours and monitoring developments. We had a small office in the operations center. We did nothing but EP-3, coordinating with our people in Beijing. What I would say is that issue largely got resolved at a level well above my pay grade, well above the assistant secretary's pay grade and the undersecretary's pay grade.

Q: High-level attention you are saying.

GOLDBERG: Yes. The discussions were among Rich Armitage and Colin Powell, Paul Wolfowitz, at Defense, Condoleezza Rice at the NSC and Joe Prueher, our Ambassador in Beijing. David or I might listen in on some of these conversations but just as often we were excluded. We were very fortunate to have Admiral Prueher in Beijing at that time. He was a former naval aviator and former CinCPAC or Commander in Chief of the Pacific. Prueher had flown EP-3's and knew what the plane was capable of. In a rather dramatic moment he said to Jiang Zemin that the military was misleading him. There was no way that a slow-moving, lumbering plane like the EP-3 could turn sharply into the fighter jet that was being flown by Wang Wei, the Chinese pilot. It was at that point the crisis was defused. Within a matter of weeks, our people came home; the plane didn't come back until much later and it came back in pieces.

Q: So actually one of the issues here is the level of sophistication or at least briefing of the other side.

GOLDBERG: Well we always had the feeling that the military people in China withheld the facts about the capabilities of the two planes. Still, there was genuine anger over what had happened. The loss of the plane and the loss of the life of the Chinese pilot, and genuine anger that about the United States pressing its right to patrol waters off of China's coast in order to keep tabs on China's military buildup.

Q: I presume the Department response to the EP-3 incident was to stand-up a task force?

GOLDBERG: Well, it really wasn't a task force. It was really more sort of a limited working group. With a task force, you end up with 15-20 people working as a team around the clock. Oftentimes the task force are formed to ensure the safety of American citizens in difficult situations and to respond to the inquiries of their family members with regard to their whereabouts. A task force has a very large consular presence and lots of interagency coordination. This never got to that point - it was just Sedney and I and maybe one or two others who kept a log of what was going on.

Q: Did you in the working group end up writing papers or summaries, chronologies, a logbook if you will.

GOLDBERG: As I said, we certainly kept a log. We did a chronology. We did notes to brief people, but they weren't really for the senior officials. They were for other officials, out of the loop but with a need to know - like the deputy assistant secretary or the assistant secretary.

Q: Your next assignment in the summer of 2001 is to the economics bureau with whom you had been liaising all along. How did that tour come up?

GOLDBERG: Well, I got a note from Tony Wayne's executive assistant inquiring about my interest in an EB job - Tony was then the EB assistant secretary and I had worked closely with him during the PNTR battle. I thought it was kind of special, Tony reaching out to me, but in fact, these notes went out to almost every economic officer, because economics jobs at that time went begging. EB was one of those bureaus that had to do a significant amount of recruiting - aggressive recruiting - in order to get its jobs filled. Anyway, I went and talked to Shaun Donnelly who was Tony's principal deputy assistant secretary and he suggested a few jobs. I wasn't sure whether my career was going to continue much past this Washington sojourn and figured it might be a good idea to get some experience dealing with real business issues. So I took the job as the deputy special representative for economic and commercial affairs. There was no special representative the first year I was in the office, so I was effectively running it.

Q: Now again could you situate that office within the bureau?

GOLDBERG: Well to be honest about it, it was kind of a marginal office in many respects. There were bigger issues, trade issues, financial issues, monetary issues, and while all of these had an impact on businesses global operations, we were a backwater operation. In addition, we were not really doing policy but coordination and liaison with business. And advocacy. But the lead on advocacy was not CBA, the Commercial and Business Affairs office, but the Advocacy Center over at the Department of Commerce. My second year in the office, there was a special representative - Frank Mermoud - and he liked to travel. So I was still running the office more or less while Frank was handling the politics of putting us on the map. We had a pretty good group of people and we had a

lot of autonomy. The first year was higher profile, of course, as I attended the biweekly EB staff meetings as well as the daily meeting with Tony Wayne and the weekly meeting in E with Al Larson. All of which took up a lot of time and which Frank enjoyed. The special representative was kind of lower than a DAS but higher than an office director level.

Q: So you had people working for you? You were a supervisor.

GOLDBERG: Yeah, I had five or six people working for me, and that continued even after the special representative came in. They were divided along geographic lines Asia Pacific, Africa, Latin America, Europe. I had one person who did a small grants program. And we always had interns. We were one of these offices that needed interns because we had so much operational work to do.

Q: What is behind the name change. You said it was first the deputy representative for commercial and business then a special representative?

GOLDBERG: I was paneled as the deputy special representative and in the absence of a political person that first year, I was the acting special representative. Then in the second year after Frank arrived, I was his deputy. It was good to have all that exposure the first year, because it gave me credibility within the bureau, within the building, and with the Commerce Department as being someone who could get things done.

Q: Would you also have touched bases with businesses?

GOLDBERG: We were constantly in touch with businesses. Whether it was groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the individual business associations, or regional groups that were set up in support of businesses like those in the Asia Pacific. We spent time at the mid levels of all the major corporations; I sat in on most of the meetings that Tony or Al had with senior businesses leaders when they came calling.

Q: What was their interest? What could State provide these business people?

GOLDBERG: You know in a lot of business people are risk averse, surprisingly so, they want guarantees of government support and if not of support, then of the government not looking too closely at their actions. We advocated on their behalf when they were looking for contracts and we provided detailed risk analysis of the political climate in a country. Tony Wayne was a political officer and as economic assistant secretary, he was better at big picture briefings than at analyzing the data. He was very generous in terms of including officers who had area expertise in his meetings.

Q: Now this 2001-2003 tour coincided with the September 11 twin towers attack. You are in an economic business bureau, but did you see any impact from that?

GOLDBERG: In my second year, I spent an awful lot of time as a member of the Iraq task force group. You may recall the State Department report that was done about the

future of Iraq took a much different approach to reconstruction than the one that was adopted – more measured, with more transitions, more capacity building, not leaving the Iraqis to deal with issues that they had no inkling about. I was also involved in working with USAID on coming up with ideas with regard to contracts – the bidding of contracts, including sole source contracts. I helped write some of the rules for the interagency on how contracts would be bid and monitored.

Q: This is all the work State did in looking at Iraq.

GOLDBERG: The State study of post-Iraq war scenarios was two volumes. And all for naught in the aftermath of the war, what with Rumsfeld calling looting the “exuberance of liberation” and Bush declaring “Mission Accomplished” when it was no such thing. Had we followed the State blueprint – and here I’m not trying to lay blame on DOD or others who wanted to get in and out as quickly as possible, but their actions certainly were short-sighted - we probably would not have had the kind of problems we have had over the last ten years.

Q: Now was the seventh floor interested in this work?

GOLDBERG: Oh yes, very much.

Q: Did you brief on the seventh floor?

GOLDBERG: I didn’t. The work that we did was briefed up on the seventh floor, but I personally didn’t brief on the seventh floor.

Q: You were saying earlier you weren’t quite sure what this job and the Commercial Business Affairs office would provide to you. Two years later as you are leaving what do you think you got out of this assignment?

GOLDBERG: What I thought I would get going in was contacts that might stand me in good stead later on as I moved into a different career. But what I ended up getting was some hands-on practical knowledge about how business operates and what government can provide to business

Q: Now in the summer of 2003 you move again but it is back to the China desk.

GOLDBERG: Yes and it is back to a very different job. It was the other deputy job, the one handling political and personnel issues.

Q: Well going back to our template, could you describe the desk when you arrived in the summer of 2003. Who is there?

GOLDBERG: Well let’s see. Joe Donovan was the director. I was his deputy. Chris Marut was Chris there at that time as the economics officer.

On the political side, we had maybe four people and on the economic side there were three people. We had a public affairs officer seconded to the desk – this was the period when every officer was a public diplomacy officer and to show how serious we were about that, we brought PAS into the desk’s activities. So overall, including office management people, the desk was about twelve.

Q: Who was the deputy assistant secretary the desk reported to?

GOLDBERG: Randy Schriver, who was very close to Richard Armacost, the Deputy Security. And the assistant secretary was Jim Kelly.

Q: Since you are literally coming home after a short absence, how did the desk feel to you? What were the atmospherics? What were the policy priorities?

GOLDBERG: It hadn’t really changed that much from what we had been doing before. Again let me reiterate, this was a very operational job. China policy since the Kissinger days has been made over at the NSC, with State Department input. We were fully engaged writing and briefing but always understood where policy was made.

Q: What were typical duties at this time? An average day?

GOLDBERG: The first thing we did when we came in in the morning was a daily note to the Assistant Secretary about overnight events in China and Hong Kong. That was latter shared in the building round the interagency community. Some of the issues did require guidance and we would ask for it. The Assistant Secretary then used the items to brief at the Secretary’s daily meeting. So that was the first order of business when we came in.

The second order of business was press guidance. In many respects it was updating previous press guidance. But whenever you had something that was unusual or different, you’d churn out and clear a couple of sentences. After clearance, it went on the EAP press office and to the Assistant Secretary’s suite by 10:00am. Once all the boxes were checked, our items would be incorporated in the book for the press secretary’s noon press briefing. Then of course there were the daily taskings. At night, or throughout the day, we put together the official-formal, which was a series of “private” communications and information sharing with the embassy or the consulates. In those we would also solicit Mission views and opinions or talk about personnel related issues.

