

JERUSALEM

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WELLS STABLER
Vice Consul
Jerusalem (1944-1950)

Bureau of Near East Affairs
Washington, DC (1950-1953)

Ambassador Wells Stabler was born in Massachusetts on October 31, 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1941 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. His career included positions in Israel, Jordan, Italy, France, and Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Spain. Ambassador Stabler was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

Q: So you went to Jerusalem in late 1944. How did you get there?

STABLER: That is a long, long story. I was visiting the family of a close friend of mine, who is actually my brother-in-law, who had gone overseas with OSS. I had gone up to Coopertown to visit his family and while I was there I telephoned Personnel and was told that I was going to be vice consul in Jerusalem. Obviously one knew about Palestine and Jerusalem, but I really had to go look up a map because I hadn't had it in mind at all, except in the Biblical sense. Although I had, when we lived in Venezuela, I was down there one summer, met (my father and mother were great friends of the British Minister and his wife) Field Marshal Lord Allenby who had liberated Jerusalem from the Turks in the First World War and was visiting Caracas. A very nice man. Little did I think at that time that one day I would be walking the streets of Jerusalem.

I left in early November, 1944. I took a Portuguese freighter from Philadelphia. We spent two weeks crossing the Atlantic, flying the Portuguese flag with a big spotlight over it at night hoping that the German U-boats would see the flag of neutral Portugal and leave us alone. We crossed without incident stopping briefly at the Azores, but we were not allowed ashore. We finally got into Lisbon two weeks after leaving.

At that particular time, in order to go on...there was a flight once a week, I think, from Lisbon to Gibraltar. I could have gone on that plane the day after I arrived, but the Chargé d'Affaires in Lisbon was an old friend of mine from the days I worked in American Republic Affairs, Newby Walmsley [his wife Theresa and he are now both long dead] and he wanted me to stay for a visit. So I accepted their kind invitation and stayed for a week in Lisbon by which time there were no more planes for Gibraltar. So I had to go by Portuguese Airline via Tangier and Casablanca from which one went to Cairo.

When I got to Casablanca I stayed at the famous Anfa Hotel where the Casablanca Conference had taken place. It was under US military control. They informed me that there was no way I could possibly get out of Casablanca under a week. So I had a week in Casablanca and made a visit to Rabat. I flew up to Algiers in a US plane. Spent three days there. Then took a Royal South African Air Force plane which was a cargo plane full of Christmas packages and had no seats, so I sat on some of the packages. We finally got into Cairo shortly before Christmas of 1944. At that time the US Minister was Pinkney Tuck. His number two was an old friend as well

from my days in Latin American affairs, Cecil Lyon. I telephoned the Consulate General in Jerusalem to inform them that I had at least gotten as far as Cairo because the last they had heard of me was sometime in early November. They said, "Oh, we are glad you have gotten this far, but don't you dare come near Jerusalem until after Christmas because no one can do anything about you."

Q: Even towards the end of the war there were still people coming in there...pilgrims and that sort...

STABLER: Absolutely. And of course there were enormous numbers of US troops that ploughed into Palestine, particularly for the Christmas period, Christmas services in Bethlehem. So, the YMCA, which was the one place one could stay was completely crowded and booked. So I was told to stay out of Jerusalem. I stayed in Cairo for another week and had a wonderful time. I had never been in the Near East and did some sightseeing. I think it was the 27th of December that I finally got a British Royal Air Force plane that took me to Jerusalem, to Lydda, the airport.

I thought I would not wire ahead but just arrive in Jerusalem and go up to the Consulate and present myself. I got to Lydda and the first person I saw was Field Marshal Lord Gort who at that point was the High Commissioner for Palestine and Transjordan. He was just on his way out for good. I wondered how I would get to Jerusalem. At that point a very nice British Army officer who saw me sort of stranded said he was going to Jerusalem and offered me a ride. I rode in his car through beautiful country. The orange blossoms were out. It was a beautiful day, cold, but beautiful. We drove on up into the hills and arrived at the Consulate where I presented myself.

They said they would have met me if I had let them know. Well, I didn't want to bother anybody. I reported to Lowell Pinkerton, who was then the Consul General and Christian Steeger, who was the number two. I set myself up in the YMCA and there began almost five years between Jerusalem and Amman.

Q: What was the situation in early 1945 in Jerusalem as you saw it?

STABLER: The war was still on. The US had camps in Palestine. Of course the British had substantial forces there, although the war had by that time passed on. The Middle East was no longer a theater of operations as such. There was a Middle East theater but no war operations. It had all shifted basically to Europe.

The Jews and the Arabs were in an uneasy truce during the war. Most of the terrorism and the civil disorder that existed prior to the war had come to an end. There were incidents. The Jews were bringing in illegal immigrants which was annoying the British and, of course, the Arabs. The Arabs had resented the British efforts even to let some of the Jews in legally and they felt the British were being unfair to the Arabs. The result of that was that there was a certain number of Palestinian Arabs who openly declared themselves for the Nazis.

[The grand mufti of Jerusalem] had indeed thrown his lot in publicly by going to Berlin. He was regarded by the British as a war criminal although he was never brought to trial.

In spite of these things the terrorist operations against the British that had been seen in Palestine in the years preceding the war had pretty much come to a halt. Jews and Arabs alike had participated in the war effort. As a matter of fact, just as a matter of interest, there was in Jerusalem a thing called the Middle East Center of Arab Studies which had been set up by the British Foreign Office for purposes of teaching Arabic to British officers who would either stay on in some civil administrative capacity or go in to the Foreign Service. It was run by Colonel Bertram Thomas who had quite a background in the Arabian desert. He was a bit of a four-flusher, but nonetheless he was there. One of the main assistants who spoke absolutely perfect Arabic was a gentleman who was a British Army major, Major Aubrey Eban, who later became Abba Eban.

So there was a truce. I traveled extensively in Palestine and it was basically perfectly safe for anybody to do that. Curious enough, it was on the 27th of December, 1945, exactly one year to the day I arrived in Jerusalem, that I almost got blown up. A bomb, Jewish, had been placed in a British police compound. That began again the whole cycle of violence that went on right up until the British got out in May, 1948. The truce had broken down. The Arabs and the Jews started again against each other. The Jews against the British particularly, to protest British efforts to stop Jewish immigration into Palestine from Europe. Of course they ran many ships in illegally. Beached them and the immigrants would get off and disappear into the Jewish areas of Palestine along the coast.

The Arabs were aware of this. They objected to it. The level of violence simply escalated. You remember, later on, maybe '46 the King David explosion...the Stern gang had brought in milk drums in the basement of the King David Hotel which also housed the British Secretariat for the Mandate and blew it up. It was a ghastly scene.

Q: When you first arrived there was this truce going on. What were you doing and what was the main interest of our Consulate General in Jerusalem?

STABLER: The main effort, really was, of course, observing what was happening. The Consulate General had the rather unique position of being one of the two Consulate Generals that reported directly to Washington.

Q: It and Hong Kong.

STABLER: Yes, it and Hong Kong. The exequaturs were issued by two foreign powers, Great Britain as it related to Palestine and then, even though Transjordan was not independent, we were commissioned vice consuls for Palestine and for Transjordan.

Q: So you covered Transjordan?

STABLER: We covered Transjordan as well.

Q: Which would be today on the other side of Jordan.

STABLER: At that point it was still an emirate. There was a British Resident there. Abdullah,

King Hussein's grandfather, was the Emir at the time. But he also had certain authority and we had an exequatur from Transjordan as distinguished from the exequatur signed by King George for Palestine. In 1946, Transjordan became independent.

In any event, the role of the Consulate General at that time was one of really tracking what was happening there. The Consul General, Mr. Pinkerton, was someone who played his cards quite close to his chest when it came to the substantive side of things. I really never did know to what extent he was turned to for advice as to what we should be doing about Palestine.

My role at that time was simply as vice consul in charge of visas. In addition I handled cultural matters. I used to take films out to kibbutzims and Arab groups and give little talks about American history, etc. It was interesting going to some of the kibbutzims and showing films produced by OWI on a variety of things related to the United States. The visa work was tremendous. Not so much the first year because no one went anywhere due to strict regulations and lack of transport, but when the war ended there was an overwhelming number of passports, etc. that had to be dealt with in terms of getting people back to the States. There were ships that came in to do this sort of thing...to take people back who had been stranded.

Shortly after I got to Jerusalem, the early months of 1945, Mr. Pinkerton apparently had learned that the Emir of Transjordan was unhappy with him because although he was accredited to Transjordan he never went there. He decided that he better go down and see the Emir. Abdullah had winter quarters in Shuneh in the Jordan Valley, on the other side of the Jordan, not terribly far from Jericho. He was down there and Pinkerton decided he would go down but he seemed to think he needed an excuse to go down. The excuse was to present me as a new vice consul.

We went down and to one of 26 it was pretty heady stuff seeing an Emir. Abdullah was very nice and it was very pleasant visit. The following Sunday I decided that I would go back down and personally sign the book. I got down to Shuneh and was very much impressed by all these Arab Legion soldiers who would snap to attention and salute when they saw a consular license plate. When I got to the winter quarters I said to one of the guards who came out to ask what I wanted that I wanted to sign the book. He disappeared and came back a few minutes later and said, "I am terribly sorry the book is in Amman, but the Emir is here would you like to see him?" I said that that would be splendid. So I went in and had a nice chat with Abdullah and told him how impressed I had been by the Arab Legion that I had seen along the roads. He said, "Well, I am having a maneuver in about three weeks time and I would like you to come as my guest." I said, "That is very kind of you, Your Highness, of course I would like to come."

After three weeks I had still heard nothing at all. One morning I was in the file room of the consulate hunting for some document and came across a letter from Glubb Pasha, who was then the British Commander of the Arab Legion, addressed to Pinkerton saying that the Emir was holding a maneuver on such and such a day and commanded me to invite you, Pinkerton, to come to the maneuver. I was crestfallen that I had been forgotten by my new friend.

The appointed day for the maneuver came and I went to my office in what used to be affectionately called "the turnip shed" of the Consulate General -- a little horrible shed that was heated by a big potbelly stove. I had been in my office not more than 15 or 20 minutes when the

phone rang. It was Mr. Pinkerton down at the winter quarters saying, "You get on down here as quickly as you can. The Emir said that the invitation was for you and he won't start until you get here." I thought to myself, "That's a lot of fun, but the end of my career."

I pulled myself together and drove down. As luck would have it I got a flat tire and got stuck in the sand somewhere. By the time I finally got to the maneuver it was over. The Emir was very nice and invited Mr. Pinkerton and me to lunch in his tent.

That was the beginning of a long relationship and friendship that I had with Abdullah and his son, Crown Prince Talal who reigned very briefly after Abdullah was assassinated, and his grandson, the present King Hussein.

Q: To get a feel of the atmosphere in the Consulate General. This must have been sort of annoying to Mr. Pinkerton wasn't it?

STABLER: Well, curiously enough you would have thought it would have, but it really didn't seem to. I think in a sense he was somewhat relieved that he didn't have to worry about Transjordan. He wasn't that interested in it. He didn't really enjoy going over there.

Q: What was his background?

STABLER: Pinkerton was a career man. He had been in Personnel, had been somewhat of an administrator. I can't now remember where he came from.

Q: But he was an Arabist.

STABLER: No, he spoke no Arabic. I don't think he spoke any foreign language at all. He got along well with the British, they liked him. But he had no real interest with the Transjordan thing. He left in '46 at some point. I can't remember quite when. I was invited personally by the Emir to come to his independence days celebrations and the Consul General was also invited but I don't remember whether that was Pinkerton or not...I think it was Pinkerton. But by that time I was fully known in Jordan and was regarded really sort of the US presence, if you will. I don't think Pinkerton really resented it, if he did, he never said anything.

I had lots of things that I did in Jerusalem. I became a good friend of the High Commissioner, General Sir Alan Cunningham, and his staff. I generally had a pretty good position in the Palestine government, although I didn't really deal with the political side of it. Although, for example, when the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry came to Jerusalem in '46...the British were already discussing what it was that they should do with Palestine because it was becoming more and more a burden for them. Violence was continuing. There was the problem of Jews in Europe. They eventually said that something had to be done. They suggested a group go to Palestine, including Americans, to see what could be done about it. So the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry was appointed and the senior US delegate to that was William Phillips, a former Under Secretary of State and Ambassador to Rome in the early part of the war before we went into it, and whose wife was my godmother. So Pinkerton assigned me to look after that delegation. I also was given the responsibility for acting as escort for quite a few Congressional

delegations that came to Palestine. Jack Javits was one of them who came.

Q: He later became Senator and a major figure in the Jewish-American scene.

STABLER: Absolutely, a very fine person. There were a number of others. So I wasn't ostracized or cut out by Pinkerton, although I did not play any role in political substantive work. He did that entirely himself. He never showed us any of his messages that he sent back and forth on substantive questions. He played it all very close to his chest. I never quite understood why he didn't take some of us into his confidence, but he didn't.

Q: To get a little feeling for the atmospheric within the Consulate General at the time, this was before the King David business...

STABLER: Well, that was '46, the King David thing.

Q: Okay, at that time, were you under any constraints about talking either to the Jews or the Arabs?

STABLER: No, not at all. I traveled extensively and saw lots of both sides. I did a good deal of work on the Arab side too. But I never ever prepared, curiously enough, during the period Pinkerton was there, any sort of political report. I went around extensively and talked to people but my role was not that of a political reporter.

Q: That is odd. In other words, the younger officers who generally get around more were not being used.

STABLER: No. We had Pinkerton, a commercial man named Malcolm Hooper, an officer who handled American citizen passports, etc., an OSS representative, and two of us who did visa work. Pinkerton was the only one who did the political work.

Q: It is interesting because what you are saying is that Pinkerton was not a particularly experienced political reporting officer.

STABLER: I don't really recall what his background was. My recollection was that it was more administrative -- personnel. He was quite well regarded. He finally ended up as Minister in Beirut and as Ambassador to the Sudan. Loy Henderson, the top man in Middle East affairs, had regard for him. But I never really had any idea of what Pinkerton did politically because I never saw a report.

Q: You know, it is hard to recreate the time, but it really took a decade or so for the real enormity of what had happened to the Jews and others in Europe during the war to sink in. The Foreign Service came pretty much from the educated class in the United States and was not particularly responsive to the Jew in the United States. I can recall hearing, not so much in college, but in prep school, anti-Semitic jokes. At that time, particularly with turmoil obviously beginning to come with ships docking all the time, was there an annoyance with the Zionist movement?

STABLER: For one thing, for those of us who were serving in Palestine, it was clear that in a demographic sense that the majority of the residents of Palestine were Arabs. There were about a million and a half people in Palestine of which about a million were Arabs and roughly 500,000 were Jews. So in the demographic sense, the majority was clearly Arab. On the other hand, as you drove around Palestine, which I did extensively, at all hours of the day and night, you couldn't help but marvel at what the Jews had produced in their part of Palestine along the coast in particular. It was a miracle what they had done agriculturally and to some extent industrially. They worked terribly hard. They were aggressive, of course, in terms of what they hoped to ultimately achieve. One probably didn't know at the outside a great deal of what had been happening in terms of the genocide in Germany. I happened to live part of the time in Jerusalem in a small apartment in a Jewish house. The owner was a marvelous woman who was a Dutch Jew, and who, after I left, unhappily was killed in one of these horrible terrorist actions where the Arabs shot up the bus in which she was in. You couldn't help but have great admiration at what they had done, but also you recognized that there was this constant encroachment on what was a demographic majority in the area. You couldn't help but be rather disgusted by some of the terrorism they pulled off in Palestine. A lot of one's British friends were killed as a result of incidents like King David, etc.

Q: Which includes some of the people who later, like Menachem Begin and the present Prime Minister, Shamir.

STABLER: Yes. Menachem Begin at that time was someone who had a big price on his head. There was the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern gang. One had someone by the name of Sartori, I think his name was, who was the Ford representative in Jerusalem and also represented I think the Palestine potash company, the Dead Sea. He was socially everywhere. Everybody knew him. The day the British left Jerusalem, May 15, 1948, he turned out to be all this time one of the important members of the Stern gang. I eventually dealt with Moshe Dayan. He was a very aggressive, abrasive individual, very difficult to deal with, but at that particular point he was fighting for his survival.

There was this constant sort of friction involving British, Jews and Arabs which got fairly tiring. I have to admit it was very hard to be entirely neutral. You invariably felt more one way than another, although our official position was that of being entirely neutral between the two. I always cite what happened to me on the 15th of May, 1948 when the British left as evidence of my following instructions to the letter. When I was caught in the crossfire between the Jews on one side of the street and the Arabs on the other side I ended up with 37 bullet holes in my car, and still being alive at least I was neutral to the extent of saying, "Who shot at me?" It was very tense. You had the feeling that the British administration was more sympathetic to the Arab cause than the Jewish cause. And the Jews knew that.

We had difficult moments. The Consulate General was not very far from the building of the Jewish Agency. One morning there was an enormous explosion. It was quite clear that it had come from the Jewish Agency. One was sorry that this had occurred but we were even sorer when we realized to our absolute horror that the Consulate car had disappeared. What had happened was that one of our Arab drivers had taken the Consulate car, had it loaded with

explosives, drove into the Jewish Agency courtyard (allowed in because of the Consulate plates), got out, disappeared and the car blew up. So it was the Consulate car that was responsible for a lot of damage; fortunately nobody was killed. Our driver vanished and eventually we learned that he had ended up in Honduras. I went there some years later and discovered there was a large Palestine population there.

So there was this constant tension that existed which took its toll on people. It was hard on people, there were curfews, bombings and god knows what. After the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, of course, then those things went on; the British finally said enough is enough and turned it over to the UN.

Q: Did a new Consul General come out before the British left?

STABLER: Yes, he did.

Q: Was there a change in the atmospherics within the operation? You knew you were getting ready for a cataclysmic event.

STABLER: Yes, there was because Pinkerton went off as Minister to Beirut before we had embassies. Robert Macatee came out from the Department...I don't now remember what other jobs he had had. I knew him before when he was assistant chief of Personnel in 1941. We are talking about five or six years later. I think he came from Washington at the time. He was quite different. By that time I had been there for going on three years and was probably, with the exception of the OSS fellow...

Q: He was the equivalent to our CIA people later on.

STABLER: Yes. There was just one man who was dressed as an American major. He was known by the British, obviously, for what he was.

I had been there for quite a few years by then and had become more involved in the substantive side of things and would do occasional political reporting. I did do a great deal more, and became sort of the political advisor, along with the OSS fellow to Macatee on a great many things.

Yes, he was there before partition because I remember that shortly after partition Frances Bolton, who was then member of congress from Ohio came out on a visit to sort of test the waters. She was rather pro-Arab basically and was rather annoyed with this partition because again we were talking about a country which had a majority of Arabs and here they were dividing it up and giving part of it to the Jews. So Macatee was there at the time.

Partition came along because the British said, "We have enough of this. We are getting out in 1948 and you better do something before then because if you don't there will be total chaos and there won't be anybody here."

Q: Was this really saying, "Here you Americans have been talking about Jewish homeland, etc.

and this is your problem."

STABLER: The Jewish homeland was what the British themselves had been talking about, the Balfour Declaration of 1917. But by 1947 there was clearly increased pressure in the United States because of what had happened in Germany which by then was fully known. There was real pressure of what do you do? We were not prepared to open up our immigration to let them all come into the States, so the next question was, "Where do they go?" By this time clearly the Zionist movement had decided that Palestine must become the national home for the Jews. Everything that they did was aimed at that time in terms of immigration to get them into Palestine. This was becoming a tremendously difficult thing for the British who had a large army, several divisions of troops, in Palestine. After all it is not a very large country, about 140 miles long and 70 miles wide. They had a tremendous concentration of first class British troops. And a fairly sizable police force which was composed of both Jews and Arabs, but the leadership was all British.

I think you are quite right that part of it certainly was directed to the United States. The British said, "We couldn't find anything through the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry; no one can come up with any solution; we don't want to have anything to do with this; we can't cope with it; we are getting out; so do what you will, we aren't going to be here."

The UN came up with the Partition Resolution which, of course, was strongly resented by the Arabs. I was advised ...again I would make a good many trips across the Jordan to see what was happening there...by the British when I went over there to take my car and have two Arab Legion soldiers with submachine guns sitting in my back seat. I did this and got over to Amman and my Jordanian friends asked why I was doing this as I was well known and no one would do anything. They thought it was sort of an insult to come with two Arab Legion guards. So, I never had them again and nothing happened.

But there was very strong resentment. Temple bombs increased and we recognized, of course, that the day would come before very long, this was 1947, that the British would be out and where would we be. So we decided that in terms of safeguarding the Consulate we would have the British come and give us an expert estimate as to what it would need to guard the Consulate. They came up with a figure of 285 marines, which would be 24 hours guard service plus road escorts. We sent a telegram to Washington saying that, in terms of the future, here is what has been recommended. Washington obviously went into a dead faint because they never answered it.

About a week before the British left, Washington suddenly threw on top of us something like 30 civilian guards...young men who after the war, not knowing what to do had answered some sort of ad and signed up as embassy guards. They came from all walks of life. One man had ended up as head of the commissary in Rome, but still was a guard and found himself in Jerusalem wondering what the hell he was doing there. None of them knew how to shoot a gun. I had to take them out personally to a range, although I had never shot a tommy gun, to teach them how to shoot tommy guns. They were totally undisciplined. In addition to that all of a sudden they sent us, which was very useful, a 10 or 12 man navy communication team which turned out to be the only way we could keep communications going. I think we had in the Consulate General 15

of these civilian guards who were very nice young man but who were basically undisciplined. They drank quite a lot; one of them got mad at me one evening and chased me with a machine gun. It was really chaotic.

We asked for an armored vehicle for the Consul General...they had set up a United Nations Truce Organization which was made up of Consul Generals from France, Belgian and the United States. The meetings were usually held at the French Consulate General, which was right under the walls of the old city. In order for our Consul to get back and forth he had to go in a car without armor or walk. So we requested an armored car. They said they couldn't send a car but could send an armored personnel carrier which doesn't have any armor on top; it just had armor on the side with a canvas top. We never got that either. The Consul General was killed by a sniper's bullet. The fact of the matter is that the Department of State was totally not prepared for anything of this sort.

Q: After Mr. Pinkerton left you were able to get a little better feel for the relations. Were instructions coming in from Washington?

STABLER: We were sort of left out of the loop on these things. There were a lot of conversations between London and Washington which we were not privy to. So a lot of these things were being done without our knowing what was going on.

Q: Just as an aside because people sometime forget how things are. There was no embassy in Tel Aviv, there was no embassy in Amman or anything like that. You were it.

STABLER: I jumped ahead a little bit because I talked about the Consul General being killed by sniper fire. It was not Macatee, it was Tom Wasson and he didn't come until just before the British left when all married men were removed. But no, Tel Aviv didn't exist as far as a US post is concerned. There wasn't a Jordan. I was the only contact with Transjordan. I was no longer accredited to Transjordan because Jordan gained independence. I traveled there as a friend.

Q: There was no mission in Jordan?

STABLER: There was nothing at all. The only thing that existed was the Consulate General in Jerusalem. I don't have any recollection that we were really consulted a great deal on these things or that we had much of an input on partition or were asked very much of what we thought about these things. I don't recall that we were kept up on the happenings in the UN. Things would happen and we would not have had advanced knowledge of what was going to happen. So we were really cut out of the loop. I suppose the High Commissioner was being queried because the British are better about these things than we are I think. Most of what we knew was gleaned from the British.

Q: During my last job I was seconded to the Historian's Office. Among other things I did a history of our Consulate General in Jerusalem. In the 1920s after the Balfour Declaration had come out, our officers there...the Jewish community was small and I think there was a certain antipathy towards the Zionist movement, a pro-Arab feeling ...were reporting again and again saying, "Zionism is all fine, but a homeland here means blood on the streets, and this is just not

going to happen." Their predictions, of course, are true, there has been a tremendous amount of fighting which continues really to this day. Were you able to give reports saying that there was going to be a blood bath?

STABLER: Yes, one was giving Washington reporting of the views of various communities on this subject -- the Arabs and the Jews and some of the religious leaders who have an interest in all of this, and also the views of the British. We reported on what was actually happening there -- the various acts of terrorism, the strong feelings of the various Jewish and Arab communities. Keeping Washington not only abreast of what was happening, but what probably would happen if certain things were done.

Again, Pinkerton, I don't know what he said. I do know...because we did do a lot of reporting after Macatee got there in which I was involved...giving various points of view and letting them know actually the tensions that were existing between the communities and what might happen if certain things were done. And then, of course, after the Partition, we brought them up to date on that.

Q: Prior to Partition. In your reporting did you feel any concern about...okay, if you report this, this report might be looked with disfavor by both the Jewish community and those sympathetic, there was still a residue of the New Deal Administration which had had very strong Jewish support...did you feel any constraints?

STABLER: I think Pinkerton may have felt some constraints because he was a very cautious man and didn't want to upset anybody particularly. It may be that some of that could have come through in his reporting. After him there was a greater openness in expressing points of view. I mean not worrying about the political side. One tried to call the shots such as they were. The Arabs expressed very strong views about things, those views would be reported without regard to whether they would upset somebody or not. By the same token the views of the Jewish Agency, the official Jews, were also reported, plus the British who were more apt to favor the Arab cause than the Zionist cause. But I don't think political considerations entered into this reporting at all. Although one knew what the feelings were in Washington with the Department of State on one side and domestic political aspects on the other side. But when the time came for Truman to make his decision to recognize Israel de facto on the first day the British had left, I can assure you that we were neither consulted nor informed.

Q: I don't think anybody was informed.

STABLER: I don't think anybody was. Although the effort was made at that particular time to persuade the President that if he was going to recognize Israel de facto that he could temper it by recognizing Jordan de facto, even though Jordan had been independent since 1946 and we are talking about 1948. The President declined to do so.

Q: Was there a problem about not recognizing Jordan then? Was it budgetary or was there...?

STABLER: No, I think when Jordan became independent no one in Washington really bothered to think about recognizing it, regarding it pretty much as a British affair. In 1948 it was entirely a

political thing. The President made the decision that this would have to be aimed at Israel and not be tempered in any way by also recognizing an Arab state. By that time the general outrage of the Arab world had already been felt with respect to what was happening with Partition and therefore it would be regarded by the Jews as probably insulting to try to balance it. So he declined to do that and it was only in January, 1949, when we recognized Israel de jure that the decision was made to recognize Jordan de jure at the same time.

Q: I want to stop at the Partition time where we will pick it up later. One last question. What was your feeling and those at the Consulate General about the British letting go? Were you thinking, "Oh my god, they have a responsibility, and shouldn't get out." or "Obviously they can't control the situation and lets see where the chips fall."?

STABLER: Obviously everybody recognized there would be utter chaos and almost anarchy once the British left. It was well known as a result of everything that had transpired before -- the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry and then various UN studies, etc., and the British statement that they were getting out. One can sympathize with the British because this had become an enormous burden to bear, extremely expensive in terms of money and lives with no returns, which they had been carrying on for a great many years. There was no way that they were going to be persuaded to stay on. Pressure was brought to bear on them to stay on. They may have considered it for a while, but by that time the Labor Government had come in and I think that they finally just realized that there was no way they could do it or really wanted to do it.

We all knew that Partition wasn't going to be viable because everybody was against it. It was a big unknown that we were embarking on the day that the British pulled out. But the political situation had reached the point where there was no alternative. They wouldn't stay and the UN had no ability or capacity to put a force in there. It was just one of these machines that gathered speed and there was no stopping it. The United States had no power to stop it either because we were behind the Partitioning. We certainly weren't going to take over from the British. Domestically it was quite clear that this was what the Jews wanted because this was the creation by partition of the homeland. As it turned out they got the whole thing.

We knew in the Consulate General that there was the Hagganah.

Q: That was the Jewish army.

STABLER: Yes, that was the Jewish army. It was illegal, but the British didn't do much about it. They knew it was there and had some utility in the defense of kibbutzims and things of that sort. They got their arms helter-skelter by stealing from British ammunition depots and things of that sort. That was sort of the unofficial army. Then there was the Stern gang and the Irgun Zvai Leumi. The Irgun Zvai Leumi was the larger group and the Stern gang the smaller group. They also existed. One knew that the Jewish Agency ran a fairly efficient operation and the assumption was that the Hagganah would acquit itself pretty well in the struggle against the Arabs.

But as you added up the Arab manpower for the Arab armies, it was hard, frankly, to see how in

the final analysis the Jews would be able to withstand this onslaught. Added to this, of course, was the view in all the Arab capitals -- American representatives in all the Arab capitals were reporting that this better not happen because the Jews would be pushed into the sea. At times the war between our representative, James McDonald, in Tel Aviv and our representatives in the Arab countries was worse than the fighting because those in Arab countries took one side and McDonald the other.

Q: What was in Tel Aviv?

STABLER: On the 15th of May when Truman recognized Israel de facto, we set up a diplomatic representative's office in Tel Aviv. James Grover McDonald came to Tel Aviv as the first American representative. Although he was not an ambassador in the strict sense of the word, he was the American Representative in this de facto situation. The office was set up in Tel Aviv as indeed if it were an embassy with communications. Messages would be repeated Tel Aviv and Arab capitals.

As I say, on paper it certainly looked as if there was no way the Israelis could withstand the Arab onslaught.

Q: Can we focus on what you were doing at the time of the Partition, on May 15..?

STABLER: No, May 15 was when the British left in 1948. Partition was the previous year in 1947.

Q: Well, then when the British left, because I...

STABLER: They are two distinct things. The Partition was the United Nations resolution to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Maybe we went over that last time. If we did, then lets take it up to May 15, 1948.

Q: Yes, that is what I had marked on the last tape.

STABLER: When the British pulled out of Jerusalem, they pulled out of Palestine a day or two later because they moved with the High Commissioner up to Haifa and had an enclave and then they shortly afterwards pulled out completely.

In any event, May 15, 1948 I was at the Consulate General. The staff there by that time had been reduced by many. Those of us who were there were all bachelors including the Consul General, Tom Wasson.

Q: I might mention at this time that it was the policy in those days that when trouble started you got rid of the families and also, if possible, you put bachelor officers into a place.

STABLER: Yes, it certainly was the policy as far as Jerusalem was concerned. We had a number of married officers there and they all transferred. Those of us who remained were bachelors and there were, I think, several officers who were brought from other posts for temporary duty who

were bachelors. For example, Stu Rockwell, who also became an ambassador later on, was in the embassy in Ankara and was detailed as one of the officers to augment the staff. And then there were one or two others but I don't offhand remember who they were.

In any event, on the morning of May 15, Major Andronovich, Nick Andronovich, who was the CIA representative in Jerusalem, and I drove out in my personal car. The Consulate General by that time had no car because it had been blown up -- I think I mentioned it last time. We drove out to a little airstrip called Colombia and found there a small plane and British troops drawn up in battle array with a battery of field artillery with guns aiming in the direction of Jerusalem. In due course the High Commissioner arrived, Sir Alan Cunningham, who was a friend. He was received with full honors at the little airstrip. After saying goodbye to me and Andronovich and his staff, he took off in his little plane headed for Haifa. The guns were hitched up and bit by bit the British forces also departed.

In a very short period of time Andronovich and I were left standing on an extremely empty airfield feeling really quite lonely, because with the departure of the British forces all public security in Jerusalem came to an end. There was no neutral police force, no security provided by a third element, that is to say, Jews, Arabs or the British.

Andronovich and I drove back into Jerusalem and I came to the Consulate General and found sitting on the steps going up to the office a group of members of the staff including civilian guards who had recently come in and one other officer, Bob Houghton, by name, who is dead now. They were all rather irritated because they had wanted to go up to the hotel which was not too far from the Consulate General on the main streets near the YMCA. When they had walked in that direction they had been shot at. The British had gone, and public order had completely collapsed. They went back to the Consulate General and asked to borrow a car which was refused them. They didn't want to risk walking up there again and being shot at.

I said, "Look here, I have my car with a couple of flags on it. Hop in the car and I will drive you up there." This was around noon time on the 15th. In they got along with me and my little dachshund. We drove up the street around the corner from the Consulate General and almost in no time we started getting shot at. I drove the car right up on the sidewalk and let the people in the car get out. They almost fell into the hotel.

As soon as they had gotten out I started driving up the street towards the YMCA at which point I was taken under machine gun fire -- on one side by the Jews and the other side by the Arabs. I decided it was a no win situation and backed my car down the sidewalk and came really within a hairbreadth of having a bullet right through my head. It was scary. I was able to get out and fall into this hotel, literally.

There we were stuck for over 24 hours. That night...there was virtually no food in the hotel, there were no lights and we were concerned that during the night either a Jewish or Arab patrol might come in to this hotel and shoot first and ask questions later. Things were very tense at that time and the Jews and the Arabs were really after each other.

It was while we were all sitting in that hotel -- we did have a battery radio or some sort of

communication -- that we learned that Mr. Truman had announced the de facto recognition of Israel, which made us all even more nervous because this was the area where there were quite a few Arabs around and we didn't think that decision would be very popular.

In any event while we were there one, possibly two, of the men who were with us there, part of the Consulate staff, got rather antsy about being cooped up and without my knowledge or permission, I was the senior officer there, went out onto the street and were promptly shot. Fortunately, neither of them were killed; they were picked up by Red Crescent ambulances (very brave ambulance people indeed) and taken off to hospitals. One of them was a civilian guard who was well into his 60s by this time.

Q: This was the type of person they sent out?

STABLER: This was the sort of harebrained scheme they thought up. Ages went all the way from the 60s down to the early 20s. This gentleman was in his 60s.

Anyway, he was taken away and, of course, we had no idea where. At that point we didn't know whether he was dead or alive. I think there may have been two, certainly there was one.

In any event, in due course the people at the Consulate General were able to arrange with the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had people in Jerusalem at that time trying to help in keeping some semblance of humanity in all of this that they come down to the hotel under the protection of a Red Cross flag -- I think these were mostly Swiss and extremely brave men because this was a wide open street absolutely visible from any sort of sniper's post. They came down by small groups and began removing the people in this hotel. Being senior officer I was the last to leave. Just before I left they started mowing the streets with bullets of one sort or another so we had to hold up awhile. We all got out and went back to the Consulate General. Those were the events of May 15.

There then began a period of one month in which really we were under siege -- the whole of Jerusalem really. The Arab Legion had occupied the Old City and were lobbing mortar shells into the New City. We lived there at the Consulate General with our own generator. We had a naval communications unit which was just across an alley way in a convent. We had the sort of guard force that would shoot street lights out and do all sorts of things.

During that period we had a number of casualties. One of the naval communicators at one point was walking behind the Consulate General, I don't know why he was there after dark. He ran across a patrol, we don't know whether it was Jews or Arabs, and was shot. He eventually died. Two of the guards, two young men, heard screams and went out behind the Consulate into this no man's land and brought Walker, I think that was his name, back into the Consulate. We had a US Public Health doctor assigned to the Consulate General at that time and he was able to give first aid and got him into a hospital. Eventually, I am sorry to say, he died.

The Consul General, Tom Wasson, was a member of the Security Council Truce Commission which was composed of the United States, France and Belgium, as I remember, and was supposed to keep in touch with the Jewish and Arab communities with the idea of somehow

getting a truce from the fighting that was going on, which was widespread. The Egyptians had come into Gaza, the Iraqis had marched a division into Palestine, the Syrians had fiddled about a little bit up in the north, the Arab Legion had occupied the West Bank and the Old City. The Truce Commission met in the French Consulate which was just under the Walls of the Old City. Wasson was obliged to walk the distance, which was relatively far and fairly open between the Consulate General and the French Consulate. On his way back from one of these meetings he was crossing a street just behind the Consulate wearing a bulletproof vest, but a sniper, and to this day no one really knows whether it was Jewish or Arab, shot him in the arm which was the one area that was not protected by the vest. We got him to the hospital but he died very shortly thereafter.

At the time he was hit I was in the Consulate General, the only officer there at the moment. We had a number of communications at that point. We had the navy and a special CIA/OSS operator on the road, who was also wounded in a mortar attack in due course. I had to decide who was going to be the acting Consul General. We had Bill Burdett who was assigned there; we had Stuart Rockwell from Ankara who was on temporary duty but senior to Burdett. But I made the decision that an officer permanently assigned to Jerusalem should be the acting consul general. I sent the message informing the Department that Consul General Larson had been shot and seriously injured and I assumed charge, signing it Bill Burdett. So Bill Burdett indeed was acting consul general for a month or so until a replacement came.

During that period we were pretty much holed up. You could get around and some people lived outside the Consulate General. I lived in the Consulate General and slept with telephone and tommy gun by my bed. We ate ten-in-one rations that had been brought in before.

Q: Ten-in-one rations being a military combat type of ration.

STABLER: Yes. Enough food for one man for ten days or for ten men for one day, something of that sort.

Q: I might add, not the greatest food in the world.

STABLER: Not the greatest, but it was the only food we had because all the markets were closed.

Q: He hadn't been around a lot but seemed to have more of a world view than many. Did he use you as a sounding board to find out what this peculiar place, the United States was? Because America really had very little influence in that area, the Middle East, at that time.

STABLER: There wasn't a great deal. We began to have a good deal more. We had some degree of influence, but not in the north because obviously Iraq was in the British sphere, and Lebanon and Syria were more or less in the French sphere. Very shortly after I got to Jerusalem there was the uprising in Syria and the French were eventually pushed out.

He was interested, of course, in the political views of the United States. I don't think he ever quite understood why he wasn't regarded more favorably by the States. The fact there was no

recognition obviously galled him. He assumed, in a way, that as he regarded the American President as an important figure the American President by like token regarded him, Abdullah, as an important figure, which of course obviously wasn't the case. He had that sort of a vision of the world where he saw himself in a larger role than he really had. This also was somewhat likened to what he regarded as his role vis-a-vis the British Queen. The British did look upon Jordan in their way as an important element and he looked at the Queen as a fellow monarch.

Q: Actually it would have been the King.

STABLER: Yes, you are right. I was flying across the Channel in 1950 when I got word that the King had died. So it was the King.

He had very little idea of what made this country tick. I think they were all aware of the rather strong domestic political influence of the American Jewish community which, of course, distressed him.

Q: Did he talk to you about this?

STABLER: He never really took me to task about the general Arab view that our policy in the Middle East was dictated by domestic considerations. I don't ever remember him talking a great deal about that. He was apt to talk about the larger picture of how he viewed and looked towards the future and some peaceful arrangement where Jordan would be a bigger state and Israel would be there, etc. He obviously very much wanted to have a formal relationship with the United States.

In January 30, 1949, I went down to the cable wireless where I had to go to pick up my messages -- by this time I was alone again, I didn't have any clerk -- and found a US info message in the clear put out by USIA which declared that the United States had recognized Jordan and Israel de jure. Then there was a coded message. I had to go back to the house and get my one time pad out and laboriously decode the message which said exactly what the message had said that was in the clear. I was to inform the King that Jordan was recognized de jure. Then I had to sit down and type the message out, sign it, get into my car and drive to the Palace, see the King and hand him the note. This was about 11:00 in the morning. He said, "Yes. Where have you been? I have been waiting for you since 8:00 this morning." It had been on the BBC. Yet, the Department had seen fit to give me no warning or opportunity to have at least the advantage of appearing to be on the inside. It had all been made public, yet I had to go through this business of decoding this stupid message which said all the same things as the public message.

The King was pleased but I think he would have been more pleased if I had been able to go in the night before and say, "Your Majesty, I just have come to inform you that we are announcing tomorrow morning that we are extending de jure recognition."

Q: When you went back to Washington afterwards, did you ever find out why this happened?

STABLER: I am afraid it is just our system which never really functions terribly well with these things. Part of it comes from the White House which sometimes doesn't tell the State Department

when it is going to do something. The State Department is frightened to death of sending any message ahead of the White House. Nobody in the White House stops to think about the other side that maybe some foreign policy advantage could be gained by doing some of these things in a slightly different way.

Q: I might add that I have had some interviews with people who were in the middle of a civil war where we recognized one side or the other in Africa leaving our embassy extremely exposed because they were under the power of the group not accorded the recognition.

STABLER: I think, as a general rule, we have been extremely lacking in using our information sometimes to our best advantage. We don't tell our people in the field sometimes what they ought to know. We don't tell them in a timely enough fashion. We generally view the ambassador as someone who is there but not really considered as a primary matter. The British are much better than this. They consider the ambassador an important person and a priority member of the team. He is told what he has to know in plenty of time. I don't mean to make a capital case that our relations with Jordan were forever compromised by that. All I am saying is that it would have been a good gesture to have told the King in advance, but we didn't do it.

He was pleased and we set up the legation in Amman. The British Royal Air Force sent an honor guard to the Legation the morning I raised the flag, which was in February because I think it took them a month to get all the staff out and formally set up the Legation.

That year, the fourth of July, the first one where we had formal relations, the Arab Legion sent a brass band to play at the reception that I gave that afternoon. It was all done with good humor. The King was obviously pleased to have the United States finally a member of the diplomatic corps in Jordan. It didn't change a great deal because one had already worked as a mission.

Nothing really spectacular happened during that period. A lot of it was dealing with the question of the future and how to settle the problem with Israel. What to do, etc. Then, internally, the King spent some time trying to decide...I spend a certain amount of time with him. We discussed and debated what we should call Transjordan. It was called the Kingdom of Transjordan and he wanted to change it. The discussion was whether we call it the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, or Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Ultimately it was decided to call it Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. While I was traveling with him we would spend time trying to design a new decoration. Things of that sort. Just sort of amusing household details.

Q: You were there more because of your long term visiting and as a friend...although there was quite a difference not only obviously in rank but also in age. Do you think he was reaching out to you in some of these ways either as a counter to or difference with the British, because they had been there so long?

STABLER: I don't think as a counter. I think he obviously enjoyed the idea that he had a "special relationship," if you want to call it that although it really wasn't, with representatives of the great powers. To him the French were not very important and they had all been involved in the business of denying him the Kingdom of Syria; the Fourth Republic was a mess, not to be taken very seriously. Obviously he had nothing to do with the Russians; they weren't there and they

were bad. He had had all these years of close relationship with the British, now suddenly the United States had become a friend too. I am sure that going back to what I mentioned very early on when I first went over to Amman in early 1945, with Pinkerton who had been criticized for not taking an interest in the Emir, and took an interest, and although I was only a vice consul that seemed to appeal to him too and for some reason we struck it off quite well personally. But certainly there was no question that I represented his contact with the other great power. It was never a counterbalance to the British because there was nothing we did. The British provided arms for him, they provided military officers, and trade, etc. And we provided nothing.

We did, however, recognize that he was a force for stability in that part of the world and that view is still held today. In spite of the fact that Hussein, for his own good reasons, did what he did, we are not prepared to get rid of him.

Q: To put this in context, we are talking about just after what was called the Gulf War between the United States and its Allies and Iraq in which Jordan and King Hussein were at least verbally giving a great deal of support to the Iraqi side which was not appreciated by the United States at all.

STABLER: One has to remember that King Hussein has a great many Palestinians in his Kingdom and at that time Saddam Hussein was trying to use the Palestine ploy to garner support; King Hussein is a survivor. The fact is that Jordan does represent an element of basic stability and we are not just about to abandon them, and certainly in the period I am talking about, 1948, Jordan was the only country that showed at least some degree of sensitivity and rationality when it came to Israel.

During that period I saw a lot of the King. He gave me a horse that I used to ride. He used to play polo in Amman with Arab Legion officers which was fun but dangerous. One had really an interesting time with not only the Jordanians and Palestinians but with the foreign community. It was a very small town. Everybody knew what everybody else was doing. There was a lot of intrigue and things of that sort. But it was a wonderful experience. I was amused at one point when Stanton Griffis, US Ambassador in Cairo, came over to Amman. I showed him around and took him down to the Winter Quarters in Shuneh to have dinner with the King. He was quite taken with all this performance and apparently wrote to Bob Lovett, who was then the Under Secretary of State, recommending that I be made the first US Minister to Jordan.

Well, I was only 28 or 29. That fell, as you can imagine, not only on deaf but scandalized ears in Washington...the idea that someone at the lowest grade in the Foreign Service should suddenly become a Minister. Of course some of my colleagues in the Middle East like Keeley, who was US Minister in Damascus, didn't think it was a very good idea either. Anyway, it didn't get very far. So I became the first Chargé d'Affaires in Amman and then in August, 1949 I was transferred. David Fritzlan came out as the Chargé d'Affaires.

Q: I have done an interview with him.

STABLER: You have done an interview with David?

Q: Yes.

STABLER: Then, as you know, the Minister was selected, a man by the name of Barnes, I think it was. He suddenly disappeared from sight and didn't go. The first US Minister was Gerald Drew who came out in early 1950.

I was told to return to Washington without delay, the fastest possible means. I rushed back, rushed to the Department to the greeting, "Oh, you are here? Why did you come back so fast?" No one then knew why I had been told to come back so fast. I worked on Palestine Affairs for a while. Then in January, 1950 I became Political Advisor to the US Representative to the UN Trusteeship Council which met in Geneva from January, 1950 through March, 1950, to draft the statute for the international city of Jerusalem -- the Corpus Separatum. This was an interesting three months of activity where the Trusteeship Council very seriously went through step by step, chapter by chapter setting up an international city of Jerusalem and for the holy places in what had been Palestine, so that Bethlehem, Nazareth, etc. would be under the control of the administrator of this international city with an international police force.

That was pursuant to the Partition Resolution in 1947. At the end of the session, the plan was given to the representative of Israel and the representative of Jordan, who then controlled the holy places in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Within a matter of a very few minutes those representatives turned the plan down. And that was the end of that.

WILLIAM C. BURDETT
Vice Consul
Jerusalem (1948-1950)

Ambassador William C. Burdett was born in Tennessee in 1920. He entered the Foreign Service in 1941 and served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. His career in the Foreign Service included posts in Iraq, Israel, Turkey, Great Britain, and Malawi. Ambassador Burdett was interviewed by Richard Nethercut in 1988.

Q: The Mid-East is very much on peoples' minds now in view of the possible breakthrough in Arab-U.S. dialogue. Could you tell me about your involvement in Mid-East policy and which assignments were the most significant?

BURDETT: My first significant involvement in U.S. policy towards the Middle East arose during an assignment to Jerusalem. I went there in May of 1948 as a Vice Consul 0-5, Foreign Service Officer-Class Five, arriving four days before British troop withdrew. Unhappily our Consul General, Thomas Wasson, was killed by a sniper several days later. As a consequence I became Acting Consul General and the U.S. member of the (UN) Security Council Truce Mission.

Q: That must have been quite an unusual experience for somebody at such a junior point in his

career. Can you recall some of the feelings you had, and how this worked out?

BURDETT: The entire situation was unusual. Jerusalem was divided into Jewish and Arab sectors with feelings of apprehension all around. There was sporadic firing, mortar barrages, some of the shells falling in the Consulate General compound. Our movements were limited, but we maintained telephone contact with the British Consulate General in the Arab sector. The British proved most helpful throughout in keeping us abreast of developments in the rest of Palestine. I attended meetings of the Security Council Truce Commission in the French Consulate General. We were in regular communication with officers of the Jewish Agency, and the Jewish Defense Forces. Occasionally, we could also reach the commander of the Arab Legion in the old city of Jerusalem, and other Arab officials. Fortunately, we established early a close working relationship with Colonel Moshe Dayan, commander of Israeli forces in Jerusalem.

Q: What about communications with the State Department? Were they reliable and did you get rather detailed guidance, or were you forced to make a number of decisions on your own?

BURDETT: Shortly prior to the British withdrawal the State Department established a Naval Communications unit across an alley from the Consulate. We had our own generator and thus perhaps the best communications that existed in Jerusalem with the outside world. We could receive messages almost instantaneously from Washington. In the confusion then existing the Department allowed us to take the initiative in determining our activities and reporting to the extent we could. The Department realized the restrictions on our movements and did not press us for jobs that were not feasible. We made the facilities of our communications unit available to members of the American press.

Q: You mentioned that one of the people you negotiated with, or had contact with, was Colonel Moshe Dayan. Would you care to elaborate on this contact with him?

BURDETT: As a member of the Security Council Truce Commission we worked with Colonel Dayan and Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah el Tel of the Arab Legion and UNTSO in drawing up detailed cease-fire lines for the Jerusalem area and monitoring the truces. Dayan was a tough negotiator but as a sabra knew and had grown up with the Arabs. Fortunately the personal relations between Dayan and el Tel were good which facilitated the work of the Truce Commission.

Q: Looking back now in the context of subsequent American policy towards the area, what effect do you think your role at this time had on subsequent American policy in the area?

BURDETT: We encountered constant difficulties with the Jewish civilian authorities and had the impression that they would reach an agreement and when they thought it advantageous would ignore it. This was shown in the question of bringing supplies to Jerusalem after the Security Council imposed truce. We became involved in a public controversy with Bernard Joseph, the top civilian Jewish official. The truce agreement provided for a "standstill" so that neither side could take advantage of the truce to improve its position. Contrary to this provision Jewish trucks entered Jerusalem regularly, ignoring a check point the Security Council Truce Commission tried

to establish. Most importantly the Jews took advantage of the truce period to construct what was known as the "Burma Road" beyond the range of Arab Legion guns linking Jerusalem to the main Jewish areas. Thus, by the end of the truce the Jewish authorities had successfully broken the siege of Jerusalem. Thereafter they enjoyed military superiority in the area, while before that this advantage had rested with the Arab Legion.

Q: I see. Now at what point did you then complete your assignment as Acting Consul General, and did you stay on in Jerusalem after a new Consul General had been appointed, or what happened?

BURDETT: During the summer of 1948 John MacDonald was assigned as Consul General. He was transferred shortly thereafter, and I resumed charge of our office just before the assassination of the UN mediator Bernadotte. I was then in charge of the office until early in 1950 when a new Consul General arrived, and I was transferred to Tabriz.

Q: Did this experience in Jerusalem stamp you as a Mid-East specialist and have an impact on your subsequent career development?

BURDETT: Unfortunately I am not an "Arabist", and have no scholastic or linguistic knowledge of the Middle East. I've maintained a professional interest in the area ever since and did receive assignments related to that area through a large part of my career.

Q: From Jerusalem I judge that you were subsequently involved in the Mid-East crisis involving the Suez Canal. Could you please explain your involvement there?

BURDETT: From Iran I was transferred to the Department and assigned to the Office of Near Eastern Affairs and then the Bureau of Near Eastern and African Affairs. President Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956 marked the failure of an ambitious program of Secretary Dulles intended to seal off the area from "international communism". To contain Soviet expansion, Mr. Dulles adopted a policy of impartiality in the Arab-Israel problem and set about creating a Middle East Defense arrangement. I participated in developing a detailed proposal for a comprehensive Middle East settlement. We thought Israel obtained word of our plans (Israeli intelligence on our planning was "remarkable" indicating inside leaks), found them distasteful, and deliberately adopted policies including aggressive border raids, to make it politically difficult for Nasser to move towards an accommodation. At the same time Israel's supporters in Congress blocked the provision of military aid. In 1955 Nasser reached the conclusion that he could not count upon the United States to restrain Israel politically. He also concluded that the U.S. would not meet his requests for military assistance sufficient to enable him to protect Egypt from Israeli aggression. Nasser decided to turn to the Soviet Union for military assistance. Increasingly he adopted a non-aligned anti-Western stance.

The deterioration in relations was rapid. In the summer of 1956 we replied negatively to the Egyptian demand for a "yes" or "no" answer on an outstanding offer to finance the Aswan Dam. Nasser used this in part as a pretext for nationalizing the Suez Canal. A mighty scramble then ensued to find ways to assure the continued international use of the canal and to provide the British and French a face saving alternative to the use of force to regain control of the canal. Two

major conferences were held in London. Nasser in effect rejected the proposals coming from those conferences. In late summer of 1956 the British and French military preparations were well publicized. However, we thought these were in the nature of bargaining postures and contingency planning. The actual decision of Britain, France and Israel to attack the Suez Canal caught us by surprise. We made a last minute effort to forestall the attack unsuccessfully.

The Administration was then confronted with an "agonizing reappraisal". President Eisenhower decided that we had no alternative but to oppose the British, French and the Israelis.

Q: You were very much involved on the Washington end of things and I wonder if you could describe how the State Department related in this case to the formulation and the implementation of President Eisenhower's policy?

BURDETT: Once the decision was made to oppose the British, French and Israeli attack, Secretary Dulles became in effect the "Desk Officer". Our efforts were coordinated by his office. I was the bag carrier when Bob Murphy was sent to London to reconnoiter prior to the attack, and I served as "bookkeeper" in the sense of assembling briefing books and doing staff work.

DANIEL OLIVER NEWBERRY

Vice Consul

Jerusalem (1949-1951)

Daniel Oliver Newberry was born in Georgia in 1922. He received his bachelor's degree from Emory University in 1944. He then served overseas in the US Army from 1943- 1946. His career included positions in Jerusalem, Turkey, New York, Laos, Iran, Turkey, and Morocco. Mr. Newberry was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in December 1997

Q: How did you get into Jerusalem?

NEWBERRY: With difficulty! [Laughter] It was really rather a gripping experience for somebody like me who really didn't know very much about how to conduct himself as a Foreign Service officer. The airstrip at "Columbia" was literally just a landing strip. The paved, asphalt road from Ramallah to Jerusalem ran across the landing strip. There was vehicular traffic going across the landing strip! It was that kind of situation.

It was getting rather late in the afternoon, and the pilot had to fly on to Beirut that same day. He had to get to Beirut before dark because in 1949 they didn't have any landing lights at Beirut airport. So the pilot and the crew of the airplane were eager to get out of "Columbia" airstrip. While they were getting all of the cargo unloaded, which was destined for delivery to the UN Mission up there at Government House in Jerusalem, I was talking to an obviously European soldier in the uniform of the Arab Legion. He turned out to be an ex "Afrika Korps" German who had somehow escaped becoming a prisoner of war. He had enlisted with the Arab Legion. So there I was, chatting away with him in German, never realizing that I was closing the "trap"

around myself by being seen and heard speaking German.

The point I'm leading up to is that a woman Major in the Arab Legion, and remember that this was in 1949, was in charge of the arrivals and departures of all persons at this airstrip. She was the only officer in the Arab Legion who could speak four foreign languages. Her name was Major Asia Halaby. She held a commission in the Arab Legion. We eventually got on fairly cordial terms, but not that day! She took one look at my passport and said: "Mr. Newberry, you cannot land here!" I said: "Where can I land? I don't have an assignment to Beirut. At least, I'm assigned as a vice consul in Jerusalem. It says so in my passport." She repeated: "You can't land here!"

I realized that I was in trouble. So I talked to one of the American Sergeants who had been a passenger on my plane from Athens. I said: "When you get up to the UN Mission at Government House, pass the word back to the American consul over on the Israeli side that the new American vice consul is out at the 'Columbia' airstrip and is in trouble." This Major Halaby had said: "Okay, you can stay, but you're a prisoner of war!" That's when I said to this American sergeant: "For Heaven's sake, get the word to the American consul and tell him what my situation is."

Well, as it turned out, this Sergeant went to a cocktail party and forgot all about me. However, another one of the UN military people was staying at the same "Bed and Breakfast" place where I was under "house arrest." Three days later, he saw the American consul, Bill Burdett, on the street in Jerusalem and said: "What are you doing about Newberry?" Bill is now dead, God rest his soul. He said: "Newberry? He's still in Washington." I found out about this conversation later on. Anyway, once the consulate knew that I was out at "Columbia" airstrip, another vice consul came out and "bailed me out." That was my arrival at my first post. I had literally been declared to be a "prisoner of war."

Q: Dan, could you explain, both for me and for the historical record, what the situation was in Jerusalem in 1949 when you arrived there? How did it appear to you?

NEWBERRY: I'll be glad to do so. First, let me say what the "technical" situation was. What was referred to as the "Old City," that is, the entire walled city of Jerusalem, plus the eastern side of the city, including Mt. Scopus and all of the area adjoining it to the East, was controlled by Jordan. This was the situation left over from the first Arab-Israeli War of 1948. The Jordanian Army, made up principally of the Arab Legion, held what is now the West Bank of the Jordan River. That is, the "Old City" of Jerusalem, plus the West Bank of the Jordan River. Israel controlled what was called the "New City" of Jerusalem and everything West to the Mediterranean. So, in effect, we had to deal with two governments in Jerusalem.

We dealt with the Jordanian "Mutusyarif," as they called him, the Governor of the "Old City." On the Israeli side, the Israelis still had a "Military Governor" of Jerusalem. So that was technically the political division of authority.

As it turned out, we had a little difficulty in getting me started on my assigned duties. Bill Burdett, the American consul in Jerusalem, had already decided that I would have one of the most irksome jobs in the American consulate, because that's what they always do to the most

junior officer. [Laughter] That was arranging "clearances" for American travelers to get through what was called the "Mandlebaum Gate." That is, from the Israeli to the Jordanian occupied sections of Jerusalem. Mandlebaum Gate was actually a square, or a "Platz," as they say in German.

Since the "cease-fire lines" happened to be laid in place, Mandlebaum Square was "no man's land" between the Jordanian held sector and the Israeli held sector. There weren't very many American travelers whom either side would allow to cross to the other side. In particular, the Jordanians didn't like people to come first to Israel and then to Jordan. It was my job to arrange for all of these "clearances," to go and meet these people, and to walk them through "no man's land" and help them with their baggage, since no vehicles could go through this area. That is, unless I happened to have a consulate jeep, which couldn't carry much luggage in any case.

The only kind of vehicle allowed to go through the Mandlebaum Gate was a foreign, consular vehicle. Everything else was stopped. It was like being on the bank of a river where there was no ferry boat. People literally walked across the demarcation line.

So this was one of my first, assigned duties. However, our old friend, Major Asia Halaby, of the Arab Legion, was also the person who handled the clearances for the Jordanians. During the first two or three weeks that I was doing this job, I had some other duties to handle on the Jordanian side, but my name was not on the Jordanian "clearance list." Finally, the American consul took the matter up with the Jordanians. Major Asia Halaby said: "We suggest that you assign somebody other than Mr. Newberg" [sic] to that duty.

Of course, Bill Burdett stood on principle. He got his friend, Wells Stabler, who was the American Chargé d'Affaires in Amman, Jordan, to go to the Jordanian Foreign Ministry. Major Halaby was then ordered to let me perform my duties in clearing people to go from the Israeli to the Jordanian side of the line.

Q: I think that she must have thought that you were Jewish, because she heard you speaking German.

NEWBERRY: That's why I mentioned the fact that I was heard speaking German. Eventually, she told me this. She said: "Your name is Daniel, and I heard you speaking German. What else was I to think but that the State Department had committed the great effrontery of assigning a Jewish vice consul here?" As I found out later, that was what was bothering her, although I didn't know it at the time. Actually, I think that the State Department would have had every right to assign a Jewish vice consul to this position. It might have been a little hard on the incumbent, but there was nothing wrong with the principle of assigning a Jewish consular officer to the American consulate in Jerusalem. We had Jewish FSOs and have had them assigned to Jerusalem, but not in 1949. When I thought about what might have happened if the Jordanians had had an American "prisoner of war" in those circumstances, it did not leave me with a very cozy feeling.

Q: What was the military situation there? Was there a cease-fire at that time?

NEWBERRY: There was a cease-fire. As I recall it, the truce talks at Rhodes were still going on, although I will have to check the dates. They already had in place the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), or had it on hand very soon after that. There were multinational contingents monitoring the borders between Syria and Israel, Jordan and Israel, and Egypt and Israel. They had these UN "Truce Supervision Units" based around there. It was a pretty "hairy" [dangerous] business. Some of the personnel assigned to these units came close to great, personal peril in handling this job. It was a very tense time, indeed.

It was also particularly dangerous. I remember, from the time when I was still under "house arrest" at this "Bed and Breakfast" place which was called the "American Colony Hotel" [North of the walled city of Jerusalem]. Actually, it's more than a bed and breakfast place, but I was a newcomer and didn't know the difference.

I wanted to go to the Anglican Cathedral to attend religious services. They told me at the American Colony Hotel to stick to the main road because there were still land mines that had not been "defused." It was still a combat situation in May, 1949, even though there was a truce in effect.

Q: What was the American consulate general in Jerusalem doing in those days in its relationship with the Arabs and the Israelis?

NEWBERRY: It was more a case of what the consulate general was trying to do. It was really an anomalous situation in terms of our relations with our own colleagues. The American ambassador in Tel Aviv insisted that the consulate general in Jerusalem was a "constituent post" of the American mission in Israel. He tried to give orders to the consul general in Jerusalem, but the consul general would have none of it. In consular terms, the consulate general in Jerusalem reported directly to the State Department and not to the embassy in Tel Aviv and not to the Legation in Amman, Jordan. This was about the time when they stopped referring to the country as "Transjordan," calling it simply, "Jordan." That was sort of the bureaucratic situation that we had.

In traditional, Foreign Service practice we all got to know and to cultivate the Military Commander of the Jerusalem Garrison on the Israeli side. He was a colonel named Moshe Dayan [later Israeli Defense Minister and a major Israeli political figure]. He was very approachable. He and his wife were obviously very ambitious. They had what the Europeans used to term a "calling day," a certain day when new arrivals could go to Dayan's house and meet all sorts of interesting people.

That's what I did, even though I had no reason to meet higher ranking officials. So I got to know Moshe Dayan and his sister, who was being "courted" by one of our officers. I won't say which one. Moshe Dayan's sister-in-law married a young Israeli Air Force Lieutenant. I was lucky enough to be invited to the wedding. That young Lieutenant was named Ezer Weizman, who is now President of Israel. [Laughter]

It was an unusual situation where a young, low-ranking Foreign Service officer, in fact, the most junior FSO, had regular access to these Israeli "movers and shakers." Just as during a later part of

my experience in Jerusalem, toward the end of my tour there, I just "happened" to be on the Arab side of Jerusalem one day in August, 1952, when something terribly dramatic happened inside the Old City. I found out that King Abdullah of Jordan had been assassinated in a mosque! I was the only officer in our consulate general who knew this. I was trying to alert the other side of the line, while still doing my job as a reporting officer.

So for the next several days all of us in the consulate general were trying to piece together what had happened. Obviously, the Jordanian Police moved in and arrested people right and left. However, it was just my luck that I happened to be in a place where nobody in the American consulate general would have known about what had happened for hours until the BBC [British Broadcasting Commission] reported what had happened. I was able to contribute to the reporting on this event.

Q: You mentioned that you had contacts, even as a young officer, among the "movers and shakers" on the Israeli side. What about on the Jordanian side?

NEWBERRY: I was just going to say that, in the context of this quick "round up" of people who were arrested by the Jordanians, was what I thought was one of my best contacts. He was explaining a lot of things to me. I guess that he was a nephew of the famous Mufti Hajamin al-Husseini, who was very prominent among Palestinians. My friend was arrested and eventually hanged for alleged involvement in the conspiracy to kill King Abdullah! I began to think that acquaintanceship with my friends, the people whom I was cultivating, was potentially dangerous.

Q: What was your impression of Jordan when you first arrived in that country, including how it was run, where it was going, and all of that?

NEWBERRY: Well, Stu, I can only give a very circumscribed response to that very good question. As a "new kid on the block," I was so concentrated on getting my work done, and it was a very busy job, that I didn't really have the leisure to go out and sort of "explore" things.

We didn't have "professional" diplomatic couriers. We took it in turn to drive our diplomatic pouches over to Amman, Jordan. I would chat with the people in our Legation there, which consisted of two rooms in the Philadelphia Hotel. So I picked up impressions regarding the situation. However, my recollection of those years is very limited. The British were still very much "running the show." That impression has lingered with me, especially after King Abdullah was assassinated. Abdullah's successor, King Khalal, was mentally so limited. Then, it was some further time before the "Brave, Young King," Hussein, really began to take control of the situation. But during all of this time, from 1950 to about 1960, it seemed to me that the British were still very much "calling the shots."

Q: What about Israel? What was your impression and the reaction of our people in Jerusalem toward the Israelis?

NEWBERRY: I have to say, quite candidly, that I was personally shocked, when I arrived at the consulate general in Jerusalem, to find that, to a man, our people were all very "anti-Israeli." I was shocked at this because, first of all, as I told you, some of my best friends and closest

"buddies" in the U.S. Army during World War II had been Jewish refugees from Nazism. I was prepared to be "open minded" about Israel. However, as I learned more about some of the more terrible things that the "Hagganah," the most prominent of the Jewish organizations, did during the first Arab-Jewish War [in 1948], I began to appreciate that there really were two sides to the Arab-Jewish conflict.

Then, at a certain point, the line from "Romeo and Juliet," about "a plague on both your houses" appeared more reasonable to me. "A plague on both your houses" was pretty much my attitude during the rest of my time in Jerusalem, because such outrageous things were done on both sides. I think that I was honestly "neutral" by the time I finished my tour of duty in Jerusalem.

Q: Either then, or not too long afterwards, our consul general was killed, and nobody, even to this day, knows who killed him.

NEWBERRY: I heard many, almost eyewitness stories. I think that it is beyond debate that our consul general, Tom Watson, was killed by a sniper. They still had his "bulletproof vest" hanging up in the consulate general which was supposed to protect him. However, the bullet entered right under his armpit and went right past the "bulletproof vest." So, despite taking precautions, he was killed in that way. I haven't made a detailed study of this matter, but on the basis of circumstantial evidence I believe that the sniper could only have been on the Israeli side. Well, I don't really know. However, the point is that, when he was killed, Consul General Watson was either going to or coming back from a meeting of the Special Consular Commission which was trying to implement the truce. He was on an errand of peace, either coming or going, when he was shot by this sniper.

Q: Do you think that that contributed to the bitterness of the people in the consulate general toward the Israelis?

NEWBERRY: It may have, because the man that I replaced was also shot, presumably from the same direction. However, he survived. So that's part of it. I think that the natural, sort of "social" contacts of the Americans in the consulate general, especially those who couldn't speak any other language but English, was with the military and civilian people in Government House. I would have to say that they were pretty much anti-Israeli.

Q: What about the relations between the consulate general and I guess that by now it was our embassy in Tel Aviv?

NEWBERRY: We had an embassy in Tel Aviv. The ambassador was a "political" appointee.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

NEWBERRY: His name was James McDonald. He was a prominent and perhaps the leading, Gentile "Zionist" in the United States. He was "rushed out" to Tel Aviv shortly after the United States recognized Israel in 1948. He didn't know much about the State Department, but he thought that he had access to the White House, [then under President Truman]. He attempted, without success, to persuade the consulate general in Jerusalem to consider itself a "constituent

post" of the embassy.

Ambassador McDonald's performance in Tel Aviv is interesting, in retrospect. I liked him personally but I thought that he was not a good choice to be ambassador in Israel at that time. He didn't serve in Tel Aviv until toward the end of the Truman administration. We had a career FSO as the second American ambassador to Israel, Lynette Davis.

I was assigned to temporary duty in the embassy in Tel Aviv for the last few months of my tour in Israel. This was during the interim period when we were waiting to know who the new ambassador to Israel would be. I remember hearing a youngish Israeli Foreign Ministry official telling me: "Well, we hope that the new American ambassador will be a career officer, because we know that in the State Department they discounted everything that Ambassador McDonald said. We want an American ambassador who will report accurately what we say to him." Of course, since Ambassador McDonald was such a partisan of Israel, he was interpreting what the Israelis said to him, and the Israelis didn't want that. The Israelis just wanted an accurate report of what they told him.

I had not been in Israel since that first tour, but the Israelis had obviously learned how to "operate" in Washington. However, at that time, which was just a year after Israel became independent, they were still "feeling their way" as to how best to influence the development of U.S.-Israeli relations. Having an all-out, pro-Zionist American ambassador in Tel Aviv was not their idea of the ideal situation.

Q: It still isn't. Just recently our ambassador to Israel was actually an Australian citizen who had also been a lobbyist for the Israeli government. Then he was naturalized as an American citizen and is now the Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

NEWBERRY: Well, you said it, Stu. I didn't, but I'm not disputing any of the irony in your remark.

Q: This is a very "dubious" situation, to say the least.

NEWBERRY: I think that, as an aside, that applies to sending, how should I say it, "hyphenated" Americans as ambassador to any country where they are closely associated with either the culture or the politics of the country in which they are supposed to represent the United States.

Q: I know that recently we had a Greek-American ambassador to Greece. I heard that his views on Greek-American relations were completely discounted in Washington, because his reporting was so "biased."

NEWBERRY: There's another side to such a situation, too. I am talking now, not so much of the ambassador, but of American Jews who may be assigned to the embassy in Tel Aviv. When I was in Jerusalem and then, briefly and for several months at the embassy in Tel Aviv, the labor attaché at the American embassy was a very sharp guy. His name was Milton Fried. He was the only identifiable, Jewish-American officer in the American embassy.

The reason he was chosen for the position of Labor Attaché, and he told me this himself, was that he was the son-in-law of Sidney Hillsman, a very prominent American labor leader. However, he said privately to me: "This is not a place for an American Jew to be assigned. All of the Israelis think that, because I'm a Jew, they can 'use me.' In fact, I'm an American, and I resent this attitude." Those were pretty much his words. It's awkward to be in such a situation.

Q: We've run across this in a number of countries. Well, during the time that you were in Jerusalem, were there any incidents or events which particularly come to your mind which you or the consulate general had to deal with?

NEWBERRY: I can tell you of some "colorful things" that I had to deal with.

Q: Let's hear them.

NEWBERRY: In the Table of Organization of the consulate general in Jerusalem, I was called the "citizenship officer." We did not issue visas, thank God. I think that most Foreign Service officers who haven't done visa work consider themselves very lucky not to have had that kind of assignment. I have great respect for visa officers, and some of my best friends are visa officers, and all of that. However, I consider that my assignment to the consulate general in Jerusalem was very interesting, and I learned a lot about consular work, but very little about visas.

Let me get on to citizenship matters. This had a particular angle because I was assigned to Jerusalem. In 1949 one of the things that the citizenship officer in Jerusalem had to do was to keep track of all of the American veterans in our consular district who were entitled to receive benefits under the "GI Bill" [legislation enacted in 1945 to help veterans attend college or other training courses]. There were lots of veterans in Jerusalem at the time, and they all wanted their checks delivered on time. I had to make sure, if they were attending Hebrew University, for example, that they received their money on time. This involved a big, administrative problem.

There were other aspects of this citizenship job. There were many naturalized American citizens in the Jerusalem consular district who were probably very close to the "point" of automatically expatriating themselves. Under the Nationality Act of 1949, a naturalized, American citizen could not remain overseas indefinitely. So I found myself having to prepare certificates of expatriation for American citizens. When I learned the job, I anticipated this situation and I would call them in and tell them that if they didn't go back to the U.S., they would lose their American nationality.

Most of these people didn't speak any English. They spoke Yiddish. So there I was with my college German. I spoke German to them, and they would answer in Yiddish. So that's the way we communicated.

I think that most people who are acquainted with that part of the world are aware of those extreme, Orthodox Jews who have been sort of caricatures. These Jews, many of them from Poland, wore big, black hats, had side curls in their hair, and big, black gabardine coats. There was a community of these Orthodox Jews in a certain quarter of Jerusalem who were American citizens. I had them as "customers," too.

Of course, I didn't have any political objection to them, but I had to keep on good terms with them. First of all, because they were American citizens and, secondly, because we had to pass through their community, even on the Sabbath, to get to the Mandlebaum Gate. Several times I had stones thrown at me in this area, the Mea Sharim quarter of Jerusalem, because they considered that I was "desecrating" the Sabbath. In fact, I was like a postman, doing my appointed rounds, but they didn't like it when I passed through their quarter on the Sabbath.

What I'm leading up to is that these people were a very important, colorful, and even "pungent" part of my recollection of Jerusalem. These people took their ritual baths before they came in to meet me, but they never washed their clothes! You can imagine, in a warm climate like that of Jerusalem, what they smelled like when they came into my office! I'm not kidding you. I reached the point where I would have to stand by the window and keep them all the way across the room, just to be able to talk to them. It was that bad! Sorry to go into this aspect in such detail, but if you want to talk about "color," that's one of the more "colorful" sides of doing citizenship work in Jerusalem!

Then, over on the Jordan side of the consular district, I had more "colorful" experiences. Of course, when I first got to Jerusalem, we didn't have any sort of office over on the Jordan, or Arab, side of the city, because, as it turned out, the office building of the consulate general was on Ramallah Road in the "New City" of Jerusalem.

As it turned out, we were eventually able to use a couple of rooms in the building housing the American School of Oriental Research in the Old City of Jerusalem. The citizenship officer (that is, me) held office hours there, one day a week. Anybody who had claims to Social Security checks or who needed to register the birth of one of their children who had claims to being American citizens (for many Arabs were American citizens), could meet with the citizenship officer at the American School of Oriental Research.

On another day in the week I went up to Ramallah, which was perhaps half an hour's drive from Jerusalem. I had office hours at the Quaker School in Ramallah one morning a week for Arab Americans who came in to discuss citizenship problems. I can give you an example. It is curious to note that some of these people were actually shepherds. Their parents, or some of the older members of this community, somehow had gotten jobs in war industries in the U.S. during World War II. They stayed on in the U.S. long enough to acquire rights to a Social Security pension. Then they came back to Palestine and were re-absorbed into their own culture. When their children were born, they may or may not have been eligible to be registered as American citizens. So I really had to know U.S. citizenship law, inside and out. Otherwise, I would have been "zapped" [disavowed] by the Passport Office back in Washington.

Q: Did you get into any difficulties with Jordanian or Israeli authorities as you went along your appointed rounds? I mean, after you got over the initial problems you had with the Jordanians.

NEWBERRY: Not really. I can't recall that either side treated me discourteously, once they understood what I was doing. My greatest fear was that, because of the sort of "front line" atmosphere, I might wind up taking the wrong road. I remember once on a beautiful, spring day

some friends of mine and I went out with a picnic basket. We took the wrong road and wound up in the middle of "No Man's Land." We tried to sneak back as quietly as we could, because in that atmosphere any frontier guard might have just shot us, if he'd seen us out there. My main concern was inadvertently making the "wrong move." As far as courtesy or discourtesy, helpfulness or unhelpfulness, I never encountered any of that. Granted, I was doing things which were politically pretty much "neutral." If you asked my superiors for their views, such as the consul general, if he were still alive, you might get an entirely different answer.

Q: Who was the consul general?

NEWBERRY: The first one was Raleigh Gibson. He had not yet arrived, and Bill Burdett was acting consul general. Gibson had been consul general in Salonika, Greece. I remember his telling stories about the famous "Wood and Pulp Case." I think that he was consul general in Salonika at that time. He finished his tour of duty as consul general in Jerusalem. Younger officers who don't know their way around Washington and don't have a "network" of friends and supporters back in Washington may have trouble finding out what's going on. After Gibson left Jerusalem, we had another long period of time when there was no consul general assigned. Roger Tyler then became acting consul general and served in that capacity for quite a long time. He replaced Bill Burdett. We didn't have Raleigh Gibson's successor as consul general until I had left Jerusalem.

I was out in Jerusalem for two and one-half years. We had a fully accredited consul general there for a little less than a year during that period of time.

Q: You mentioned that the officers in the consulate general in Jerusalem were basically "anti-Israeli." What would you say was the root cause of this attitude?

NEWBERRY: I mentioned their association with the UN people, and there were still a lot of British officials around. The British in Jerusalem had particularly bitter memories of what the Hagganah [Jewish Agency] and what the Irgun Zvai Leumi [IZL] did to the British troops in Jerusalem. My colleagues in the consulate general, who had been in Jerusalem longer than I, would talk about "horror stories" dating back to this period. Well, that's about the best answer that I can give.

I had so much on my mind about learning how to do my job that I can't say that I spent a lot of time analyzing the views of my own colleagues. That's just my recollection of the situation, and I can't help you much more than that.

Q: Did you have many visitors to the consulate general in Jerusalem?

NEWBERRY: Yes, in spite of everything. You asked for color. I'll give you some color. I was assigned to make all of the arrangements for official Americans crossing through the Mandlebaum Gate, both from Israel to Jordan and from Jordan to Israel. I think that this particular incident happened during the second Christmas time that I spent in Jerusalem.

A strange, shall I say, "coincidence," or whatever the word is, occurred. Former Governor of

Minnesota Harold Stassen, a famous name in American politics of that era, came to visit Jerusalem. I've forgotten what his position was at that time, but he was a perennial [and unsuccessful] Republican candidate for President. I can't recall precisely when this happened. Maybe he was still Governor of Minnesota. Anyway, we learned that he was coming to Jerusalem by way of Tel Aviv. I was asked to arrange for him to go across into Jordan through the Mandlebaum Gate at night. He wanted to go to Bethlehem to attend a Christmas Eve ceremony of some kind.