Q: Now in the old days, as they say, that official informal was sent out as a telegram. But at some point State converted to e-mail. Which was it when you were there in 2003?

GOLDBERG: We started with cable, but by the time I left as Director three years later, everything was in e-mail.

Q: Now how would you describe the difference of being the deputy political as opposed to being the deputy economic?

GOLDBERG: A lot of issues were ones I had not addressed previously, especially on the military, security, and intelligence sides of the house. So obviously I had more contact with the NSC and DOD. I had to get smart of some things I hadn't really been involved in before, like security and intelligence. Not that everything was new but the level of detail that you needed to do your job well was greater than before and different.

Q: Let me back up a tad. How is it that you came back to the desk in the first place?

GOLDBERG: Well another one of those situations where a lot of the jobs that I had been interested in - and some of them were DCM jobs overseas - went to other people, and it was getting pretty late to be looking for a job. I spoke to Don Keyser, who was then the DAS for China before becoming PDAS for Korea and Japan and Don asked if I were interested in going back to the desk? I was and I did.

Q: Excellent. You arrived at the desk in June 2003 during year three of the Bush administration. In the wake of the earlier EP-3 incident and the 9/11 attack on the twin towers, what is now the major attitude toward China?

GOLDBERG: Well, I think the Bush people had the sense that China could be helpful in the war against terrorists. If we were successful in working together on this, we could develop a broader strategic relationship, one which made it possible to ease our burdens in Afghanistan and Iraq. Also, we could get China to help us forestall Iran's nuclear ambitions or other efforts that were inimical to American interests. Eventually we even persuaded the Chinese to help us deal with North Korea's nuclear program. When I was on the desk, Jim Kelly had a famous meeting with his NK counterparts where they acknowledged they were in possession of nuclear capability that could lead to a bomb. There was great anger and hostility as the North Koreans, not surprisingly, had taken advantage of the United States, not honored the agreements of the early 1990s about not embarking on a nuclear program that was aimed at weapons development.

Q: You were talking about liaising with China to tell the Iranians to behave themselves. This must have been difficult when the Iranians were encircled. They had American troops in Iraq and American troops in Afghanistan. How successful do you think the Chinese might have been?

GOLDBERG: The Chinese were interested throughout this period in keeping America preoccupied in the Middle East/South Asia/the "-stans" so that the focus would not be on China. It didn't cost the Chinese anything to say "sure we will be helpful" and then not deliver or deliver minimally; alternatively, they could and did resort to their policy of non-interference and just state that they were not going to do anything which interfered with another nation's right to self-determination. A lot of our discussions were repetitive; they certainly didn't move us forward in a positive direction, and personally, I think we were unrealistic in our expectations, even slight as they were. But given the situation, the dire situation we found ourselves in and with people thinking that China was a potential ally, the conversation went on. I think we spent far too much time assuming they would help.

Q: I would presume as head of the political side of the house you had a fairly decent interaction with the Chinese embassy during this assignment. Any particular regular contacts? What level were you interacting with?

GOLDBERG: As director, I interacted at the political counselor level. As deputy, with an odd assortment of lower level officials. The Chinese mission in Washington – as with missions throughout the world – was really pretty rank conscious. Political counselors preferred dealing with the director, the DCM with the DAS and the ambassador with the Assistant Secretary and above. We had the occasional social get together with the Chinese. Very scripted and formal. There was always a degree of wariness.

Q: Now were they still in their old embassy?

GOLDBERG: Yes. They didn't open their new embassy until 2008, the same year we opened ours.

Q: Now, you have interacted with Chinese over a few years now. What assumptions or observations were you making about the caliber of their diplomatic people that you meet?

GOLDBERG: Given the importance of the United States, many of their best diplomats were in the North American bureau. They had people who were increasingly better language qualified, better informed about the United States than their predecessors, and certainly far more polished. It doesn't mean that they were any more desirous of having personal relationships. They were cautious – there was, in their view, potential for them to be compromised or be perceived as compromised by their colleagues, being too close to the Americans. But they were certainly getting a better caliber of officer at their Embassy in Washington and their consulates elsewhere in the U.S.

Q: Do you remember anybody particularly who was outstanding?

GOLDBERG: Certainly He Yafei, political counselor and DCM who went back to China and became a Vice Minister focusing on North American affairs. He is now Ambassador to Geneva. Their DCM Liu Xiaoming, who was probably more impressed with himself than other people were with him, but he knew his stuff. He became Ambassador to North Korea and is now their Ambassador in London. The Ambassador to the U.S. at the time was Li Zhaoxing and he represented more the old way of doing business than the new; he became Foreign Minister. Xie Feng, who is now their DCM, was here as was my counterpart in Beijing when I was DCM, Zheng Zeguang. They had some up and coming people who were bright, highly motivated, and interested in the relationship.

Q: Now I would assume since you are on the political side of things, you have some sort of watch on Taiwan issues. Mike Meserve is in regional affairs doing Taiwan at this time. How did things Taiwan come to your attention?

GOLDBERG: Joe and Mike would meet two or three times a week formally with the Deputy Assistant Secretary and more often informally. I had a good relationship, at the time, with Mike and often went to his office – down the hall – to talk. Mike had two people working with him, but coordination was extremely good. Given the importance of the issue, you had to have a keen sense of the issues on both sides of the strait how developments would play domestically in the U.S. There was also a lot of coordination with Congressional affairs on Taiwan-related issues.

Q: Such as?

GOLDBERG: Oh, who to brief up on the hill. How to brief them. When to brief them.

Q: What would you say were the main issues during this assignment from 2003 to 2006?

GOLDBERG: We didn't have anything like the Belgrade bombing or the EP-3 incident, that is events that sort of set the relationship backward in dramatic fashion. Or move it dramatically forward. For the last six years of the Bush administration, we had a relationship that was on a reasonably positive trajectory.

Q: Speaking of operational things, you were mentioning that in July of 2005 you became the director. How did that come about?

GOLDBERG: Originally I was going to language training that year before going out as Consul General in Guangzhou. A couple of people who might have been interested in the Director job passed on it. Randy Schriver asked me if I was interested in doing the job and I said yes. I figured whatever language I really needed to brush up on I could do that while I was out in Guangzhou. It turned out that wasn't the case and I could have used a year review, but certainly I don't regret the time I spent as Director. I think it made me a better manager my last five years in the Service.

Q: So you would have been assigned to Guangzhou already by 2005?

GOLDBERG: Yes. I was already assigned to language training. So before Guangzhou, I was supposed to have a year of language training.

Q: So actually the Director job was an extension of your two year tour.

GOLDBERG: Well you could look at it that way but you have to be formally paneled into the Director job. It was a different number, a different code. I was paneled for a one year tour. Since that was my seventh consecutive year in Washington, I had to get formal approval from the Director General's office to be in stateside that long.

Q: Oh that is right. State had a regulation you are only supposed to be back in Washington for a set period of time, Five years?

GOLDBERG: At that time it was six. Now it is five. So I moved up. Randy left and Jim

Keith came in as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for China in EAP.

Q: What was Jim like to work for?

GOLDBERG: Very substantive and policy savvy. Very good relations on the seventh floor. He was close to Chris Padilla who was Bob Zoellick's executive assistant and spent a lot of time with Zoellick as well. Jim was often called upon to fill in for Chris Hill, the Assistant Secretary, when Hill was otherwise engaged on North Korean issues.

Q: Now as Director it would have ratcheted up your contacts at the Chinese embassy.

GOLDBERG: Exactly, so the political counselor at the time was always in the office or on the phone – that was Jia Xiudong. Periodically I would meet with the DCM when I was acting in Jim's capacity and I had more opportunities to meet with Chinese delegations.

Q: Any particular issues came up during your directorship?

GOLDBERG: You know the interesting thing is the further up you go the more the personnel issues become important. I dealt with more personnel issues as Director than I did as Deputy Director. So there were efforts to put the right people in the right places, and then there were efforts aimed at getting the wrong people out of where they were. I guess the major event of my time as Director was Hu Jintao's visit to the U.S. and how it was marred in some ways by referring to the PRC as the Republic of China (i.e., Taiwan) and a Falun Gong journalist shouting slogans at Hu during a White House ceremony.

Q: Now you were saying that through language you were to be assigned as Consul General in Guangzhou. Was that going to be Mandarin or Cantonese?

GOLDBERG: No, it was going to be Mandarin. Cantonese was a bridge too far for me personally. When I left the desk, I did take six weeks of language training. When I was in Guangzhou, I used speeches as language learning opportunities, forcing myself to practice my delivery and reading the remarks in Chinese characters rather than having them Romanized for me. That enhanced my ability to engage directly in Chinese.

Q: Now the Consul General in Guangzhou is the largest of the five CGs, isn't that right?

GOLDBERG: Actually Shanghai was and I think is still larger in terms of personnel numbers. But the thing about Guangzhou that is notable is that it handles all of the immigration work China wide. People who were actually immigrating to the U.S. were processed – lovely word – in Guangzhou. So we had the full range of consular service, immigrant, non-immigrant, American citizen services, fraud prevention and adoptions - what have you. The largest component of the mission was devoted to consular.