Meanwhile, we got word that old Senator Theodore Green (Democrat, Rhode Island) was coming to Jerusalem for a visit. However, Senator Green was coming to Jerusalem by way of Jordan. Senator Green was just about as durable in his own way as Senator Strom Thurmond (Democrat and later Republican, South Carolina). They both wanted to go to the Christmas Eve celebration, including Midnight Mass, in Bethlehem. So the consul general arranged to get over there, at the Mandlebaum Gate, and meet the car that brought Senator Green from Amman, Jordan. They were waiting in the car on the eastern side of Mandlebaum Gate at about 11:00 PM on Christmas Eve. I was coming from Israel and making my way to Mandlebaum Gate with Governor Stassen. We got over in the car, a large car. So I got Governor Stassen, the consul general, and Senator Green into this large car. However, I had the impression that Senator Green wouldn't speak to me!

What I discovered as we moved along was that this was one of the "tricks" of old Senator Green. He could fall asleep with his eyes open! In fact, he used to do that on the floor of the Senate in Washington. So that was why he apparently wouldn't speak to me. He was asleep!

Q: This is the second interview done with Daniel O. Newberry. This is in 1997. I guess that we are just about the end of your tour in Jerusalem. One thing you might discuss. Did you feel, in Jerusalem, the "heavy hand" of the pro-Israeli press and politics in the United States? Or did this really come later?

NEWBERRY: Stu, my impression was that the pro-Israeli press had already won, hands down. There was no contest, from our perspective. There wasn't any pro-Arab press in the U.S., from our perspective. All of the American news media, including radio and what there was of television [TV] at the time, were pro-Israel. At least, that is the impression that we had out there.

Q: Was there any concern on our part about the Arabs who, for one reason or another, had been forced out of their traditional homes in Greater Palestine, which is now part of Israel, as refugees? Were we reporting or thinking about that at all?

NEWBERRY: We were reporting on it, insofar as the small staff at the American consulate general had the leisure to report these things. The embassy in Tel Aviv was not particularly interested in that aspect of the subject. The legation in Amman did some reporting because they had huge camps of Palestinian refugees on the East bank of the Jordan River.

Yes, we were concerned about this. We were talking previously about the "well springs" of anti-Israel feeling. I could see this with my own eyes. This is a technique that the Israelis still use. You create refugees when you want to, quite simply by bulldozing their houses. That is still a

standard technique.

When I first went to Jaffa, which is a suburb of Tel Aviv, it looked like one of these old European cities destroyed during World War II. Jaffa, as a city, goes back to the time of the Crusades and before that, even to Biblical times. Jaffa looked like one of these old, European cities which were absolutely devastated during World War II. I asked people: "Where was all of the fighting? Nobody said anything about pitched battles here." I was told: "Oh, no, the Israelis demolished the town after the fighting was over." The Israelis had just about flattened the entire, old city of Jaffa, just to make sure that the Arabs didn't have any place to come back to. That is just an example of their attitudes.

Q: When you came back to Jaffa, did this type of thing cause feelings of revulsion among your colleagues, and maybe you? At this point the American public was sort of cheering for the "plucky Jews" to beat back the Arabs and all of that.

NEWBERRY: People tended to speak of "brave, little Israel." However, Stu, I have to say that in the "culture" of the Foreign Service in those days nobody was particularly interested in "debriefing" junior officers freshly back from their posts.

Q: They still don't. They don't "debrief" the senior officers, either. The closest thing we have to debriefing is the process that's going on here, 50 years after the fact.

NEWBERRY: Anyway, inexperienced officers like me were wondering what was going to happen to them next. I have no memory or any impression of anybody wanting to "pick my brains."

However, when I got to Atlanta for home leave, somehow "the word" got around that a local, home town boy had returned from being a vice consul in Jerusalem. The Hadassah Business Women's Club [Jewish community group] invited me to be a speaker at one of their meetings. I wondered how many businesswomen there were in Atlanta, and Jewish businesswomen at that. Atlanta was still not a very big city in 1949. This program was held at a Jewish country club in Atlanta. I was graciously received and then taken into the room where I was going to make my little speech. There were about 800 women in the room! They all wanted to hear everything that they could possibly hear about Jerusalem.

I would have to contrast this reception with the attitude of officers in the State Department toward one of their professional colleagues in talking about his experiences in Jerusalem. They might even have learned something from my talk! These Jewish businesswomen in Atlanta wanted to get everything out of me that they could. They were a very good, sharp audience.

Q: You were there in Jerusalem from 1949 until when?

NEWBERRY: From the first part of May, 1949, until some time in October, 1951. As I said before, during the last few months of that period I was on temporary duty at the embassy in Tel Aviv, although still technically assigned to Jerusalem.

Q: Let's talk a little about your reaction to being in Tel Aviv. I am speaking now of the atmosphere in our embassy there, as opposed to the consulate general in Jerusalem. Was there a difference in how things were regarded and dealt with there?

NEWBERRY: There was a definite difference in the atmosphere, because the people in our embassy in Tel Aviv had no contact, to speak of, with Arabs at all. That led to a built-in difference in outlook. It was a "different window on the world."

Of course, I had never been in an embassy before. I didn't even know how to work in an embassy. I was assigned to temporary duty in the Economic Section of the embassy. I had a certain set of subjects that I worked on. Talk about "color"? I'll give you another bit of "color." In those days we had "despatches," as you may remember. This was the only time that I ever wrote a despatch. The State Department was very proud of spelling the word "despatch" with an "e," rather than with an "i."

One of the things that I got interested in, and this was one of the ironies of the Foreign Service, was the "vanity" of my superiors. They wanted their sections to be fully staffed and to show that they were "overworked." In fact, the embassy was not "overstaffed." Nevertheless, they insisted on getting this young officer, me, who had been assigned to Jerusalem, moved up to the embassy.

There really wasn't enough work for me to do. There wasn't enough office space, either. There were four officers in a room half as big as this room. You know the dimensions of it. It was like the "City Room" of an old newspaper. We almost literally had to "climb over" each other to get in and out of the office. However, there I was in the embassy, even though I wasn't really "needed."

I thought of subjects to write reports on. I decided to write a report on the Israeli fishing industry. It was very poorly developed in those days. I realized that one of the keys to the fishing industry was the dietary laws and the "Kosher" rules about what kind of fish could be eaten. That is, whether the fish were scaled or unscaled, skinned or unskinned, and so forth. I had a Biblical quotation at the beginning of my despatch. In my experience this was the only time that I dared start off a despatch to the Department of State, quoting the Bible. This may still be rare.

However, I had a lot of fun and learned a lot about why the Israelis, at that point, hadn't done anything with their fishing industry. This despatch had to do with that. In Turkey, in the olden times, it had been the Greeks who did all of the fishing. The Turks had to learn how to catch fish, and the Israelis also had to learn how to be fishermen.

RICHARD B. PARKER
Consul General
Jerusalem (1951-1953)

Desk Officer for Jordan, Israel, and Iraq

Washington, DC (1957-1959)

Ambassador Richard B. Parker was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1923. He received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Kansas State University. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in 1949, he served in the U.S. Army as an infantry officer. Ambassador Parker's career included positions in Australia, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and ambassadorships to Algeria, Lebanon, and Morocco. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: Yes. Well, now, you went to Jerusalem in 1951. How did you see the situation at the time in Jerusalem and in the Arab world? How did it appear to you?

PARKER: I didn't have any idea of what it was. I had gone to see the Israeli consul in Sydney who recommended some books to me. I read several of these books. One of them was Arthur Koestler's Promise and Fulfillment. There was also a Lebanese consul there. But a man who for various reasons, principally his rather poor command of English, was not taken seriously by anybody. I did not go to see him. It never occurred to me.

I went to Jerusalem primarily with an Israeli-oriented background. I had no idea of the complications of the Palestine problem or anything else, or the history of our involvement in that area, or what our interests were. I was interested in my career and going to serve in a place that might be interesting and would have some prospect of maybe leading me to the exalted rank of class 3 or class 2 by the time I was ready to retire.

Q: Well, what was your job as the -- it was the consulate general now?

PARKER: Yes.

Q: How did it fit into the system because Jerusalem has always been a --

PARKER: Independent.

Q: Independent.

PARKER: Yes. Well, we reported directly to the Department, and we were very jealous of our independent status. We didn't take any nonsense from those bastards in Tel Aviv or Amman. We thought they didn't really understand the situation. The principal officer, the consul general, was in charge of political reporting, and we had primary responsibility for reporting on the activities of the mixed armistice commissions, which were the U.N.-supervised commissions which had both Israeli and Arab officers on them which were supervising the armistice agreements concluded in 1949. There were always incidents across the border to report on. A lot of activity, very interesting activity.

Q: Let's explain a little about the borders at this point in that area.

PARKER: Well, they were the borders where the fighting stopped in '48. Jerusalem was a

divided city. We had an office on the Arab side, and an office on the Israeli side. The first six months of our tour there, we lived on the Israeli side. And the remaining eighteen months, we were on the Arab side. We had to go back and forth. We had a sort of permanent pass that would let us go back and forth through the Mandelbaum gate.

One of my principal functions was arranging temporary passes for people to go through the gates. To go from the Israel side to the Arab side and vice versa. These were tourists, officials, visitors, and so forth.

Q: Well, who was the consul general and how did he operate in this complicated situation?

PARKER: The consul general was a man named Tyler, Roger B. Tyler. No, sorry. S. Roger Tyler. He operated very well in this environment. He took things very much in his stride, moving back and forth, knowing people on both sides of the border. I think well-liked by people on both sides. He was a very poor administrator of the consulate general. I had a terrible time with him. But he was certainly, in terms of the political function, I think very good and quite well-liked, and everybody remembers him.

Q: Dick, you were saying you wanted to add something about dealing with -- we talked about the Mandelbaum gate -- but your assignment in Jerusalem in 1951 to 1953 about the West Bank?

PARKER: Yes. Thinking over the answer I gave you afterwards, I thought I should have pointed out that at this point in 1951, the West Bank, the region between the Jordan River and the 1948 boundaries of Israel, was controlled by Jordan.

The consulate general in Jerusalem had responsibility for reporting on the West Bank. People from Amman did not get over there very much. The Jordan River was always quite a division between us. Actually, the West Bank was our consular district. We didn't issue visas, but we did passport and citizenship and notarial services for the West Bank. We also in theory had responsibility for Gaza. In other words, we had responsibility for everything that was left over from 1948: Gaza, the West Bank, and the so-called corpus separatum, the separate body of Jerusalem. We didn't recognize the sovereignty of either Jordan or Israel over their respective halves to that city. Tel Aviv did not send people up to Jerusalem without our permission.

Back in 1951, the Foreign Ministry was still down at the place called the Village -- I think it was Hakiryia.

Q: This is the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

PARKER: Israeli Foreign Ministry. We saw in the Foreign Service list that the Department was showing Gaza as in our district. Nobody from Cairo had been there since 1948, apparently. One day I decided to try to find out if we could actually go to Gaza. We had special passes that permitted us to go across the border in Jerusalem, up in Galilee on the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters between Syria and Israel, and across the Lebanese border at Ras Naqurah. So why not go to Gaza with a U.N. pass? So we applied for permission to go there, and it was refused by the Egyptians.

I don't know what the people in Gaza did, but certainly we were not providing any consular services to them, nor were we reporting on that area nor was anybody else.

Q: I must say, my two and a half year exposure in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia did not endear me to the machinations of that world. Why did we not develop the equivalent -- have you noticed -- of Arabists, of Israelists?

PARKER: We have trained some people in Hebrew. There are a number of officers who have spent two, or perhaps three, tours in Israel, but, you know, making a career out of Israel is pretty limiting in terms of your choice of jobs and places to go and so forth. Very little geographic scope. If you become an Israeli specialist, you are hardly persona grata across the line in the Arab countries. So it has not been something that has appealed a great deal to people.

Q: Now how did you, again, from the Amman point of view, our embassy, view Israel and how about, on a more personal side, how did you view the reporting that was coming out of Tel Aviv? Did you feel you were reporting on the same climate or was there a difference?

PARKER: Tel Aviv naturally tended to report things from an Israeli perspective. That was the perspective that they saw down there. Just as I think we tended to report things from a Jordanian perspective. We always thought they were terribly pro-Israeli, and they always thought we were terribly pro-Arab.

What was the first part of the question?

Q: How did we view Israel? One was the reporting and the other was the --

PARKER: Yes. I think we saw Israel as a considerable liability in the area. We realized that it was no escaping our identification with it given the political realities at that point. But we were concerned that this friend of ours was something that was really out of control in terms of its activities towards its neighbors. I arrived in Amman just after the Gaza raids in 1955 in which the Israelis went over in force in Gaza and killed a large number of people, attacking Egyptian police posts and so forth. A well-documented story and something that Israelis are still arguing about and something that led directly to the Egyptian press for arms from the Soviets. After the Gaza raid, they turned to us for arms, and we imposed conditions which they thought were unacceptable, and so they turned to the Soviets. And that became the Soviet entry into the area. Well, we saw this sort of action by the Israelis as the vector of Soviet penetration in the area.

SLATOR CLAY BLACKISTON JR.
Political Officer
Jerusalem (1953-1956)

Desk Officer for Jordan and Israel
Washington, DC (1956-1957)

Slator Clay Blackiston, Jr. was born in 1918 in Richmond, Virginia. He graduated with an A.B. degree from the University of Virginia. During World War II, he was an aviator in the U.S. Navy Mr. Blackiston joined the Foreign Service in 1947 and served in Amsterdam, Stuttgart, Port-au-Prince, Jerusalem, Tunis, Jeddah, Cairo, Amman, and Calcutta. He was a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations in 1971. Mr. Blackiston retired from the Foreign Service in 1975. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: But you went to Jerusalem in 1953 and you served there until 1956. Was that just a regular assignment or did you ask for it?

BLACKISTON: I can't remember but I was very happy to go there and I found it fascinating, although we had a lot of problems there which maybe you know about.

Q: Could you explain what the situation was like at that time?

BLACKISTON: The situation was this: the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 had left a situation in which there was no peace, just Armistice Agreements between Israel and the four surrounding countries, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. The Lebanese border was the same border it had been, but on the Syrian border there were three demilitarized zones (DZs), where, when the fighting ended, Arab villagers were still living. The terms of the Armistice Agreement were that life in the villages should go on as before; they shouldn't be interfered with. The Israelis, practically from the beginning, started encroaching the DZs and ultimately drove the Arab residents from the Hula area DZ and the two up at the headwaters of the Jordan. They also would fire on Syrian fishermen; there was a section of DZ that was only about 30 feet wide between the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee and Syrian territory and the Golan Heights. The Syrian fishermen would drag their boats across this strip of land and fish as they had been doing for centuries and this would cause trouble.

On the Jordan border the Armistice Agreements were negotiated by the Arab Legion, as it was then called. It was officered by British officers; Glubb Pasha was head of it, and the brigades were headed by British officers. And when the Armistice Agreements were signed they were negotiated by British officers who really didn't know the terrain that well or the geography, so the Armistice border was drawn in such a way that villages were cut off from their land, instead of drawing the border so that it would encompass these communal lands. So many of the villagers would come over into what had been their lands to harvest crops, graze their sheep and so on. This would lead the Israeli border police to fire and sometimes kill them. Occasionally infiltrators from Jordan would cross into Israel and attack Israeli settlers. While I was there there was a famous attack on a town called Qibya led by Arik Sharon; it was a village at the end of a road projecting into Israel. In retaliation for some infiltration from Jordan, the Israelis made a massive night attack on this village of Qibya blowing up houses and killing some 60 people. The Israelis followed the same tactics -- there were a whole series of these things, Qibya is one of the best known -- they would encircle the town, mine the road (there would just be one road) on the Jordan side and then put these satchel dynamite charges against the buildings with the people inside. I think fifty-six people were killed. Then when the Arab Legion would come down the

road, they had no other way to go as it was rocky terrain, the trucks would hit these mines. I was there the morning after with another FSO, Cleve Fuller; there is a picture in Life taken of us standing amid the bodies and describing us as UN observers. So this was the pattern of things and there were many of these places. My job included liaison with the UNTSO observers. Well, I lived on the Jordan side. Shall I describe all this?

Q: Yes, please do.

BLACKISTON: Is this getting too long?

Q: No, No. This is what I want, particularly this Jerusalem bit.

BLACKISTON: Let me describe the situation in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was also divided by the armistice line. There was the old city, which was the walled city, plus an eastern part of Jerusalem that was in Jordan; the new city was in Israel. The people of Jerusalem during the Arab-Israel war had defended the old city themselves, just the local inhabitants, but they were going to be overwhelmed so they called for help from Transjordan's King Abdullah. The Arab Legion came and did defend the old city so that it was not captured by Israel. We had one consulate general because the United States supported the UN partition plan which called for an Arab and Jewish state -- with a *corpus separatum*, which included Jerusalem and Bethlehem, an area that was to be internationally administered because of its significance for the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths. Of course this never came to pass but we still today support the legal fiction of it. At that time U.S. passports in Jerusalem said Jerusalem, Palestine; neither Jordan nor Israel. Now that has been changed, I believe. So we had the Consulate General; the main office of the Consul General was on the Israel side on Mammilah Road; across from us was a Muslim cemetery that the Israelis bulldozed. There was an office on the Jordan side and that is the one that I headed. We could cross back and forth during the daytime, and we did; the general public could not. Consular personnel could cross at night but you had to ask for special permission; sometimes we did go for a reception or something on the Israel side.

We had UN observers who were assigned to ensure that there were not violations of the armistice agreement, or if there were to investigate who was responsible. It was called the UN Truce Supervisory Organization, and they were on all four borders. We had what is known as Mixed Armistice Commissions for each of these borders; there was what they called the HKJIMAC which meant Hashemite Kingdom Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission -- there were similar MACs on all the other borders. The observers came from the United States, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and maybe Norway, I've forgotten. My job was to get to know these officers and to report on incidents, so I got to know them very, very well. The MAC met in a building that was in a no-man's land between one part of Jerusalem and the other. There was some cooperation between the Israelis and the Jordanians with regard to mosquito control, because water would sit there and if they didn't do something about it it would affect both sides so they did do that much.

There was a firing incident in Jerusalem while I was there and the Jordanians -- this is on Nablus Road which comes out of Damascus gate going towards Nablus and would have gone on toward Damascus if there had not been a division between the countries. The Jordanians erected a wall

which was about eight feet high, I guess, maybe more, so that in any firing from the Israel side the passersby would be protected. They were not using artillery but mortar shells. I am rambling a little here, but I might cite one case. We would get these Americans there, I guess you would call them hippies today -- they were going to make peace. I remember one day some guy had been in to the consulate to see me, then he'd gone over -- you could with permission cross over to the Israel side. One morning, there were loopholes in this wall, this guy walked into no-man's land and an Arab Legion man shot him dead right out in front of the consulate. Of course he should not have been there but he was a harmless guy. I remember my son calling me, and I looked outside and there was the guy dead.

I may jump a little bit, there is so much that happened there. You remember the Eisenhower Doctrine?

Q: The Eisenhower Doctrine was essentially what?

BLACKISTON: The idea was you would sign up the countries of the Middle East; if they adhered to this doctrine of objection to communism then they would get support, military assistance, from the United States. Lebanon signed up for it but nobody else. Also there was an attempt to get Jordan; we even tried to get Egypt, into the Baghdad Pact -- which of course we never joined. We joined the political committee and the military committee, I have sort of forgotten about that. But there was an attempt to get Jordan into the Baghdad Pact in 1955 and this really blew their stack. There was a farm near Jericho run by Musa Alami & Project, it was quite famous; it used to get a lot of publicity in Reader's Digest. Musa Alami was a Jordanian who got money from Iraq for the farm which trained Palestinian youth in agriculture. It did a good job. That was at the time that Iraq was still more or less under British influence with King Faisal II on the throne.

Q: The King was assassinated.

BLACKISTON: That was later, when Abd al-Karim Qasim overthrew him in 1958. That was later, Nuri Said was the Prime Minister of Iraq who was pro-British. The Jordanians, the mass of the people, particularly the Palestinians, reacted very unfavorably to this attempt to get them into the Baghdad Pact. There was a big refugee camp down in Jericho which is in the Jordan Valley. The refugees came out of the camp and were attacking and tearing apart this Musa project, which was doing good work, actually. They trained students in agriculture, raising chickens and such, and they would sell their turkeys and so forth; but they were getting money from Iraq, Iraq being considered as opposed to Palestinian interests. So they tore the place apart. There were also some Mennonite Missionaries down in the refugee camp, and these missionaries -- well I think they accused them of trying to distribute Bibles. Whether they did or not I don't know but we got a call and I had to go down there in a jeep. These people were barricaded in their house and I brought them up to Jerusalem. Then one thing led to another and by the next year, early January, we heard rumors of an attack -- I've got a paper on all this part, I don't know whether you...

Q: When the time comes you might include that.

BLACKISTON: Well it's long, I just looked it up; I just realized I had it. So I am doing it off the

top of my head here.

Q: That's all right.

BLACKISTON: In January 1956 there were rumors of an attack on the Consulate. So we brought over three marines from the Mammilah Road Consulate General and put up concertina barbed wire on top of the fence around it. We had several attacks on the Consulate, but the big one came one day, and I would have to look up the date, when there was maybe a thousand people milling around... this main attack was in January, I guess, with a large crowd outside and we had three marines inside. The crowd was calling to pull down the American flag and our gunnery sergeant, called back, saying, "It ain't time for colors yet." So this mob started breaking in; we had two doors, one a side door, the marine broke out the upper panels and was standing on a chair so he could fire his .38 revolver. My wife and two kids were up on the second floor hiding behind clothes' bags. There was a stairway up to the residence quarters from the side door and some guy had broken out a panel and was getting ready to step into the hallway leading upstairs. I had a shotgun, an automatic shotgun that my father had left me, and so I fired at this guy and he left or was pulled out or something. Anyway this went on for some time; it was pretty hairy! Finally the Arab Legion brigade sent troops down and drove these people away.

Q: Hadn't there been any protection before? Why hadn't they sent troops before?

BLACKISTON: I guess it was the political situation there. You see Glubb Pasha had not been dismissed yet and it was pretty dicey. I was telephoning the governor of Jerusalem asking for protection. There were a number of people killed in this incident. I have upstairs the statement of, I think it was, Brigadier Gallatly, who gave me a figure of how many were killed; I have forgotten what it was. So this situation was not very good, it is not a normal thing and shortly after I was transferred.

Q: Did you have any dealings at all with the Embassy in Tel Aviv?

BLACKISTON: Oh yes, I am glad you asked me this. I didn't have direct dealings with Tel Aviv, but we had a constant battle with the Embassy; with the Army attaché reporting Israeli versions of border incidents, which were not true. We were getting the facts from the UNTSO observers and the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Supervisory Organization, who first was a man named General Vagn Benecke, a Dane. He had played a substantial role in spiriting Danish Jews across the Kattegat to Sweden. And yet this man, because he reported the truth, was just castigated by the Israelis. Now his successor was a General Burns, a Canadian Major General who had been in command of a Canadian division during the second World War. We got to know him quite well too; as a matter of fact I visited him some years ago when I was up in Ottawa. I am sure he is dead now. The Embassy in Tel Aviv, we considered, as constantly presenting the Israeli viewpoint. You see the first American Ambassador to Israel was a guy named McDonald who was confessedly a Zionist; no attempt at balance or anything. The Consul General was constantly getting flak from the Embassy in Tel Aviv, not from the Embassy in Amman. That was the situation.

Q: What was your impression of the Israelis at that time?

BLACKISTON: Aggressive; talking peace but not really wishing it. Nothing much has changed.

Q: Did you feel that your or the Consul General's reporting was inhibited because of domestic political pressures?

BLACKISTON: No, I do not think so. Actually, I was thanked. I will give you one example. The Israelis were complaining bitterly, because on the Mount of Olives, which was on the Jordanian side at that time, there was a Jewish cemetery and many of the grave stones had been knocked down during the war, not officially but by individual Arabs who had broken these stones. That's where this guy Robert Maxwell who either fell or jumped off his yacht off the Canary Islands was buried in an almost official Israel funeral.

Q: A famous British financier of Jewish background; Maxwell, I think.

BLACKISTON: Maxwell, is buried there and there have been allegations that he was a Mossad agent. So these gravestones had been knocked down by Arabs and the Israelis were complaining bitterly to the U.S. government about this. But I had traveled all over Israel and just right across the street in the Mammilah cemetery, which was a Muslim cemetery, I watched and took pictures where they bulldozed the whole thing. So I wrote a dispatch and sent in pictures, making the point that yes, Arabs had knocked down these graves but this was not done by the Jordan government, whereas what had transpired on the Mammilah cemetery was an act by the Israeli government, and I drew a contrast there. Actually I have been all over Israel and they have destroyed graves and Muslim shrines all over the place.

Q: You left there in 1956. Was this before the Suez crisis and war in October of 1956?

BLACKISTON: Yes, they got me out of there because it probably wasn't good for me to stay there. So I went back and was on what was then called the Jordan-Israel desk, for a year. The experience in Jerusalem had interested me in the Arab world, so I applied for Arab language school.

EUGENE H. BIRD
Vice Consul
Jerusalem (1956-1958)

Eugene H. Bird was born in Spokane, Washington in 1925. He was in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1948. He attended the University of Washington, receiving a B.S. degree in 1948 and a M.A. degree in 1952. Mr. Bird's overseas career included posts in Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and India. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1994.

Q: How did you find dealing with Israeli diplomats?

BIRD: I found them quite charming. I was always very welcome in Ambassador Abba Eban's embassy. Some years after I left Washington [in 1956], friends told me that I was viewed as being very pro-Israeli when I went to [the Consulate General in] Jerusalem. And I was "courted" there. I was assigned a young Israeli who would call me at [various] times from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So I was viewed as potentially a very useful person to them in many ways, because I'd worked on so many different problems and projects affecting them, including the Johnston Plan [for the division of the waters of the Jordan River between Arabs and Israelis]. [On my way to] Jerusalem, I went via London. It was kind of unusual and, perhaps, kind of "bumptious" of me to do this. I arranged my travel so that I went to London, where I received a briefing. Dayton Mak took me to the [British] Foreign Ministry.

Then I flew to Beirut. I'd never seen these places before. Of course, I'd been briefing people on them. Fraser Wilkins once said to me, after a briefing I had given on Jerusalem, "How long has it been since you've been in Jerusalem?" [I had never been there and told him so.] It was very embarrassing. I could read and brief fairly easily. I went to Beirut and met the Ambassador and his staff and spent a day or two there.

Q: *When did you go to Jerusalem?*

BIRD: I arrived there on May 10, 1956.

Q: *What was your job?*

BIRD: I was just a vice-consul in East Jerusalem. I handled West Bank affairs...

Q: *Can you explain how our Consulate [General] in Jerusalem was organized at this time?*

BIRD: It was an independent office and still is. It did not report either to our Embassy in Amman, Jordan, or to our Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel. The main building for the Consulate was in West Jerusalem in Israel. We had a very small staff of seven or eight people [in East Jerusalem]. We had no CIA personnel assigned there. One of the first things that happened [after my arrival] was that the CIA asked to put in a couple of people there, disguised as USIS librarians or something like that. My Consul General asked me if I thought I could live with that. I said, "Oh, sure. I dealt with CIA a lot in Washington." I got some money from CIA to rebuild the roof of the old Russian Church in East Jerusalem. I had good contacts with the Russian community as a result of that.

The fact is that we carried in our passports a statement that we were accredited to the United States Consulate General in Jerusalem, Palestine. We received letters of recognition from the governor, or "Muhafiz" of East Jerusalem and from the Mayor of West Jerusalem. We defended our independence very strongly, as a result of which the Consul General was always in trouble with both of our Ambassadors [to Jordan and to Israel].

Q: *Who was the Consul General at that time [in Jerusalem]?*

BIRD: William Hamilton. He'd previously served in Khartoum but was not an Arabist as such. He was near his last assignment abroad. He had, perhaps, one more tour after that. He was a very well-educated, very quiet person. He didn't make a lot of waves. He always had some small problem going, either with the desk back in Washington or with the Ambassador in Tel Aviv.

Q: What was the situation in Jerusalem in the summer of 1956?

BIRD: Well, [John Foster] Dulles was Secretary of State. He'd made a couple of visits to the Middle East by that time, trying to work on the problem of Arab-Israeli relations. A very socialist-oriented Egyptian regime had just made its first agreement with the Soviets to provide arms in the Middle East. As a result, there was a newly-developing relationship between the United States and Israel to "balance" those arms shipments to Egypt. Syria immediately became a client of the "Czechoslovak" arms industry also--which was really the Soviet arms industry. This development was generally viewed as a prelude to war. In fact, I told my wife before I left Washington in May, "I don't think that you're ever going to get to Jerusalem because I expect a war to start even before you can come in late June or early July."

It didn't happen quite that way, but all during the summer of 1956 we were "Cassandras" in a sense. We were all predicting war and were trying to report, I suppose, and do everything that we could do, at whatever level we were operating, somehow to prevent that war from happening. The reason for the war, of course, was the nationalization of the Suez Canal by the Egyptians. In fact, the Eden Government [in the U. K.] and the French Government [under Guy Mollet of the French Socialist Party] were working very closely with the Israelis. We knew this. There was a buildup [of troops and supplies] on Cyprus. By September the level of insults between the Egyptians, on the one hand, and Paris and London, on the other, was pretty high. However, the Egyptians really didn't want a war to happen. They were trying to use the United States to try to prevent that war from happening.

I think that Secretary Dulles, in effect, was "washing his hands" of the whole affair, quite frankly. We had a political reporting officer at the Embassy [in Tel Aviv]. I think that he was probably associated with the CIA. He was Hungarian Jewish in background. He had some very good friends in Israel. He managed to find out the exact date [of the beginning of the Israeli involvement] about a week ahead of time. He sent that date in to Washington. He had to send it on the "back channel" [through the CIA] because the Ambassador didn't believe him. Things like that were happening.

Q: We're talking about Ambassador Wally Barbour, aren't we?

BIRD: Yes. I presume that the warning got through to the Israeli desk and, therefore, to Secretary Dulles. I suppose that there were some efforts to work with London and Paris. What was a surprise was the closeness of the relationship between Tel Aviv and Paris and London on this matter. The Israelis were absolutely overjoyed with this opportunity to try to topple Nasser. We had very close relations with the British Consulate General [in Jerusalem]. A man named Wilson, the Deputy Consul General, was my contact at the British Consulate General. Later on, he became the head of the Foreign Office's Information Division and spokesman for the Foreign

Office. He was a very elegant personality and well clued in to what was happening in the [Israeli] Foreign Ministry. They [the British] pulled all of their people, except a few officials like Wilson, out in August or early September, 1956. Then, after three or four weeks--or maybe a little longer--they brought them back [to Jerusalem]. Then everyone thought that the chances of war had diminished. We [in the American Consulate General] never believed that.

We had good reason [not to believe that], in the last 48 hours before the war started, when all the public transportation was disappearing off the streets. [Israel] was mobilizing its reserves. The first news we had of the invasion of the Sinai Desert by Israeli troops was Kol Israel [the official Israeli radio station] announcing on its 10:00 PM news program, "Our forces have reached the Mitla Pass, 70 km within the Sinai" [Desert] area. I was on the Israeli side [of Jerusalem] that night. The next day I went to the other [Jordanian] side. We had access to a [telephone] line through the British Consulate between the two sides. It was the only line across the Mandelbaum Gate. The British had negotiated that in 1948 before they withdrew from Palestine. We could "tap into" that line by calling the British Consulate. The British Consulate on the other side would call our Consulate. Of course, [the phone conversations] were "tapped" [by the Israelis], so there were things that we couldn't say.

The British, of course, were quite surprised at our reaction in 1956, as were the Israelis. It was a real shock to them. You have to wonder if Secretary Dulles simply didn't send the right message to [British Prime Minister] Eden. There have been lots of books and articles written about this, including Dick Parker's recent book ["The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East," by Richard Parker], but we don't really know whether Eden was being Machiavellian, though I suspect that that was it. He had decided, just as Don Bergus had a year before, "Well, I guess the only thing left is a nice little war." [In the State Department] they had no intention of doing the needful and preventing a war from happening. I think that that's one of the great failures in American foreign policy in the Middle East.

It is my personal opinion that we could have prevented the 1956 War and could [also] have prevented the 1967 War. I was in [the Embassy in] Cairo in 1967 and in [the Consulate General in] Jerusalem in 1956 and saw the buildup toward war. However, we were not doing all that we could to prevent the war from happening. Why [we didn't do enough to prevent war] will always remain a mystery to me, because our interests were obviously very heavily affected by the closure of the Suez Canal in 1956. In fact, our reaction proved that it was not something that we wanted to happen. Secretary Dulles was a very intelligent person in many ways--in spite of being a lawyer. He let the situation develop to the point of crisis.

Q: Bringing our discussion back from Secretary Dulles to Gene Bird, here you were, straddling Arab and Jewish nations. What did all of you do during the Suez Crisis [of 1956]?

BIRD: I suppose we survived. The first thing we did was to evacuate everyone. We were told to get everyone off the West Bank area that we could. I called in [the heads of] the Mennonite and other missionary groups. There weren't a lot of Americans on the West Bank, but there was a sufficient number for us to have a problem getting them out. I tried to arrange for an aerial evacuation, because we didn't seem to be able to get permission to drive in our cars all the way to Beirut. A lot of people didn't want to leave their cars in Amman, [Jordan]. We made a disastrous

attempt to bring in a DC-3 [aircraft], which we managed to lease from Air Jordan. We got about 30 people and all of their luggage out at the airport. At the last moment the Jordanians said that their plane could not fly because there were too many risks involved for an Air Jordan plane in the air. There had been a "shoot down" in 1948 of a plane from Air Jordan, or, rather, the predecessor to Air Jordan. We knew one of the survivors of this crash, the head of the American School for Oriental Research. Here he was, being evacuated on an Air Jordan plane. He survived the 1948 shoot down by a "Yak" [Soviet built] fighter, an Israeli fighter from Russia, which always intrigued me. So evacuation was a major issue.

And then there were demonstrations, which went on for about six months, during which time we kept our people out [of Jordan]. My wife and our two little children, both pre-schoolers and very young, boarded an aircraft, perhaps the morning after the [Israeli] invasion [of Sinai] and got out. It was one of the last aircraft out.

We had a lot of [American] tourists, of course. The tourists didn't see anything happening. It was a very calm period in Jerusalem itself. There were some troops up close to the line, but there was a prohibition written into the armistice agreement on having tanks near the line. Both sides respected that in 1956, unlike in 1967. So we had no incidents. I remember our emergency radio. I was trying to go from the Consulate on one side to the other. I turned the radio on but all I could receive was people talking back and forth in Hebrew. They had the same kind of radios that we did. We had provided [the Israelis] with communications equipment. [When I was on the Israeli desk], I had helped to get that radio equipment [for them] in substitution for jet aircraft. They had very good U. S. Army communications gear, which had been integrated into the Israeli Army. They used it throughout the Suez Crisis.

So we were a kind of lonely group of [temporary] bachelors, sitting there in Jerusalem for almost six months. The rumor mill was always active, saying that it [the prohibition on having our families there] was going to be off next week and so on. But the official description of the policy was that, "We wanted to teach both sides a lesson." I remember the puzzlement of the Egyptian who invited me over, shortly after Secretary Dulles had made a very pro-Egyptian statement of sympathy. I said that we were taking the whole issue to the [UN] Security Council and were trying to get the British and French to pull out [of the Suez Canal area]. Really, Israel was a sideshow in this whole thing, even though she had gone almost all the way to the Suez Canal. Israel had been prevented from going all the way by the British, who told them, "Don't go any farther. You're not to take the Canal. We're going to take it." In fact, the Israeli Army probably could have taken the Canal all the way down [to Suez]. There probably weren't that many Egyptian troops left in the Sinai Desert area.

This didn't happen, so the situation became a matter of arranging for the evacuation of British and French troops [from the Suez Canal area]. We [in the Consulate General in Jerusalem] weren't directly involved with that, except that we were in contact with people like [British Consul General] Wilson and with the French [in Jerusalem] and so on. At the Consulate General we talked a lot [about the situation]. We tried to come up with ideas. One of the ideas we came up with was letting the Israelis keep the Gaza Strip at that point, because Gaza was not an area which the Egyptians had been remarkably good at governing. It would have given the Israelis a reason to return all of the 400,000 [Arab refugees] to within the 1956 borders. Our expression

was, "This will break the back of the refugee problem if you bring all of these people back into Israel." Let them go back to Ashkelon and the villages and so forth. We knew the villages had been largely destroyed, but we thought that we could find a way to reintegrate them into Israeli society.

I remember raising this idea at a very low level, just to test it with my contact in the Israeli Foreign Ministry. He looked at me as if I were really mad. It was a new idea to him. He said, "You don't understand anything about Israel, do you?" He meant [to say], "We don't want those people back. We want the land but we don't want them back." He said, "Why don't you take them instead to Brazil?" Years later Assistant Secretary George Allen told me that he had suggested the same thing to Secretary Dulles at the White House during the same period. They had been briefing President Eisenhower. Allen told me that both Dulles brothers were there--Allan Dulles from the CIA and John Foster Dulles from the Department of State. Allan said that maybe it would be a good idea to leave Israel with Gaza. John Foster Dulles went absolutely ballistic and said, "No, that would be rewarding aggression. We can't reward aggression. Forget that idea completely." So this was unacceptable from both sides. It's interesting to look back and see what's happening now.

Q: How was life for you in the Consulate General in Jerusalem? How were your contacts with people on the West Bank of the Jordan and how did they respond to the events of 1956?

BIRD: They were in a state of shock, of course, and then the situation turned into a state of concern about whether Israel intended to take the West Bank. The actual crisis itself only lasted about four or five days before [hostilities stopped], and about three days after the Egyptians lost Port Said. During that period the Mahafiz of Jerusalem, an East Banker who was very close to King Hussein, though not a Palestinian, was in very close touch with the Consulate General and with me, because the Consul General wasn't always in East Jerusalem. So sometimes in the evening I would go over there and talk with the Mahafiz or some of his friends and attend some of his majelis [conversation] meetings. There was constant political talk about Israeli intentions. There was real fear that the Israelis intended to take the West Bank at that time. They feared that it could easily be done and that it would happen. We were watching any buildup of the Jordan Arab Army--the Arab Legion.

I remember sitting with the head of the American Colony Hotel [in East Jerusalem on the Damascus Road] and other people who were quite well known and long term residents of the area. I had also gone down to Jericho and had watched a very long line of [Jordanian] military vehicles which had come down the very road which Yasser Arafat is now trying to get control of. My friend, British Deputy Consul General Wilson, was also with me. We watched through binoculars to see whether they were going to turn up toward Jerusalem, which would be an indication of war, or turn and go across the [Allenby] Bridge and go back into Jordan. In fact, they turned and went across the bridge and into the main part of Jordan.

It was a strange time as far as our relations with the West Bank are concerned. Our Deputy Consul General had completed his tour [of duty in Jerusalem] and left. Andrew Killgore, the new Deputy Consul General, had not yet arrived, so I was more or less left alone. I roamed up and down the West Bank of the Jordan. There wasn't a lot of consular work to do. I ran the office. By

then we had a couple of CIA types on the West Bank, working under the cover of the Consulate General. We were trying to report on what was happening in terms of the relationship between the West Bank and Jordan, because there wasn't much of a relationship between the West Bankers and Israel. The only place that they ever met was at the meetings of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission, or the IMAC, as they called it. That was just a few hundred feet from the Consulate office [in East Jerusalem]. I used to go over and talk with the Norwegian [UN officer] who was there at the time. We had very close relations with the UN. They had a very high level UN civil servant, a Frenchman. His efforts were to keep the two parties from militarizing the area close to the line of demarcation and keep the peace as well as he could. The effect that the UN had in terms of creating the conditions for peace were pretty minimal, in reality. This UN civil servant had a deputy, always a U. S. military officer, a colonel or lieutenant colonel, usually a Marine Corps officer. We became very close friends with him--his name was Barney. He was there during the Suez crisis in 1956.

Those military people in the UNTSO [UN Truce Supervision Office] really had more insight because they were operating on the Syrian front, and on the Egyptian front, too, through Gaza. And then, of course, there were the representatives of the UNRWA [UN Relief and Works Administration]. Henry Labouisse was ahead of UNRWA by that time.

Q: Henry Labouisse was former [U. S.] Ambassador to Greece, a professional Foreign Service Officer.

BIRD: A very fine person. I'd seen him just before I went out [to Jerusalem] at the annual pledge giving session at the UN Security Council in New York. What struck me then, of course, was that the Arabs, who had lots of money--Saudi Arabia and others--were still trying to push the problem of the Palestinian refugees back on the West as much as possible because they didn't want to take responsibility by giving substantial amounts of money to UNRWA. In reality, they never did [give much support to UNRWA]. At that point [1956] we were giving 28 cents per refugee per year, an incredibly small amount. The same thing is true now with the Palestine funds. They're trying to get together our contribution, which is going to be relatively minor in comparison to what we give to Israel every year.

Q: What was your impression of Jordanian officials and the Jordanian Government at this time? What did we think of their rule over the West Bank?

BIRD: We heard from Palestinians that they didn't like the "little King" [King Hussein]. I knew the widow of a Husseini who had been executed for participation in the plot to assassinate King Abdullah [King Hussein's grandfather]. He was known as "the East German spy." I don't think that he had any relationship with the Communists at all, but, of course, in those days anybody from East Germany was very suspect. He was originally from East Germany. I never knew him, of course. He had been executed three years or so before. She was still there, very much accepted in Arab society, which was surprising. She eventually married a United Nations official but, of course, she had been very much a part of the strained relations between the West Bankers and King Hussein.

When we were there, King Hussein made his first, official visit to the West Bank since his accession to the throne. I remember my little son standing, along with thousands of other kids, on the road from Kalandria Airport, waving a Jordanian flag. The Jordanians had pretty effective control, of course, but the attitudes expressed by the Palestinians were very derisive. Shortly after we got there, the first, free election in Jordan's history was held. It went pretty well but it went pretty much against the king on the West Bank. I remember Sari Nusseibeh, who is now involved in the peace process at the present time. His father, Anwar, was running for the Jordanian Parliament. He received 1,400 votes from the West Bank. But I think that that was partly because he was identified as an Anglican, as a very Anglicized person. He had gone to college in Britain, was a very elegant personality, and later became Minister of Defense under King Hussein. I must say that relationships between the King and West Bankers were not good. I stood for two hours on the pavement waiting for the King to fly his own plane in, which he did. I still have some pictures from that period. All of the correct things were done for the King, but there were lots and lots of comments in the crowd while we were waiting, which we could overhear. They were saying something like, "He isn't my king"--that sort of thing.

Q: What about your relationships with the Israelis in Jerusalem after the United States came down rather heavily and stopped the fighting in 1956? What happened to you?

BIRD: My contact in the Foreign Ministry of Israel and I met almost every other day during this period. We had breakfast or lunch and sometimes met later. We talked a lot. I think that at one point--it was probably one day after the war started--I speculated that the Russians might threaten something in the way of retaliation. After all, it was "their" army that was being defeated. I speculated that perhaps they would threaten to fire their missiles. And sure enough that night, the Russians did threaten to fire missiles. He called me the next morning and said, "You must have had information." Of course, I didn't have any such thing. It was pure speculation. I think that the Israelis were quite astonished at the extent of the political defeat that they had suffered from this. It took them a good many years to come back from it. It wasn't until 1967, in fact. I think that the "old man," [David] Ben Gurion, probably expected a severe reaction, but all the signals had been strangely absent that we would be terribly displeased.

Q: The British, of course, who were so much closer to us than anybody else, at least at Prime Minister Eden's level, were astounded at what happened.

BIRD: They had come up against a Puritan Secretary of State.

Q: Well, it wasn't so much a Puritan Secretary of State. There was also President Eisenhower, who obviously was calling the shots.

BIRD: That always intrigued me. Why did he do this? I've asked [Ambassador] Dick Parker about this and so on. But if the [U. S.] really intended to come down on the side of Nasser, why didn't we do something to prevent [the British action], because this was the way it was viewed--coming down on the side of Nasser? Of course, I realize that it wasn't viewed by President Eisenhower that way.

Q: It just may be that some people in Washington think in long range terms. Then, all of a sudden we get to the point where somebody [in the White House] essentially says, "No, this is wrong." [We often tend to be] fairly passive until a certain point where we say, "To hell with this!"

BIRD: I think that, in spite of everything, we were probably a little surprised at the Consulate General [in Jerusalem] at the extent of the cooperation between Israel and the Paris-London axis. However, I wonder if we could have prevented that war. This always intrigues me. It seems to me that we could have used our "clout" to have prevented it.

Q: At this time you were sort of a new boy on the block [in Jerusalem]. Did you get any feel of what the views of the Arabists were? I mean our Foreign Service Officers who were specialists in the area.

BIRD: I got to know some of the Arabists because they had come on their annual tour from [the language school] in Beirut. There must have been about 20 of them in training at that time. I was the "control officer" for their visit [to Jerusalem]. I set up their meeting with [Prime Minister] Ben Gurion on the Israeli side and with the Mahafiz on the Jordanian side of the city. We traveled around Israel with them. Really, it was the first opportunity I had had to see a lot of things in Israel, and I accompanied them down to the Embassy [in Tel Aviv], too. I remember only one, remarkable meeting. That was with Prime Minister [David] Ben Gurion. The "guru" or one of the "gurus" of the Arabists was Edwin Wright, who came along with them. It was the first time I had met him--well, maybe I met him back here in Washington. It's possible. He was not a person that I knew well, if I knew him at all in the period before 1956. A number of the really well known State Department Arabists were there. Dick Parker wasn't there--he was already in Amman in the Political Section. But Andrew Killgore was there, as were Bill Crawford and Lucien Kinsolving, among others. I met all of these people for the first time.

We went up to the Knesset [Parliament]--the old building--and we were ushered into a kind of amphitheater, probably the place where the Knesset met at that time. I don't recall that it was all of that large. We were seated in the bottom row of seats. The old man, Ben Gurion, came in, a remarkable looking person--someone that you wouldn't forget. And that's part of the story. He sat there and gave us a description of the 1956 War and where they were. This was perhaps six months after that war. He took questions. Ed Wright finally put up his hand. Ben Gurion recognized him. Ed started to ask a question, but Ben Gurion interrupted him. He said, "I know you. We've met before, haven't we?" Before we went in, Ed Wright said that this was his first opportunity to meet the Prime Minister. Ed was very flustered, but he said, "I don't believe so, Mr. Prime Minister." Ben Gurion replied, "Yes, in fact, it was in the fall of 1943, on the lower level of the old State Department building" (now the West Executive Building) "in one of the corridors there, on the second floor, as I recall." Ben Gurion was very exact. He had obviously been carefully briefed or had an excellent memory, one or the other. Ben Gurion continued: "I led a delegation of people interested in getting Jews out of the [concentration] camps and out of Germany and, perhaps, bombing the camps. I made the representations to you." Ed Wright looked at him for a moment and he said, "Yes, I remember the delegation." He had forgotten that Ben Gurion was a part of that delegation.

We all shook our heads afterwards. It was a simple thing. Any assistant could have looked at the [list of visitors] and seen the name of Ed Wright, known who Ed Wright was, and mentioned it to Ben Gurion. But I still don't know, to this day, whether Ben Gurion was told that Ed Wright was there or whether his memory was really that impressive. He was very impressive. We talked about his retirement--what he wanted to do, to retire to the Negev Desert, to Stabokur. I guess that this meeting with Ben Gurion was one of the most memorable things that happened during this period. I would go to the Knesset from time to time but, of course, I didn't speak Hebrew, so there wasn't a lot of point to sitting there and listening to the flavor of the discussions.

The flavor of the debates hasn't changed. I was there in May, 1993. They still shout at each other in a way I have not seen in any other parliament except in Lebanon. They absolutely are the most aggressive group of people that I have ever seen in a parliamentary situation--maybe a little like the early sessions of the U. S. Senate when they used to have fistfights on the floor of the Senate. [Laughter]

Q: Well, there you were, the new boy on the block, looking at both of these worlds. The Arab world on the West Bank was somewhat artificial, but it was a new nation. Israel [was] on the other side. What were your impressions of these two worlds, at that time?

BIRD: As you recall, I'd had a lot of briefing experience for 18 months before [going to Jerusalem] and I'd read everything I could get my hands on in the early and mid 1950's that had been sent in from all of the posts in Israel. We had a post in Haifa at that time, in addition to Tel Aviv [and Jerusalem]. So my impressions were probably skewed to some extent by the reports which I had read. There were reports like the story told by a friend of mine, who was DCM in Amman, who decided that he should visit Israel. He came down near Tulkarm on the Israeli side of the line. The [Israelis] took him to see an Israeli orchard, [an orange grove on], a Kibbutz [collective farm]. It was a very impressive, beautiful orchard. At one point he put all of this in a report. I went to visit that orange grove afterward, just because I wanted to see it, after reading this impressive report by Paul Garron. Paul said that the Israeli Foreign Ministry guide said to him, "Have you ever seen such a marvelous orange grove? Did you have any idea that we have things like this?" Garron, who had been in Amman for two or three years and had visited the West bank in his travels, replied--and this was the ultimate "put down"--"Yes, as a matter of fact, I viewed this [orange grove] from the other side of the line. I was shown it by the man who planted these trees."

I think that, in some respects, you get a reputation with each side, and you have to watch the kind of reputation you get with the Israelis, because they have a long memory about such things. Andy Killgore has told me that since he left Jerusalem, he has been reminded [by the Israelis] of things he had said or reports he had sent in and so on and so forth. You get very sensitive to the fact that anything you say may be used against you.

I went from this orange grove up across on the other side to Tulkarm and stayed in and around that city for a couple of nights. It had lost most of its land to the Israelis and was sitting there on a rocky hillside. I talked with some of the people there. Then, on that same trip, I went to Kibbya because there had been a series of reports while I was on the Israel desk back here in Washington on the "Kibbya Incident," which Sharik Aron had inspired.

Q: *Yes, when he was a captain in the Israeli Army, I think.*

BIRD: Yes. I think that it happened in 1953, but it may have been 1952. I don't know.

Q: *Would you explain what it was?*

BIRD: Yes. There had been an incident in those orange groves, in which a couple of Israeli workers, one of them a woman, had been killed. The retaliation policy was in force in Israel. I could tell you about the retaliation policy in great deal, in terms of [how it originated], but I won't. [After the incident] the Israelis sent in a platoon. They decided that the tracks led near to the village of Kibbya. So they went across the line at night and surrounded the entire village. Sharon later said that he had gone to sleep after they captured the village--he'd taken a nap. In fact, that probably isn't at all true. What the Israelis did was to have sappers [Army engineers] wire the houses--they knew that people were inside these old stone houses. You blow one wall down, and the whole thing comes down. They blew up a number of houses, killed 85 people there, and wounded a lot more. Almost all of them were civilians. It was a severe act of retaliation for those two Israelis who died. Things haven't changed very much. They did the same thing--are doing the same thing--in southern Lebanon today.

Q: *Shatila and Sabra [Palestinian refugee camps just South of Beirut]?*

BIRD: The [key factor] is that the policy of retaliation [is still in effect], and Sharon is still a major factor in Israeli politics. He was "out" for three years, until 1956. When the 1956 crisis came along, they "rejuvenated" him--brought him back. He'd been forced out of the Army after the investigation of the Kibbya affair. Somebody had to be blamed. But, in fact, it wasn't Sharon. It was the policy of retaliation.

Q: *"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"?*

BIRD: Well, yes, in many respects. So I used my background to go to places like Nablus and to talk with the Mayor there, Hikman Masri. He introduced me to a real Arab city, the first Arab city I had known, because Jerusalem--even in those days--was not really that Arab. It was a much more sophisticated place. I enjoyed the contact with village life.

I did this on the Israeli side, too. I would visit kibbutzim [plural of kibbutz, or collective farms]. I remember the Jerusalem Corridor [from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem]. A friend of mine has just written a book about that same area. I remember going into the Jerusalem Corridor and being shown by a young man from Hebrew University the real defense works that the kibbutzim had. They had 6" guns. These were big ones, I might say, speaking as a naval gunner, hidden in the orange groves, even back in caves. They were pointing directly at Abu Musa, which was one of the Arab villages across on the other side. They were really prepared as, probably, they should have been, for almost anything. The people were a little bit afraid that an American vice-consul really shouldn't be in such a situation, because it revealed too many Israeli military secrets.

One of the things that I did because of my relationship with some of our military people out there--and I was still a reserve officer in Navy intelligence at that time--was talk a lot with them about their contacts with the Israeli military. I remember reporting some of this--how difficult their relations were and how they couldn't find out anything from the Israeli military. While I was there, our military were still in shock from the fact that the American Ambassador's office had been "bugged" with the wooden eagle, a big, carved American eagle. They [the Embassy general services officer] had taken it down and sent it out for touching up. When it came back after five or six months, they discovered that all of the Ambassador's conversations could be heard on a certain frequency outside. The [Israelis] had installed a sound-powered transmitter inside the eagle. This became one of the famous stories back [in Washington] when new employees were briefed on how careful they should be and on the security needs of the Embassy in Course 101 [at the Foreign Service Institute].

I remember my Consul General at that time being very, very concerned about security on both sides of the line. Every couple of weeks we carried the diplomatic pouch from Amman to Tel Aviv, across the line. Somebody would bring it [to Jerusalem] from Amman and then we would carry it up to Tel Aviv. [I remember] how careful we had to be. We usually had two people accompany us just so that one side or the other, the Jordanians or the Israelis, wouldn't try to set up an "accident" and seize the pouch. Not that there was a lot in it, but I think that, in any case, you learn these security concerns as the result of being in a potentially "Berlin type" situation--a divided city where you'd say good night to someone on one side, perhaps an Israeli. And they would send "greetings" to Mohammed on the other side. The situation was very, very weird. It was something you don't forget very easily.

Q: Of these two worlds, were you making any professional judgment about what you wanted to do about them?

BIRD: I think that I went out there with the reputation of being very, very pro-Israeli, or at least "tilted" in that direction. As one of my Israeli friends said to me, after I'd lived on the Israeli side for a while and then moved to the other side, because that's where my office was, "You know, we cannot seem to keep people satisfied with Israeli society, once they see it." He said, "I don't know why it is. We've got to do a better job out there." I think that, overall, I ended up by the end of two years with a desire to stand back and try to remind both sides how necessary it was for them to make some sort of peace there and share that land.

We could see that the U. S. had suffered a good deal from the 1956 War. It had threatened our relations [with Britain, France, and Israel]. It had happened when the Hungarian Revolution was going on. Some people say that we didn't take the kind of action we could have taken because of [the 1956 War in the Middle East]. The Middle East is a conundrum for almost all of our policymakers. I can see the same pattern developing now. The alarm bells ring, and the Secretary is expected to rush out there. By the time I left Jerusalem I sometimes felt that the most important thing was, perhaps, to stand back and remind [both sides] of their responsibilities to themselves. I didn't become "pro-Arab." I just became a lot less "pro-Israeli."

Q: How did you find just accompanying this group of [Foreign Service Officers] studying Arabic? Particularly when they were going around Israel, what kind of comments did they make and what were their reactions?

BIRD: I came away from that experience of spending a week with those officers, who were not that much older than I but were more experienced and were specialists in Arabic, with the feeling that I had never heard so many derisive comments about the Arab society that they were supposed to report on. The officers were all male, of course [at that time]. Their remarks tended to be derisive of Arab society and not of Israeli society alone, by any means, though there was that, too. Certainly, they couldn't be viewed as so committed to promoting Arab policies, countries, and culture that they couldn't see the U. S. interests involved. I know that that isn't the common view [of U. S. Arabists], but they reflected an opinion contrary to the view that those who have become intrigued with Arab culture are its defenders. I go back to my [Israeli] friend's comment that all of the United Nations people, after first living in Israel, move across the line and feel more comfortable when they live in an Arab culture. Frankly, I think that it's partly that they had much better housing and living conditions. Also, it is somewhat overwhelming to try and live in a society of people that consider themselves somewhat exclusive and definitely "chosen" in the sense of religion [as do the Jews].

We enjoyed the contrast between the two societies. You know, over the years we've gone back many times to Jerusalem. The feeling I have is that the division is still there. It's just as if the Mandelbaum Gate had never been taken down. Socially, there is almost no real, relaxed contact between the two sides. I think that attempts by the Consulate General since 1967 to bring both parties together have largely failed. There have been "peace parties" on both sides. We managed to [establish contact] with Hanan Ashrawi and Naomi Chosan, one of the Israeli women members of the Knesset. They were once very close to each other. However, when I was talking with Naomi Chosan about this [relationship] not too long ago, she said, "You know, I haven't seen my friend Hanan for a long time now." So the relationship [between Arabs and Jews] is still very, very distant, even among people like that.

MARGARET J. BARNHART
Consular Officer
Jerusalem (1968-1970)

Margaret J. Barnhart was born in 1928 in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. She graduated from Goucher College in 1950 with a major in international relations. She joined UNESCO and was employed there between 1951 and 1955. Following that she worked for the State Department in the Speakers Bureau. In 1961 she enlisted in the Foreign Service and held positions in Paris, Tokyo, Jerusalem, Bangkok, and Rio de Janeiro as well as several positions in the Department of State.

Q: You were in Jerusalem when to when?

BARNHART: '68 to '70. I arrived on the day that Sirhan Sirhan shot Bobby Kennedy. From the airport I went right to the consular section to look through the files for his family.

Q: He was a Palestinian?

BARNHART: Yes, he lived up on the West Bank. This was a good way to remember the date of my arrival. I had heard that he had been shot when we were Rome. By the time we got to Athens, the pilot had heard that he died. President Kennedy had died while I was in Paris. A big memorial service was held at Notre Dame. I joined my Embassy colleagues in attendance at the service.

Q: Back to Jerusalem.

BARNHART: Jerusalem was fun. I went there, as I say, in June of '68 to '70, and that was interesting. I was in charge of the consular section, and I had one assistant who was there along with about 8 foreign nationals. The Mandlebaum Gate had come down the year before.

Q: We're talking about '67 war when the West Bank in Jerusalem had come under Israeli rule.

BARNHART: When I got there one year later in '68, I said, "Where's Mandlebaum Gate? Well, right outside of my office, the old consulate that was on the west side, the Arab side, was there. The Deputy Consul General lived upstairs, and we had the consular section downstairs. And then over on the east side, the Israeli side, the Consul General lived upstairs in the building, and the rest of the consulate, admin, political who'd come, were all over there. There was a lot of back and forth. On my side I had the Iraqi Jew, I had a Sabra, being a native born Israeli, and I had a Moroccan. I had the Moroccan but then I had Muslims. I had a whole variety of Christian-Muslims, Muslim Muslims that would get down on a rug five times a day to pray. And he shared an office with this Sabra, but they got along. We just had this mixed bag. Shortly after I had gotten there, there was a big bang. Oh, what's happened? And I went out right away. One of my locals there said, "Oh, that was an explosion." And it had blown in the window in the office where my deputy was sitting, had blown in that window, and he had been just out in the garden. I went out right away and looked around. The detonator had gone off but the bomb hadn't, and I almost stepped on the thing. So that was a little excitement that day.

Q: What was the bomb for?

BARNHART: With the Palestinians these things were going on all the time. The Palestinians and the Israelis would put bombs in wastebaskets. One side would do it and bomb something in Tel Aviv. Then they would retaliate. They would go back to the West Bank, the Israelis, and blow down a building. They found one kid that was involved in this, or they thought was involved. They would go out and take the whole family, give them 24 hours or even eight hours to get out, and then blow it up. It was pretty dicey. I lived on the West Bank, and I had a choice where I wanted to live. Most of us did live on the West Bank. We could get better and larger housing than on the East Bank. We were separate from the Embassy. I mean, we were the Consulate General reporting directly to Washington. It was this *corpus separatum*, I guess, thing that we didn't recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, or Jerusalem as being part of Israel.

Q: Who was the Consul General when you were there?

BARNHART: Steve Campbell, his wife was French. I never met her. She died before I got there. She had done lots of work in the Resistance and was decorated by the French Government, but unfortunately she died of cancer. I knew some people at, the UN offices in Jerusalem. One of the girls had a house at Gaza. We used to go down there on the weekends. You were certainly limited in where you could go. You could go up to Galilee or Lake Tibberedge. You could roam around the West Bank. But we couldn't cross the Allenby Bridge.

Q: Oh, Allenby Bridge brought you into Jordan?

BARNHART: Into Jordan.

Q: Was everyone there monitoring the temper of the Palestinians in the West Bank and how this was working out?

BARNHART: Not everyone but political officers both in Jerusalem and from the Embassy in Tel Aviv monitored the situation. When I arrived from Tokyo, I knew far more about the Vietnamese War and what was going on. I remember seeing a headline that Nasser died, but I knew nothing. I hadn't been there more than two or three months, and I pretty much became pro-Arab, as did almost everyone there. They gave us a hard time, they set up roadblocks - the Israelis.

Q: Did you have any Palestinians coming to the Consulate and asking for help and that sort of thing, and particularly American Palestinians?

BARNHART: Some yes, but not too many. There were other Americans that lived there, religious group type people and so forth, but basically the Americans did not create much of a problem for us. Occasionally there were. There was one famous American, Joe someone, but he was mayor of some little West Bank town and his only problem was: when are you all coming to eat, Saturday, Sunday? And I would turn to my deputy, "You go." I just didn't care much. I'd go when I had to, to some of these. The Arabs wanted to entertain all the time. The Arabs were wonderful when they wanted visas. I did visa work for awhile. They would come in and say, "I have a wife and five to ten kids here, and here's a piece of paper that I own land here, etc., and I want to go just see my brother. I'm coming back, of course. I have all these reasons to come back." And then I found they were walking across to the local gasoline station and borrowing money to come in and show it to me in cash. "We can't show you bank accounts, because our bank is in Jordan." A lot of them would come in too and say, "I'm going to be a student." "Where are you going?" "I'm going to aviation school." And then I said, "And then you're going to work for El-Al?" Air Jordan I didn't think. I had checked on that through our embassy, and they got their pilots from their air force. All kinds of stories. I used to get free food here at the Calvert Inn, though, because of all those nice young Palestinians who couldn't handle US schools and who thus chose employment, i.e. Calvert Inn owned by a West Bank family. I tried to give a limited number to the Arabs. If you had 30 student applications in one day and none of them were any good, you'd have to give a few, because you're also giving visas to the Israelis. But they'd end up in a restaurant or someplace, and say, "You were right. I wasn't a very good

student." Anyway they were fun.

Q: Did you ever have any dealings with the mayor of the Israeli part of Jerusalem, Teddy Kolley?

BARNHART: Yes, I had met him several times on business or at receptions. There were seven countries that didn't recognize Jerusalem, namely the Dutch, the French, the Spanish, the Greeks, and the United States, but all had small consulates in Jerusalem. The diplomatic community was small as well. You could go to five receptions in the same week and see them every time. Teddy Kolley handled official business. He was nice. I was reading about the one who's there now, who is not so nice.

Q: Not so nice, no. He's sort of a true believer, I guess.

BARNHART: You couldn't drive everywhere when you wanted. The Maesharain area of the Orthodox Jews was right outside of my office. You don't drive on a Saturday morning, because they'll stone your car. I used to play golf down in Caesarea on the Israeli coast, and at least once, I had to spend the weekend because I could not get on the highway because it was one of the high holy days. Orthodox Jews used to come in the office for visas. "We have to go to the United States for the high holy days," and I had thought all Jews came to Jerusalem for the high holy days. I learned that for many, their head rabbi was in the U.S. The Orthodox Jews, they'd sit there and they'd look down, and when I'd ask them a question, they continued to look down. They'd never look at you. So then when it came time, if the locals put the passport in, then I signed it. I'd sit there and just hold it to see if they would reach for it - because they won't touch a nonbeliever or have any contact. If they really wanted it and wanted to get out of the office, they'd finally grab it.

Q: Somebody who was dealing with them said that when you've got a whole roomful, it really smells, because they didn't bathe.

BARNHART: No, and they wore those heavy coats and fur hats. While I was there, the Israelis hired a pathologist to work at the Hebrew University. He lived in Jerusalem in the Orthodox area. Because the Orthodox don't believe in pathology, they went and dragged his mother and his wife out of the apartment and did considerable damage. They didn't kill them, but they tore apart the apartment. That was one of the first things I remember seeing. There wasn't anything we could do about it. They are violent, and they were even in those days. If I had been the man, I would have packed up and gone home, but I guess he was going to stay around. He was Jewish.

Q: Dealing with our Embassy in Tel Aviv, was it sort of us and them between Jerusalem and...?

BARNHART: Yes, pretty much so. Our Consulate Generals for the most part were pro-Arab, I would say. Consular people move around and like that, but still there was not too much support for the Israelis, whereas Tel Aviv was just the opposite. I don't know whether they had an Arabist there or not. I don't think so. They would read our reports. Anytime Jerusalem sent cables into Washington, we'd info Tel Aviv. But there wasn't any love lost, or very little.

Q: *Were you doing any looking for...*

BARNHART: Counting halftracks? Well, when I was living on the West Bank, we always - I think they were called halftracks, these big convoy things - and you always reported those. You counted them if you happened to be around to see one. Yes, we did report a lot of them, all of us were told to. It was a small consulate there, and so we all watched what went on.

ARTHUR R. DAY
Consul General
Jerusalem (1972-1975)

Arthur R. Day was born and raised in New Jersey. He served in the U.S. Naval Air Corps during World War II. Upon completion of his military service, Mr. Day received a master's degree from Chicago University. His Foreign Service career included positions at the Palestine Desk, the National War College, United Nations Affairs, and in Japan. Mr. Day was interviewed by John A. McKesson in 1990.

Q: *Let's go back to some of these various posts you were at, starting with the beginning of your career in NEA. Do you have any particular overall comments about how this launched you into your connection with the Middle East?*

DAY: At that time, in the summer 1949, the Palestine problem, as it was called then, was still very much in the forefront of our concerns in our Middle East policy. So I became very well acquainted with the Arab-Israeli issue and that wove itself throughout my career and I ended my career being a deputy assistant secretary in that same bureau in which I began. There are a lot of constants in the Arab-Israeli problem in all those years and consequently every time I revisited it throughout my career I felt pretty much at home in dealing with it. The Arab manner in dealing with the problem and us did not change; much to the despair of those who wished the Arabs well, they often did so badly in handling their affairs. And the Israeli manner of dealing with the United States did not change much; they always practiced a very intensive, very aggressive and very effective policy, and the Congressional pressure that we felt in the department throughout was a very important factor, always, in dealing with the Israeli problem. That did not change, it just increased through the years. Aside from that there were many practical changes in the problem which we can come to as we go along, but those constants certainly remained.

Q: *As a general thing, Israeli intelligence has always had a great reputation for its outstanding abilities. I assume that you would agree with that statement and did you get the feeling that the Israelis not only were always on top of knowing what was going on in the Middle East and the world but also what the U.S. position was?*

DAY: That was their main concern, even at that time. Prior to 1967, of course, we had far less to do with the support of Israel than afterwards. We had not supplied them with any substantial weaponry up to that time. Nevertheless their diplomats tended to know on whose desk at a given

time a certain paper was in which they were interested. I remember one of the third secretaries taking me out to lunch and wanting to know on whose desk a certain paper was. I was surprised to know it even existed, but he did. They seemed to have no trouble keeping track of American policy and certainly had little trouble influencing it.

Q: Let's move on to the whole issue of the Arab-Israeli problem. I know that you served in Jerusalem; before coming to your tour of duty there do you have any comments to make before we move to there?

DAY: I think we can just pick it up there. I had lost track of the Middle East problem to some extent in that I had been off on other details. I was in arms-control for a couple of years.

Q: That's right, you were in ACDA and arms control. Do you want to say something about that?

DAY: I don't think there was a great deal going on at the time that is worth recounting. Perhaps the most interesting thing was that the organization, the negotiating organization, that I happened to have the most to do with at that point, was called the CCD, the eighteen member, I believe, international negotiating organization that was situated in Geneva.

Q: What did CCD stand for?

DAY: Conference for ? No one ever remembered what CCD stood for. It was a subordinate UN body to negotiate arms control on a less than full UN membership basis. It began with fifteen, then moved up to eighteen, then became at some point twenty-one. The interesting thing about it was, I thought, it was under the chairmanship of the US and Soviets and it worked quite well, oddly enough, partially because on arms control, especially at that level (this was not strategic arms control, these were things like the nuclear proliferation treaty which had been negotiated just before I got into that business, the treaty to ban biological weapons, the treaty to ban mass destruction weapons on the seabed) on these somewhat subordinate issues we and the Soviets found ourselves often on the same side as opposed to the Third World non-nuclear powers. Consequently the joint management of that body worked quite well and we, on the American side, and our counterparts on the Russian side, became quite close associates, friends to some extent, people I have followed over the years and met in other places. It showed what we are now seeing on a much larger scale, where the interests are now common, how we and the Soviets could work together quite effectively. They had some first class diplomats, quite as good as we certainly, and they and we together ran a relatively tight ship.

Q: Moving on to Jerusalem, you were consul general there. I gather that was a period when the Israeli government considered Jerusalem its capital and that created a somewhat awkward situation for consuls general. Would you care to comment on that?

DAY: That is certainly true; the Israelis wanted us out of Jerusalem because we were there largely as a symbol of non- acceptance of the claim that this was their capital, even that it belonged to Israel officially and legally. Our embassies, a dozen or so countries in the same situation, were maintained in Tel Aviv and we had consuls general in Jerusalem. All of us had two offices in Jerusalem, in what had prior to 1967 been Israeli Jerusalem on the Jewish side of

the city and the other in what had been Arab Jerusalem. That was another burr under the Israeli saddle; they felt we were doing this to emphasize the fact, as we saw it, that Jerusalem was not a single city, that there was an Arab side and an Israeli side. Of course, to a certain extent, that is why we were doing it. We got along fairly well with the Israeli authorities. Teddy Kollek [the mayor] was a savvy political person and understood the problem. He was a little sarcastic with us from time to time, but on the whole we did not have trouble with the city authorities, in fact we were somewhat grateful for Kollek in one sense. He stood between us and some Israeli national ministries that were located in Jerusalem, which had authorities who would have been much more difficult to deal with -- especially the Interior Ministry which was run largely by very conservative orthodox religious Jews and who were really not happy about having Christians in Jerusalem at all, especially consuls general. Kollek understood he had a polyglot city on his hands and if he was going to run it successfully everyone had his niche, and we had ours. In general we got along with Kollek fairly well.

I found some of my colleagues, the other consuls general, to be a little petty at times in their opposition to the Israelis. Some disliked the Israelis and I am afraid some disliked Jews in a more fundamental way. I do not say that in a broadcast way, but there were some who had the problem. Consequently I found myself, from time to time, isolated from them, not going along with what I felt were their more extreme expressions of opposition to the Israeli rule there. I was willing to do that and American policy would not have permitted anything else. We maintained quite firmly our right to be in Jerusalem and to claim that Jerusalem was not legally a part of Israel, but on the other hand the State Department was not going to make any bigger an issue of it than it had to because it certainly was not a thoroughly popular point of view in the Congress of this country where the Israelis had a lot of influence. We got along. It was one of those situations, a little like Berlin, where you arrived at a *modus vivendi* and you parted from it at your peril.

One example I might mention, when I first arrived in Jerusalem I went to pay my call on Teddy Kollek as the mayor of the city and he brought up a problem which had been bothering the Israelis quite a bit. The consuls general, obviously as diplomats do, had from time to time large receptions, national days or other occasions. All of them had two receptions; they invited Israelis to one and Arabs to the other, largely because the Arabs did not want to come where the Israelis were, they did not want to be in a position of accepting the *de facto status quo*; they were very unhappy and they did not want to be put in a position of mixing with the Israelis. When I called on Kollek, he mentioned this and said he would like very much to have receptions in which the two would mix. I told Kollek that I was not there as a missionary, to change peoples' views, I was there as a diplomat and was prepared to accept the way they felt, both the Arabs and the Israelis, about each other. If there were Arabs who were willing to come to receptions where there were Israelis, I had no problem with that and would invite them, but I certainly was not going to put myself in a position of pressuring the Arabs to do this. That was the policy I followed throughout my stay there. There were some Arabs who met Israelis in their own personal lives with no trouble and I had them to receptions and other gatherings where Israelis came, but on the whole I followed the general practice of having most Arabs to separate meetings because simply they would not have come and would have felt aggrieved if I had pressed them to come.

I remember one particular case which impressed me with the depths of feeling on the subject. I got to know quite well the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem -- the non-communist Orthodox Church, the one that fled Russia and had its headquarters in the United States, which is why I got to know them quite well. Father Graby -- which was the man's name who was the head of the church -- would have me quite often to receptions at his place in the old city of Jerusalem quite close to the Holy Sepulcher. I remember one occasion when he had both Israeli officials and Arabs, all of whom I knew, and he also had photographers, as people do at their parties to take pictures of the guests and give them out as souvenirs later. I remember one poor harassed woman, Dora Salah, who was the head of the YWCA....

Q: Arthur, you were telling us about your experiences in Jerusalem, would you continue.

DAY: I was describing this reception at the Russian Orthodox Church in which the Archimandrite had invited both Israelis and Arabs, some Arabs who did not at all care to be associated with Israelis. In this one case, the woman I mentioned, Dora Salah, head of the East Jerusalem YWCA, which was very active in the Palestinian resistance, I remember seeing her at this reception with the haunted, hunted look trying to avoid ever being caught talking to or near an Israeli at a time when the photographer was there so that she would not have her picture taken with an Israeli showing in the same picture because it would have really been awkward for her among her constituency. It was a very telling example for me why it was unfair to put them in that position. I never did; I tried very much to avoid doing that.

Q: Would you care to comment on the relations between the American consuls general in Jerusalem and our embassies and our ambassadors in Tel Aviv?

DAY: That was a very tense relationship, in some ways more than the relationship directly with the Israelis. Only with the ambassadors, the other officers in the embassy were professionals, some of whom were close friends of mine, but both the ambassadors who were there when I was there were very, very pro-Israeli, anti-Arab.

Q: Could you tell us who they were?

DAY: Wally Barbour had been there ten years when I arrived and was there another year or two more before he became too ill and retired. He had become an institution in Israel. They had named schools after him and he was very pro-Israel. As he told me one day, his solution for American foreign policy in the Middle East was to arm the Israelis and forget the Arabs. Let the Israelis take care of the Arabs. He on the other hand was not very active. He was not very well during that period. Consequently I disagreed with him but I had no real run-ins with him. His successor, on the other hand, was a politician from New York named Keating; he had been a senator, and very, very pro-Israeli, as I guess a senator from New York would get to be associating with pro-Israeli groups in his constituency. I did have trouble with him.

I remember one occasion, which was quite embarrassing actually. I had heard from his DCM (his deputy chief of mission) in the embassy that he, the ambassador, had an appointment to come up and see Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem. [after first saying Berlin rather than Jerusalem] (I am going to make that mistake from time to time having served in two divided cities one after the

other it is hard to keep them straight. Both have an east and a west. Interesting though, one city was a city that was psychologically thoroughly united but physically split, Berlin - and Jerusalem when I was there was physically united but psychologically deeply split.) Keating had an appointment with Kollek in Jerusalem and under the rules of the game this was not to be done. The embassy was to deal with the national government and I was to deal with the city government although the Israelis were always trying to water this down. I knew there was no point in my calling Keating about this since he regarded me as pro-Arab and consequently would not have paid any attention to what I would say. So I called Washington and told the desk officer what was going on, and asked him if he could just let Keating know what the rules were so there would not be a struggle here. To my utter dismay, in opening my telegrams the next morning I found a State Department telegram signed by the Secretary of State to Keating saying that they understood he had this meeting with Kollek, that he was not to do that, that was not the way business was conducted and he was to look to me, as the consul general in Jerusalem, for his guidance on how to deal with Jerusalem. I knew that would put Keating in a flaming fury and he would know on the face of it that I had been the one to put the Department up to it. I called Keating on the telephone, there was nothing else to do, and said I was very unhappy with the way things had worked out and the way it had been worded, that I agreed with what it said but I hoped it would not ruin what relationship we had. He was very unhappy, not nasty, about it on the phone. I don't think I ever spoke to him again after that. There was no occasion to; there certainly was no occasion found. I had him to our residence once in Jerusalem thinking he might find it useful to meet some Arab leaders from East Jerusalem and some church people, very substantial people like Pio Laghi, the head of the Roman Catholic church mission in Jerusalem who later went on to become the apostolic delegate in Washington. A very fine Italian. The Ambassador came up with his wife to have dinner with me, but I understand he never really forgave me for it -- to face him with actual Arabs was more than he could tolerate. So it was a difficult relationship, but fortunately it really did not affect anything. It just made life a little less pleasant.

There was a constant push in the embassy to become more active in Jerusalem and the West Bank, but Washington was very strong on that and kept them from going off the reservation. So I had no really serious trouble, it was just a friction.

Q: Who were the State Department senior people on the Arab- Israeli problem during that period?