Q: Actually that part of China is the traditional source of overseas Chinese.

GOLDBERG: Yes. But increasingly Chinese are emigrating from places throughout China, not just Guangzhou and Fujian, so we would see people from central China like Hunan and Hubei, for example, and from the north, Shanghai and Beijing. But the reason for having all immigration services in Guangzhou, as you point out, was that traditionally immigration had come from that area.

Q: Now what was the consular district?

GOLDBERG: The consular district was Guangzhou, Fujian, Hainan and Guangxi provinces.

Q: And did you get a chance to travel to all of those provinces?

GOLDBERG: Oh yes, actually I tried to get to them three times a year. I didn't go to Hainan that much. But I did spend a fair amount of time in Fujian and in Guangxi. In part, aside from the importance of just getting out and showing the flag, the reason for that travel was to establish virtual presence posts. These are not consulates per se but recognition that a city or an area was a target of opportunity and we should be visiting frequently. We had three VPPs: Nanning in Guangxi, Xiamen and Fuzhou in Fujian. So I was traveling in those two provinces extensively. In my second year, we established the Nanning VPP on the Fourth of July and in my last year, we did the same – on the Fourth – in Xiamen. It was important for us to reach out beyond Guangzhou, the consular city in which we were based, to other major cities in China, especially to communities that we thought might be receptive to an American presence and an American message.

Q: How did that work out?

GOLDBERG: Pretty well. But these things tend to lose focus unless you really tend them. So although countrywide I think there were a dozen VPPs, only a few were really successful – and I think Xiamen and Nanning were among them. We did Fuzhou because the Mayor of that city, the capital of Fujian province, was unhappy that we would focus on Xiamen, a city of two and a half million people rather than Fuzhou which had four-plus million. Also, at an earlier time, we had thought that we might put a consulate in Xiamen.

Q: Now getting back to the consulate in Guangzhou, what sections do you have there and who is working for you?

GOLDBERG: Well we had a full complement of State department officers – pol/econ/consular/management/public affairs. We had a commercial officer, soon to be two officers. We had an agricultural officer. We had somebody from the Department of Homeland Security. We had a Patent and Trademarks Office person. Technically, he was under the commercial office but we treated him as a separate office. All were members of my small country team in Guangzhou.

Q: And who was your political and economic chiefs?

GOLDBERG: When I first got there the political chief was Jim Turner and after that it was Steve Lang. Steve is now the Deputy Director on the China desk.

Q: Back up in Beijing the ambassador is Clark Randt, and Dave Sedney is DCM.

GOLDBERG: Yes. David was there, an old friend who was very supportive of what we were doing.

Q: Now one of the interesting things about your consular district is Fujian province, from which the people on Taiwan actually emigrated from. So I suppose you were reporting on Fujian in terms of Taiwan investment, tourism.

GOLDBERG: We would spend time whenever we went to Xiamen city at the Taiwan Research Institute of Xiamen University. We got to know the scholars there really well. We also met with the Taiwan associations anywhere we went in Fujian; also in major cities in Guangdong and Guangxi, which also had a significant Taiwan presence. Our reporting – our ground truth version of what was actually happening in cross-strait business and trade was very good. We didn't cross over into policy lines but we could see for ourselves the increasing economic integration and Taiwan's growing economic dependency.

Q: There was a considerable amount of Taiwan investment in that area?

GOLDBERG: Everywhere in the south. Guangxi province, for example, was trying to attract Taiwan investment into the hinterlands and part of the long-range Guangxi infrastructure development project related to getting goods to market, accessing ports in Guangzhou and Shenzhen by building roads and railways.

Q: Now as the senior officer at the mission you must have had fairly extensive contacts both in the provincial administrations and the party organizations?

GOLDBERG: No, not the party. They weren't terribly interested. I had nothing much to offer in their view. So my contacts were mostly with the provincial government. But even there, the provincial governors weren't interested in seeing me either so I was relegated to a vice governor. Others in the mission were lucky if they saw directors general. The Chinese really low-balled us, even as they – as I've said before – had access to senior officials in the U.S. Their senior people did often roll out the red carpet for major American business and trade groups. That was money, after all.

Q: What was the nature of the reluctance? Did they have the capability to interact, language?

GOLDBERG: They just weren't interested. I don't know what Gary Locke's experience is, but I know that Sandy Randt, Jon Huntsman, Jim Sasser, Joe Prueher, they were all frustrated that the only people they saw were "vice" something or other - a vice minister

of foreign affairs, a vice minister of commerce – when they had an issue of consequence.

Q: Now Guangzhou has a fair sized foreign diplomatic community.

GOLDBERG: Yes. When we were there it went from about 22 missions to 32. A significant increase. I am not sure how many they have there now. It could very well be the same because a couple of missions like Sweden closed up shop and a few have opened. But we did end up with a very significant foreign mission presence.

Q: Now did all those missions have fairly equal or unequal contact with the Chinese?

GOLDBERG: Absolutely. Everybody was frustrated. I remember a meeting with Party Secretary Zhang Dejiang when he was in Guangdong. Once a year he would meet with members of the diplomatic community and that was it. So overall there was great frustration on our part in terms of our inability to engage at the most senior levels.

Q: Let me ask you an operational question. With that size of foreign diplomatic community, was there an international school?

GOLDBERG: Yes. There was the Guangdong Guangzhou American school, but it was an international school.

Q: And did you have some fairly significant responsibilities for the administration of the school?

GOLDBERG: During the first two years, I sat on the board as the U.S. representative, and then in my third year I delegated that to my administrative counselor.

Q: What was the international school like?

GOLDBERG: It was not bad. During this period, we were considering plans for and then building a new school in one of the suburbs of Guangzhou. Most parents you talked to thought their kids got a good education. As you went higher up in the grades in the school the number of Americans as such was significantly reduced. The largest contingent of students at the school was Korean.

Q: Speaking of new buildings, didn't the consulate at Guangzhou move out of the hotel at one point, had they already moved out?

GOLDBERG: No, that is the new mission. We were in the old Esso Tower near the White Swan Hotel. The mission is still there. A lot of the work I did was associated with building the new consulate, which is scheduled to open next year.

Q: How did those negotiations go?

GOLDBERG: Very difficult. Reciprocity was very important. When you got an agreement at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs level, you would be back at square one dealing with the local regulators. So we had teams out all the time meeting with the Chinese on design, and trying to come to terms with an ever changing set of regulations, which the Chinese told us were unchanging. When I was there we had cleared the grounds in the area that the building will occupy in Zhujiang Xincheng, the new city along the Zhujiang River. But we had not formally broken ground. Ground was broken when I was in Beijing as DCM.

Q: What is the new facility going to look like?

GOLDBERG: A state of the art building. It will be a secure facility with the appropriate setbacks that were mandated by the Inman Commission after the Africa bombings in late 1990. It will be a very open facility, with a great hall leading into the consular area. There will be an atrium, similar to the atrium in the Beijing Embassy. The flow-through looks very good particularly on the consular side of the house. It is a facility that allows for an increase in the number of Americans and Chinese who are working in Guangzhou. It can accommodate up to about 325 people total.

Q: There was an story on the NBC 10:00 news program last night about visas from China and how everybody had to go to the five consulates to even apply and there was terrible delays and what not. Were those kinds of delays and heavy workload the case while you were there?

GOLDBERG: Heavy workloads yes. But I think the carping about this has gotten significantly greater my last year in Guangzhou and then the year and a half I was in Beijing, when in fact the process has been simplified and efforts are made to be more accommodating. Still, absent more officers – and that has happened – there are long waiting times. In Guangzhou and Beijing, one of the significant reforms was the decision that a person did not have to apply in his or her consular district but in fact could, if the wait time was too long in one place, he or she could go to another consular district where the wait time was shorter.

Q: Now I assume you have hosted the ambassadors' field trips down to your consular area?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. We had Sandy Randt down there three times during the period I was there.

Q: And what would those be like in terms of work for the consulate and what was going on?

GOLDBERG: Well they would give us a list of people they hoped to see and a list of events they were interested in our setting up for them. Randt was able to see the Party Secretary, Wang Yang, and that was the first and only time I saw Wang in an American scheduled meeting. I saw Wang only one other time after that with a group of other

diplomats. Having the Ambassador visit mean putting together a considerable number of briefing papers, updating contacts preparing for Q's and A's [questions and answers] and things like that. But having the ambassador did provide a greater degree of access and opportunities for having dialogues that we would not have otherwise had.

Q: I have in the back of my mind that Guangzhou is responsible for almost half of China's GDP.

GOLDBERG: Probably less. Probably Guangdong and Fujian together account for 1/3. I am not sure that it is still that high.

Q: You would have done some extensive economic reporting.

GOLDBERG: Yeah we did. It was really economic reporting on the Pearl River delta area, the area between Guangzhou and Shenzhen area. Then we did reporting on the Xiamen-Fuzhou corridor in Fujian and what was happening there as well.

Q: Connecting money to investment is important to business. Were you also looking at the banking system and making judgments about it?