DAY: Roy Atherton was the assistant secretary and Hal Saunders, who later became the assistant secretary, was the deputy who dealt with my area. I can't remember who the desk officer was. There were a series of fairly professional well-acquainted officers dealing directly with the problem. One of the complications was that jurisdictionally, Jerusalem came under the Israeli desk although my job there was really was entirely with Arabs. My role was to keep in touch with the West Bank leadership and West Bank population primarily and to report what was going on in the West Bank, which from time to time became important. That was of course primarily of interest to people on the Arab desks back in the Department, especially the Jordan desk. Jordan had at one time been in control of the West Bank and the West Bankers were still Jordanians by passport if not actually by loyalties. Actually they detested the Jordanians almost as much as they detested the Israelis.

My jurisdictional managers were not the ones who were most substantially interested in what I was doing, but it did not matter since people in NEA got along very well and there were no brouhahas between the desks.

Q: As you know, the State Department officials have been traditionally accused by the press as being too pro-Arab, at least a certain segment of the press in America. From your vantage point, which seems excellent, in Jerusalem and from your previous experience, would you care to comment on how you assessed the attitudes of the Department senior officers and the desk officers. You have already told us the two ambassadors you have served under in Israel were very, very pro-Israeli. How would you assess the evenhandedness or lack of it among our senior personnel in Washington at that time?

DAY: I think the proclivities which you referred to existed back in my previous incarnation in the Middle East; then there was no doubt that the officers in the State Department handling Arab-Israeli affairs, at least up through the office director level, were very pro-Arab. This would have been in 1949-50, in that early period. They were officers who had in their earlier careers been entirely in the Arab context and they knew the Arabs and felt that Israel was a dangerous intrusion into the area from an American political point of view. Although they carried out American policy as it was set out by the American presidents and secretaries, they still wished that we could be more favorable to the Arab side. By the time when I became more directly involved in it when I was in Jerusalem, which was quite a lot later, that was in 1972, well over twenty years had passed, a new generation of officers had come along, like Roy Atherton, and Roy himself was as evenhanded as a human could be about everything. I would say most of his officers were much more cold-bloodily American-policy-oriented and less sentimentally attached to the Arab mystique, which does exist. The orientalist had a kind of attachment towards the Arabs that went beyond policy. They were not so much in evidence as before.

I thought that NEA, that was the bureau that handled this issue in the Department, really was quite objective in its dealings with it, which is not to say, nevertheless, that it was well to the side of the Arabs from most of the American Congress, which was as unevenhanded as you can get. The American Congress was really totally, for the most part, committed to the cause of Israel. Some of the staff people on the Hill, I am convinced, spent most of their time promoting the cause of Israel, which as far as I am concerned is a foreign country. I, and many State Department people also, resented the fact that these Americans in official positions seemed much more concerned about the fortunes of a foreign country than the fortunes of their own country.

Q: You are talking about the staff on the Hill?

DAY: On the Hill. This led to what I thought was understandable resentment on the part of the State Department on having our policy so strongly effected by forces and people who weren't primarily interested in the success of the American policy but who were primarily interested in the success of Israeli policy. But they understood the name of the game, which was politics when Israel was involved, and they lived with that, as I lived with it, and ceased tilting with windmills.

Q: What would you say was the role of the consul general in terms of policy and practice during

your stay there?

DAY: It was in the first instance a symbolic role, to symbolize our unwillingness to accept that Israel had acquired Jerusalem. Beyond that, as I mentioned earlier, we kept in touch with West Bank Arab trends. We were really the principal reporter on Palestinian attitudes, which became at times, and certainly after I left there, became very important to American policy. I think our contribution to American policy was as expert observers of the Palestinian side of the equation. There was no country, no embassy, that had a direct focus on Palestinians. The Jordanian embassy certainly didn't. The king and his government were almost as opposed to Palestinians in some respects as the Israelis were at times. So I was the Palestinian embassy in a certain sense. That is what I tried to be; while not becoming an advocate of the Palestinians, in fact I became rather discouraged in the way that they conducted their affairs and felt always that the best solution for the West Bank was the solution in which it became part of Jordan again, rather than become independent. I was convinced that it would become a very troublesome entity. Nevertheless my role was to deal with and to report on the Palestinians.

Q: When you say the Palestinian embassy you mean the American embassy to the Palestinians?

DAY: That's right.

Q: How would you assess your contacts with the Arabs and the Israelis? Would you have any comments to make on that?

DAY: The Arabs with whom I dealt with in Jerusalem were mostly non-political people; there was not a political hierarchy, of course, on the West Bank. I did deal with mayors of the towns, who were the most senior political people. The mayor of Bethlehem, Freij, best known in this country, I knew quite well. I knew the mayors of some of the other towns, but beyond that the people involved in politics, so to speak, were lawyers, pharmacists and whatever, teachers and principals of the schools run by the United Nations agency that dealt with Palestinians, so I had a wide and very varied list of contacts on the Arab side. It was not always easy to keep track of the movements there, because the people who became most influential were people whom we saw very little; they were much more obscure. This became much more true in later years after the uprising there. The people who seemed to become influential were a new generation that shoved aside the people I knew in my day and I think none of us, nobody on the American side, really knew them terribly well.

On the Israeli side, I talked about my relationship with Kollek, which was not bad, but wasn't too warm. I got to know his deputy very well, a man named Meron Benvenisti who was really in charge of Arab affairs for Kollek and later left the Israeli government and became an academic, then in later years ran the West Bank study project in Israel which provided much of the information on which we and the Israelis both assessed West Bank activities. I also happened to know some of the Israeli Foreign Office people whom I had met in my previous incarnations dealing with Israel. Although they were not supposed to be dealing with me officially, I nevertheless kept in touch with them to some extent, including Eppie Evron, who had been ambassador to the United States at one point and now was a senior officer in the Foreign Office. He came to lunch one time, which I am sure was the first time he ever did that. We got along on

a personal level and I have no complaints. The military who ran the West Bank were inaccessible to me by their choice. They were not supposed to deal with anybody but the embassy and the embassy would not deal with them, so they were really out of touch with American officialdom, but there again I occasionally met one of their occupation colonels in some Arab mayor's house and got to know him slightly. I never had a contact so that I could call them up on the phone and ask what was going on.

I also knew the Israeli press people who dealt with the West Bank, some of whom were very pro-Palestinian. I knew a few press people who were on the Arab side and kept in touch with them as a diplomat would anywhere.

Q: This was of course the period that Kissinger was active with his shuttle diplomacy. We know that Secretary Kissinger remained very, very involved in this whole issue. What were your general feelings and assessment of this issue, how Kissinger operated and how effective his policies were?

DAY: Of course I got to know Kissinger much better when I became deputy assistant secretary, though I saw him somewhat in Jerusalem. I was in a rather odd position because he was coming to Jerusalem, "my town" so to speak, to meet with the Israelis. He was not coming to Jerusalem as the separate entity that I represented the Americans in, but he was coming there to meet the Israelis. My role was a minimal one, and should have been. The embassy people came up to Jerusalem when he came and took care of him, which was fortunate because it took the whole embassy to do it. I could not have begun to staff it. I used to go, each time he came, over to the King David Hotel where he would arrive and stay, and when he came in the front door, I would be there together with the manager of the King David Hotel. The two of us would rush out and shake his hand. I always thought after that whether he had thought of me as the deputy manager of the King David Hotel, which I must have looked like, although later on I got to know him. So I had very little substantively to do with him although I thought very highly of what he was trying to do. I thought he was on the right track and that he was being as tough with the Israelis as he was with the Arabs. He established good relations with Arabs that no other American had worked with, Hafez al Assad, the Syrian leader in particular. He put up with a lot from the Israelis. I remember one time -- he was not very popular in Israel -- on one visit he went through the streets -- he was trying to make the Israelis give up the Sinai in a deal with Egypt -- and there were signs up "Jew boy, go home!" They felt he was a traitor to the race. At one point, Golda Meir, who was prime minister, and a pretty tough cookie herself, felt she had to speak out to her own people. She said, "Look we have a tendency, we Israelis, to deal with a situation like this, by *ad hominem* means, by attacking the person of the policy, rather than the policy itself. We have to stop that with regard to Kissinger, in particular." It was getting out of hand. He was subjected to really personal abuse, but he persevered. Kissinger was a pretty tough nut and I don't think it got to him too much. He had some very difficult times there and I could tell from dealing with his staff and seeing him, that they were difficult. But I thought that he was on the right track and in general was very successful.

There are some comments that I think I would like to add concerning my service in Jerusalem. One of them concerns the Yom Kippur war of October 1973 in which the Egyptians and Syrians attacked the Israelis on both the Egyptian front along the Suez canal and the Syrian front along

the border of the Golan heights. During the week before the attack there had been rumors of troop movements and activity, especially in the Syrian sector. U.S. military officers had inquired several times of Israeli military intelligence whether these movements did not presage some kind of hostile action by the Arab armies. The Israelis, having been burned by predicting Arab attacks early in the year that did not materialize, dismissed the reports as groundless. Toward the end of the first week of October, though, they were sufficiently concerned that they began to move troops of their own up towards the Golan front with Syria.

My involvement began on the night of October 5th, which was a Friday night and a night on which, at sundown, the very holy observance of Yom Kippur began in Israel. My wife and I were to go out to dinner that night to a staff member's in the Arab side of Jerusalem. In order to avoid driving through Jewish Jerusalem, in which we lived and where the driving of automobiles was virtually prohibited from sundown on that Friday night until sundown on the day following, we had parked the official consulate car on the border of the old city, that is the border of Jewish Jerusalem, which was only about three blocks from our residence. We walked to the car and drove on to the Arab side where the Yom Kippur observance did not apply. Sometime during the meal I was called on the phone and informed that an urgent telegram had arrived for me from Washington -- presumably, although I do not remember the details, an "immediate, night action" which would require my attention at once. I returned alone to the consular office which was in the same building as our residence, leaving my wife at the dinner. My recollection is that I drove back to the edge of Jewish Jerusalem and walked the few blocks on into the very still and quiet Jewish city where there was no traffic in the streets. The Department's message instructed me to go to the headquarters of the UN truce supervision organization, known as UNTSO, which was located on a hilltop just outside the city of Jerusalem in buildings that the British had once used for their headquarters during the mandate period. I was to tell the UNTSO commander that the US government was concerned that Arab governments might misinterpret Israeli troop movements on the Golan Heights as having hostile intent and might be lead thereby to some response that might precipitate hostilities.

It so happened the UNTSO commander himself, a Finnish general named Enio Silasvuo was away from headquarters that night and acting in his place was the senior American officer assigned to UNTSO headquarters. I got back in my car and headed off for the UNTSO headquarters which required at one point my going into a section of Jewish Jerusalem. I had to get out at one point and remove a barricade that was designed to keep traffic from entering the city and then replace it behind me, driving on through the quiet streets and hoping that none of the more aggressive orthodox Jews, who were inclined to throw rocks at automobiles, even on the ordinary Sabbath day of every week, would see me and react. They apparently did not and after having removed the barricade that let me out of the Jewish community, I proceeded on to UNTSO and delivered my message. The American colonel agreed to convey this through the UNTSO team stationed in Damascus and I returned to Jerusalem in the same manner as before. Ultimately my wife and I concluded the dinner and returned home to bed. We were awakened at an early hour the next morning by an aircraft, a fighter I presume, flying very low over the city. An extraordinary event at any time but especially so on such a holy day as this. When I made my way upstairs to the office and looked at the cable traffic I found that the Israeli government had finally become convinced that an Arab attack was imminent and had ordered military mobilization. Since Jewish Israelis did not have their radios on because of the holy day, the

fighter plane pass was intended to alert them that something was afoot and they should turn on the radios to receive the mobilization instructions.

Later that day, it must have been very shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon, I received a phone call from UNTSO telling me that their observers along the Egyptian-Israeli line on the Suez canal had just that minute reported an attack by the Egyptian forces past their observers, their observation points, towards the Israeli lines. I was able to get a flash telegram back to Washington within minutes of this attack having occurred, which was the first time, but not the last by any means, UNTSO's presence along the borders and the good relations that existed between the consulate general and UNTSO headquarters enabled us to report quickly and accurately on the progress of the war. Throughout the next week or two as Syrian and Egyptian armies crossed the Israeli lines and then ultimately were driven back across the lines in the other directions, the UNTSO observers pinned down in their observation posts in the midst of the conflict kept up a stream of reports to the headquarters in Jerusalem about the progress of the war. The consulate forwarded these to Washington as they were received since the reports, especially in the early days of the war, reflected much more serious difficulties for the Israelis than the Israelis were publicly acknowledging. Our reporting was able to keep Washington more accurately informed of the true state of affairs, although I assume the Israeli government was informing our embassy in Tel Aviv a good deal more accurately than their press was informing the public.

The period of the Yom Kippur war in Jerusalem was a strange one. In the first week while no one really questioned whether the Israelis would really be able to defend themselves in the end, the fighting did strike quite close to the Israeli heartland in the north of Israel where the Syrians pressed down from the Golan heights. But there was an almost eerie atmosphere of business as usual at the same time, so swiftly had the war come. On one occasion an American religious tour group wanted to visit the Christian sites on the Sea of Galilee which were only a few miles from heavy fighting and which could conceivably have been overrun had the Syrians been more successful than they turned out to be. The group leader inquired of the consulate general about the situation and was told that this was just not the thing to do at that time. So far as I was aware at the time, he decided to proceed in any case, and disappeared in the direction of the front with his entire tour group. Within the city of Jerusalem there were several hundred American students, some of them Jewish students at Hebrew University, as well as a sizeable group of Christian students who were visiting the old city with its Christian sites for a period of study. I was kept busy the first week of the war briefing these students, as best I could, about the security situation and about how it affected them, especially in the case of the Jewish students, giving them assurance that they could pass along to their worried parents at home, that it seemed unlikely that the city of Jerusalem would come under attack. Living in the city was an odd experience in other ways, especially since it was blacked out at night with cars driving through the streets with their headlights dimmed by blue paint or laundry blueing. It so happened that it was a period of full moon and no doubt for the first time in a long, long time, it was possible to see the city from the hills around it with the moonlight shining on its domes and towers without the disturbance of any artificial light. It was a truly beautiful thing to see, although the circumstances were not so benign.

A second set of comments that might be worth making, although not as serious, concern a

concert that the Israel philharmonic orchestra gave outdoors in a large square in Bethlehem, known as Manger Square. I do not recall the date, but I believe it was following the Yom Kippur war, and it must have been in the following spring or summer. Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, had apparently induced an American donor to provide a substantial sum of money to hold the concert, the purpose of which was to show the unity between Jerusalem and the Christian Arab town of Bethlehem, a short distance away to the south. As always in this complex occupation situation the effort cut both ways. My wife and I were sitting in the second row of the block of seats in Manger Square facing the Church of the Nativity in front of which the platform had been erected for the Israeli orchestra. The first item of the concert was a Brandenburg concerto, the violin part of which was to be played by a young man who had not too long before arrived as a Jewish immigrant from the Soviet Union. The orchestra had gotten well launched and the violinist was in full cry when suddenly the Arab minaret, in the Square, located just behind the audience, erupted with the recorded call to prayer that the mosques broadcast at regular intervals during the day. The volume had obviously been turned up quite high by the mosque authorities and the sound tore into the fabric of the Brandenburg concerto, somewhat like an iceberg tearing into the hull of the *Titanic*. The orchestra played gamely on for some seconds, but gradually one instrument after another gave up and before long Zubin Mehta, the conductor, brought it to a halt and all of us waited out the Moslem call to prayer. An Israeli authority told me that they had been well-aware of this possibility, but had thought they had induced the mosque authorities to tone down the sound so as not to create a disturbance, but obviously they had failed. Other cultural and political conflict was evident at the concert as well. We noticed that there was a certain amount of movement to and fro in the row ahead of us where Teddy Kollek sat with the Bethlehem mayor, Elias Freij, and on the following day at a lunch that Kollek gave for the consuls general we learned what had happened. Freij was scheduled to make a brief statement at the concert on the platform which had been erected for the purpose. Over the platform was the emblem of the Israeli orchestra, an unmistakable Jewish symbol, the menorah. It was quite clear to Freij that the TV broadcast of this event would catch him standing in front of the Jewish menorah, a situation which was not at all appealing to him. Kollek told us with some chortling that in order to get Freij's mind off the problem he had gone up along the row in which they had both sat and had brought Mrs. Mehta over to sit next to Freij. Mrs. Mehta was a very attractive woman and Kollek assumed that her beauty would cause Freij to forget about his political sensitivities. In the event, Freij did arise and make the statement, although there was no way of knowing whether Mrs. Mehta's presence had been responsible. As an aside, however, the consuls general were all a little soured by Kollek's obvious glee in how he had manipulated the Arab mayor and it revealed once again one of the less attractive aspects of the Israelis in their dealing with the Arabs -- an attitude of condescension and arrogance at times.

BETTY JANE JONES
Deputy Consul General
Jerusalem (1973-1976)

Betty Jane Jones was born and raised in Wisconsin. She majored in government at Beloit College and entered the Foreign Service in 1954. Her career included positions in Italy, Germany, India, Israel, the United Kingdom (England), and

assignments related to the United Nations in Washington, DC and New York. This interview was conducted on March 8, 1993.

Q: You left Calcutta, and that war just in time to go to Jerusalem. People must have been thinking of you as Typhoid Mary?

JONES: Even funnier than that was the Ambassador in India was Ambassador Keating and he moved from there to Israel. In fact, he said to me one day, "Everywhere we go, they seem to have a war." Yes, I went on a direct transfer to Jerusalem.

Q: When did you arrive?

JONES: In July? I think it was July '73.

Q: And stayed there until '76?

JONES: That's right.

Q: How did you see the situation in the summer of '73?

JONES: As I alluded to earlier, things were very stalemated. Nothing was happening in terms of resolving the problem, the Arab-Israeli problem. There didn't seem to be any chance of movement. Then the war came and that all changed, and again as in '67 there was hope that this would lead to something that could help resolve the problem.

Q: How did the war hit Jerusalem where you were?

JONES: Well the war itself didn't really affect us very much except that, you know, they call up so many people. A couple of our local employees got called up. One was let go fairly soon after. He was in his fifties. Both of these were drivers and the younger man did stay in for the course of the war. It's a very funny situation where people there go into the army. They go off to war. They come home. They can one day be off somewhere fighting, and the next day be home on a pass, and then two days later be back fighting again. It's a very odd feeling. It's so different from what we're used to where people go miles away and it's a totally separate situation. There was a lot of tension of course, concern. But Jerusalem itself, I don't think ever felt, the city per se, was in danger. Similarly in Calcutta, we never felt any danger during the war, even though we had a blackout for two days but it was pointless, because there was nothing happening in that area. Following the war, we got terribly busy because of the shuttle diplomacy, and because they came to Jerusalem, and were at the King David Hotel, which is not very far from the Consulate, and used our facilities, our communications. So that we had to have a twenty-four hour operation, and we ran messages back and forth between the Consulate and the King David Hotel.

Q: What were you doing in Jerusalem?

JONES: That's what I was saying earlier. I was the Deputy there, and I was Deputy in Calcutta too, but I was pretty much in the Economic Section, whereas in Jerusalem I was supervisor over

the political and economic officers and the consular and administrative sections.

Q: Who was the Consul General?

JONES: It was Pete Day. Arthur R. Day, during the first two years, and Michael Newlin the third year that I was there.

Q: You know, there's always been the problem of Jerusalem which has been in a way the thorn in the side of the Israelis because of the reporting on Palestinian affairs, particularly on the West Bank. How did that work during your period and what were the pressures on you?

JONES: Well, the Israelis of course resent the fact that we have not recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Jerusalem is an independent post; it's not a constituent post of Tel Aviv, in order to maintain this policy. Its consular district includes the West Bank and the city of Jerusalem, both west and east. That gave us an opportunity to have contact with both sides which is an unusual situation in that area. We were able to report on events in the West Bank and to travel freely, and observe things. And also report on events in Jerusalem and have contacts with city officials. We didn't have any official contact with the Israeli government. That's the province of the Embassy. But we did cover the city and we did have contacts with the mayor and other officials there. It's a very sticky situation because little events would happen. When a congressman came to visit, the Israeli government wanted to, or the mayor's office wanted to, give him a tour of East Jerusalem, whereas we felt he should go with us not with West Jerusalem officials. Little things like that. Mostly our relations with them were good, but as I say, they were unhappy. There was a feeling on their part which I don't think is correct, that the consulate in Jerusalem was full of people who were anti-Israeli. That was not fair I think, and I think it was not a feeling that those who had contacts with the Consul General held, because they knew that he was not biased in that way, and in fact had many good Israeli friends, and was very sympathetic to their problems.

Q: Were you ever given any, if not instructions, heavy breathing from our Embassy in Tel Aviv, and even from the Department saying: "Cut out talking about Israeli procedures in the West Bank" or anything like that?

JONES: No, I don't think so. There were occasional problems of jurisdiction between the Embassy and us, but nothing that I can recall that was ever significant. We would talk to them on the phone frequently, and usually work things out.

Q: There weren't any incidents? In that time where a consul would go out and find that an Israeli had been beating up on some villagers. You'd report it and then it would get into the New York or the Washington Post and cause heartburn?

JONES: I don't recall anything of that nature. You know, you're required to do these annual human rights reports and the Embassy sent in a combined one covering Israel and the occupied territories because Gaza is under its jurisdiction. But we drafted the one on the West Bank and we sent it to them to include, and there might have been a few minor editing changes, but basically, they sent what we had prepared. I don't recall...There may be things I don't remember,

but at the moment I don't recall any major difficulty we had.

EDMUND JAMES HULL
Political Officer
Jerusalem (1975-1979)

Ambassador Hull was born in Iowa and raised in Illinois. He was educated at Princeton and Oxford Universities. After service in the Peace Corps, Mr. Hull joined the Foreign Service in 1974 and had postings in Amman, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tunis and Cairo as well as serving as Ambassador to Yemen from 2001 to 2004. In Washington, the Ambassador served on the National Security Council and as Advisor to the Secretary of State on Counterterrorism. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005

Q: So you went to Jerusalem?

HULL: I packed everything I had from my apartment including my plants, drove down to the Allenby Bridge and had everything including the plants carried across into the West Bank and then up to Jerusalem.

Q: You were consul general in Jerusalem from when to when?

HULL: I was the sole political officer in the consulate from 1975 through 1979. Mike Newlin was consul general, and Don Kruse was his deputy.

Q: The perspective of Jerusalem is basically the West Bank?

HULL: Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and West Jerusalem is very, very Israeli. East Jerusalem was under the Hashemites before 1967 and was primarily Arab Palestinian. So what you had in Jerusalem was really a schizophrenic situation where on a daily basis you would be dealing with Israelis and Palestinians who had radically different views of the world.

Q: Had King Hussein renounced his rule over the West Bank at this point? Or was that later on?

HULL: At Rabat in 1974 at the Arab Summit, the Arab leaders agreed that the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) was the sole, legitimate spokesman for the Palestinian people. King Hussein had to accept that decision. So formally the torch had passed, but informally, I think, the King maintained residual ambitions, not in a sense of wanting to impose himself but wanting to be available if others asked him to play a role. And certainly with regards to the Haram Sharif, the Islamic holy places, the Hashemite had had a long, profound association there and continued to pay the salaries of the Haram officials. I think he had a lingering ambition, but one which was rarely articulated. The Israelis for their part, also very much wanted to keep King Hussein and the Hashemites in the picture because one of their preferred options was some kind of a role for Jordan in the West Bank in a final solution.

Q: What was the balance that you all had to deal with? The Israelis were occupying significant parts of the West Bank.

HULL: They were occupying the entire West Bank.

Q: At the same time we did not recognize the legitimacy of this or how was this dealt with?

HULL: We considered it an occupied territory. We didn't recognize Israel's claims to it nor did we recognize, for example, the expansion of the Jerusalem city limit or the annexation of the Golan. We thought all of the territories should be subject to a negotiation in an agreed settlement. The consulate in Jerusalem was unique in the world. It was the only consulate that was independent of any embassies. The consulate reported directly back to the State Department, not through Embassy Tel Aviv. The Consul General had a very delicate position in this regard. Our mandate was to be the liaison and to report vis-à-vis, the Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, not Gaza – Gaza was under the embassy – and secondly, to be the liaison and report on the municipal Israeli government, Mayor Teddy Kollek at the time. That was what we were meant to do. In doing it, of course, we were very much interacting with Embassy Tel Aviv and their responsibilities. It caused a certain amount of friction, a certain amount of tension and was a challenge.

Q: Who was the Consul General then?

HULL: Mike Newlin.

Q: How would you describe the relationship? The ambassador was Sam Lewis, wasn't it?

HULL: The ambassador was Sam Lewis.

Q: You were a little on the sidelines watching these two, but how did they deal with each other?

HULL: Of course, Sam Lewis was a force of nature, he was ambassador for a very, very long time, had an excellent reputation in Washington, an extrovert, very confident. Mike Newlin was quiet, but also extremely competent and very good at getting things done in a low-key way. And Mike Newlin, I think, successfully defended the independence of the consulate and did very delicate reporting with a great deal of integrity. You could admire both of them.

Q: The Israelis are not noted for shyness. And I would imagine there would be constant attempts to, I don't want to say compromise, that's the wrong term, but to do something which would give the Israelis more control than they might have if we didn't do something? Did you find yourself maneuvered or pushed or concerned about something like that?

HULL: Well, of course. The Israelis were always pushing and one of their major objectives was to get the embassy moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and really displace the consulate. We were under constant pressure and receiving constant attention from the Israelis. We were operating in a fishbowl. With me it came to a head. I was responsible for reporting on settlement

activity. This was a period of significant expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. There was a great readership for this material. We didn't realize initially how much of a readership until we started getting feedback, and it turned out that President Carter was tracking the issue very closely and would be commenting upon reports we had submitted about settlement expansion. So we felt we had a pretty important mission in that regard. Of course, the Israeli actions were quite at odds what they were saying or giving us to believe and therefore reporting the facts on the ground was reporting something that was embarrassing to Tel Aviv. I would go out on these periodic field trips and record changes. On one field trip, after telling my immediate boss that I was going out, I was in the proximity of one of the settlements and encountered Israeli security people who detained me. I explained who I was, who I was working for, and what I was doing. They detained me, they made some calls, and then eventually after 45 minutes or so I was released. Only fair, I had been detained by the Palestinians in Beirut and now I was detained by the Israelis.

I got back to Jerusalem and reported up my chain of command to my bosses about the incident which was a very good thing to do because quickly Ambassador Lewis was notified by the Israeli government that I had been engaged in inappropriate activity. Lewis called my boss to find out what it was all about, and fortunately Mike Newlin was able to brief Ambassador Lewis that this was in the line of duty, reporting on a subject of great interest to Washington. So Ambassador Lewis to his credit pushed back and, I believe, defended my activity. That didn't stop the Israelis. The issue was leaked, it was on the radio and the following days an editorial appeared in Haaretz, one of the leading newspapers entitled "Shalom, Mr. Hull", which was "Goodbye, Mr. Hull." Haaretz was hoping that I would be given my walking papers, but in fact the Consulate, the Embassy, the Department stood in back of me, and I continued my reporting and finished out my tour quite normally.

Q: At some point you mentioned the settlements. Were you able to talk to the settlers? I assume they were within your area of responsibility?

HULL: With the settlers themselves. Yes, although we didn't take a confrontational, we tried to avoid a confrontational approach, whereby we would be challenging personally what they were doing with their lives, but inevitably you would be running into these People, and they wouldn't be shy at all about telling their story and why they believed they have a claim on one spot or another and what they intended to do.

Q: Were you finding that the settlers at this particular time were for the most part, people who were pushed by religious conviction or was this a pretty good deal? Low rent or what have you?

HULL: There were several factors. There were Labor settlements along the Jordan valley and there it was a security objective that the Labor government had promoted. But then you had a very strong religious element and the settlements, for example, in (???) on the way to Hebron, there you had true believers who were really fulfilling what they considered to be a Biblical imperative. Also though there's no doubt the Israelis provided considerable material advantages to people who were willing to go and settle. You could get a much nicer villa in a settlement than you could ever afford in Israel proper, and you had a number of financial incentives if you were willing to live in the occupied territories.

Q: Was there a significant number of the Israeli settlers who were American citizens?

HULL: Yes. Sometimes the most fanatic were Americans.

Q: How about dealing with them? Did they go to you?

HULL: They would come to the consulate for consular services. Consular affairs were done in East Jerusalem across the Green Line which had been erased physically after the 1967 war but nevertheless, on the Arab side, which was always somewhat of a problem for Israelis because they didn't feel all together comfortable. Other business was done in West Jerusalem. The political section where I worked, the economic section, the commercial section, all of these were in the West Jerusalem, and the Arabs if they wanted to avail themselves of those services had to come across and use those facilities. Mostly what we did with the Israeli public was consular services which were very important because they had many connections with the U.S. and then again as I said, we did deal with the municipal government and that we did out of the office in West Jerusalem.

Q: The Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, was quite a famous figure. How did you deal with him? How would you characterize him?

HULL: He was imaginative, he was active, he, I believe, really wanted to unite the city and not just physically, but also on a human level. I think he had a measure of sympathy for the Arab population that was unusual. He was a showman of the first degree, and I really think his public diplomacy was extraordinary in stamping Israel's "trademark" over most things in Jerusalem. Not all together an easy thing to do when you think of the television shot of Jerusalem with the Haram Sharif's Kubbah As Sakhra (the Noble Sanctuary's Dome of the Rock) in the background. Ironically, the classic visual of Jerusalem testifies to an Islamic character. But Teddy Kollek was quite able and quite effective. He had working with him Meron Benveniste, who knew the Palestinians very well, and who had written on the Palestinians and the Crusaders. It was a relatively enlightened municipal government.

Q: You could not talk with the PLO at this point, could you?

HULL: No, but we found this restriction easy to finesse. Technically any member of the PLO in the occupied territories was a member of an illegal organization and therefore should be in jail. We concluded that anyone who was not in jail was prima facie not a member of the PLO and therefore fair game for us, and we did talk with anyone.

Q: Would you talk a little bit about being a political officer? How did you go about your business?

HULL: I came on board in January, and I believe it was February or March when they had the first municipal elections since the occupation had begun in 1967. These elections were of great interest because there would be a relatively free vote and the true sympathies of the West Bank electorate would be gauged for the first time since Israel had occupied the territories and so the

priority was covering that election. I know my bosses had some trepidation because they had a new political officer, green and unproven, and the elections would be his first challenge. It was a very interesting election. Often it was decided by “tazkiat” (consensus). In fact in all municipalities it was decided by consensus. In Bethlehem, the old families – particularly the Freij’s – held sway. In most of the municipalities, however, the consensus process came up with a nationalist slate of young, intelligent, active Palestinians who were not formally associated with the PLO, but who made clear their affinity to the PLO and considered the PLO as the spokesman of the Palestinian people. So we dealt with people like Fuad Qasimi, Karim Khalaf, Bassam Shaka’a, Mohamed Milhem – really a new generation of Palestinian leaders, who were impressive for what they wanted to do in their cities and for their ability to articulate the Palestinian position.

Q: At this particular time, was there a concern that the Israeli security services were trying to undermine, discredit any potential Palestinian leader that was coming down the path?

HULL: No. The Israelis, I think, welcomed a homegrown Palestinian leadership and their hope was that this leadership would somehow develop and supplant the leadership that was then outside of Palestine in Lebanon. The Israelis gave these Palestinians leeway.

Q: How big a figure was Arafat at this point?

HULL: Arafat was the embodiment of the Palestinian national cause. He was really without a rival, and Palestinians in the West Bank supported him sincerely.

Q: This would be more of a consular matter, but were there concerns about Israeli security forces beating up or being nasty to Palestinians?

HULL: Oh, sure. This was the Carter period. There was a big emphasis on human rights, and the human rights report coming in from the Consulate General in Jerusalem was one of the most problematic reports to hit the desk in the Department, which is still the case today.

Q: OK, you’re putting together this report which consists mainly of toting up incidences of who was doing what to whom and that sort of thing?

HULL: To a large extent.

Q: And I’m sure obviously Tel Aviv didn’t like this?

HULL: They had to do their own report, and yes, I am sure they found a lot of what we were reporting created problems for them.

Q: You were a junior officer yourself. There’s always the thing in any embassy or consulate where junior officers seek out sensation and are looking for extreme cases and all. The most senior officers tend to modify them. I mean this is the dynamic that goes on all the time. Did you find this going on?

HULL: No. There was a very interesting case which was not actually related to the human rights report. We had assigned to the consulate a woman who had been an INR (Intelligence and Research) analyst and wanted to do political reporting, but she was doing consular work. She was giving immigrant visas, I think. In the course of her visa interviews she had a significant number of Palestinians who had been prisoners of the Israelis. In the course of interviewing, she developed a significant number of accounts of mistreatment of prisoners, and being a trained INR analyst she, of course, was able in a sophisticated way to compare the accounts and come up with certain patterns, accounts from independent sources of significant mistreatment or torture of the Palestinian detainees. She collected all of this and she wrote it up in a very, very coherent fashion and she submitted it to Mike Newlin and Don Kruse, and it was sent in. The cable cite – Jerusalem 1500 – became famous. It exploded in Washington because it included a great deal of detail, very significant analysis, put very dispassionately, but which painted a very troubling picture of prisoner abuse and torture by the Israelis. As I said, the consulate management, Newlin and Kruse, as far as I know, didn't hesitate at all. They sent it right back in, and it had a tremendous impact when it hit Washington and was eventually leaked into the media. Of course, that didn't have to go through the embassy because we were an independent consulate. If it had had to go through the embassy management, I'm not quite sure what would have happened.

Q: The normal response to this, particularly looking at the Israeli pattern, is to try to discredit the messenger which is being done in spades in the United States today. What happened in this case?

HULL: The reporting officer was subject to a lot of attention and a lot of rumors were put out and her relationships were examined extremely closely.

Q: We're talking about male-female type relationships?

HULL: Right.

Q: If you've got a woman making a report you can always say, you know, some guy got to her or something.

HULL: There were suggestions along those lines but the fact that the material had come from so many different sources, who had just been there for a visa interview, really made it difficult to discredit the reporting. It was rather ad hominem or ad feminine.

Q: What happened? What happened to her?

HULL: She was eventually transferred back to Washington, I think not as any kind of a disciplinary measure. I don't recall if it was on schedule or premature, but she had a rather unusual personality, she was very introverted, I would say not your typical diplomat, more an analyst, and she went back to Washington and I'm not sure what happened to her career after that.

Q: Did you get out? Did you travel extensively through the West Bank?

HULL: We traveled freely throughout the West Bank. There were very few restrictions. Occasionally, when there was a security incident, there would be a curfew imposed and then we would have to talk our way through the curfew or else have to wait until it was lifted. We traveled very freely.

Q: How heavy at that particular time did you find the handling of the Israelis on the West Bank?

HULL: It was fairly heavy. Certainly they were watching the security situation very carefully, and they were also expropriating considerable amounts of lands for settlements. They had a choke hold on the economy so it was a rather heavy-handed occupation.

Q: You spoke of expropriating lands, I have heard stories either losing records or cooking up records or something. In other words, land deeds going back to Ottoman times weren't recognized. Was there a lot of, you might say legal hanky panky going on?

HULL: There were many categories of land. The Israelis almost automatically of course, claimed and disposed of any state land, land that had been controlled by the Jordanian government. There was also land where Palestinians had legal deeds to it which on occasion was expropriated. The vast majority of the land had been Palestinian hands for generations, but there was no legal title. The British had begun to register some of this land, I don't think they had gotten very far. So there was a great deal of traditional land ownership and that gave the Israelis a certain area in which to act in the fashion they wanted to act.

Q: Did you find checkpoints and as an ex-enlisted man myself, I know the guy who ends up on the checkpoint, particularly at night, is not the best soldier. And particularly you have a citizen military and I was wondering if there were problems with the troops who were doing the guarding?

HULL: It could get very sticky but, of course, our cars were labeled CC (consular corps) so we were advertising our status and our mission. But depending on the circumstance or the individual on duty, it could be a bigger or lesser problem. A good tactic was to take one of the Israelis who was driving for the consulate. I remember David Pinto in particular. He was an Israeli, he'd served in the military, he knew the mentality, he knew Hebrew, and he could talk his way through almost any checkpoint. That was often your strongest ally.

Q: Were you able to go to villages and talk to the various leaders there?

HULL: Yes, because I had Arabic it was quite easy for me. Our responsibility was to get out and report back to Washington on what was going on.

Q: You were there during the Camp David process? When Carter came in what was the feeling at first about Carter?

HULL: Well, early in his administration, Carter made a statement in favor of a Palestinian homeland which echoed in some ways the Balfour Declaration of 1917. That had a very positive echo in the West Bank. There was a feeling that this was a new administration that was serious

about dealing with the problem. And then we watched the painful negotiations taking place to try to reconvene the Geneva Conference which were running afoul of such questions as Palestinian representation and how the Geneva Conference would be structured.

Soon after I arrived in Jerusalem, a sea change occurred. I mentioned the Palestinian elections, but you had Israeli elections and Begin became prime minister. This brought Likud to power for the first time, and of course, Likud's attitude toward the occupied territories, especially the West Bank, was radically different from the Labor position. That side of the equation became much more difficult to work. We could follow from Jerusalem the efforts being made by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and people like Assistant Secretary Hal Saunders and Special Mideast Envoy Roy Atherton to get the Geneva Conference reconvened. There was interest in the new mayors, whether they would step up and agree to represent the Palestinians which they refused to do, referring back to the Rabat Summit decision that the PLO was the sole legitimate spokesman of the Palestinian people. The process ground on until President Sadat in Egypt alarmed the Americans by concluding that President Carter needed help and would not get there on his own, and announced that he was willing to go anywhere including Jerusalem in the cause of peace. We listened to this with disbelief; we couldn't imagine that Sadat really meant what he said.

Q: Sadat at that time was still considered somewhat of a lightweight, wasn't he?

HULL: Well, I think after the 1973 War, people were no longer under-estimating this fellow. Anyway, we had Sadat's offer and, of course, this had not come in a vacuum. Israeli Foreign Minister Dyan had been meeting with Sadat's National Security Advisor Tuhami in Morocco. These were secret contacts between the Israelis and the Egyptians about which we knew nothing at the time. With alacrity, Menachem Begin issued the invitation to President Sadat to come to Jerusalem. They were communicating through the consulate because the Egyptians had no embassy in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv and the Israelis had no embassy in Cairo so we were playing a mediatory role.

I still recall one evening I was called in because we had received a cable from our embassy in Cairo which contained President Sadat's acceptance of Begin's invitation to visit Jerusalem. Since I was the junior officer I was the logical person to be the postman and the message was given to me. Menachem Begin was speaking that evening at a large assembly hall in Jerusalem, and I was tasked to take the message to that convention hall and to wait for Prime Minister Begin to finish his speech and then to deliver to him President Sadat's acceptance of his invitation. I thought that was a pretty cool thing for a young officer.

We tracked the Sadat visit very carefully when he came to Jerusalem and, like others, watched on TV as he descended the steps of the airplane and shook hands with Begin and embraced former Prime Minister Golda Meir, listened to his speech in the Knesset, which struck us as very orthodox in terms of Arab politics. Perhaps the most important thing we were meant to do was to get Palestinian reaction to the whole thing. The reaction within the West Bank and East Jerusalem was relatively favorable. Sadat had said the right things, he was still esteemed for what he had accomplished in the 1973 War. It was really only after the PLO weighed in from Beirut excoriating Sadat that public opinion in the West Bank shifted against the visit and against Sadat.

Q: At the beginning of this process from the Consulate General's point of view was the PLO in Beirut considered an intransigent group? Not only did you have instructions we couldn't work with them, but did you feel that their policy or mind set was such that they were probably were undealable with?

HULL: I don't think we necessarily thought that. I think given our parochial perspective we thought that there were good minds, good people in the West Bank and East Jerusalem whose views should count. After all these were the people living under the occupation itself, they were still inside, they couldn't get around to conferences or attend U.N. sessions and some of the other prerogatives of the PLO leadership. I think we, at least I, felt their views deserved to be heard and appreciated.

Q: What were your relations with the embassy in Tel Aviv? Did you go down there? Was there a lot of consultation or not from your part?

HULL: At the top there were regular consultations between Mike Newlin and Sam Lewis, and I think they worked very hard at maintaining that relationship. I personally did not do as much as I should have to cultivate relations with the embassy. I think that I, as a young man, was jealous of the independence of the consulate and resented any possible infringements by the embassy. And I think the relationships grew quite testy over time as we would be reporting things that made life uncomfortable for the embassy. So it was a strained relationship at my level.

Q: Part of it I think, would be just the normal thing. Here you are the political officer in Jerusalem and you go to Tel Aviv you are a very small fish in a much bigger pond, aren't you?

HULL: It wasn't so much personal prestige or status. It was that we were living in a schizophrenic world. There was very little common ground between the way the Palestinians saw things and the way Israelis saw things. I think, naturally, we took on some of the perceptions of the people we were dealing with primarily. That meant that naturally there would be a divide between the way the embassy would view events and the way the consulate would view events. I think I needed and others needed to make more effort to bridge that divide.

Q: How were relations with the embassy in Amman?

HULL: Cordial.

Q: How was King Hussein regarded on the West Bank?

HULL: With suspicion. The Hashemites after 1948 had moved in and annexed the West Bank and their rule over the West Bank had been heavy-handed in many ways. They'd been resented. Of course, the West Bankers, most of them were Jordanian citizens and they had to be careful about how they conducted themselves, but there was no love lost between West Bank Palestinians and the King.

Q: So the Camp David process started – we are talking about after Sadat's dramatic trip to

Jerusalem. How did things work out?

HULL: Well, initially, the United States took a step back from the process, because Sadat had acted to a large extent unilaterally and this of course, had derailed our preferred course which was to Geneva. I think Washington decided we needed to step back and see what the Israelis and the Egyptians could accomplish on their own. Not much was the answer. When the summit occurred between Begin and Sadat at Ismailia, it became very apparent that the two sides left to themselves would get nowhere, and therefore Carter and his team re-engaged and finally got the parties to Camp David. I think from my perspective it seemed like very impressive diplomacy at Camp David. The Sinai was settled relatively easily, although the settlements were a significant issue. The real blood was spilled over what happened to the West Bank and Gaza, because that's what Begin did not want to give on and where Sadat needed something to maintain his position in the Arab world. Of course, what we did was we took Begin's suggestion of autonomy for the residents of the West Bank and Gaza, and we tried to push that as far as possible towards an interim arrangement of self-government which would then be followed by negotiations of the final status.

When I first read the Camp David Accords, I thought from a Palestinian point of view, it was thin gruel. After all the Egyptians had gotten virtually all of Sinai back, recovered the oil fields, the settlements would be uprooted. The Palestinians got what might look like a bowl of porridge, but the Department made a concerted effort to sell the Camp David Accords. Hal Saunders came out to Jerusalem, and we arranged a series of meetings between Hal and some of the best of the mayors, including Fahd Qawasmi and Mohammed Milhem. Hal made the rounds, or perhaps they came to Jerusalem, I'm not clear, and he made a very good pitch as Hal was always able to do. And again, as with Sadat's speech, the initial reaction from the Palestinians was interest. They didn't rule it out, but predictably in fairly short order the PLO came online from Beirut denouncing the agreements, denouncing the self-government proposal, and then we found our interlocutors scurrying behind the PLO's position, and we could never get self-government off the ground.

Q: What about visiting groups? Israel could almost convene the Congress there at one time or another. How much did they peel off over your place?

HULL: We saw a significant number of Congressmen who would want to hear both sides of the story, and we would arrange meetings for them. We benefited from that traffic.

Q: Every time there was a primary in the state of New York, every presidential candidate, practically, has to say they are going to move the embassy to Jerusalem, and it never happens but it is sort of the ritual. How much did you think of this as an issue?

HULL: It was constant. There was constant pressure from the Congress to do something. We would, of course, hope that the Department would hold the line, as they did largely.

Q: Did you find yourself being pushed in a corner by Congress people who, you know, at least at that time the Arab group was nothing compared to Jewish groups and particularly Jewish political contributions were extremely important to a significant number of Congress people, so

were you sort of considered the anti-Semitic Arab lovers or something? Was this a problem with Congress?

HULL: I think Congress, the engaged members, were aware of what the consulate was doing and were uncomfortable with what the consulate was doing so there was a constant tension in that regard. We did get some sympathetic visitors. We were aware of Representative Paul Finley, who was sympathetic to the Palestinian perspective. We were visited by Senator Paul Simon from Illinois, who was very interested in hearing both sides of the story. There were exceptions, but generally we found Congressional attention more critical of us than otherwise.

Q: How well did you feel you were backed by the State Department?

HULL: I think we were backed very well. I think the NEA Bureau and the leadership of Hal Saunders, Roy Atherton by then I think had moved on and was the special envoy, and even in the White House Bill Quandt was the senior director. I think they were very serious, professional and fair-minded people. I never really doubted the Department's position.

Q: What about other countries? Did they have representation on the West Bank?

HULL: Yes. There are a significant number of European countries which have consulates similar to ours: the British, the French, the Spanish, the Turks have a consulate there and the Greeks have a consulate there, so we had our own little consular corps.

Q: Did they play much of a role from your perspective?

HULL: They were active, they were interested. It was a very high profile issue. The British, of course, had the legacy of the Mandate and a special position therefore. Most of the consulates were active and interested.

Q: In the area that you had responsibility for, were there many holy sites?

HULL: Oh, yes. The Haram Sharif or, as it is known to Jews, the Temple Mount is in East Jerusalem. There were sites in Hebron, notably the Mosque of Abraham where the prophet is buried as is Sarah and other patriarchs. There's Rachel's Tomb, which is on the outskirts of Bethlehem. There was Joseph's purported tomb up in Nablus. The West Bank had many sites of religious significance.

Q: Did these concern you all?

HULL: Oh, yes. They were flashpoints. In Hebron you'd have regular incidents at the Patriarchs' Tomb and the other sites as well.

Q: When you were there, were there any of these Israeli or Jewish fanatics trying to do things at the wrong place?

HULL: Yes. It happened not infrequently in Hebron, and also in the Haram Sharif area. There

were significant challenges.

Q: Did that get you involved?

HULL: Well, if there was violence and casualties, it would be reportable. We would try to keep track and try to figure out how the incident occurred, who was responsible, and yes, that was part of our mandate.

Q: Did you have sort of well-meaning Christians coming to see Bethlehem and the holy spots and being in the wrong place at the wrong time?

HULL: A significant percentage of the Palestinians were Christians. Bethlehem is a Christian Palestinian town. The mayor was a Christian. And Ramallah was primarily a Christian town. First of all, you had Christians among the Palestinians. You had Americans, also pilgrims coming in, and we would be responsible for their safety and well-being. We would have to warn them if there were dangerous situations, but the situation was not as dangerous as is the case now when terrorism is widespread, there were real no “no-go” zones. At that stage you could still travel virtually anywhere in the West Bank in relative safety.

Q: I would imagine you would get the usual speeches – as a former consular officer – the people who believed they were Jesus coming back to his hometown and that sort of thing?

HULL: We did have those cases. Since I wasn’t doing consular work, I really didn’t interact very much with that element but it was certainly there.

Q: By the time you left in 1979 how stood things compared to where you were in 1975?

HULL: From our perspective, they had worsened. The settlement activity had expanded in a major way, and the political process had come to pretty much of a dead end after Camp David. The hope that had come with the election of the mayors in 1975 and the new blood, with the intense Carter negotiating efforts early in his administration, all of those promises had not really produced change. We left feeling that times would be tougher.

Q: Did a significant other develop during this period of time?

HULL: A very significant other developed. My wife, Amal, is a Palestinian. She was the director of the Islamic Museum in the Haram Sharif. She had been an International Visitor (IV) grantee, and therefore was on the consulate’s list of contacts, and we had met at one of my welcome parties. I had with great relish recounted to her my experience in the Peace Corps living in Mahdia, the capital of the Fatimite Dynasty, an account which she found rather quaint. Over time our relationship became serious, and we married in 1978. It so happened that Vice President Mondale decided to visit Jerusalem on that day. My boss, Michael Newman, was always a great gentleman and gave me the day off.

Q: Did this cause any problems, having a Palestinian wife?

HULL: I think it raised many eyebrows. The Department handled it very well indeed. Michael Newlin had married a Czech national during the Cold War when Czechoslovakia was communist. He had had a similar personal experience, and that made him sympathetic to my experience. But the Israelis found it puzzling. When we went on our honeymoon, we arrived at the Ben Gurion Airport with one suitcase. They looked at my American diplomatic passport, and they looked at her Israeli-issued laissez passer identifying her as Palestinian, and they wanted to know to whom the suitcase belonged because if it was a diplomat's suitcase it would get cursory treatment, but if it was a Palestinian suitcase it would get very thorough treatment indeed. We told them that it was shared which produced a quandary. It was pretty clear that we made an impression. When we arrived back a week later and went through the processing, our passports were requested for processing and the official took one look and said, "Oh, yes, we've heard of this case." It was somewhat unusual and took some delicate handling.

Q: Since essentially you were reporting things that the Israelis rather not be reported, was the fact that you were married to a Palestinian used against you in the newspapers or anything like that? Did you ever feel any pressure of this nature?

HULL: No, this was 1978. No, actually, I think the pressure predated it and postdated it. Perhaps unusually, I don't think it was ever cited as a factor.

MICHAEL NEWLIN
Consul General
Jerusalem (1975-1980)

Ambassador Michael Newlin was born in North Carolina in 1929. He received both his bachelor's degree and master's degree from Harvard University in 1949 and 1951, respectively. His career has included positions in Frankfurt, Oslo, Paris, Brussels, Leopoldville/Kinshasa, Jerusalem, Vienna, and an ambassadorship to Algeria. Ambassador Newlin was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on October 10, 1997.

Q: So you went to Jerusalem in what is always an interesting, but controversial post, with the Israeli government fairly well entrenched in Jerusalem and yet surrounded by the masses of Arabs. It was a challenging assignment. Did you have a large staff?

NEWLIN: No. The staff was quite small. Certainly on the political side, we had just myself and the Deputy Consul General, and one Political Officer. We had a fairly large Consular operation, issuing visas and passports.

Q: You were divided into two offices?

NEWLIN: Yes, we were. The Consulate General is located in an Israeli neighborhood even though the building is an old Arab one. The Consular operation was over on Nablus Road, over on the other side of town, on what was then known as the Arab side. These terms, of course,

were rejected by the Palestinians and the Israelis, but this reflected the composition of the neighborhoods.

Q: What were your relations with the Embassy?

NEWLIN: It depended with whom you talked. I managed to, I think, get along reasonably well with Mac Toon, a difficult and opinionated individual, who had his own problems I guess while he was Ambassador to Israel. In my first interview with him in Washington before I went out, he made it quite clear that he didn't agree that the Consulate General should be an independent post; it should be a constituent post. I pointed out that this policy went back to the founding of Israel. The status of Jerusalem should be determined at the ultimate peace negotiations. He tried his best to get Jerusalem under him, but it didn't work. But we got along very well. I will say for the record that thanks to DCM Tom Dunnigan, we had very, very good relations not only with Tom, but with Blackwill, the Political Counselor. I think we worked albeit independently but in a coordinated effort to achieve U.S. objectives in the area.

Q: Thank you very much for the commercial, but it's true, Mike. I know we had good relations there.

NEWLIN: That was thanks to people like you and Blackwill and the others. We always welcomed people to come up and meet with us at the Consulate General and whenever I was invited, I always went down to the Embassy. Historically, this was not always the case. There were times when the Ambassador and the Consulate General didn't even speak. I did not feel that that was the kind of relationship one should have at Foreign Service posts.

Q: No. And I will say one thing for Mac Toon, my Ambassador. He treated everyone the same. (Laughter)

NEWLIN: And, bless his heart, he is alleged to have taken an initiative without mentioning it to me, and for getting a Presidential letter from Carter telling the Israelis to stop settlements to help peace prospects. It was all secret. He handed it over to Rabin and Rabin said, "I can't accept this. The government would fall." (Laughter) So he took the letter back. This shows that his heart was in the right place.

Q: Yes. Absolutely. It always was. Now, what were your relations with the Israelis?

NEWLIN: Minimal. I had Israeli friends, of course, from my years in New York, where we worked very, very closely with the Israelis on anything to deal with the Middle East. Tekoah, Eppie Evron, Cahana and some of the others. My commission as Consul General to Jerusalem was signed by Kissinger. The Department noted there was no chief of state to present it to for an exequatur. If anyone, it would have been to Teddy Kolleck, the Mayor, who was a wonderful, wonderful person. I had very good relations with him and his staff. Always the inevitable problems would come up. We always managed to find a solution. I wound up being a guide for high ranking officials who naturally wanted to visit the sites in the Old City. Such visitors were supposed to go under my auspices rather than Israeli.

Q: Several of the Israeli officials mentioned to me that they would like to see the Consulate General closed.

NEWLIN: Sure. Sure.

Q: I tried to point out that we were going to keep it open. They never pushed very hard. Finally, what were your relations with the Palestinians?

NEWLIN: We were really on the political side, accredited to the Palestinians in Jerusalem and the Left Bank. Due to an historic anomaly, we were not accredited to Gaza. It would have made sense to have us accredited there as well, though I had a very good relationship with the Gaza leaders. Of course, during this time no American officials were permitted to have contacts with the PLO. While a majority of the Palestinians supported the PLO, none admitted to PLO membership since if they did, they would be deported or jailed.

I arrived in Jerusalem a year after there had been probably the only free and fair elections held in the Arab world in the Left Bank. The Israelis let this go forward and they respected the results. Therefore, I had an elected leadership in the Mayors of all the towns. They were all very, very capable, moderate people. They were trying to do their best under very difficult circumstances of Israeli military occupation and the inevitable problems of trying to rule a large population--a young population. I made regular visits to the West Bank mayors and other notables; sometimes I met at their offices and sometimes met in their homes. I did most of my political reporting that way.

Q: Could you intervene with the Arabs?

NEWLIN: Yes. Some of the Arabs in East Jerusalem would not come to the Consulate General, but I would have a chance to meet with them. This all changed, of course, after Camp David, when they would come. Not only the West Bank mayors but the Gaza leaders too.

Q: You were there, of course. You were in Jerusalem at the time of Camp David. And also during Sadat's visit.

NEWLIN: We were there for Sadat's visit. It was one of the great experiences of my Foreign Service career. Indisputably an historic event.

Q: Would you like to say a word or two about that?

NEWLIN: The Consulate General played a minor role. We provided secretarial and other assistance to the Egyptian delegation right around the corner at the King David Hotel. We typed the English version of Sadat's speech for the Knesset. I took my daughter, who was a teenager at that time, over to the King David Hotel. I said, "In a few minutes, through that door will walk the President of Egypt and the Prime Minister of Israel. (I went on and on.) You'll want to remember this."

Q: An historic first.

NEWLIN: An historic first.

Q: What was the effect on the Consulate General of the Camp David agreements?

NEWLIN: I was called up by Dick Viets, who was then the DCM in Tel Aviv. He said, "Go turn on your television set, Mike, early in the morning. You will see a broadcast from the East Wing." When I heard this, I thought it was too good to be true. When Jimmy Carter said, in effect, that during the negotiations for the final status, there will be a moratorium on settlements, I said, "This is really something. This is more than just a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. It is laying the foundation for a permanent Arab-Israeli peace." Carter repeated his statement on settlements the next day in his statement to Congress. In New York, two days later Begin held a backgrounder for Israeli journalists, he was asked about this. Begin said, "Do you think that I, a member of the Likud, would ever agree to a freeze on settlements?"

I immediately called up Dick Viets in Tel Aviv. He had noted the contradictory statements and said he would ask Moshe Dyan, the Foreign Minister, about this when he met him at the airport on his return from New York. Dyan told Viets that there was some misunderstanding and that he would sort it out when Begin returned a few days later. Of course, that never happened and Camp David became a bilateral peace which resulted in Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

At any rate, I didn't wait for instructions from Washington. I got in a car and I went off on my West Bank rounds, telling the Palestinian leaders and mayors and notables that, "This is your chance. If you want to bring about an end to occupation, you will accept it." They all got a little cagey and said you'd have to bring the PLO in, what would Arafat say, and were we consulting Arafat? We weren't. But I made a strong pitch for them seizing the opportunity for negotiations offered by the Camp David agreement.

Q: Those were exciting periods, weren't they? Were you inundated from visitors from State, Congressmen?

NEWLIN: Oh, yes. That was one of the byproducts. We had the sitting President, Jimmy Carter, was there once. We had former President Ford, we had Senators so, as I say, after Camp David we made a strong pitch. This was followed up by high-level people from the Department such as Hal Saunders coming out and meeting with the Palestinians, people from Gaza would come to the Consul General as well as people from the West Bank and we made a very hard sell, saying, "This is your chance to start getting rid of the occupation or ameliorating the situation now. Are you going to take this, or do we go back and tell the President that you're not?" They would take evasive action, basically because the PLO--Arafat--were not involved and they didn't feel they could do this on their own. It was asking really too much of them to take this on since they were under Israeli occupation. It was unfortunate. It was particularly unfortunate that the understanding that Carter tried to impose of a freeze in settlements did not succeed. Settlements remain a major hurdle. It was still a major achievement...firmed up peace between Egypt and Israel, and things of that nature.

Q: What do you feel about the question of moving our Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem?

NEWLIN: I think that shouldn't be done until we have, in effect, an overall peace agreement. Congress, for political reasons, keeps opposing that. I hope the Administration...That's just one other erosion of our position.

Q: Finally, do you feel that your policy input had any effect in Washington?

NEWLIN: Yes. I remember sending off a telegram once concerning the West Bank and at the end where you could have a comment, I fudged in making the comment by also making a policy suggestion--a relatively minor one--but a policy suggestion. I remember about two days later I was called up, and David Korn said, "Your suggestion has been approved." I said, "What? What?" They said, "Yes, your telegram came out of the Oval Office. In the margin of the comment was, 'Okay. JC.'" I said, "You don't mean to tell me that the President reads telegrams from Jerusalem?" They said, "He reads most of the telegrams you send." (Laughter)

I am happy that the potential of the Consul General has now been realized. Ed Abington has played an active role in reviving the peace process and has shuttled between Jerusalem and Gaza conveying our views to Arafat.

DONALD A. KRUSE
Deputy Principal Officer
Jerusalem (1976-1980)

Donald A. Kruse was born in Philadelphia in 1930. He later attended Wheaton College and majored in history. Following his graduation in 1952, he received a masters degree in political science at the University of Pennsylvania and then joined the army. Following his two year run in the army, Kruse joined the Foreign Service and served in posts in Canada, Luxembourg, France, Belgium, Jerusalem, Italy, and England. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in March 1997.

Q: You were there from '76 to when?

KRUSE: To 1980, which were the years of the Carter presidency, just by coincidence, as you know. We had arrived in Jerusalem in September 1976 with the Brookings report just being completed, which talked about the need for a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, that is, that all Arab countries would somehow make peace with Israel. That Brookings report had great influence on Carter's thinking and on his administration's actions. We started with some of our own efforts to get this going. Then Anwar Sadat decided to, in fact, follow his own inclinations. As you know, after he talked about his willingness to go to Jerusalem, Prime Minister Begin invited him. And so there in November of 1977, he arrives at Tel Aviv Airport, the first Arab leader not only to recognize Israel, but to actually come and step on the soil of the state. So, that happened just a year after I got there. It was from there on in a roller coaster. We were busy.

Q: Let's take it when you arrived. You got to Jerusalem. The consul general was Mike Newlin. What was the role of the consulate general in Jerusalem at that time?

KRUSE: The district for the Jerusalem consulate general was all of the city of Jerusalem and all of the West Bank. It did not include Gaza. So, aside from handling the typical visas and passport needs and all that kind of business, we were charged with making contact with the Palestinian leadership on the West Bank and in essentially East Jerusalem. We also were dealing with the Jewish mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kalleck at that time. We were jokingly called "the outlaw consulate" because we did not recognize Israel's claims to territory in Jerusalem nor, obviously, in the West Bank. Therefore, we did not have exequaturs with the Israeli government. We were not recognized officially as our mission being responsible for dealing with the Israelis. All of that was done by our embassy which was in Tel Aviv. So, it was a kind of an anomalous situation, but it had existed since 1967 when the city was no longer divided. Although the Israelis, of course, wanted us to accept, their claims to all of Jerusalem, etc., we were not about to do that. So, we operated under Israeli benevolence, if you will. They allowed us to do our thing. But essentially, our thing was to deal with the Palestinian leaders on the West Bank in East Jerusalem. At that time, the political leadership consisted mostly of elected mayors. The Israelis had allowed municipal elections in '76, which had PLO supporters, but not identifiable PLO figures becoming mayors in all the cities of the West Bank.

Q: At that time, contact between the United States and the PLO was forbidden by Congress.

KRUSE: Not really Congress at that time, the prohibition stemmed from Kissinger's promise to the Israelis at the time of the '73 agreements not to deal with the PLO until it essentially accepted the fact of the state of Israeli and stopped the terrorism. So, it was first Henry who got this started. The Congress later on codified it. In 1976 there was absolutely no possibility of dealing with the PLO. As you may remember, Andrew Young dealt just quietly with a PLO representative in New York and that got him fired. Some other ambassadors got in a little trouble if they seemed to be talking to or were involved with the PLO. We would say in the consulate that, "If any of these mayors that we're dealing with are PLO, then it's the Israelis fault that they're still there. We're not in the business of deciding whether somebody is PLO or not. That's Israel's concern."

Q: Could you talk about the relationship between the consulate general and the embassy in Tel Aviv during this time?

KRUSE: As you can see, there would be certain different emphases in both places. We were emphasizing the desire to have the Palestinians become involved, particularly after the Sadat visit and the Camp David process, when finally the Palestinians were indeed given a part of the Camp David agreement. That is, we were to get the local Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to become a Palestinian negotiating partner for future dealings with Israel. This was the first time that we had really given- We said as we tried to sell this, "You're now given a ticket to get into the conference room." It's the first time Palestinians in any way had gotten such an invitation to join in the discussion of their future. So, that was our prime interest at the Consulate General.

The embassy's interest, of course, as a typical embassy, is to continue a good relationship between the host country and the United States, to, in effect, help accomplish our goals with Israel, which always is to make it secure and prosperous and all that. So, we dealt with different people, different constituencies. Although we both were reading from the same policy script, we emphasized different things. We were trying to tell the Palestinians that this was a great opportunity for them. I don't know that the Israelis were that concerned that Palestinians joined in the negotiations. There was this built-in difference of emphasis. I think you could say that, personally, some of the officers at the embassy and officers at the consulate had different views. The officers at the embassy would tend to feel that the Palestinians would always resent the existence of the state of Israel and that it's almost impossible to see a peaceful resolution of the conflict. I think those of us at the consulate who had known the Palestinians better felt that there was a possibility. Of course, you can say that in retrospect 20 years later, we were maybe more right than they. But the game is not over yet. We still have to see. There are many Israelis who would certainly agree that it isn't possible to have peace with the Palestinians.

I'll give you an incident which occurred when we had a Congressional delegation out in which the members typically, if they were a serious delegation, wanted to hear both sides. They wanted the consulate to brief them and they wanted the embassy to brief them. We would usually emphasize the Israeli settlement building activity that was going on indicating that this was something that doesn't help the peace process. The embassy would agree with that because our policy was opposed to settlements. But I think the embassy would be able to put this in a context of why the Israelis were doing it because these were the ancient Biblical lands that were near and dear like Hebron, Jerusalem, Bethel, and other places would be where, naturally, Jews would want to live. So, sometimes CODELS would detect almost a policy difference. You can imagine that they would be more inclined to be favorable to the Israelis and would raise some questions back in Washington as to "Are these two posts really in line out there? It seems like we hear a little different thing from both sides." Of course, the Department would say, "They've all got the same policy, no change." There were times when there were complaints about the consulate being not pro-Israeli enough. I don't think anybody ever complained that the embassy was not pro-Palestinian enough. So, we had to live with that. I think you can easily draw the reasons why we were different and often times, depending on the zeal of people at the consulate or people at the embassy, you could have some pretty lively discussions.

Q: I would have imagined this was the time when, even before the Carter administration came in, Congress had mandated human rights reports shortly before. Then you had the advent of Pat Derian and the increased power of the Bureau of Human Rights. I would have thought this would have been both an opportunity for you and a track for the consulate general. The Israelis are not a benevolent occupying force. They have a difficult job to do, but they also are as rough-handed as probably any occupying power can be.

KRUSE: They seemed to have learned their lessons well.

Q: So, how did this play out for what you were doing?

KRUSE: The human rights thing was a very big part of our reporting. Reporting on settlement activity and reporting on human rights, as well as representation for the Palestinians were the

three major political issues that we dealt with. Human rights, we tried to report as objectively as we could, mostly based on hearing stories from Palestinians who had been affected by Israel's occupation policies. We had opportunities often when we interviewed Palestinians wanting to get visas to hear why they have a police record. Usually, it was because it was some political accusations by Israeli authorities. In the course of the interview, often, the visa officer had occasion to ask, "What was the charge? Why were you convicted? Why did you admit your guilt?" In many, many cases, if any infraction at all, it was some nationalist manifestation of some kind, but hardly a bloody, terrorist effort. You got the convictions either because the client had no way of understanding what was going on because the whole thing was conducted in Hebrew or our recognizing that he'd get a little better treatment if he just admitted to something. So, you had that kind of perversion of justice. It was such a consistent pattern. You heard it time and time again. You heard about how they were initially questioned and they were kept incommunicado and had hoods over their faces and made to stand for long periods of time, sometimes doused with water and put out in the cold. I guess you could say that not much of this was really life threatening, but some of it was pretty painful or uncomfortable. So, we would report these things. Then, Washington, of course, wanted to be sure that all of this could be proven. In some cases, it wouldn't have been easy to prove it. Every human rights report was a negotiating process. Of course, it was always the consulate that came in with these reports. Although the embassy was responsible in Gaza, they didn't get the same level of stories that we did. So, it was really the consulate that always was reporting the Israeli bad things.

Q: I would think that you would have, I won't say a problem, but you're up against really not a policy power with which, close on, a young Foreign Service officer would not be comfortable with. This type of activity and all. It would naturally stir up the underdog juices of a reporting officer and yet you kind of know that the reporting can be accurate as all hell, but it would immediately get leaked to the Congress, which would immediately leak it to the Israelis. It's not completely the Jewish lobby, but it's damn close. I mean, there are other allied groups to it, but essentially, the most politically powerful lobby in the United States during this whole time. Yet you've got these young officer whom it would be very difficult to control. They've got a story and they want to get it out.

KRUSE: Yes, it's clear to them as the truth and they feel it should be reported. In many cases, that's what we tried to do.

I was going to say that I had been in the Service 20 years in the late '70s and I never had expected that what we reported from Jerusalem was so liable to become public so quickly. Maybe it was the issues I had dealt with before weren't as volatile or the subject was not of as much deep interest as reporting on Israeli violations of human rights and Israeli settlement activities. The one great criticism in retrospect that, I think, one can levy at American policy was its refusal to talk to the Palestinian Liberation Organization. We inhibited ourselves from going down the road to a solution with the Israelis and the Palestinians because we basically said, "We don't believe that the PLO is a legitimate party." Our reporting from the Consulate General made it clear that Palestinians on the West Bank would never substitute themselves for the PLO. Our contacts always said, "You must talk to the PLO-only it can represent us." So, we delayed almost 20 years before we began a dialogue with the PLO. I have to think that, if this was a policy that could somehow have been set free from domestic pressures and Congressional pressures, we

would not have waited so long. We would not have had the painful burdens of so many people lost on both sides.

Q: Did you have to work to, one, to a certain amount, restrain your young reporting officers and, two, to protect them?

KRUSE: We were aware of the need to make sure that individual officers didn't get singled out. Of course, when we sent in the human rights reports, it was the post leadership that took the responsibility. There was an occasion of one of the junior officers named Alexander Johnson, who prepared reports on her interviews with Palestinian visa applicants, which showed the pattern of human rights violations. We allowed those reports to go forward with a covering memorandum that this represented the effort of one officer and that we accepted this as a valid effort on her part. That report apparently became public. We had to go through a season of phone and other inquiries from press people about, "What's this Alexander Johnson doing?" To make it clear, unfortunately, Alexander had a lot of problems personally and in her work otherwise and we felt was not really the best candidate for advancement in the Service. Eventually, in fact, she did not get her tenure. I believe that she quit the Service a few years later went public completely with her book called "Jerusalem 1500," as I remember because that was the number of the airgram that we had sent in with her reporting. That got a little publicity. It was the same time that "The Sunday Times" in London had done a very thorough report of Israeli practices with prisoners in the West Bank. So, a lot of this stuff was hitting the West Bank at the same time and the Israelis were getting very sensitive to all this. Getting back to the point of what we did with the officers who felt they had to report this, we tried to do it as matter of factly as possible and tried to protect the names of individual officers. I think, to a great extent, we were successful, not that it changed Israeli practices, unfortunately.

Q: Were you concerned about the Israeli secret service doing disinformation on your officers to discredit them and all?

KRUSE: Yes, it was an issue. It is true that, from time to time, Israeli officials (high ranking) would say something to the ambassador in Tel Aviv.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

KRUSE: Sam Lewis, as you know, a career officer. He was there a long time, although at a certain point, he did resign as a career officer and then was reappointed as a political appointee. There would be times that Israeli--I heard once or twice about Israeli officials complaining to the Embassy about Consulate officers being anti-Israeli. I think the embassy had quickly rebuffed those kinds of accusations. But I will say that I never felt in any way that the Israelis would do anything to us in any physical way because that wouldn't be in their interest to go that far. But they did think of the whole consulate as being anti-Israeli, I'm afraid. Many Israeli politicians would say that.

Q: What about your contacts with Teddy Kalleck, who was the mayor for many, many years in Jerusalem, who seemed to try to bridge the gap between the Arabs and the Jews?

KRUSE: We tried to have a correct relationship. He was the Israeli mayor of Jerusalem. However, we get immediately to this question of where Israeli authority should go, where the Israelis thought it went. They had annexed all of Jerusalem, including the part they took in '67. Without going through all the details, suffice to say that we never accepted that nor did any government in the world. Certainly, the people who lived in Arab East Jerusalem, never thought of him as their mayor. But Teddy Kolleck tried to present himself as the mayor of all Jerusalem. He was a humane person in terms of not wanting to unnecessarily offend Arabs. His vision was to have Arabs in Jerusalem living happily under a Jewish mayor who would be willing to dialogue with them and attempt to treat them, if not equally, because there has never been an attempt by Israel to treat its Arabs equally, at least as humanely as possible. This was a very difficult and, I would say, impossible job that Teddy may have thought he should try. We had some difficulties with him from time to time. We had two separate receptions on July 4th, one for the east side (the Arab side) and invited only the Arabs, and one on the west side for the Israelis and essentially only invited them. This was a great offense to Teddy, who thought that we were attempting to continue the division of Jerusalem. We said that, in fact, we're just trying to fulfill what our policy is. So, we did not ever, in my time, combine the receptions. But this made him very unhappy. To finish off on Teddy, he would constantly tell the United States Consulate General and the other five or six consulates that existed in Jerusalem with our same non-status (the Brits, French, Italians etc), "You consulate people don't get the picture at all. You are helping contribute to the division of this city into Arab and Jew. What we're trying to do is make us all live together." The implication was that if only we would get on board the program of a single Jewish administration, the Arabs would eventually be happy, would accept it, would be quiet, and that would be the end of it. At the time I was there (I left in 1980), the Arabs had still not risen up in the way that we thought, eventually, they would. But with the Intifada, which started in '87, it was clear to me that Teddy has his answer, that he was the one who was wrong and we were the ones who were right, that there were two cultures in Jerusalem, and that they weren't going to mix unless there was a basis of equality.

Q: What about reporting on the settlements during this time? As we talk today, a settlement is causing civil disturbance and deaths in Jerusalem. The Israelis are putting one up in Arab Jerusalem. It's on the front pages. During this '76 to '80 period, what was going on in the Jewish settlements on the West Bank in Jerusalem?

KRUSE: Well, a lot was going on, but I think the most important thing was going on here in Washington, where we had a President who effectively said that settlements are illegal. It was very clear cut and very simple. They were not obstacles to peace only, but they were absolutely illegal. Now, that did disturb the Israelis. When the new administration came in in '80 under Reagan, they changed that formula to just being obstacles to peace, not illegal. So during my time in Jerusalem we had a lot of backing here in Washington for reporting fully on the settlements. We did that. We interviewed settlers. We talked to those who were organizing the settlements. This was one issue where we actually talked to some Israeli officials--if not talking to them, we were quoting them because the settlement issue was, of course, a West Bank and Gaza issue, but mostly the West Bank and Jerusalem. Washington welcomed this. It was a big effort going on in the intelligence community to keep completely up to date on this. I suspect and hope that it is continuing. It looks like it is because I see maps from time to time that show the growth of these settlements. It goes back to what Hodding Carter said in these days. When we

objected to the Israeli settlements, Hodding Carter said, "It's like two men negotiating over a glass of water and one picks it up and starts drinking from it. This is what Israel is doing with its settlements. It's simply trying to prejudge the outcome." That's true to this very day.

Q: Were you getting a fix on who was going into these settlements?

KRUSE: Yes, we would interview settlers. In fact, at one point, one of our officers actually got stopped inside one of the settlements and was challenged as to how he got in. He said, "I just drove in." But he was detained briefly and questioned because he had been asking questions of the people that were there. This was, of course, before the big settlement push in the early 1980s when Shamir simply advertised cheap living on the West Bank. These were mostly zealots, pioneers, putting up settlements, in some cases wildcat settlements with no authorization and defying the Israeli authorities to get them out. On the other hand, there were some completely approved settlements by Israel that were going ahead. They had a master plan. You knew what they were hoping to accomplish--implant as many Israeli settlers as possible. Particularly around Jerusalem, they had pretty well accomplished that. They have encircled Arab East Jerusalem with these high rise settlements, basically suburban high rises, that now have about the same number of Jews living there as Arabs living in the core of East Jerusalem. When I was there, this was just a gleam in their eye. But they've accomplished it.

Q: I would have thought you would have had problems because you're the American consulate general. When you talk about zealots, from what I assume, a disproportionate number of zealots are actually American Jews who come to Israel are reinforcing their faith and, like a convert to Catholicism, are more Catholic than the Pope - that they would come, get involved, and then if things got bad, scream and yell for American help.

KRUSE: You're right. Of course, many of them continue to carry their American passport and therefore had a parachute if they wished to get out. They were usually unhappy with the American consulate and particularly when we expressed our policy. But, in retrospect, they probably thought that it didn't matter what we said or did, they were just going to go ahead and build settlements. Sometimes they did defy their own government. But eventually, most of those wildcat settlements were authorized. It's called "creating facts on the ground." It's like so many of the Israeli soldiers or settlers who have shot Palestinians. We go through the whole business of the Israelis bringing them to justice and meting out some kind of punishment. Unfortunately, usually, that is followed in a few years by a pardon granted to those offenders by the President of Israel. So, it's very clear that Arabs are treated much differently from the Jewish population. House demolition is standard treatment for a Palestinian charged with a security offense-- no Jewish Israeli has ever had this treatment, not even the assassin of Prime Minister Rabin.

Q: What was the impact of Sadat's visit to Tel Aviv and the Camp David process?

KRUSE: When the Camp David Accords came out with the idea of autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, we finally had a program to present to the Palestinians as something that they should look at and hopefully find it greatly more attractive than their current situation under occupation. We essentially tried to sell it as being the end of Israeli occupation. The question of what it would lead to was open. We never could promise them a state, but we did say that, "You can

participate in your own future." So, our sale was, "This is better than you've ever been offered. It's better than you have now. Join in." We had a very active program. Washington expected us to sell this to the mayors of Nablus, Bethlehem and Hebron etc. We tried that. But the essential answer, which, I have to say, is very understandable, was that, "You've come to the wrong party. We are not representing the Palestinian people. The PLO represents that Palestinian people. We are like prisoners in a cage. We can't talk for the rest of the Palestinians and we don't have any strength. So, we choose not to be involved." I think there were some Palestinian leaders who would have joined in if we had made more clearly what the end result would be. They just said, "We're not going to take a leap off into the dark. We don't know where you're going to lead us. The idea of a ticket to the conference table is not enough for us. We want to know what the end is going to be." You see, we were not prepared to tell them what we wanted the end to be. Frankly, to this very day, we're not prepared to tell the Palestinians what we think they should have at the end. This continues to be one of the great failings of our policy.

Q: As you looked at this policy, did you see any solution?