GOLDBERG: The banking, I mean we did that basically through our American contacts. The local Chinese bankers weren't all that interested in meeting with us. I did get to know Frank Newman quite well. Frank was a former American Deputy Secretary of the Treasury who became a senior administrator at the Shenzhen Development Bank. We did have some contacts with the China Development Bank as well and the China Merchants Bank. None of these were major policy banks in China, whose local subsidiaries had nothing to do with us. So whatever we might have learned about the banking community came from our contacts with foreign bankers who were there. And even they were guarded.

Q: Now Shenzhen was one of the original special economic zones. You are there almost 20 years later. Has it been subsumed, overwhelmed? How are the Chinese planning their economic expansion?

GOLDBERG: Well, Shenzhen has not been overwhelmed or subsumed in any way shape or form. Shenzhen was never really under the Guangdong provincial government authority. It always reported directly to Beijing. Beijing continued to have a vested interest in Shenzhen's success and cross-border interaction with Hong Kong and whatever else they might be able to do this area. Shenzhen today is a city of seven-to-nine million people, has reasonably sophisticated financial services and telecommunications, with Huawei and ZTE campuses in the city.

Q: Now you have the consulate in Hong Kong next door. What was your relationship with them?

GOLDBERG: Starting in early 2009, we were doing more joint reporting, more cross border traveling. As a result, we were doing a better job of telling the story of what was happening in south China. In fact, we also had an MOU with Taiwan with regard to travel of Taiwan officers on the mainland and in Hong Kong.

Q: What kinds of things were being observed that impacted on the mainland and in Hong Kong businesswise? I have in mind reports that Hong Kong was moving its small manufacturing into Guangdong and as was Taiwan so I assumed you would be reporting back and forth on Hong Kong XYZ Company....

GOLDBERG: They moved the manufacturing out of Hong Kong well before I got to Guangzhou. When I went to Hong Kong, Joe Donovan would host events for me and the consulate would arrange some meetings. We would see business people who had thrown in their lot with the mainland government; their entire business operation had already been moved across the border. A lot of the Taiwan businesses who were in Hong Kong had made a similar migration, retaining the back end, sales and finance in Hong Kong, but moving the whole manufacturing operation to Guangdong, and to a lesser extent Fujian. Also increasingly large numbers of Taiwanese – many of them former military from pre-revolution days, others businesspeople pure and simple - were settling down in Shanghai.

Q: Now you had been stationed in Hong Kong many years before. From this perspective in 2006-2007, what differences did you see? Of course you are on the other side of the border now but does Hong Kong look to you?

GOLDBERG: The biggest difference was that while there was the appearance of freedom of expression and dialogue, it was also clear that many people would not say what they thought about some of the changes for fear of offending the ruling authorities. Papers that used to be critical were self-censoring.

Q: How useful was the press you were reading in Guangzhou?

GOLDBERG: Ahh. Good question. If you read the standard national papers, you questioned what they wrote about south China. But you also had papers like the Southern Weekend which often would report on issues that were critical of the mainland policy. They sometimes crossed the line; editors were fired or journalists who were imprisoned or detained for periods of time. You could do an article that was critical of something going on in another province or another locality outside Guangdong province, as sort of exposé. It was always clear to the casual reader in Guangdong or Guangzhou the real target was either the provincial governor or the mayor or deputy mayor of Guangzhou who were doing the same things. These investigations were chosen at random.

Q: What was our political reporting on governance or ethics?

GOLDBERG: We had a couple of delegations in Guangzhou looking at governance and ethical issues. We also had groups looking at rule of law. Beijing University established a

law school on its campus in Shenzhen, which taught American jurisprudence rather than the European. That got a lot of play, i.e., training lawyers in a different legal tradition. But for the most part we ended up being unable to verify much of the corruption going on around us and ended up reporting rumors rather than facts or coming up with real case studies. We had a better than average handle on what was going on in Shenzhen where almost every mayor or deputy mayor was called to Beijing and placed under administrative detention. It was easy to be corrupt in Shenzhen

Q: Let me move on to something else. You should have a fairly major USIA (U.S. Information Agency) program and outreach. What did that look like?

GOLDBERG: We had two really good people handling our public diplomacy. Darcy Zotter whom I had known in Beijing ten years before worked for me first and was followed by Paladino who had served on the China desk when I was there. I spoke at a lot of events, opened some exhibitions, fronted for some musical groups that came out. We had some seminars etc. All-in-all, it was a very well-run operation at a time when the mantra was every officer a public diplomacy officer.

Q: Was there a USIA library?

GOLDBERG: There was one attached to the USIA office that Chinese could use, but it wasn't terribly large. It was mostly periodicals and journals. We had a couple of computer terminals where people could access information.

Q: How was the funding for that? Was that always a problem for the USIA program?

GOLDBERG: You could always use more, but I don't think we were ever in a situation where we could not do a program because we didn't have the money during the three years I was there.

Q: Let me go back to something else. We are talking about an ambassadorial visit. At the time you were there, were those visits just to Guangzhou or to the other provinces?

GOLDBERG: I never traveled in Fujian or Guangxi with Sandy Randt. He only came to Guangzhou or Shenzhen.

Q: Actually one major event happens at the time you were there. In 2008 the Chinese hosted the Olympic Games. That must have been very exciting for them.

GOLDBERG: Well that really was a Beijing-centric event in almost all respects. As far as Guangzhou was concerned, they were looking towards the Asian Olympics, which the city hosted in 2010. People watched these events on television but you didn't get the same sense of excitement you got up in Beijing.

Q: Anything else about Guangzhou that we haven't touched on?

GOLDBERG: Well I would say just one other thing and then why don't we bring today's session to a close. There was an awful lot of illegal immigration and people smuggling. We organized a group of six consuls general to address those issues as a group. While I was in Guangzhou, I organized our team of CGs for a trip to Fuzhou to talk to the vice governor, the mayor of Fuzhou and immigration officials about ways we might cooperate in order to meet the challenges of illegal immigration.

Q: And they were seized with that?

GOLDBERG: They weren't as seized with it as we were. We were seized with it but they were not. My successor, Brian Goldbeck, continued the program.

Q: Now one of the programs that you would have controlled down there was the international visitors program I assume.

GOLDBERG: We contributed to the International Visitors Program by coming up with lists of people from our consular district who we thought might benefit from the travel and work/study experience.

Q: Were you fairly successful in getting your nominees accepted by the program.

GOLDBERG: Yes. All of our nominees were accepted by Beijing. We always provided a significant list of alternates and many of them were chosen as well. The only limitation was whether the Chinese would allow the people we chose to go on these programs. Those who didn't go despite being chosen would plead they couldn't go for work reasons. However, it was often the case that they could just not get permission from their unit to participate.

Q: So we are not only talking about civil society types but government people.

GOLDBERG: Yes.

Q: Was there any particularly successful IV grantee who came back and said, "Wow?"

GOLDBERG: We had some bloggers who went, who blogged about their trip. We had some people who went in and came back less enthusiastic about the relationship as a result of some of the things they saw, a sense that China's time was coming and America was in decline.

Q: Interesting. Like what?

GOLDBERG: They were critical of mass consumerism, American values, television programs, sex, clothing, you name it, so much of it was cultural. We had one conversation with a returnee about whether China was ready to have a dramatic rethink of its political system and move toward real representative government. He said it wasn't

important to have representative government, what was needed was to make officials more accountable for their actions.

Q: Bob we have got a big part coming, Embassy Beijing, 2009-20011.

GOLDBERG: Well the first question to ask is how did I even get this job?

Q: That is right because DCM jobs are special and important.

GOLDBERG: I was lucky. The DCM, Dan Piccuta, a good friend, was planning to curtail and retire. I was already paneled into a job working in the office of the Inspector General. Dan asked me and a few others whether we might consider coming to Beijing. Frankly it was one of those jobs you just can't turn down. Having been in Beijing in the 90s, having worked so many years on the China desk, and then having traveled to Beijing many times over the course of three years as Consul General in Guangzhou, I knew there were a lot of challenges and I thought I was more than capable of handling them. I had some support in the EAP front office and good recommendations from Dan and others.

Jon Huntsman had already been chosen as ambassador and was going through the confirmation process. When I contacted him and asked if he wanted to do an interview, he said no. He was comfortable with whatever decision EAP and the State Department personnel office made. I landed in Beijing on July 5, and was Chargé for the first six and a half weeks I was there. The first issue that confronted me on the day that I arrived was the uprising in Xinjiang province and whether or not I would send our officers, two military and two State Department officers in to harm's way in order to monitor the situation.

Q: Was that the embassy's call?

GOLDBERG: It was the embassy's call. We informed Washington of our intentions, but did not ask permission. We already had officers on the plane at that point. I guess if there had been any pushback out of Washington we would have reversed course. But none of us thought there would be because the demand for information was very strong. We just went ahead and did it.

Q: Now were these officers from the embassy in Beijing or from one of the consulates?

GOLDBERG: Just Beijing. Xinjiang, even though so far to the west, was in the Beijing consular district.

Q: Now how did you hear about these disturbances in that area?

GOLDBERG: It was already in the news. CNN always trumps anything we do in terms of getting the story out. But then hopefully we do our job in terms of getting the details and the story behind the story right. We also do pretty well on analysis that might be useful to policy people in Washington. That is why you need people on the ground.

Q: Now, did Chinese authorities need to approve this?