KRUSE: Frankly, I didn't. Back then, I had the fear that the Palestinians would just be ground into the dirt, unless we changed our policy toward dealing with the PLO. So, I'm half way encouraged that it does seem that whatever happens now in the future, the Palestinian cause is not a completely lost cause. There were many who thought that it would become a lost cause. How the Palestinian cause can be fulfilled properly and happily is still not sketched out by our policy. I could say that the outcome is uncertain. When Golda Meir was around, she said, "Who are the Palestinians? Where are they? What are they?" Nobody says that now. The whole world now knows who they are. Whether they're treated justly or not depends largely on Israel and the United States.

Q: You had not grown up in this particular atmosphere. Coming into it, reflections from your memory of how we treated the blacks in the South?

KRUSE: I think there was very much that feeling although I thought more of the South African experience, where there was a very definite racial difference that was policy. In Israel, that's a little more nuanced than outright apartheid. I remember from my time in the South before the civil rights movement got moving that... The thing that strikes you is that a lot of people, even when the blacks were treated so poorly in the South, there were a lot of people who thought this was wrong. It was just a question of how you're going to change (inaudible). In the case of Israel and its treatment of the Arabs, what I can never answer a Palestinian is why we give Israel four or five billion dollars a year. It's one thing to let human rights abuses go and not blow a whistle or stop it somehow, but it's another thing to wound the party who is doing all these unjust things continual unquestioned support no matter what it does.

Q: As a Foreign Service officer, to see the power of domestic politics on something that may not, in your opinion, be in American world interest, not only you, but the young officers, was this something you sort of had to work on to keep people from getting too discouraged and too cynical?

KRUSE: It is a problem. I guess all of the young officers had come to realize that, in many ways,

our relationship with Israel is not a foreign policy issue; it's a domestic issue. Certainly, our French and British and other colleagues in Jerusalem would say, "We just can't understand why you do these things. What is the reason for your support of Israel, your vetoing resolutions, etc." Then in the second breath, they'd say, "But then we know about your lobby." It is unique. There is no other country that finds itself so under the control of such a powerful lobby. Recently, there has been reporting about the President's reaction to Netanyahu, which is generally a mild one, even though clearly there is disagreement with him. The newspapers are quoting unnamed administration officials, suggesting that how else is the Democratic party going to pay off its debt? But this whole issue of Jewish and Israeli supporters and their contribution to the campaign seems to stay outside the whole ongoing debate on campaign funding. In my view, Israel's influence on our political process and our foreign policy is the most egregious and dangerous example of the influence of a foreign country on our government.

Q: In 1980, where did you go?

KRUSE: I went to the Sinai Desert for a year. I was the deputy director of the Sinai Field Mission. That was kind of a follow-on to my years in Jerusalem. The Sinai Agreement came and the reason they had this American team out there, the Sinai Field Mission, was because of the peace agreement that Henry Kissinger brokered in '73 and '74 between Egypt and Israel, which called for the U.S. to monitor the forces in the Sinai. So, we were out there monitoring, we with our helicopters and Cheny Blazers out among the Bedouins and the camels. So, we were right in the middle of the Sinai Desert.

Q: What was the status during '80 to '81 during this period you were in the Sinai?

KRUSE: It was half way into the terms of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt; their peace treaty in '78, which called for a complete withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the Sinai within a certain period of time. The period of time was, I think, eventually to end in '82. So, while I was there, we were still half way there. We still had some Israeli forces in part of the Sinai. It was a confidence-building measure for the Egyptians and the Israelis to have us there, particularly for the Israelis. They insisted on us. They wouldn't take the UN. So, we paid the price to do that. It was a fascinating experience. It was unusual because it was the only time in my career when my family could not be with me. In that sense, I would wake up in the morning and look at myself in the mirror and say, "What in the world are you doing out here?"

Q: Tell about how it progressed while you were there first.

KRUSE: This was the first time I had dealt directly with the Israelis in an official sense, and Egyptians; dealing with each of them. When you would go into Cairo, you'd have an agenda for the meeting. You had a lot of tschai (tea), coffee, soft drinks, lots of jokes, lots of laughs, get through the agenda, come back in a month or two and not a thing had been done. But we had had no arguments. When we would go in with the Israelis, there were a certain amount of refreshments and that type of thing, but every item on the agenda, every jot and tittle, would be argued over. You would set deadlines for this or that. You'd have courses of action for every one of the items. When you came back in a couple of months, it was all done. Everybody had done their work. So, it was a difference between the way the Israelis acted and the way the Arabs, in

this case, the Egyptians, acted. The Israelis were such sticklers for every phrase of that agreement they signed with Egypt. That's why I was so appalled when it comes to the agreement that Israel signed with the Palestinians, they don't care at all about keeping any parts of it, no deadlines, no nothing. No apologies. Just forget it. If we had tried that with the Egyptians, we would have been frayed by the Israelis.

Q: You mean the Israelis.

KRUSE: Well, if we had let the Egyptians get away with violations. If the Egyptians hadn't met a deadline, boy, we would have never heard the end of it. So, it all depends on who's in a superior position.

Q: I've talked to some other people who have been involved in this and they say that, as you said, things were a little bit haphazard and sloppy and all. But the Israelis were always testing. They would try to get things they weren't supposed to have--overflights or get arms in or something. It was almost a game of doing this. People I've talked to say it was basic, almost hostility there. Did you feel that or not? Was that unfair?

KRUSE: I think what you've got is this dual strain in the Israeli psyche or makeup. You've got the one that identifies with the Labor party, where indeed, they strive and believe that a Jew can make it in the world on his own, that he doesn't need to worry that everybody is after him. The Likud is the mentality that it doesn't matter what the Jews ever do, they would never accept them as normal people. Therefore, according to Likud, if Israel wants something, it's going to have to fight for it and don't worry if the world objects. I think that kind of paranoia is, to a certain extent, in every Israeli. Given the history of the Jewish people, it is understandable. Of course, the history of the Middle East has not been one where their arrival and setting up their state has been wildly welcomed. So, I understand that they may not feel that they are completely a normal state in the region. But I think the Labor people felt that normalcy was a possibility. I'm afraid Likud doesn't think it ever is going to be a possibility.

Q: Were there any incidents or any particular problems that you might want to recount?

KRUSE: No, just the fact that we almost had the helicopter crash one time with our director and a whole gaggle of Egyptian officers. I wasn't on it. It had taken off with a full load of fuel. They had forgotten that they were at an altitude of about 4,000 feet. It was somewhere near Mt. Sinai. That makes a little difference in your lift. So, the thing got up and bounced a whole lot, turned over, but did not catch fire. It was a scary thing. If a tragedy had happened, I must say, it would have marked the Sinai Field Mission in people's minds forever.

**BRANDON H. GROVE Jr.
Consul General
Jerusalem (1980-1983)**

Ambassador Brandon Grove Jr. was born in Chicago in 1929 and lived in

Hamburg, Germany at the time of Hitler's rise to power. Before Germany invaded Poland, his father was transferred to Holland and later to Madrid in 1940. He attended Fordham University and later Bard College and Princeton University. His Foreign Service career took him to such places as the Ivory Coast, India, West Berlin, and Jerusalem as well as an ambassadorship to Zaire.

GROVE: The first memories that come to me about Jerusalem are its sunsets and sunrises. I have never seen light of such soft and rosy hue as it reflects off the Jerusalem stone of buildings in the old part of the city. It has a golden glow at times, in Jerusalem's uncontaminated air three thousand feet above the sea. Yet the city has a feeling of solemnity. Christ, as he reached the summit of the Mount of Olives, is said to have gazed on Jerusalem and wept. Today, he would surely do the same.

Jerusalem is the home of friends to me and my family. Father Godfrey, a Franciscan friar, was such a person. He was best known for his knowledge as an archeologist and tour guide in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and for his sense of humor. In his brown frock, he reminded us of Friar Tuck--round, warm, jovial, and quite a gourmet. He was a native of Washington, DC although he lived for many years in Jerusalem.

Freddy Weisgal was an American Jew living in Jerusalem. He and his wife Jean opened their home to other Americans. Freddy was a fine jazz pianist and a raucously funny man, a great friend of American journalists, well known for his parties. He invited us to Yom Kippur and other Jewish holidays, a wonderful entry, through American eyes, into Jewish life in Jerusalem. On my last night in Jerusalem, Freddy gave a party at the old American Colony Hotel. As we gathered around the piano in the bar after dinner, Freddy played his incomparable rendition of Ellington's "Black and Blue," my favorite, and an apt description of how I felt after three years among Palestinians and Likudniks.

And then there were the Harman and Eitan families, scholars and diplomats, the most delightful and generous of friends. Amos and Beth Elon, perceptive and sensitive people, were so painfully troubled by the actions of their government in Lebanon and on the West Bank that it was sometimes hard to be in their company.

Jerusalem is a city of hats: Armenian priests with triangular hats, Greek Orthodox with cylindrical hats, skull caps--*kipahs*--Israeli men wear, Palestinians with their scarves and headbands, and Russian Orthodox priests whose hats resemble flower pots more than anything else. Never have I been in a place where head dress plays such a defining role. Jerusalem is also a city of distinct neighborhoods, with its heart inside the old walls. Mea Shearim is home to ultra-orthodox Jews, where men wear Polish medieval clothes, and women are covered from head to foot. A Jewish friend wearing a light Parisian summer dress told me she had been spat upon in Mea Shearim.

The century old American Colony Hotel, with its beautiful inner court and a muezzin in a mosque nearby who wakes people early each morning with his call to prayers, is situated in the Arab quarter of East Jerusalem. Founded by the Spafford and Vester families generations earlier, it was a refuge in an Ottoman style for journalists and others who chose not to stay at the King

David Hotel in West Jerusalem, despite its spectacular views. The esteemed Philadelphia Restaurant where its owner Walid so generously presided, was nearby.

Easter brings vivid memories. My sons, some friends, and I would rise in chilly darkness, and go to one of the hilltops around Jerusalem from which we could look toward Jericho. As the sun appeared, we heard donkeys bray and roosters crow. Groups of Christians sang hymns and assured each other that Christ had risen. Then we had an Easter champagne breakfast spread upon the ground. Ramadan, a Muslim holiday of fasting to celebrate the poor, touched us in its self-denial.

Jews say that if you leave Jerusalem on a journey, you have not returned until you revisit the Wall. I came to understand, and felt this way myself. During my assignment I left Israel often, and never believed I had truly returned until I touched the Wall again. I fondly recall the run-down Anglican School in the former Hadassah Hospital, which two of my children attended. Paul graduated from there, and my youngest son, Mark, was heartbroken and cried when we had to leave.

My favorite place was half-way down into the old city where the Jewish Quarter abuts the Arab. There, at a certain high point, you find yourself in a small and empty square, one side of which is open to an astonishing view beyond the cramped Arab homes with their red-tiled roofs and cats below. Straight ahead and also below, is the Western Wall with the Dome of the Rock above it, sacred to Jews and Muslims. Beyond the old city a Christian church spire rises on the Mount of Olives. All of this in one frame. I came here often, because this sight was such an extraordinary physical representation of the confluence of three great faiths in Jerusalem. One could stand in that quiet and empty square, and see evidence in stone of the great cross-currents that shaped, with so much bloodshed, the city's course through history.

Jerusalem is a place of religious observances, none more solemn than Yom Kippur. During this time of soul-searching, the city comes to a silent standstill, except for emergency services. I recall walking down King George Street, a major thoroughfare, with my son Mark. It was deserted. Mark stretched out in the middle of the street, celebrating the absence of people and traffic. During Yom Kippur, Jerusalem is miraculously filled with the sounds of its birds. Jerusalem has no international airport. This city on hilltops is approached from the ground, either from the sea or desert. One climbs up to reach Jerusalem. In the early 1980s, there was still a feeling of having arrived at a small and quiet place, a rather sparse and somber enclave where the mood was set by scholarship and gods.

In jarring contrast are the Jewish settlements that now ring the city like the wall against Arabs they are partly intended to be. Politically motivated, hastily built and often unneeded apartment complexes, the settlements are strategically placed to defend the city from its hilltops and expand Jerusalem's perimeters. In nearly every case, they are built on expropriated land Palestinians believe to be their own. The settlements bring more cars, pollution, population and ugliness to the environs of Jerusalem. They form a harsh skyline. Settlements crowd this former city of open places and small stone houses and squeeze it toward its ancient core. The old city becomes increasingly quaint, an attraction to tourists, archeologists and pilgrims. It no longer seems the

heart and *raison d'etre* of Jerusalem, around which the rest of the city emerged over centuries to provide support.

People in the Foreign Service are asked what their favorite post was. It is a difficult question to answer, because all assignments have their good and bad aspects for professional and personal reasons. When you are young and at the bottom of the ladder there is the challenge of getting it right and the satisfaction of being promoted. Parents and children are young too, and that is a special pleasure as well as responsibility. Years later, with hard work and luck, you may be near the top of your profession and enjoying the responsibilities and perquisites of its senior members, as in being an ambassador. But the children have grown and are gone and family life has changed. These two lines can intersect, like the curves of supply and demand. In my case, and I believe for my children also, this occurred in Jerusalem, where the struggles of Arabs and Jews were our daily life, and the city, when you know its neighborhoods and Anglican School, and become close to people living there, takes you over. I answer this question by saying Jerusalem, because of its intrusive mood and beauty when we were there, and its capacity to humble.

Jerusalem and its Consulates

My assignment to Jerusalem took me by surprise. As I finished my work in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in the winter of 1979, I expected to become ambassador to Haiti, and started preparing for that appointment when I received a call from Personnel. Secretary of State Vance, who normally took no interest in assignments below the ambassadorial level, had decided to select the new consul general to Jerusalem himself, because of the importance of implementing the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel concluded on September 17, 1978. Would I be interested in going? Jerusalem of course was not an embassy, while Haiti was, but it had many of the attributes of a chief of mission posting and would be engrossing work.

Jerusalem was the farthest place from my mind. When I asked Personnel why they had thought of me, their answer was that I had the right credentials: no association with Jerusalem, and neither the Israelis nor Palestinians knew of me. Initially, at least, I would not be a problem for either side.

I went to Philip Habib for advice. He was under secretary of State for political affairs at the time. Phil knew the Middle East as few did and took an interest in his younger colleagues. I told him I was intrigued by Jerusalem. Jerusalem, he replied was "the big time," and I would be foolish to turn down such an opportunity. Samuel Lewis was then our ambassador to Israel. He and I had known each other since my early days in the Foreign Service, when we both worked for under secretary Chester Bowles. Personnel had consulted him, and when the assignment was made it had Sam's blessing.

I had a general knowledge of the Middle East, thanks to Bayard Dodge's graduate seminar at Princeton conducted in his living room on Mercer Street. My parents had lived in Egypt from 1950-53, when my father was president of Mobil's company there, and I visited them one summer while a graduate student. But I knew little about Jerusalem, and would have to start from scratch. Most of my briefings were arranged by a bright, precise, and exceptionally competent

young officer named James (Jock) Covey, who was then on the Arab-Israeli desk. He would later become my deputy in Jerusalem.

The few consulates general in Jerusalem are unique in status. They are neither embassies, nor traditional constituent posts. They function independently of embassy supervision and report directly to their capitals at home. My efficiency ratings would be written by the assistant secretary for the Middle East, not our ambassador in Tel Aviv, guaranteeing independence in reporting on such topics as Palestinian attitudes and Israeli settlements.

The US view of Jerusalem is that it is a single, undivided city whose final status can be determined only when the parties involved reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. Until that happens, Jerusalem exists in a kind of limbo. Its circumstances are different, however, from the limbo of Berlin, whose final status was also undetermined during the Cold War, but defined by the outcome of World War II and extensive quadripartite agreements reached by the occupying powers. Jerusalem, fully occupied by Israel after the 1967 War, lacks any formal legal definition of its status.

Today, Israel has jurisdiction over all of Jerusalem. We and most other countries officially regard a portion of the city, the former Jordanian-occupied East Jerusalem, as "occupied territory." We and most other countries have not located our embassy in Jerusalem in recognition of other legitimate interests in its ultimate status, and to encourage peaceful agreement in reaching accord on that status. Settling the Jerusalem issue will probably be the last hurdle in arriving at a comprehensive structure for peace in the region.

When I arrived at Lod Airport in Tel Aviv in the winter of 1980, I was met by two members of the consulate's staff, in whose company I drove for the first time up the hills to Jerusalem. When we reached my future home and the garden gates opened to let us in, I saw why this Ottoman residence was one of the most striking properties our government owns abroad. Stately yet welcoming, its three stories covered with vines climbing beyond high windows, it spoke of history. I opened the front door and, like Alice through her looking glass, drew breath and stepped into a new life. Once my suitcases were placed in an enormous bedroom with a vaulted ceiling, I climbed the separate stairs to my office on the third floor, with its lingering whiff of prewar times, and signed a telegram to the State Department reporting I had arrived and taken charge.

This was the extent of my official installation. I was not accredited to the government of Israel and therefore did not have an exequatur, a formal document normally issued to a consular officer by the host government acknowledging the right of that officer to discharge consular responsibilities. I was able, as my predecessors had been, to make calls on the foreign ministry in Jerusalem, where I was acknowledged as an American official with consular authority in the city. My calls were on the chief of protocol and head of the consular division. Both were seasoned pros who received me graciously. We had the normal consular workload: Americans getting arrested, being born, dying, losing their passports. We did not issue immigrant visas, which was done in Tel Aviv. We were concerned not only with Americans in Jerusalem, but also those on the West Bank, many of dual nationality.

Our consular district covered the city of Jerusalem and the West Bank, but not Gaza. Gaza came under the purview of the embassy, a legacy from its occupation by Egypt. I went to Gaza often and met socially with officials there, including Mayor Shawwa. I liked Gaza which I had first visited in 1952, during a summer with my parents in Egypt. Even then there were 200,000 displaced Arabs living in UN refugee camps.

My Berlin experience, with its emphasis on symbols and precedents, helped me in Jerusalem. One such question was whether, and if so when, I should fly the American flag on our official vehicle. While this may sound like a trivial matter, flying a flag is a statement about the status of the occupant of the vehicle. I was not the American ambassador to Israel, and Israelis regard Jerusalem as their capital. I discussed the matter with Sam Lewis, and we agreed I would fly the flag during official calls at the foreign ministry and on the mayor, when attending national day celebrations of other consulates, and on formal visits to patriarchs.

All of the Israeli ministries, except defense, were located in Jerusalem. Defense, for security reasons, remained in Tel Aviv. This required ambassadors and several of their staff members stationed in Tel Aviv to drive back and forth to Jerusalem, which took about an hour each way. Sometimes Lewis was obliged to make the trip as many as three times in one day. Our consulate provided him and his staff office space, communication facilities, food, drink, and a place to rest. It was complicated and time consuming for everybody. We had a public affairs officer, and commercial and trade promotion programs for Jerusalem and the West Bank. We provided support to a half dozen American private voluntary organizations working with great success and dedication on the West Bank. Ours was the largest official foreign presence in Jerusalem, as it is nearly everywhere, dwarfing the other consulates some of which were one-person operations. We were responsible, too, for maintaining informal contacts with the various religious denominations represented in Jerusalem.

The Vatican's representative was *primus inter pares*. France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Greece and Turkey also had their consulates general in the city, as powers represented in Jerusalem during the Ottoman Empire. We formed a small and close-knit consular corps, whose members bore responsibilities similar to mine, except that the US was the only country that did not include Gaza in its consular district, and I had no formal religious responsibilities as most other consuls did.

We had different degrees of access to the Palestinians, based upon traditional ties and the politics of the moment. The US inevitably was cast in the role of the "heavy" after the Camp David Accords, and the more radicalized Palestinians refused to see American officials. Monthly meetings of the consular corps, chaired on a rotating basis, amounted to discussions of how each of us viewed the situation on the West Bank and in Gaza, and more broadly the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. They gave me an opportunity to brief my colleagues on the lack of progress in the peace process envisioned in the Camp David Accords, and on US involvement in Lebanon through Phil Habib's negotiations.

As a consular corps, we had formal and long-standing relationships with the Greek, Armenian, and Russian Orthodox Patriarchs and the Vatican's representative. For the US, these were matters of observing protocol and showing good will. For the Greek, Italian, and Turkish consuls,

however, religious ties were their most important responsibilities. Dinners hosted by the Orthodox patriarchs took place in a medieval court-like atmosphere. We were literally "thumped" into the Patriarch's presence by a *kawas*, a uniformed Arab attendant with a long and heavy metal-tipped staff which he banged loudly on stone floors to clear an imaginary path through empty halls and announce our coming. It is a particularly odd feeling to be calling alone and be preceded by a *kawas*. Except for the austere quarters of the Vatican representative, the patriarchs in their splendor left one wondering which century this was.

Life and Work at the American Consulate

Before I left Washington I was briefed on the ties between our embassy in Tel Aviv and the consulate general in Jerusalem. Harold H. Saunders, then assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, a wise and gentle man, went over that relationship with some care because historically it has been troubled. Maintaining the independence of Jerusalem was important, and just as important was that I be perceived as maintaining it, he said. There had been periods during which ambassadors and consuls general were not speaking to each other. Hal pointed out that Sam Lewis was a strong individual; he hoped I would resist efforts by the embassy to encroach on my responsibilities. I said I had known Sam for a long time, and had no reason to anticipate difficulties.

As it turned out, Sam and I had an excellent relationship. We never had differences concerning our respective roles or "turf." There was a minimum amount of friction between our staffs, because Sam and his DCM, and my deputy and I, monitored the relationship carefully. Once, Sam asked whether he could use my residence for a social occasion. He would be the host. I replied it could cloud the US view of Jerusalem's status in other people's eyes. He pondered this for a few moments and agreed.

I attended the weekly country team meetings at the embassy in Tel Aviv, reporting on West Bank developments and listening to discussions of US-Israeli relations. When it was relevant, I provided a Palestinian perspective or urged the embassy to take a particular initiative vis-a-vis the Israeli government with respect to our concerns about Palestinians. I was included in various social events hosted by the embassy staff, as were other members of the consulate, and we sometimes added embassy staff to our guest lists in Jerusalem. Sam and I stressed that the US had only one set of policies concerning Jerusalem and the West Bank. Government officials and journalists heard the same line from me as they did from Sam.

Social occasions in Tel Aviv gave me an opportunity to provide Israelis the flavor and mood of the West Bank. They were interested in the way someone outside the always turbulent political situation in the capital saw it. Our military attachés in Tel Aviv reported regularly on the West Bank. One day, driving to Tel Aviv shortly before Israel's invasion of Lebanon, I encountered a long column of flatbed trucks carrying tanks from the south northward toward Lebanon. I counted the tanks, and was able to provide timely information to our military attaché for his reporting. Our cooperation was productive.

The Jerusalem consulate general is the only foreign service post where Israelis and Arabs work side by side. When there were disputes, these had to do with conditions of work, and were not

politically motivated. I was struck by how ready both sides were to live and work together. When a Palestinian employee had a baby, Israeli staff members went to the hospital to see the mother and child. The reverse was also true. Weddings were attended by both groups. We were, in fact, a family at the consulate general. Most of the local staff had been working there for many years. We had good jobs for Palestinians, and Israelis also found satisfaction in working for the US government. The residence staff, especially the gardeners, had been there for decades; most were Jordanians living on the West Bank who stayed after the 1967 War.

The major-domo in the residence, an all-seeing man in his sixties of unbounded tact named Mohammed Latif, had been the major-domo in Amman when William B. Macomber was ambassador there. Bill once visited me in Jerusalem, and these two men fell into each others' arms. When I told Mohammed that Macomber would be coming to dinner, he said Macomber had been easy to work for; all he ever wanted for lunch was a hamburger.

The American staff at the consulate general was small and its quality uniformly good. Jock Covey, who soon became my deputy, was active in training our junior officers of whom we had three at all times. When Phil Habib's Lebanese negotiations intensified, we served as an executive secretariat to him. Our staff worked hard and long hours. Backstopping Habib was rewarding for junior officers learning how negotiations are conducted. They had responsibility and tight deadlines thrust upon them and responded superbly.

Even after 1967, when Jerusalem ceased to be a divided city, we kept our office building in East Jerusalem and performed consular, information and cultural functions in that building. The compound on Agron Road in West Jerusalem was used by the consul general, and the political, economic/commercial, and administrative staffs. The third floor of the residence was the consul general's office. It could be reached directly; a visitor would not go through the living quarters on the first two floors to get to the office on the third. Our 19th century buildings in Jerusalem dated to Turkish times; we had owned them for many years and been able to invest sufficient money to maintain them reasonably well. The office floor housed communications equipment that weighed tons, and we worried about the load, which, indeed, eventually became a serious structural problem.

The consul general's residence is known for its Ottoman character and unselfconscious dignity. It speaks of other times in a pastoral Jerusalem of wide roads and quiet, tree-filled gardens. The property is walled in. An oval driveway encloses a lawn richly bordered by rose bushes and other plants. Tall old trees provide shade. Built of large stone blocks, the front of the residence is covered by flowering vines whose scent in spring seeps inside, and whose green leaves in summer nestle it.

One enters a stone floored hall: the rectangular, polished Jerusalem stone of rose and yellow hue. A vaulted dining room is to the right and winding stone steps lead to the floor above. The ceilings everywhere are high, and freely moving air cools the house in summer. Plants on the steps bring in the garden. The stairs emerge into the center of a large foyer on the second floor, the main floor of the residence. To provide accent and orientation to this space, I painted one of its walls a flat red ochre found in the public rooms of Jerusalem's American Colony Hotel. To

the right of the steps is the long living room with its large oriental rugs, fireplace at one end, and vaulted white ceilings above.

Alone in that room overlooking the garden through the vines, I had feelings of both possession and intrusion, an instinctive respect for the events that had taken place there, and the people involved in them for over a century of Jerusalem's life. The residence was permeated by echoes of its past. They made a pleasant sound, and I thought myself the custodian of this old house and a definer, for a brief time, of its future.

If I speak in the first person singular, it is because my wife and I separated before I went to Jerusalem for reasons of incompatibility. We had become distant people with different interests. Our younger sons, Paul and Mark, lived with me thereafter, and attended the Anglican School. Jack and Cathy, already in Washington schools, visited during the summer while Paul and Mark were with their mother. It was not easy, especially and sadly for the children, but we managed well in the end.

In the early 1980s, security in Jerusalem was not the problem it has become today. I walked freely without a bodyguard, avoided crowds, and told my children to do the same. My tour ended before the *intifada*, before fighting broke out on the West Bank, and before Palestinians armed themselves with more than rocks and stones.

I began a typical day with an informal staff meeting in my office, after reading the cables from Washington and our other posts and confirming that our reporting was on track. I might next meet with Palestinians who wanted to talk with me, and then have lunch with an American visitor, a journalist, or Sam Lewis if he was in town. There were daily phone calls to our embassy in Tel Aviv, sometimes on our secure phone which never seemed to work properly. Afternoons were often devoted to calls on mayors and prominent figures on the West Bank, and observations of settlements to note their relentless expansion. I would return and have dinner with my sons and Israeli friends, or with Father Godfrey, a close friend of our family, archeologist, and renowned tour guide to the holy places of all religions. Those of us at the consulate general became his personal flock, year after year. Throughout, I was assisted by one of the best secretaries in the foreign service, Martha Hayward, with whom I had served in West and East Berlin, and as country director for Panama.

I did a considerable amount in media relations, although not publicly, meeting with American journalists in my office or over a meal. I also saw locally based reporters, whose families and mine became friends, and columnists and commentators who traveled through the area, people like Rowland Evans and Tom Brokaw of NBC. I have always liked journalists. They are wonderful sources of gossip, humor, and insights. The good ones live in a world of *realpolitik* and are not easily taken in. Only once was a confidence of mine betrayed, and that accidentally.

Rarely would an Israeli reporter ask to talk with me. I was friendly with people on the *Jerusalem Post*, but wanted to keep a low public profile. In general, the Israeli press and radio enjoyed criticizing the actions of our consulate. The Israeli press is always lively, sometimes vicious. Few escape its barbs. There was never any full-blown reporting on the consulate general, but we received occasional digs about our visits to Palestinians. We were denigrated as "Arabists" by the

hardliners. I had even fewer contacts with the Arabic press; most Arab journalists tended to be leftist, shrill, and vehemently opposed to US policy, especially the Camp David Accords.

The ways the words "Arabists," as applied to Foreign Service officers, and "balanced," to characterize reporting or statements, are used by some Israelis and their American friends bothers me. Today, an Arabist is someone who has learned Arabic, studied the culture, and made the Middle East an area of professional specialization. This is a necessary component in our diplomatic skills, exemplified in the career of Ambassador Parker T. Hart. The word "balanced" is made pejorative, connoting a prejudiced favoring of the Arab side. Sometimes this happens, as does the reverse in Israel's direction, but we should all be able to agree that balance is an intellectual accomplishment worth striving for, especially in a diplomat.

That said, there has historically been a bias toward Arabs among many of the State Department's Middle East experts and vestiges of it remain. Some of this is romantically based, as in the views of generations of British travelers and explorers in the Arab/Muslim world, people like Charles Doughty and T.E. Lawrence. Some reflects opposition to Israel's post-1967 settlement policies, anger over its treatment of Palestinians, and resentment over the political influence of Israeli lobbying in the US. "Who are the Palestinians?" Prime Minister Golda Meir asked sarcastically at a press conference in the US in 1969. Some of the concern, also, is based on economic realities and the international politics of oil. It took Clark Clifford and President Truman's business partner Eddie Jacobson to overcome State Department resistance in 1948, from Secretary Marshall on down, to recognizing Israel. Until recently, few real Arabists jeopardized their State Department careers by learning Hebrew and serving in Israel. The personnel system took care that this did not happen.

In my own family, my Polish-born mother, a product of middle-class Warsaw in the early decades of this century, sometimes made anti-Semitic remarks. My father, who became a leading expert in the corporate world on Middle East oil, did not, but criticized Israel's frequent and evident disdain for Arabs. My summer paper in graduate studies at Princeton, written after I visited my family in Cairo, was entitled *Dimensions of the Arab Case*, because I thought, in 1951, that too little was understood about the concerns of moderate Arabs about Israel. In it I concluded that Arabs should accept the fact of Israel's existence and begin to work out a way of life with her. I am not, however, an Arabist by anyone's definition. In 1983, my prospective assignment as ambassador to Kuwait foundered when the Kuwaitis turned me down as sympathetic to Israel on the basis of my service in Jerusalem.

Washington was greatly interested in Jewish settlements and their expansion, and it was up to us to decide how to observe and quantify the frantic housing construction around Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank. Palestinians saw the consulate as the eyes, and especially ears, of the US government. To many Israelis, however, we were diplomats whose activities were vaguely sinister. Likud partisans occasionally raised a fuss about the activities of the consulate general on the West Bank, usually in the media, where we were portrayed as PLO sympathizers. I was never made to feel uncomfortable by ordinary Israelis, however, who seemed to accept our presence and what we were doing as a matter of course.

With brutally repressive measures against Palestinians in force on the West Bank and an expanding war in Lebanon, these were wrenching times for most Israelis. A few of them refused invitations to our residence, seeing the consulate as a symbol of imagined support for the PLO by the US government and an impediment to Jerusalem's becoming the site for an American embassy. In fact, our firm policy toward the PLO was to avoid all contact with that organization and its representatives, and our views on the status of Jerusalem were equally public and clear. The PLO was banned on the West Bank and we never knowingly met with anyone from that organization, although its sympathizers were everywhere and growing in number.

There were also a few Americans, including visitors from our country, who would not come to the residence for the same reasons. Most of them expressed their opinions civilly; others felt less constrained. One of the most frustrating situations for a diplomat abroad is an emotional attack on his government's policies by fellow citizens who are biased or poorly informed, and want to stay that way. To complicate matters further, the consulate general was in good favor with elements of ultra-orthodox Jewry who believed Jerusalem should be an entirely spiritual place, and not a capital for the state of Israel. Our presence was viewed by them as desirable, and a constraint on the secular ambitions of the Israeli government. They regularly attended our Fourth of July celebrations.

The Camp David Accords

I arrived in Jerusalem 18 months after the Camp David Accords, which brought peace between Egypt and Israel, were signed in mid-1978. One of my responsibilities was to elicit support from Palestinians for those agreements and the "autonomy" process for the West Bank and Gaza they envisioned. It did not take me long to recognize we would not succeed. My colleagues at other consulates accurately viewed Camp David as a dead issue. Washington nevertheless remained committed to the Camp David "process." While I had general guidance from Washington, it was up to the consulate to be an advocate, devise a strategy to meet US objectives, and keep Washington informed of the prospects. Rarely, did we get specific instructions from Washington to do anything. In my three years, I was instructed only once to go to the foreign ministry, and that was on a consular matter.

Consulate personnel were closely monitored by the Israeli security apparatus. I was once introduced by Ambassador Lewis to Ariel Sharon, then defense minister, at a social function honoring the arts at Lewis' residence in Tel Aviv. Sam, in a burst of good will, hoped that by meeting me Sharon might become less hostile to the consulate. Instead, Sharon said gruffly that he already knew who I was and what I was doing. He was scathingly critical of me and my staff, whom he accused of coddling the PLO. In some heat, I replied that because Mr. Sharon was well informed he would know that no one at the consulate had any contacts with the PLO. He turned his back to me and we left it at that.

Sharon had difficult relationships with Americans who were not ardent supporters of his views on settlements, Arabs, and the war in Lebanon. I found him an extraordinarily complicated man, an amoral ideologue with a nasty agenda. To him, every Palestinian is a terrorist and something less than fully human. His unrelenting policy of paving the West Bank and Jerusalem's suburbs with settlements is intended to make serious land-for-peace compromises impossible. Over many

years Sharon, in my view, has been inflicting great damage on the prospects for peace in the Middle East, and therefore on Israel's, and everyone else's, best interests.

In April 1981 during Secretary of State Al Haig's first visit to the Middle East, I briefed him over breakfast. I told him it was common knowledge among my Israeli friends that Sharon was looking for any excuse to invade Lebanon to settle the Palestinian issue once and for all by force. The invasion occurred on June 6 as "Operation Peace for Galilee," and its stated purpose was to remove PLO forces from a 40-kilometer area north of Israel's border with Lebanon, putting Israel out of range of PLO artillery. In fact, however, Sharon sought to destroy the PLO leadership and remove it from Lebanon entirely, arrange for the election of Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon, and then conclude a peace treaty with Lebanon. The goal of expelling the PLO was accomplished; the other objectives were not. Sharon was at this time still playing the dominant Israeli role in the Camp David autonomy talks, thus demonstrating that the Israelis had no intention of engaging in good-faith negotiations with Egypt and the US.

Sam Lewis had long been skeptical about Sharon, and became increasingly distressed as he saw what Sharon was up to in the invasion of Lebanon. I suspect Foreign Minister Shamir and Sharon knew more about plans for an Israeli push all the way to Beirut than Begin. Begin's subsequent depression, his withdrawal and isolation, in part, I believe, reflected his recognition of Israel's self-inflicted wound in Lebanon. He came to understand, as the coffins of young Israelis kept returning, and after the massacres at Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, what his cabinet had wrought and how much blood was on their hands.

Sharon was a problem for everyone: for Sam, for Phil Habib, but especially for peace-minded Israelis. As the Lebanese negotiations unfolded, Sam and Phil would return to the consulate after having met with Sharon, often incredulous at his outrageousness. Habib was always wary of Sharon, who seemed to all of us to have an agenda of his own, no matter what his government's stated policy might be.

Israeli officials resented the consulate's reporting on their rapidly expanding settlements, and on Palestinian views critical of Israeli activities. We disciplined ourselves about what we said and wrote, and separated fact from analysis. We made it clear to Palestinians that the US government had no sympathy for the expansion of settlements, collective punishment of Palestinian families, or acts of brutality by soldiers and settlers occurring with increasing frequency on the West Bank. We also deplored Palestinian terrorism and Arafat's role in it.

Most Palestinians I met were well educated mayors and "notables," university professors, journalists, students, businessmen, lawyers and doctors. Few were professional women. Most spoke English and had family or personal connections to Jordan, where Amman was the source of financial support, passports, and other amenities for the West Bank's Palestinians. The men drank coffee, smoked, and talked politics endlessly, it seemed. A tedious part of my responsibilities was to listen to the litany of complaints from Palestinians about US policy. Most were not interested in hearing our views, and endlessly repeated set speeches accusing us of being responsible for the West Bank's miseries because of our financial and political support of Israel. They held us accountable for the construction of settlements, claiming these were paid for by diversions of US financial aid to Israel and financial support from American Jewish

organizations. After a while, these Palestinians would end their monologues and get to more open discussions, although one could usually feel their bitterness toward the US and resentment of the Camp David Accords, which were viewed as legitimizing the Israeli *status quo*.

Arabs of each village and city varied in temperament; at best, one did not sense more than a loose coordination of views among the mayors in the early 1980s. The more radical Palestinians, however, marched in lockstep. Elected officials, like the mayors, talked to us without reservation and in the easy-going manner of people whose lives are in politics. This was not always true for private Palestinians, who tended to be more cautious if their ties to Jordan were strong, or they were concerned about seeming too close to US officials promoting the Camp David Accords. There were only a few occasions when it was not "convenient" for a mayor to see me, and a suggestion was made that we meet the following week. In general, access to Palestinians was not a problem.

Palestinians were also bitter toward Egypt's President Sadat, co-signer of the Accords. I was in Jerusalem when he was assassinated by his military officers, and it wasn't long before Palestinians repeated the PLO line that his fate was deserved because he was a traitor. The moderates who made such comments surprised me. After Israel, Egypt was the strongest military power in the region. The Camp David Accords neutralized that power, which radical Palestinians saw as the only hope of one day regaining their territory and, in the case of the fanatics among them, pushing Israel into the sea. Palestinians resented President Carter as well, and were pleased when he lost his bid for re-election. They had higher hopes for the Reagan administration, believing it might repudiate Camp David. They particularly hoped the "autonomy" process would be abandoned, and that the US would become less supportive of Israel. Of course, none of this occurred.

This was still a period when Palestinians were unarmed, and violent confrontations with Israelis on the West Bank were not a daily occurrence. Demonstrations did break out in violence, but Palestinians used stones then, not guns. They burned tires, created black smoke, and blocked a few roads; they rioted in refugee camps, but this was pre-*intifada* and weapons were used only by Jewish settlers and military occupation authorities.

Acts of terrorism within Israel, organized abroad by the PLO, Hamas and other groups, were increasing in number and severity. Palestinians in general felt themselves impotent victims of an occupation that became increasingly callous toward their human rights and contemptuous of international standards defined in the Geneva Conventions. Their fellow Arabs in the Gulf States and elsewhere sent money but did not, in the eyes of Palestinians, appear seriously interested in what was happening to them.