GOLDBERG: We didn't even bother with that. Had we asked, we would have tipped our hand and been told the situation was too volatile and no one could vouch for our protection.

Q: Who headed the team, do you recall?

GOLDBERG: Well what we did initially was send down a couple of very low-level officers under guise of doing our standard consular services package. In other words, we were making sure that American citizens in the area we were serving were safe. We did get inquiries about their welfare and we needed to account for them. We sent one consular officer and one political officer down. And, as I said, we also dispatched two military officers, who were there to observe military movements. We did that over a period of about six weeks alternating teams every week to ten days. Then they would come back and be debriefed. While there, they would phone in messages or send us e-mails which we turned into sitreps or situation reports on a daily and sometimes twice daily basis. When they returned they would do a more in depth cable. The military officers did the same through their system.

Q: Now did our team members get to talk to local officials or not?

GOLDBERG: Not very much. In fact once it was clear what we were doing, they were followed. There were a couple of times they were warned away from certain areas which were problematic in terms of their security.

Q: And what conclusion did the Embassy come about this event?

GOLDBERG: In the beginning, foreign reporters called the situation a home grown or domestic reaction by disadvantaged Uighurs to Chinese policies. In some places in Xinjiang, Han majorities of over 70 percent were controlling business; Uighurs were nowhere to be seen and few were benefiting from economic development in the area. Clearly the policy out of Beijing was to Sinicize the area – just as in Tibet or the Tibetan areas of Sichuan. But ultimately our conclusion was there was considerable outsider or outside the country involvement, with financial and arms support for the uprisings.

Q: Umm mmm. I can remember from my own studies when the Qing dynasty fell, up to then Manchuria had been off limits to Han Chinese. Afterward, Han Chinese farmers looking for open fields and better prospects flooded into Manchuria.

GOLDBERG: In any case it was quite a challenge, but for me as DCM the decision to send them was not a difficult call and officers wanted to go. We had no dearth of volunteers. For the first two weeks I was in Beijing, I would get calls, maybe three times a week, from the Chinese foreign ministry, usually at 10:30 at night to come in and receive a demarche at 11:30. They were always doing me a favor they said by providing

me with information that was strictly confidential – confidential that is until the stroke of midnight when it would be out in the New China News Agency. Those demarches also ended with the Chinese expressing hope that the U.S. wouldn't be involved in the events that were unfolding in Xinjiang and that the U.S. wouldn't comment unfavorably or characterize Beijing actions as human rights abuses, that we would understand the Chinese were doing everything possible to prevent the violence from escalating

Q: Now you said that the team out there would sometimes report back by e-mail.

GOLDBERG: If not by e-mail, then by blackberry or telephone. When it became clear that the U.S. was not condemning the Chinese but urging a cessation of the violence and trying to assist in finding an accommodation between Chinese and Uighur interests, then there was less blocking of communications between the Embassy and those in the field.

Q: Now let's go back to the Embassy as you arrive there. This is a major American diplomatic establishment and certainly has more agencies than just the State Department present. Could you talk about how large the embassy was and how it was organized?

GOLDBERG: Well mission-wide, there was an Embassy and five consulates. We consider Wuhan to be a consulate although it had not been planned to set it up as such – we did at that point have the right to open a fifth consulate and had chosen not to do it earlier. Our hand was forced between under the Vienna convention if you have a diplomat permanently stationed somewhere, then you need to have a consulate. We had about 2000 Chinese and Americans countrywide working for us. The Embassy when I got there had about 31 or 32 agencies. Every agency wanted to be there. We had agencies that had no presence elsewhere globally like the Food and Drug Administration, which had a total of eight people in country. So it was very big. You tend to think country team meetings are small and compact, an opportunity to engage in depth on some specific issue. But for our country team meetings, we might have as many as 35 people sitting in a secure area with a very limited amount of time to brief on their activities.

Q: Well it sort of illustrates the depth and breadth of the issues on which we interact with the Chinese. You said the Food and Drug Administration was there.

GOLDBERG: Yes, when I was Desk Director, I had participated in conversations with regard to opening the FDA. Guangzhou and Shanghai were the two consulates in which an FDA presence was approved. We spent about a year or so changing the layout of three floors in Guangzhou consulate so that we could accommodate the FDA presence and its need for a lab for testing. As you say, the FDA's presence does illustrate the breadth and depth of the relationship and how many issues we were involved in. On the FDA side alone, we had Heparin adulteration, the Melamine milk scandal, some pharmaceutical issues. All were matters on which we felt it necessary to engage the Chinese in country.

Q: Now did the Chinese have a counterpart organization to the FDA?

GOLDBERG: Whenever you set up one of these offices, there is always a memorandum of understanding that provides reciprocity. I'm not sure what the Chinese have done in this regard.

Q: About the time you arrived there or maybe earlier the Chinese had another Swine flu outbreak. Of course, they responded to it much differently than the earlier SARS outbreak. I think I read articles about tourists being tested right at the airport to see what their temperature was.

GOLDBERG: Right and if they had a temperature or some evidence of illness then they were confined for a period of anywhere from seven to ten days. This created some problems for us, not just our citizens being quarantined but the need to respond to public inquiries about what was going on. We had to have our consular officers over to the hotels and hospitals where people were confined. The Chinese were operating from a zero tolerance non-science based position. It was as if they were seeking to hermetically seal the country off from any illness. Interestingly, their course of action was popular with the Chinese public.

Q: And of course you are just saying this would involve the consular officers doing citizen services.

GOLDBERG: It ate up a lot of time.

Q: How big a consular section did we have?

GOLDBERG: China wide we issued hundreds of thousands of visas a year. So it was a substantial operation. We had 40 or 50 Chinese and Americans or more working on visas and American services.

Q: Now how was that visa situation because from 9/11 there had been new rules and it slowed the process down. Was that impacting on your situation in China?

GOLDBERG: Post-9/11, many countries thought the United States was closing its borders. Actually we were redefining ways in which the United States could make its borders more secure but we didn't do a very good job of explaining what we were up to. We had a one size fits all because you don't tailor your visa policy to any one country; it is designed to be worldwide. Our visa issuances while I was in Beijing increased dramatically; this was true of all of China. By the time I left in January 2011, we were issuing well in excess of 80% on an adjusted basis. But our rep on the street was that visas were somehow difficult to get. In fact, our bias was towards issuance and not towards denial.

Q: Speaking of some of the interesting organizations that were at the embassy at the time, I am looking at the list. DHS [Department of Homeland Security] was there. DHSCIS [Citizenship and Immigration Services], DHSICE [Immigrant and Customs Enforcement], what were they doing?

GOLDBERG: CIS was also in Guangzhou and Shanghai looking at what was called visas 1992, or those given to family following to join people who have refugee status in the States. CIS was evaluating and processing family members. In some instances family members weren't really real family members, but individuals paying the people in the States to put them on an application. This could cost you anywhere from \$25,000 to \$50,000 if you were successful in getting your name on the list. So we had a lot of people at DHS following this very closely as to whether or not people were in the appropriate legal status. But they also did some other things in terms of liaison with the Chinese on immigration and customs and border issues.

Q: So in fact they were in liaison with the Chinese on some of these other issues sharing their expertise. At the time I was there, there were an outstanding group of officers in the defense attaché office. I think General (Charles) Hooper was there at the time that you were there. What were their responsibilities?

GOLDBERG: General Hooper had left before I got there. I saw him I guess in April or May, but he had been replaced by Brad Gehrke, a rear admiral, by the time I arrived.

Q: What was DAO's contribution to the mission and their liaison with their Chinese counterparts?

GOLDBERG: Their mission was threefold. First they were trying to build relationships military to military. This was difficult as the Chinese military held them at arm's length first because of our Taiwan policy and then later because of differences over navigation in the South China Sea. Their second function was an intelligence one. Their officers traveled around the country doing direct observation of military installations if possible (and it was not all that possible frankly) and collecting information from people along the way. Then the third function was working within the mission to advise us in general about what is going on. They also coordinated with other elements of the mission that had intel functions.

Q: Now at this time how were we ranking the Embassy in size? It was one of the larger ones wasn't it?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, I think it was number two.

Q: Now you are there; you are chargé. That is kind of a tough way to start an assignment. You don't even get a chance to know where the bodies are before you have to start directing them around. But Ambassador Huntsman comes in. How did he see his role and how did you two work together to run the embassy?

GOLDBERG: Well it was always clear from day one that the Ambassador was the policy guy, the public face of the mission, and that I was the mission manager. But he was very generous in including me in any meetings that I wanted to be included in. It was always clear mission-wide that anything substantive that went to the ambassador for approval or

consideration as part of his overall activities and agenda passed through the DCM's office. That is normally the way that it operates. We had a very good relationship from day one. He came in fully briefed. He had ideas about things he wanted to do from the moment he arrived. A lot of our activities were pointed toward the President's visit at the end of the year. So we convened a series of meetings and hosted any number of delegations really with eyes towards making that visit a success.

Q: Now actually Ambassador Huntsman has been an ambassador before.

GOLDBERG: Twice. He had been Ambassador to Singapore when he was 30 during Bush I and he was also Ambassador and Deputy U.S. Trade Representative for Asia during Bush II. So he came fully conversant on all issues. While he was engaged on all fronts, he took a special interest in the economic working group. We formed a working group – replicating the interagency group in Washington – so that we could come up with ideas on how to expand our commercial presence and resolve trade conflicts, which are endemic in any relationship of this size. Our objective was to advise Washington on the best ways to create opportunities for American businesses and jobs for American workers.

Q: Then in late October 2009, Commerce Secretary Locke, USTR Kirk and a group went to Guangzhou for the U.S. China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade. That is a pretty high level delegation. Is that trade commission particularly active?

GOLDBERG: Yes. It has been around for a quarter of a century, meeting annually at the top level, once or twice a year at the deputy level and constantly at the assistant level. It was designed to handle the day-to-day operational aspects of the trade and commercial relationship. The annual Strategic and Economic dialogue in contrast is supposed to look at the broader conceptual issues that further bilateral trade interests or bedevil them.

Q: What were some of the major economic issues that arose during this assignment?

GOLDBERG: Pretty much the same thing as any other time during the last decade. Access to markets, transparency issues, intellectual property rights, financial services, banking and insurance, capacity building. One of the issues that was hard to get a grip on was “indigenous innovation.” It appeared that the Chinese were only going to allow domestic companies to bid for government programs and that were going to give favorable, if not exclusive, consideration to domestic companies in a whole host of things from telecommunications to infrastructure. These domestic companies, by virtue of dominating the domestic Chinese market, would acquire the know-how and skills to be global in scope and the very bigness of China would dictate that China set new rules for standards and regulations. Indigenous innovation was characterized as one of the “new” developments that we had to address, but in fact, it wasn't as new as a lot of people made it out to be. It was pretty much how they operated most of the time.

Q: Actually I notice that the time you were there the Rio Tinto scandal popped up. What was at stake there?

GOLDBERG: For us, insofar as the arrests of the Rio Tinto employees were concerned, nothing. We weren't involved in providing iron ore to the Chinese and Rio and the others that were involved are not American firms. Rio's employees, among them Stern Hu, who was arrested with a couple of Chinese employees, is Australian. Our Australian colleagues were most under the gun wavering between wanting to be supportive if this were an injustice but they were outraged when they found out that the bribery allegations were true. From a broader perspective, the Rio arrests sent a chilling message to all companies about the scrutiny they were being subjected to from Chinese authorities. What saved the U.S. companies was the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which makes it illegal, punishable by a fine and imprisonment, for American companies to bribe or act in a corrupt fashion overseas.

Q: What were some of the things that Ambassador Huntsman was particularly focused on in addition to economics?

Q: In addition to economics, he was very much involved in our VPPs, Virtual Presence Post program. He supported the expansion of these activities by either providing money or showing up, just visiting. He traveled a lot. From the moment he arrived he was very positive about public diplomacy in general, talking about who we are in the United States and our deep abiding interest in making the U.S.-China relationship a successful one. He also made the most of his family - one of the things the Chinese were most intrigued about was his adopted Chinese daughter, Gracie Mei. Jon and Mary Kaye visited Gracie's hometown several times, and the Ambassador took Gracie back to the orphanage from where she was adopted. I think he was giving her an appreciation of her identity as a Chinese, but was always aware that she was now an American.

In addition to the VPP travel, the Ambassador visited all the consulates two-three times during his time in China and he went other places where Americans had not have been for a period of time. He was much in demand by business for the support he gave companies seeking to expand their commercial presence in China.

His third priority was being CEO of Mission China. So he did outreach to the mission, walking around, listening the concerns staff brought to his attention. Morale at mission China shot up significantly during the period he was there.

His fourth priority was ensuring that Washington was clued in on everything that was going on. He would be on the phone - mornings and evenings - with key individuals in Washington, providing his views about what was going on as well as listening to theirs. We did limited distribution scene setters for major visits and he had something insightful to add to every one of them. I would edit things and add a fair amount, but he then took that and shaped it in ways that gave it a distinctive voice.

Q: The Ambassador's travel was remarkable. How about your own travel?

GOLDBERG: Well my predecessors, interestingly enough, didn't travel. Sandy Randt,

the Ambassador, thought it was the Ambassador's job – and indeed the Ambassador's prerogative to be the public face of the mission and he alone traveled for the front office. One of my predecessors traveled once. Dan Picutta traveled a couple of times. But I got to all of the consulates (except Guangzhou) and went to Shanghai and Chengdu three/four times during the 18 or 19 months that I was there. The Ambassador thought that was important to demonstrate that we were hands on and concerned about the welfare of the people who were serving outside of Beijing.

Q: Now as the chief management officer did you run into any inter agency squabbles that you had to referee or major personnel issues?

GOLDBERG: Of course. Many times that was reconciling differences on the economic side of the house. Some of the disagreements that existed in Washington were mirrored in Beijing. But Huntsman's view, and I think he was singularly successful in dealing with this problem of interagency dissonance, was that we were all in this together, working with one another in a collegial fashion and we could as a unit could make a unified series of proposals to Washington about how issues should be addressed. You were always going to have interagency squabbles. And personnel problems, some of which I handled better than others, but I give Huntsman full credit for handling them well all the time. What always impresses me about missions in general, and I encountered this in Guangzhou, is how many things end up on the senior manager's desk and they are issues you were never prepared for. You heard a lot about some things people might do and someone would invariably do something that made you want to ask "My God what were they thinking?"

Q: Now one of the major pressures on an Embassy would be a presidential visit, and President Bush visited Beijing in November 2009. You mentioned that when you arrived in June you knew that a presidential visit was on the schedule. Could you sort of walk us thorough how a mission as large as Beijing begins to shape and organize one of these visits. What is the Embassy role in these processes?

GOLDBERG: You start by trying to help Washington define the issues. You are very operational, focusing on some things you are actually seeing on a daily basis. There is a lot of control officer work, inspecting, visiting the sites the President is going to visit and making sure that everything is staffed out. Inside the mission, one of your first decisions is to designate a senior officer, not necessarily in terms of rank but in experience, who will be the operational point or contact for the White House. This person also has an assistant who may or may not be a junior officer. As an aside, let me note that an Embassy as large as Beijing can afford to assign multiple officers to do things as a training/mentoring exercise.

Next you set up a working group. We did that in early August. Our working group eventually grew to 20-25 people. Before the President arrived, we had a daily countdown meeting and when the President's team arrived, we sometimes met twice a day. The DCM is nominally the overall control for a presidential visit, but a smart DCM knows he or she needs a couple of the Mission's best officers to make a visit work.

Q: Who were those primary points of contact?

GOLDBERG: Well on this presidential visit, I think it was Graham Mayer in the political section who had worked for me on the China desk, and Brooke Spelman, who is the daughter of former Shanghai Consul General Doug Spelman. Wise choices, wonderful officers. That's about all the credit I deserve.

Q: Now in these kinds of visits there are expected formal sessions and required dinners. But the mission generally is in a position to say if the visiting dignitary went to this campus or this monument, it would be unique and make a particular statement. Did the embassy get a chance to nominate...

GOLDBERG: You make your views known all the time, you provide lots of options, and the White House chooses. Naturally, the president's time in Beijing was quite limited so all the things we thought might be good from a PR point of view were not possible. The last thing he did while he was in China before getting on Air Force One was to go out to the Great Wall. In fact that photo of him in the leather jacket standing alone on the wall at Badaling, against a backdrop of the Gobi desert, was used by some Chinese firms for commercial purposes. Nice that it was so iconic, but in point of fact, he was freezing out there. As was Jon Huntsman who didn't take an overcoat with him.

The most significant part of the visit was the President's Shanghai town hall meeting. You will recall he went to Shanghai before he came to Beijing. He was very comfortable in these town hall forums and the idea was that he would make a few remarks and then respond to Q&A. Our hope was that the town hall would be broadcast countrywide – an illusion from the very beginning and not sure who was smoking what when we tried to do this – and we spent a lot of time negotiating with the Chinese for extended coverage. Until the last minute it wasn't clear how much coverage there would be. It was not nationwide but it was better than we thought we might get, limited largely to Shanghai and its environs. What gave some limited satisfaction was that when his town hall comments hit the blogosphere, tens of millions more Chinese had the opportunity to read what he had to say. The whole experience was frustrating – difficult negotiations with the Chinese on coverage, the venue, who would be present at the town hall. Looking back, we'd have probably been better not to have done it because the press story was how the Chinese were trying to limit the town hall rather than the efforts to give the President a platform to speak directly to the Chinese people.

Q: Do you check this off as a good visit?

GOLDBERG: Personally I think this was a very good visit, a successful visit. As good as it was, it really was the end of a reasonably successful period of diplomatic engagement and the start of a period of considerable difficulty. People looking at the visit in retrospect thought the visit had not gone well, while people who were part of it felt quite the opposite. What happened just a month later in Copenhagen, i.e., the public airing of our differences on environmental issues was just the beginning. In July and February, we

were beset with Taiwan arms sales and the Dalai Lama's visit.

The President had made it very clear when he was in China meeting with Hu Jintao and others that he intended to see the Dalai Lama when the Dalai Lama was in the states next and that he was going forward with a package of arms sales that had been approved previously. The Chinese would always get angry when we announced the sales, then even angrier when we followed through with actual sales. We also had some significant trade issues which contributed to the downward spiral a period of two or three months.

Q: I was noticing on the 18th of February 2010, the president did meet the Dalai Lama in Washington and the media picked up a story that the Ambassador was summoned to take a protest at MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

GOLDBERG: Pretty standard reaction. Any time the president meets the Dalai Lama, the Ambassador is summoned to protest this interference. Sometimes he is called the day before and then the day after as well. Nuisance calls, really. The Chinese would always claim we were engaging in a conversation with a "splittist" who is not a really a religious figure.

Q: About that same time, March 2-4, 2010, Deputy Secretary Steinberg and Jeff Bader came to town, very close after the President's visit. What was the focus of their trip?

GOLDBERG: Well two things. First, we wanted to emphasize that it was important to have a normal dialogue even in times of stress. Our second objective was to engage the Chinese in a strategic discussion separate from the Strategic and Economic dialogue (S&ED). We wanted to address matters like cyber security, the weaponization of space, the South China Sea and maritime navigation. We also thought this kind of dialogue could be a way of having a more open and frank dialogue on Taiwan or Iran. It took about a year to get Chinese assent to consider such a conversation under the rubric of the S&ED which Steinberg had shortly before he left office as Deputy Secretary. The fact that the Chinese accepted the Steinberg/Bader visit at that time was a sign that they wanted to find a way to reengage over three tough months.

Q: I would suspect that on an issue like Taiwan arms sales, the whole mainland-Taiwan relationship has a lot of nuances to it, and you are hearing different things from different Chinese organizations. How would you describe the discussion of Taiwan during this period that you were DCM?

GOLDBERG: The cross-Straits relationship was improving on its own. Without any push or help or "interference" from the U.S. Ma Ying-jeou had replaced Chen Shui-bian as president. Ma was interested in establishing a broader, more mutually beneficial economic relationship with the government in Beijing. He also wanted to promote cultural and student exchanges. He avoided talk about political associations of any sort. The mainland-Taiwan relationship was operating in a fairly positive fashion and it eased somewhat the anxiety in Beijing about Taiwan independence. It didn't spell the end of their concerns about U.S. arms sales, of course; now the mantra was "see, things have

improved, they are improving further, why would you sell arms to Taiwan when there is no longer any threat from us.” So there was no end to Chinese complaints about our failure to honor the third joint communiqué of 1982 in which we pledged, among other things, to decrease the quantity and quality of arms that America sold to Taiwan for its self-defense. I can’t really recall a good conversation on Taiwan on an official level that concluded with “you have given us something to think about and we will be back to you.”

Q: I was noticing there were some visits back and forth between China and Taiwan which seemed to be thickening the economic relationship and what not. That was of reportable interest I presume.

GOLDBERG: That is right, and we encouraged that. We also reinforced our interest with the State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office. Of course, we were also happy that we were no longer dealing with all the name calling that had gone on before during the Chen Shuibian years.

Q: One of the other major relationships the embassy was probably watching was the Japanese-Chinese relationship. How was that proceeding?

GOLDBERG: That was a legacy of World War Two and subsequently a tribute to both Japanese obtuseness about the image they presented by periodically making ill-considered statements about the War and the visits to Yasakuni Shrine and to Chinese efforts to play the nationalism card by criticizing Japan for omissions and a failure to apologize adequately. Clearly the Chinese valued the economic and trade relationship with the Japanese, the access to services products and technology. I’d say the two sides have a “Yes, But” relationship. Yes we want to move ahead and we can work together, but apologies to date have not been good and by the way that relationship you have with the United States is directed against us, so why don’t you reconsider. This is complicated today by the vast amounts of oil and gas resource interests in the seas claimed by both China and Japan. You have Chinese submarines patrolling in territorial waters, which are off Japan’s continental shelf, and creating incidents that require U.S. support for an ally.

Q: I was noticing that in September 2010, there was this incident of a Chinese fishing boat colliding with a Japanese patrol boat. That occurred in one of those disputed areas. I saw media reports that in the midst of that controversy or circumstance the U.S. told Japan that the area was covered by a security treaty. That is a fairly strong support to the Japanese side.

GOLDBERG: We made no bones about it. We reaffirmed our commitment to Japan in an area that we believed the Chinese were encroaching upon.

Q: Another area where the embassy is probably making a fairly substantial contribution is the whole North Korean situation and the Chinese role in getting the Six Party Talks going. How did the embassy see China’s role with regard to North Korea?

GOLDBERG: The six party talks were managed out of Washington, with advice and assistance from the mission. In terms of direct influence on policy, the embassy's role was less significant than people might think was the case. We maintained contact with our colleagues at the South Korean embassy and worked very closely with them but they were as in the dark about what was going on in Seoul as we were sometimes about Washington's actions. I would meet periodically and exchange views with the Korean DCM, who went on to become Korea's senior negotiator for the Six Party Talks. The political counselor and political officers had their own set of contacts – I mean we were meeting with them at all levels and having essentially the same conversation, devoid of much more than speculation. The South Koreans were always interested in seeing whether there was any difference between what Washington was telling them and what the Embassy in Beijing was telling them.

We also tried to have as many meetings as we possible with the International Liaison Department of the Chinese Communist Party. As you might know, the Chinese relationship with North Korea is party-to-party, not government-to-government. The ILD is a tough nut to crack. They would brief us after a high level visit but often they would dissemble about what had happened. For example, I was once told that Kim Jong-il had been remarkably spry on one his visits in Northeast China, jumping up on a train, when we knew he was still suffering from the effects of his stroke. Anything we learned in China as to what was going on in North Korea was either through contact with NGO's that had some role in North Korea or from Chinese think tankers who were prominent in providing advice to party officials.

Q: Was there any particular domestic, economic internal issue in which the Embassy quite disagreed with an approach that Washington suggested?

GOLDBERG: Not really. We never got to that point because the communication was so good. People had a lot of confidence in one another. Jeff Bader was over at the NSC and was very savvy and policy-oriented. We had differences of emphasis but not basic approaches with those doing economic policy at USTR, Commerce, and Treasury. The EAP people at the State Department - Joe Donovan for whom I had worked was PDAS, Dave Shear was Deputy Assistant Secretary for China – I'd known for years. Kurt Campbell and Jim Steinberg were very engaged and for the most part prepared to entertain views that we might have with regard to how to get things done.

Q: You mentioned extensive contact with your South Korean counterpart. Was there kind of a Friday afternoon lunch group with your counterparts in other embassies?

GOLDBERG: We had get-togethers with like-minded missions. I was part of two groups like that. The South Koreans were not part of either group. The Ambassador had similar meetings with his counterparts.

Q: That way you would be able to see what other people are seeing in their reporting and sharing.

GOLDBERG: We certainly share our views on issues of general interest. And we'd discuss different approaches. It was not surprising that the conversation usually turned on what the Americans were doing.

Q: Off a slightly different angle. Beijing is a major diplomatic post for everybody, which must have meant tens of national day celebrations. Did you get involved in those requirements?

GOLDBERG: I did far more of that when I was in Guangzhou where we had 30 plus national day events. I did not go to all that many in Beijing. For the most part you'd go to the really important four or five; the rest you passed out to other mission officers and they'd have an opportunity to meet with their counterparts. We'd often have five or six people at a single national day event – from the political and economic sections, the military, some other agencies.

Q: In your own work did you have a set of regular contacts on the Chinese side of things?

GOLDBERG: Mostly in the foreign ministry - the director general for the Americas. I did not meet as many Chinese in my official capacity as you might think because I was spending the vast bulk of my time inside on management and paper flow issues, chairing various working groups, dealing with the daily personnel issue.

Q: One of the things that is in train and I have lost track of the time line. The U.S. was planning or breaking ground for a new embassy. Was that going on at the time when you were there?

GOLDBERG: Breaking ground for a new consulate in Guangzhou, yes. Negotiating for land in Shanghai, yes. Looking at building an annex onto the embassy property, yes. The annex will be eight stories and designed to handle the dramatic increase in the number of officers who have been sent to Beijing since the mission itself was built. The original "right sizing" blueprint did not adequately account for how large the mission would eventually become.

Q: Eight story annex. Well that means you are no longer in Erban and Sanban and those facilities.

GOLDBERG: We haven't really been able to get rid of those and we recently decided to reopen Erban to accommodate visa overflow. The problem is that we have a difference of opinion over who should reap the benefits of the land appreciation when the properties are sold. Yiban remains the Ambassador's residence and we will stay there for the long term because we are never going to get another piece of property like that. What we need to do is tear it down and build something that is more representative of our presence in China. That is not going to happen any time soon in this current economic environment.

Q: So when did we move to the new Embassy site?

GOLDBERG: 8-8-08. President Bush was there to inaugurate. The actual move itself came a couple of months later. I was not in Beijing at the time.

Q: One of the things that you must have been watching, certainly the officers in the external section of the political side were doing so, was China's outreach to the rest of the world and its greater diplomatic activities. I think you and I just shared a list of President Hu travels here, the Premier travels there. Did you see and report on high level Chinese outreach to other countries?

GOLDBERG: Yes. The Chinese are on the world scene, even if they are not yet a global power in the classic sense. They have been going out so to speak for at least fifteen years. Jiang Zemin certainly liked to travel and it is a part of any senior leader's activities. After any visit, we would seek an MFA briefing; we would also talk with the missions where the Chinese leaders had traveled as well as ask U.S. missions in those countries for their take on what had happened. Though it sounds like we did a lot along this line, it really was not a significant part of our work.

Q: What was the significant part of our work?

GOLDBERG: I must have drunk the public diplomacy Kool Aid but I think a big part of our work was non-traditional diplomacy – trying to find a way to get the Chinese to understand the United States better, I mean really understand what was going on beneath their surface observations; we also wanted to get away from the Chinese mantra that they understood us better than we understood them. During the whole 4 ½ years I was there, we invested an awful lot of time in public diplomacy and outreach. To his great credit, Jon Huntsman took up that cause and made it his own as well. Also of significance was the economic and commercial work, helping American business and agriculture, finding new opportunities would lead to jobs in America.

On the political side, we worked to get traction in our discussions on issues as varied as North Korea, Iran, and Afghanistan-Pakistan. We wanted our policymakers to understand Chinese views on these issues so that when they presented American policies, they would present them in a way that also responded to Chinese concerns. Overall, just about every bit of our work was significant in my view; but were I evaluating the Huntsman legacy, I'd say it related as much to our interest in showcasing what America has to offer to the Chinese as in the more traditional things we do.

Q: Now did that include leadership grants, the USIA program?

GOLDBERG: Sure, in Guangzhou, as I said earlier, we made suggestions that were then vetted in Beijing. In Beijing, I saw and signed off on the final list. I didn't have anything really to do with it as such. The country team that evaluated potential applicants made good decisions and I think we were able to get the right people to the States.

Q: Now in terms of official Chinese travel, the embassy always wanted to encourage visits to the U.S. I recall in late October, 2009, the vice chairman of the military

commission General Xu Caihou visited the U.S. and had some fairly significant meetings with Steinberg, Sec Def Gates, and even President Obama. Would you categorize that as a fairly successful trip?

GOLDBERG: I think that is a fair assessment. The Chinese were very pleased and thought it was a successful visit as well, especially being received by the President. Unfortunately successful visits don't necessarily lead to outcomes where you are able to work more closely together to find common ground. I don't think the Chinese are ready for that kind of military-to-military relationship. They will take what they can get on the protocol side, but on the substance side, they hold us at arm's length. It is not just Taiwan arms sales that lead to a downturn in mil-mil ties, although Taiwan is important. It is also about Chinese insecurity – they are spending billions to modernize their military and to develop strategic doctrines. They like having asymmetry in the relationship. The more they know about us the better, and the less we know about them, the better.

Q: Reciprocity is always part of the diplomatic portfolio. January 18-21, President Hu Jintao visited the U.S. That must have involved quite a bit of coordination with the Chinese, devising an itinerary. How does the embassy get involved in that level of Chinese official coming to the States?

GOLDBERG: Well in the same way as when President Obama visited Beijing. We had a working group in Beijing to coordinate with our Chinese counterparts. We had meetings at all levels, the main ones being the Ambassador's with Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai to go over what the agenda would be. I met with my counterpart Zheng Zeguang and then later with his replacement Xie Feng, who had returned from Washington where he had been DCM. They had their working groups; we had ours. We all wanted to ensure that Hu Jintao found a welcoming environment in Washington and with the American people that he might meet along the way. The Chinese are a lot more reserved about those kinds of interactions than Americans are. So whereas the President was anxious to have a town hall meeting with a real exchange of views, the Chinese always wanted to limit the interactions their president had with the American people. They were concerned there might be some sort of embarrassment. Always in the back of their minds, they wondered: is there is going to be the playing of Taiwan's national anthem, a reference to the Republic of China rather than the People's Republic of China, a Falun Gong episode like the one that took place in 2005, some kind of human rights demonstration. We always tried to tell them that in a country like the United States the unexpected is going to happen and you need to be prepared for that. Well, they never accepted that which is why I think most of their officials come off looking stiff and formal.

Q: It must keep their planners on edge. When President Obama came out, it is always fun dealing with the Secret Service, White House Security. Did any particular things come up along those lines?

GOLDBERG: Yeah there was one incident. Normally we reserved the entire floor that the President is on for security purposes. That means we really don't want any Chinese anywhere near the President; for security purposes. But the Chinese reserved rooms for

themselves on the President's floor in November 2000 and not just one or two rooms but a half dozen, crowding out some people who needed to be around the President. That was a deal breaker for a visit as it could compromise the security and communications for the President. So you get these pissing contests going back and forth with each side marking its territory.

Q: You have been involved with China for some time by now. What would you tag as major changes in their outlook or attitude or trends over the years, including did you see whether MFA was one influential domestically and secondly more talented and trained.

GOLDBERG: Well on the MFA side I think the foreign minister and foreign affairs communities are less influential these days than in the past. Clearly the state counselor, Dai Bingguo, had the most influence by virtue of his relationship with President Hu Jintao. It will be interesting to see what the next state counselor's relationship with Xi Jinping, the heir apparent, will be like. The Chinese certainly do have better language officers, and their people come back constantly to the U.S.; they are more sophisticated about what was happening in the U.S. Regrettably, the conversations we'd have in private were not all that sophisticated or illuminating, but pro forma, a recitation of talking points. They would have no reason, of course, to have any other kind of discussion. If we engaged productively with anyone, it was with China's think tank people, who as I said were incredibly influential by virtue of the fact that they were writing policy papers to the Chinese leaders, and some of those are actually acted upon.

Q: When I was stationed in Beijing we did pay attention to the think tanks and called on them from time to time. I assume the embassy is keeping up that contact work.

GOLDBERG: I didn't do very much of that as DCM, but our political counselor and political officers certainly did so. Those who were involved with economic issues similarly met frequently with their contacts in think tanks on trade and investment, financial issues. Our Treasury attaché had very good contacts over at the People's Bank of China and at the Ministry of Finance, less good at the Chinese state owned banks because you required PBOC approval before engaging with them – and that was not forthcoming. Overall, on the sophistication side, the jury is still out.

Q: Let me ask you a few questions, you talked about virtual presence posts. Could you define that and say what it means for China?

GOLDBERG: In places where we do not have consulates, we identify cities or areas that might be of significance to the United States for economic reasons or public diplomacy reasons or because up and coming leaders reside there, or we have a lot of American citizens living there. We identify these and we organize teams in the consulates and at the embassy to go to these places every six to eight weeks, if possible, to do programs. We incorporate ambassadorial travel, travel by political and economic counselors, consular services work, and anything else that might be of interest – opening an American company, doing a health program.

We also have a website for each VPP and upload general information to it as well as slide shows of American life – and if we have a visit, anything specific that happened. As I said earlier, country-wide there were 15-16 places identified for VPPs, 15-16 working groups put together, some more successful than others.

Q: Now as the economic and tourist relationship with China has expanded, and I suspect it has expanded significantly, did any particularly unique or difficult American Citizen Services consular cases come up?

GOLDBERG: Yes – especially problems encountered by Chinese-American businesspeople. Often this was in the form of extortion, less commonly there were accusations of spying or obtaining information illegally. There was one case in which the Ambassador took a personal interest - a Chinese-American, the geologist Xue Feng, whom he felt had been unfairly treated and who was convicted of getting information that had been public when he downloaded it (and was still available on the internet) and then subsequently classified secret. When I left, he was still appealing his sentencing. The Ambassador's interest in this particular case was so great that either he or I would go visit this person once a month. It was a statement about the case, but also about the fate of Americans in China who were being unjustly accused. I visited about eight times or so.

Q: Now American tourism to China is increasing by leaps and bounds, at least in my mail I am always getting offers to take a Yangzi River trip or visit Xian. So the embassy must be aware of large numbers of Americans just coming through the country.

GOLDBERG: We did, but for the most part we did not have any contact with them unless they lost a passport or there was some problem that they wanted to bring to our attention.

Q: Now this is your retirement assignment.

GOLDBERG: Well it turned out that way.

Q: How did it turn out that way?

GOLDBERG: I aged out. I turned 65 in January of 2011 and you retire if you are not in a Presidentially-appointed position - an assistant secretary or above for the State Department or Ambassador. Since I had neither, I had to retire in January of that year.

Q: You haven't exactly cut your ties with China. What have you been doing in retirement?

GOLDBERG: Well I am now a principal with the Scowcroft Group headed by former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft. I have been working on China and other Asia-Pacific issues. Many of the skills are the same and the great thing is that I'm learning about business by doing business-related things.

Q: Just as a wrap up question; would you recommend the Foreign Service to a group of college students?

GOLDBERG: Well I am a living example of it. I have a son who is a Foreign Service Officer, currently on the China desk as the pol-mil officer. I have a daughter who is currently serving in Baghdad and a son-in-law – my daughter’s husband – who is also a Foreign Service Officer and also in Baghdad. They all served in Shenyang in Northeast China when I was desk director or in Guangzhou or Beijing. So the experiences that they had living abroad as children (my son-in-law had also lived abroad) were positive. I hope that they have as interesting and exciting a career as I have had. It was a terrific 28-29 years. My third son, who is in Baltimore and is a lawyer for the city, would have made a great FSO as well – maybe someday.

End of interview.