A Palestinian I saw often was Mayor Elias Freij, of Bethlehem. He was an orthodox Christian, a moderate, even-tempered, intelligent and moral man, someone who did not whine, and who described the Palestinian dilemma in a larger perspective. As a Christian, he did not have much influence on Muslim Palestinians. I often brought visitors to him because he was eloquent, measured and credible in his soft and patient voice, and because he lived in Bethlehem, which many Americans wanted to visit in any case. Freij was effective in talking calmly and rationally about Palestinian concerns, one of a small number of Arabs who could do so. Yet he, too,

strongly criticized the Camp David Accords as a sell-out to Israel. Freij was critical of Arafat in his private conversations with me, but never disavowed him as the legitimate leader of all Palestinians.

Most other Palestinians with whom I spoke would not have dreamed of criticizing Arafat. Freij had deeper insights and recognized that Arafat was not then acceptable to the West because of his endorsement of terrorism and ambition to destroy Israel, and his militant leadership of the PLO. Freij, always a sensitive man of purpose and conviction, read the mood on the West Bank well. He paid for his individuality by being something of a pariah on the Jordanian political scene, and on one occasion having his home occupied by Israeli soldiers for a number of days, for his "protection."

To get a different perspective, I saw, among many others, Karim Khalaf, the former mayor of Ramallah, who was one of two mayors to lose their legs in car bomb attacks perpetrated by a right-wing Israeli underground group. Khalaf lived in Jericho thereafter, but I knew him earlier in Ramallah. Khalaf was a radical, one of the most outspoken mayors on the West Bank, and a vocal critic of Camp David. Even after his amputations, he never lost his fire. When I talked with him in the shade of his garden of orange trees in Jericho, he was full of sparks and anger about the Israelis and ourselves. He, too, was not interested in hearing other views. But he was always, in the Arab way, a warm and welcoming host, unhappy if you did not share coffee and food, and take some oranges home.

Shortly after my arrival in Jerusalem, Israeli occupation authorities deported two West Bank mayors accused of being PLO-sympathizers across the river to Jordan. They were widely respected leaders among the Palestinians, thoughtful men of principle who were anything but demagogues. The world-wide publicity generated by their deportations was more than the Israelis had bargained for. Deportation left the families, who chose to stay on their land, in dire straits. Western governments, including our own, protested these measures taken at a time when we were clinging to the hope of implementing the Camp David Accords as part of a peace process. To do this, we would need the support of West Bank mayors, particularly those of stature.

I decided to visit the wives and children of these mayors to ask how they were faring, and repeated my calls when I returned to their cities. In Jerusalem, I was pleased when the women stopped by my office. From comments made to me since then, including those of one of the mayors visiting the United States some fifteen years later, I now recognize that this gesture, which became well known, probably was the most effective step I was able to take in three years to reach out to Palestinians as a credible American official.

A Visit to Batir

Mohammed Latif, our major-domo at the residence, lived in the village of Batir near Jerusalem. One day, he invited my sons and me to his home for dinner. We stopped to visit a friend of his in a village nearby, whose daughter had accidentally been killed two or three days earlier by gunfire from the Israeli military. Mohammed wanted us to meet her family. The girl's parents did not lash out at me. They spoke of their grief quietly and with dignity. They said they were unable to

understand how the US could do nothing as violence increased on the West Bank and innocent people were killed. They could not believe--few Palestinians could--that we did not have the power to curb the Israelis if we chose to.

Sitting on their terrace in Batir at dusk, looking over the vineyards in the valley and hearing the father speak of this experience pulled my thoughts and feelings together. The mother had given me a photograph of her daughter, a smiling girl in her late teens with dark, braided hair. The immediacy of their loss was poignant, as were the composure and resignation with which it was accepted and conveyed to me. No angry mob could have had anything like this effect on my understanding of the human toll of the occupation. There was also, I realized, a price paid by the occupiers, young soldiers who, for the most part, found the brutal side of their orders repugnant. Violence during 1980-83 was spiraling. During one dreadful week, West Bank violence was the cover story in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Economist*.

In Jerusalem that night, I wrote a cable, "The Dark Side of Israeli Occupation," drawing on the evening's conversation and its mood, trying to make a real person of this young victim of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Rarely had our reporting aroused so much comment. It struck a chord among colleagues in the Middle East and Washington.

The "Village Leagues" Proposal

There were problems beyond violence on the West Bank, among them Sharon's plan calling for the creation of "Village Leagues." These were to be made up of Palestinians imposed as unelected mayors and functionaries in cities that had lost their mayors through deportation. Later on, they were to become a cadre of Palestinians the Israelis intended to put in place under the "self-governing" provisions of the Camp David Accords. These Palestinians had been selected by military authorities because they were willing to cooperate. They were quislings, as people on the ground including foreign journalists called them, after the Norwegian collaborator with German occupation authorities in World War II. Some, if not all, were in the pay of the Israelis. They were a mediocre lot, whose experience had little to do with skills in governing, and whose backgrounds were often shady. One of them, a notorious Israeli agent, had for many months required open protection by Israeli soldiers at his home near Hebron.

Sad to say, there were people in Washington who insisted these quislings be taken seriously and that the proposed "Village Leagues" be given US support as part of the Camp David effort to achieve autonomy. They were officials outside the State Department whose Likud sympathies were apparent. Our reporting for a while focused on exposing the dubious credentials of these Palestinians, and the Israeli government's cynicism in this effort. On the West Bank, it was essential for us to distance ourselves from the "Village Leagues" proposal, which had touched a raw nerve, if we were to maintain credibility and access to the rest of the Palestinians. I became so disturbed about pressure from USIA, in particular, that I sent a short, personal cable to Secretary of State Shultz recommending that we avoid endorsing the "Leagues," and discourage their Israeli sponsors, if we wanted to retain what influence we had with the real Palestinian leadership. Had it been implemented, the "Village Leagues" proposal would have been the final coffin nail for the Camp David Accords. Eventually, this unworthy enterprise collapsed, although for a long time our willingness even to consider it left a bad taste.

Congressional Delegations

Israel is an important port of call for any member of congress--like going to Ireland or the Berlin wall--so we had many visitors either singly or as members of congressional delegations. These CODELS arrived in Tel Aviv and then left as soon as they could because the prime minister, religious sites, and photo-ops were in Jerusalem. Each one had an embassy and consulate "control officer" to organize their visits. Their arrivals and sojourns placed heavy demands on our time and resources. I escorted them to the West Bank whenever they showed interest in going there, and many did.

I am a great believer in the value of congressional visits. We welcomed them even in the overwhelming numbers that came to Jerusalem. Each visit provided an opportunity to present the situation as we saw it, and enter into a dialogue, sometimes profitable and always intense, with members of congress and their staffs. Our visitors were a captive audience and were interested in Palestinians, even those members of the House and Senate who favored Likud's policies. By and large CODELS are serious trips undertaken for the primary purpose of learning.

The CODELS I briefed rather endlessly came in the wake of the Camp David Accords. I often invited Palestinians to the residence to meet with American legislators directly, and tried to get Palestinians themselves to present their views to the CODELS. Occasionally, Palestinians refused to come in protest against the congress, which they considered the instrument of their misfortunes through its aid appropriations to Israel. I tried to expose visitors to a broad spectrum of Palestinian views, but because some of the most articulate among them would not come to my home, they threw away valuable opportunities to put their case to American legislators.

For example, Palestinians would not talk to Senator Howard Baker, then majority leader and a very sensible man, because he was seen by them as opposed to their cause. At the last minute, they balked at attending my reception for him and even persuaded the politically astute Mayor Freij to stay away in a show of solidarity. I usually had little idea whether Palestinians would show up at a reception before the event. Some I could invite for a small dinner, others would only attend a larger function. When Palestinians did not appear at our reception for Senator Baker, I explained why the boycott had occurred, and how misplaced it was. Baker was disappointed, but understood. Palestinians were the losers every time in these childish games.

Two CODELS came often and stood out for their thoughtful approaches to the region's problems. Congressman Steve Solarz, Democrat of New York, was one of the hardest working members I have met. He ran us ragged on the West Bank every time he came to Jerusalem. He became well acquainted with key Palestinians. It was apparent to me, and to them, that he cared about their future. Steve told me that as a congressman from Brooklyn, these visits with Palestinians were not easy politically. I admired him for his intellectual curiosity and fairness, and for the political risks he was taking at home in talking with Palestinians.

The other exceptionally hard working visitor was Senator Paul Tsongas, a Democrat of Massachusetts, who was of Greek origin. We always arranged for him and his wife to meet the Greek Patriarch in Jerusalem and he, too, was intensely interested in the West Bank and its

Palestinians. While Solarz and Tsongas remained exceptionally well informed on the West Bank, many other members and their staffs made serious efforts to understand the complexity of the issues symbolized by "unified" but divided Jerusalem.

Visit of Former President and Mrs. Carter

In March of 1983, former President Carter and his wife Rosalynn visited Jerusalem, and for most of two days traveled on the West Bank. The three of us sat in the back of his armored limousine, where Carter and Rosalynn usually held hands and she kicked off her shoes. An Israeli security officer rode in front, and a security car followed us. Carter, as the architect of the Camp David Accords, was intensely interested in Palestinians and their views. This was his first opportunity to see the West Bank. He called on some of the leaders, but not all would receive him, as we had determined beforehand. In Jerusalem, I gave a luncheon and a dinner attended by Palestinians, all moderates, who were eager to talk with him. Meron Benvenisti, a former deputy mayor of Jerusalem, had developed a statistical data base for the West Bank, including settlements and Israel's economic ties there. I arranged for him to give the Carters a briefing which had evident impact on the former president who was beginning to understand Palestinian life at first-hand.

I invited the Carters and our by then exhausted staff on the evening before they left to dinner at the Philadelphia Restaurant, our favorite place for Arab food in the heart of East Jerusalem. My sons Paul and Mark, and Martha Hayward, were there. To my surprise, Carter's security people were not unduly concerned. In that noisy and informal ambiance, we were served a banquet at which plates of cold dishes covered the table before the arrival of lamb, and *arak* was followed by beer. Walid, the owner, buried any resentments about Camp David he may have harbored. We had a lively, almost rowdy, time.

In retirement, Carter seemed more relaxed and at peace with himself: not the man of inner torments which often broke through his usual reserve when he was president. His interest in the Palestinian-Israeli relationship was genuine, and he felt sympathy for the Palestinians. By the end of his hard-working visit to Jerusalem, Carter seemed to have no doubt that the benefits of Camp David were limited to the rapprochement between Israel and Egypt he had done so much to bring about. He could see for himself that formulas for Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza were unacceptable to the Palestinians. They were opposed by the Arab states. King Hussein of Jordan had not been invited to Camp David, and did not find himself in a position to provide the indispensable support their implementation would have required--even had he wished to do so.

Carter's lined face, with its muscles often tense, told much about his ability to concentrate. His questions reflected the pragmatic, fact-gathering and analytical bent of the engineer he had been. But he was also a man of emotions who quite easily sorted data into moral categories of right and wrong. At the Philadelphia Restaurant, his warmth, joviality and teasing nature came through when he joshed with my sons and our staff and enjoyed his glass of *arak*.

Carter's wife had great influence over him, and their devotion to each other was touching in its directness. As Carter prepared for a press conference at the King David Hotel on his last day, Mrs. Carter told me he would probably not ask me what to emphasize, but I should offer my

thoughts to him anyway. I did so, even though his visit was a private one, and when he drew on my suggestions in his remarks, she turned to me and said, "See, he's taking your advice!"

Carter asked me to come to his hotel alone on the morning of his departure from Jerusalem to find out whether I thought our ambassador, Sam Lewis, too readily accepted the Israeli viewpoint on matters between us. At Camp David, he said, Sam seemed to be repeating what Begin had just told him. I replied that Sam recognized the complexities and nuances on all sides, but felt it was his particular responsibility as ambassador to interpret to our government what Israeli leaders were thinking, and why.

In briefing visitors, Sam's enthusiasm and admiration for Israel sometimes carried him away, as in his characterization of "tiny Israel" in the big Middle East. But I rarely heard criticism from him of our reporting on the West Bank, much of which, in its mere recounting, reflected discredit on Israel in ways Sam understood and, albeit reluctantly sometimes, accepted. Our two posts functioned independently of each other, an exceptional arrangement which through the years has proven itself to be sound, even when relations between them were as harmonious as Sam and I made them.

Other American Visitors

I briefed leaders of the American Jewish Community when they came to Jerusalem, and had good relationships with all of them. Sam Lewis gave me helpful advice before I left Washington. He suggested I call on the Jewish leaders whose headquarters were in New York. They should have an opportunity to meet me before I left for Jerusalem, and express their views before I took up my duties. From Tel Aviv, he helped make the appointments. I must have seen at least six heads of various Jewish organizations, asking their advice and inviting them to visit me.

They took me up on this invitation, which helped develop some rewarding relationships. When they visited Jerusalem, they listened to our briefings with concern. A few traveled on the West Bank, often using me as their guide. Sometimes I invited Palestinians to join us at the residence, if our visitors wished me to, which most did. I had no problem getting Palestinians to come to these functions. They were more tolerant of Jewish leaders than US government officials. Their hostility was directed against US policy, not Americans or Jews as such.

Secretary of State Alexander Haig visited Jerusalem while I was there, as did George Shultz, frequently. American official VIPs stayed at the King David Hotel, near the consulate. They arrived at Lod Airport in Tel Aviv and headed quickly to Jerusalem in a roaring motorcade. If it was the secretary, I would meet him and his entourage at the hotel, along with the manager and additional Israeli security agents. We would then wend our way through the crowded lobby toward two small elevators.

The question of who would ride with the secretary in such intimacy arose early in my tour. Sam and I discussed the matter and Sam said I should do the honors. The procedure was always the same. The secretary, a security guard, and I got into the elevator and rode to the appropriate floor, usually in silence. Photographers snapped pictures of us entering and exiting this small conveyance, and that was the point. I always tried to look as if I had just learned something

important. We called this ritual "elevator diplomacy." If only these vertical boxes could talk, what tales they would tell! Before my time, Secretary Kissinger and his little group once spent forty-five minutes together when the elevator got stuck while they were on their way to dinner.

For me, the most memorable elevator ride at the King David was on the way down from former President Carter's top floor suite to the lobby, one evening near the end of his visit in 1983. Mrs. Carter had felt slightly ill during the day with symptoms of flu, and a doctor had been sent for. She was able to go out, and the Carters, the doctor, a security agent and I filled the elevator as we started off. Carter asked the doctor what was troubling his wife. "Mrs. Carter," came the answer, "has herpes." The silence was awkward as we reflected on this, eyes respectfully lowered. I wished I were at the Dead Sea rather than a few inches from President Carter as he received this unsettling news. Herpes, the doctor explained, takes many forms, including minor aggravations in the mouth, and with the pills he prescribed all would be well in a day or two. Whew! Ground Floor. Everybody out to face the tourists and cameras!

The King David's VIP suites overlooked the old city, and the view was breath-taking, particularly at sunset. Early in a visit, Sam and I briefed the visitor or CODEL, often at the hotel, where we were mindful that we might have a larger audience than just those of us in the room. We of course did the same for Henry Kissinger when he came on a private visit. When the delegation was to pay a call on the prime minister or foreign minister, Sam would be the escort; it would have been inappropriate for me to go along, as my relations with the Israeli government were circumscribed.

Jerusalem's Mayor Kollek

Jerusalem's renowned mayor, Teddy Kollek, was in office during my tour, as he had been for many years before and was to be afterwards. When I arrived, I called on him. It was a cordial but tough meeting. He told me he was trying to make Jerusalem a united city, and the American consulate general was trying to divide it. He pointed to the fact that we had two 4th of July receptions--one in West Jerusalem, and the other in East Jerusalem for Palestinians. When June rolled around, I sent out invitations to two 4th of July parties, as had been the custom since 1948. Teddy Kollek went through the roof. He wrote an unkind letter of protest to Sam Lewis, which Sam unhelpfully forwarded to me for reply.

We did not want to hold two 4th of July receptions, of course, and were not interested in exacerbating Israeli-Palestinian divisions. I believed, however, that there was no other choice, and that the problem had not been created by the US. If we had attempted to hold just one event, no Palestinians, in those days of resentment about the Camp David Accords and the worst of West Bank violence, would have come, creating a breach in our relations that would have been difficult to repair. All of the other consuls felt obliged to hold two events on their national days, something that seemed to trouble Kollek far less. I saw no way to satisfy Kollek and at the same time continue our open, if not fruitful, dialogue with Palestinians. I was able to bring Israelis and some Palestinians together socially at my home, but during 1980-83 that would not have worked at a public function.

So, we had the Israeli community in the shaded summer garden of the residence, along with many Americans living in Jerusalem and on the West Bank, journalists, a protocol person from Kollek's office (the mayor himself would not come), distinguished Israeli friends like the former chief justice and chancellor Harman of Hebrew University, and the religious leaders. Our consular colleagues also attended this pleasant, even elegant, garden party which, with women in hats, many men in blazers, had a 1930s feeling to it.

The second celebration was held the next evening in East Jerusalem, on the roof of the American Colony Hotel. This was a smoky feast of grilled foods and Arab dishes lit by strings of colored lights and noisily animated by sounds of Arab music. I invited as many Israelis as I could to both celebrations. Palestinians attended the party in East Jerusalem in great numbers, bringing their families and uninvited friends. Journalists and some Israelis came to both events, including Israeli reporters and columnists who enjoyed friendships with Palestinians. Our consular colleagues came, and we partied into the night with the Vester family who had so long been associated with the American colony.

These 4th of July celebrations bedeviled us for the three years I was in Jerusalem. I gritted my teeth and gave them anyway, and was finally able to pacify Teddy Kollek in the matter. At stake, I told him, were our contacts with even moderate Palestinians as conditions on the West Bank deteriorated, a situation he also deplored. The US was second to none, I told him, in its belief that Jerusalem was, and should remain, an undivided city. But we also had to face realities of the times.

Kollek and I became friends. He came to the residence often, where his preference was to sit on the floor with his legs crossed. Guests would talk with him about Jerusalem and his plans for its future. I took congressional delegations to see him or, if their stay was short, hosted a reception and invited Teddy. I also spent time with him planning visits of American officials, which brings up the Weinberger precedent.

During my time, when cabinet-level American officials visited Arab East Jerusalem they would be escorted by myself or a member of my staff, but not Kollek or one of his staff, although Teddy quite rightly considered himself mayor of the whole city. In 1983, when Cap Weinberger, then secretary of defense, was scheduled to visit Jerusalem, I cabled the State Department arguing that the practice of having the consul general escort an American official within East Jerusalem, while Kollek did the honors in West Jerusalem, was an anachronism. Kollek justifiably resented this distinction, and Palestinians didn't care. I informed the Department that unless instructed otherwise, I would ask Mayor Kollek to escort Weinberger through East and West Jerusalem. Splitting the city in this way was unseemly, and ran counter to our own interests. We had maintained for years that Jerusalem was one city and yet, when it came to realities, we sometimes treated it as two.

I had called our desk officer in Washington, after having discussed my proposal with Sam Lewis first, to alert the Department to this message. Go ahead, they said, and see what happens. I called on Teddy to share the news. Before I could open my mouth, he said to me in his gravelly voice that he knew why I was there, and was sick and tired of the usual pitch about visitors. I told him to calm down and listen. I was there to discuss the Weinberger visit. He said he didn't want to

hear about it. I then told him we were proposing that he escort the secretary of defense through East and West Jerusalem. Teddy looked at me, dumbfounded. He finally said: "God bless you!" Weinberger, Kollek, and I traveled around all of Jerusalem in a mini-van. When we alighted inside the old walls, Teddy turned to Weinberger and said: "You know, you are making history!" Of course, I had briefed Weinberger and he understood the reference. This is progress in the Middle East.

I had a heartwarming relationship with Teddy Kollek, and admired him greatly. He was held in esteem by most Palestinians who lived in Jerusalem, and did a lot for them. They trusted him. I don't remember ever hearing a Palestinian say something nasty about Kollek. He was what we would call a ward politician with street smarts, a big heart, and a great personal touch, a man of the people. He took enormous pride in the acres of flowers he planted in Jerusalem. There were many parks, and the boulevards were divided by flower beds. Driving around the city in his battered Volkswagen Beetle, Teddy occasionally spotted someone picking a flower. He would slam on the brakes and pounce on the unlucky individual. "What would happen to this city if *everybody* picked its flowers?" he bellowed. The subject of this tirade from the mayor would be mortified, but what can you do with a flower once you have picked it?

Teddy made a political error: he stayed in office too long. I think he could have become prime minister if the Labor Party had chosen him. No one had better ties to Americans. But he was not willing to abandon his first love, Jerusalem. It was already too late for Kollek on the national scene when I was there. He stayed as mayor until voted out. Time passed him by, and from his small, second-floor apartment he has lived to see his Likud successor restore the walls between people he did so much to break down.

Places on the West Bank and Gaza

Some Palestinian villages and cities remain sharply etched in memory. Bethlehem is not at all the "little town" of Christmas carols, but rather a sprawling, undistinguished even ugly place teeming with hawkers of religious souvenirs. Mark Twain caught its flavor in *Innocents Abroad*.

Hebron is a city that disturbs me in a visceral way. There is something dark and menacing about it. A great unholiness resides there. By 1980, a settlement flourished in the heart of Hebron, established by a small group of radical Jewish settlers, some of them from Brooklyn, in an old building next to a mosque. On the roof of this building, one could see a guard post manned by settlers conspicuously brandishing their Uzis, which gave it the look of a military fortress, a jarring in-your-face message to the Arab population. One sensed catastrophes waiting to happen. When a settler shot dozens of Arab worshipers in the Hebron mosque several years ago, I was not surprised.

Nablus is a distinctive city perched on its hills with a certain grandeur. In my time, it also was the most hostile and volatile place on the West Bank. It is geographically removed from the central cluster of West Bank communities, and Palestinians seem a bit different there. Violent demonstrations were frequent in Nablus; it was in Nablus that stones were thrown at my car by teenagers. The city was radicalized in a palpable way.

The Al-Masri family in Nablus were friends. One of the brightest young men in the family, Zafer, was exceptionally courageous in his political moderation as the city's mayor. He knew the US well; members of his family had been educated there. I became acquainted with him, his lovely and politically attuned wife, and their children, who visited me in Jerusalem. Zafer paid for his courage. He was assassinated by radical Palestinians after I left Jerusalem. It was in Nablus that one found Palestinians punishing their kin for the sin of political moderation. Zafer's death was a great and painful loss to the Palestinian cause.

Then there was Gaza with its refugee camps, a powder keg in search of a match. I had good friends in Gaza, and came to understand the dynamics of the area: its poverty and restlessness, feelings of confinement, its aura of being overwhelmed by history. Arafat, today, is having difficulty exerting his authority over the Gaza strip. He is not a good administrator to start with, but Gaza is an ungovernable entity. Gaza's refugee camps were densely crowded shacks lined up along the sea shore, littered with refuse, filthy. They were made of corrugated metal or anything else that would stand, one next to the other for miles. Children were everywhere and population growth was high. There was enough food to keep people alive at modest levels, but the area was seething with pent-up anger exacerbated by the lack of jobs--and hope. Some fished, for themselves and as a business; many of the men worked in Israel as day laborers or pickers in the orange groves. It was sobering to observe such squalor and misery and wonder what Gaza's future might be. I never walked through the camps, but passed through them with my Arab driver. I saw other camps on the West Bank, such as the large one outside Bethlehem, but none as spiritless as Gaza.

My Palestinian contacts had little to do with the refugee camps, although they mentioned these camps and their problems to me often. Mayor Freij of Bethlehem and other Palestinians were concerned about the camps, but did not consider themselves spokesmen for the refugees beyond deploring camp conditions and the reasons for there being refugees in the first place. They accepted the presence of refugees as facts of life under occupation.

The mayors were more concerned about the potential for violence stemming from conditions in the camps, and the presence of so many young men with nothing to do. In fact, the refugees were not represented by anyone; they did not have a voice in the early 1980s. We would hear about them when problems arose, but they were successfully marginalized. We supported the valuable work of private voluntary agencies and UNRWA, efforts backed by many of the world's governments. But the refugees were not themselves a coherent political force; they simply existed in the West Bank and Gaza in large multiplying, unemployed numbers.

The Habib Negotiations

Israel's invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982 was the dominating event of my tour. As we watched the crisis mount, Israeli forces moved into Lebanon in an operation cynically called "Peace for Galilee." We thought, initially, that their forces would stop forty kilometers north of the border. But they kept moving, and it slowly became clear that Defense Minister Sharon intended to go all the way to Beirut to expel the PLO and arrange for the election of Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon. The Israelis suffered heavy casualties. As these mounted, and the purposes of the invasion became clear, the mood in Jerusalem changed.

The incursion polarized Israeli society as never before. Many Israeli friends asked: "What have we come to? What is this country about in Lebanon and on the West Bank?" Peace Now adherents were the most vocal in their opposition, followed by the Labor Party. A whole country was having an identity crisis. Many Israelis were morally outraged at Begin's government and its purported rationale for the invasion. There were demonstrations and vigils in front of the prime minister's residence, a few blocks from the consulate. When the Sabra and Shatila massacres occurred at Palestinian refugee camps in September, 1982 people viewed Sharon as responsible. Israelis and Palestinians alike were horrified.

Israeli anxiety was reinforced by the flow of soldiers returning from the front in coffins. Jerusalem's atmosphere is often tense and somber, but during the Lebanon crisis it was funereal. National schizophrenia took hold. As bad news from Lebanon flowed in day after day, the depression deepened. Jerusalem's universities, its scholars and religious leaders, provide the city moral authority and make it a repository for national values. Jerusalem cherishes its memories of the founding of the State of Israel and the collective conscience of its founders, and now the very meaning of Zionism was challenged.

Into this atmosphere came Philip C. Habib, assisted by Morris Draper, as leader of a US negotiating team seeking to dislodge Arafat and his fighters from Lebanon. Subsequently, Habib would broker a peace among Lebanese factions and attempt to end the war itself. I had no idea, nor did Phil at the outset, of what was in store for all of us.

I encountered Phil at my first post, Abidjan, in 1960, when he came through the region gathering material for his National War College paper on Africa. Ever buoyant, he and the consulate's American secretary, Marion Markle, had a memorable picnic trip by Volkswagen Beetle into the rain forest, where in village after village Phil sought out Lebanese shopkeepers to practice his Arabic. Marion reported that he received a hero's welcome. Phil had visited me in Jerusalem earlier, when he was trying to rekindle negotiations between Jordan and Israel on riparian issues involving the Jordan River. He had barely begun this work when President Reagan named him as his personal envoy for the larger issues of Lebanon.

Phil became a frequent guest at the residence. I insisted he stay with us rather than at a nearby hotel, because we had more comfortable quarters and he was better protected there. He could hold meetings at any time under secure conditions. Our offices and communications facilities were a floor above the living quarters and provided immediate support.

Phil loved staying at the residence for its spacious and cool comfort and the quality of the household staff, particularly the talents of Atta, our Arab cook. In typical Habib fashion, he complained that his shirts were ironed better at the ambassador's residence in Beirut. He gorged on the Lebanese pistachio nuts we put before him. He loved the rose garden. At my urging, after his death, a plaque was placed in the garden honoring him and his love of roses. Phil spent time with me, just musing and chatting. He found the residence a calming shelter from the world beyond its walls. There were days when he arrived worn out. Phil, at 63, had experienced two heart attacks, and the negotiating process was grueling. From time to time, I arranged for an

Israeli cardiologist to show up at the residence. Phil grumbled a bit, but was pleased to have a check-up. His concern was that these calls would leak to the press, but they never did.

When his motorcade arrived, I met Phil at the front door and took him to the guest room, where he unpacked his bag and hung up his suits, which were always in plastic dry cleaning wrappers. An excellent way to keep the wrinkles out, he reminded me. He stripped to his boxer shorts and tee-shirt, stretched out on the bed, and started talking. Phil invariably asked about my children, and how the household staff was faring. We discussed the garden and agreed it needed his scrutiny, an issue of priority on his personal agenda. He shared his concerns about the work at hand. Then he dozed off.

For Phil, the negotiations were arduous, frustrating, and often disappointing. Phil instinctively understood the Lebanese and their Syrian masters lurking in the background. Washington had given him a near *carte blanche* to resolve the issues in PLO withdrawal and the larger peace effort. On the phone, he dealt with Near East assistant secretary Veliotes on day to day matters, and occasionally with Secretary Shultz, an old California friend. He also spoke frequently with NSC adviser Bud McFarlane. There were occasional bursts of shouting from Phil, but he generally found the Washington bureaucracy supportive. Ambassador Lewis shared fully in these matters. He and his committed staff, including Charlie Hill, Bill Brown, and Paul Hare, became nearly as worn down as Phil as they produced reams of reporting cables.

It was the Israeli government that troubled Phil most. He had direct access anytime to Prime Minister Begin, but sometimes found him removed from Phil's immediate concerns. While Phil encountered warmth and support in many government quarters, particularly the foreign ministry, he found these qualities lacking in Defense Minister Sharon, whom he distrusted and disliked. The massacres at the refugee camps in Lebanon upset Phil greatly. He was frustrated by infighting in Lebanon among the various factions and their inability to act together. His Lebanese origins seemed to have no influence on his views or emotions, but helped him understand the mindset and negotiating styles of his counterparts in Beirut. During each visit Phil asked me to brief him about the situation on the West Bank, which was always grim. He was careful to keep these matters separate from the concerns of his negotiations, but on a couple of occasions agreed to pass along comments and advice about the West Bank where it was most likely to do some good in Begin's government.

One afternoon, Phil was in a good mood and looking for something to do. I suggested we visit the collection of Roman glass at the Israel Museum, one of the best collections, if not the foremost, in the world. The museum was close and he agreed to go. When we entered the rooms where the glass is exhibited, Phil lost himself. He became engrossed in shapes and colors, and for a long time walked from one beautifully lit display case to another, totally absorbed. It was one of the few times I lured him out of the residence. Arab feasts with family and staff at Walid's Philadelphia Restaurant constituted the others. Phil cherished the quiet solitude provided by the residence and its garden.

Phil was fond of my children, two of whom lived with me, and two others, Cathy and Jack, who visited from college in the summer. He would greet my youngest son Mark at the breakfast table with a hearty, "Good morning, smartass!" He was a warm and funny person, despite his often

stern demeanor. Phil's daughter Phyllis spent some time with us, and we tried to make her feel part of the family. Occasionally, I would host small dinners for him to which I invited UNIFIL officers, journalists, and other interesting people in Jerusalem. Phil was a great dinner companion and raconteur. He liked good wine. "Dining is the soul of diplomacy," Lord Palmerston observed. Whenever Brian Urquhart of the UN was in Jerusalem, I asked him to dinner with Phil. It was fascinating to hear their assessments and reminiscences. Brian, as well, had a deep and intuitive understanding of Lebanon and the Middle East.

We were stretched thin in the consulate when Phil was in town. Martha Hayward, ever a tireless secretary, saved us time and again. These visits were a workload for which we were not prepared. My undaunted deputy, Jock Covey, took on this chore, having had invaluable staffing experience in the State Department's executive secretariat. We trained our junior officers to put together briefing books, sort cables, and staff the needs of a busy negotiator. They took to this work like bees to honey, and enjoyed their easy access to Phil. Phil in turn, took an interest in them. He asked about their careers, past and prospective, and why they had joined the Foreign Service, amplifying everything with his usual wisecracks. The junior officers loved it, and vied for the demanding responsibility of taking care of him. Many of them received quick promotions and were recognized by the State Department for their outstanding work in Jerusalem. The lesson in this is that foreign service professionals like to work with strong leaders engaged in important issues. They will give their all in response to wise leadership from someone whose understanding and management of matters at hand commands respect.

On one of his visits to Jerusalem, Phil was unhappy about his support from our embassy in Lebanon. He was about to return to Washington for a meeting with the president, and told me he intended to ask Reagan to appoint me ambassador to Lebanon forthwith. I thanked him for his confidence and said I needed to sleep on it, although I knew what my answer would have to be. At breakfast the next morning, I told Phil it would not be possible for me to go. I had a commitment to my sons living with me that I could not abandon when they were at an age at which a father's guidance is badly needed. The divorce had been hard on them. Phil made his disappointment clear--he was a great believer in "the Foreign Service first"--but accepted my decision, frowning at me from time to time later on, grumbling that I should have gone to Beirut. Had I done as he wished, I would have been at our embassy when it was blown up in a terrorist attack.

Habib's temper was legendary, and his blow-ups were memorable though brief. Nick Veliotes, then assistant secretary for the Middle East, tells the story of one of Phil's quick visits to Washington during the Lebanese crisis. Phil asked Nick to draft a telegram on some complicated matter, which Veliotes and his associates promptly did. The draft was handed to Phil, who retreated into Nick's office and closed the door, while the others waited outside in trepidation. Sure enough, the outburst came: "GOD DAMN IT!" Phil yelled to their dismay. "Why can't the rest of the Department do work like this!"

Habib had a wise press policy. When he went to the foreign ministry at the outset of his negotiations, he was confronted after the initial discussions by a huge jumble of TV cameras and journalists. Phil, undaunted, went to the microphones, looked straight into the cameras and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is going to be a silent movie!" He surveyed the startled faces for a

few seconds, and left. He would not speak to the press during the negotiations, except for an occasional formal statement. He believed that one cannot negotiate in public. The Israeli press, moreover, was notorious for its flights of fancy and tenacity.

In the early days of his negotiations, Phil received kudos by the gross. One week, he was on the covers of *Newsweek* and *Time*. After Arafat's exit from Beirut, he was increasingly mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. When Phil returned to Washington for consultation, President Reagan usually invited him to lunch. Habib was the star of US foreign policy. That reputation changed after a suicide truck bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut killed 241 Americans in October of 1983, the worst of times for Americans committed to peace in the Middle East by their presence, actions and cautious hopes.

Writ of Ne Exiat

One of my reasons for returning to Washington for consultations in the spring of 1983 was to be present in court for divorce proceedings. Our marriage could no longer be held together. Mary, living in Washington, had changed lawyers, and a new one was starting to work with her. One afternoon, as I briefed members of the policy planning staff in the State Department on Jerusalem and the Palestinians, two federal marshals appeared in the outer office with a warrant for my arrest under a writ of *ne exiat*, which a judge issues when someone is believed to be intending to flee the country to avoid the law. They ordered me to leave the building with them, and frisked me in a men's room. We drove to the District of Columbia Jail where I spent the next two hours in a private cell. With time to think, once I had overcome my shock, I recognized this legal tactic, intended to embarrass me and hurt my reputation, which it briefly did to some extent, was so off the wall it would probably help me in divorce proceedings, which it also did. My lawyer delivered a thousand dollars in cash to bail me out and I breathed free air again.

The next morning, an irritated judge vacated his own order and rebuked Mary's lawyer for employing this strategy. In its Washington gossip column a few days later, however, *The New York Times* alluded to the incident without mentioning my name, lightheartedly characterizing me as a foreign service officer involved in a divorce frantically trying to elude federal marshals in the State Department's corridors. The writer seemed to find in this fantasy a characterization of the Foreign Service itself.

Middle East Peace

I left Jerusalem in early summer 1983, thoroughly discouraged about the future of the West Bank and Gaza. The Camp David process had run its brief course. I saw no prospect any time soon for the creation of a respectable entity Palestinians could call their own. They were at their most despairing, a mood that erupted four years later in the *intifada* uprising which introduced armed clashes, for the first time, into the occupied territories themselves. Moderates in Israel and among Palestinians hunkered down to wait for change.

And, finally, change did come at the Madrid Conference of October 30, 1991, an event that could not have happened during the Cold War. Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, the latter with only two months left in office, together brought to the table in Madrid representatives of Israel, Syria,

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. Nothing comparable had occurred since the creation of Israel in 1948 at the Cold War's onset. Much of the credit belongs to Secretary of State James Baker.

The fact that the Soviet Union no longer existed, and Syria and the PLO had therefore lost its support, made the decisive difference. With Cold War competition over, Russia and the United States saw their interests beginning to converge and joined forces in the Middle East. The Madrid Conference broke the downward spiral in Arab-Israeli relations, although beyond its symbolism in post-Cold War realignments, it amounted to little more than a new format for old problems. In the Middle East, however, formats matter. The struggles between Israelis and Palestinians are not in the main religious, but secular. They are about land, water, security, dignity, and freedom in its many forms. Whose land, today, is the West Bank and Gaza, and whose city is Jerusalem? By what rights--biblical, historical, conquest, deed, use or occupation--do these lands belong to Arabs or Jews?

Progress toward peace was made under the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles, signed on the White House lawn one hot September day by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, soon to be assassinated as Sadat had been, and PLO President Yasser Arafat. The accords had been reached without US participation or knowledge. At the White House ceremony on the lawn, I watched these former adversaries hesitate--and then shake hands, and I joined in the emotional ovation. With President Clinton standing in the middle, as Carter had stood with Begin and Sadat, the scene rekindled a fragile flame of hope.

Nevertheless, in a dangerous and inexplicable strategy, Prime Minister Netanyahu, abetted by Sharon as Minister of National Infrastructures, is creating new settlements in Jerusalem and on the West Bank, more facts on the ground, as his critics say. He adheres minimally, if at all, to the spirit of the Oslo Declaration. Arafat, on his part, is showing himself, so far, to be the weak leader and poor administrator of a corrupt Palestinian Authority, failing to control terrorism and rioters, or discipline Palestinian police in cities such as Gaza and Hebron.

Regarding Jerusalem, I suspect that a generous formula for religious sovereignty and Palestinian rights will eventually prove acceptable, one that guarantees access and control of holy places to the concerned parties in an open city that serves, by common consent, as Israel's capital, and perhaps even Palestine's. When that happens, the United States will move its embassy. The US role as peace broker in the Middle East remains indispensable and, like Phil Habib, we must not give up. The Cold War's outcome augments the diplomatic options. The lesson of Oslo is that Americans, Israelis, and Palestinians are not alone in these efforts.

My years in Jerusalem were difficult and painful for everyone. And yet, Val Vester, still at the American Colony Hotel, wrote to me fifteen years afterwards: "I think you would hate Jerusalem if you saw how it is now, so built up and surrounded by high-rise fortresses...I look back on the period that you were here as a very happy one."

WAT T. CLUVERIUS, IV

**Consul General
Jerusalem (1983-1985)**

Wat T. Cluverius, IV was born in Massachusetts on December 4, 1934. He obtained a B.A. from North-Western University. He obtained an M.A. from Indiana University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1967. He served in Jeddah, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. He also served in Washington, DC in the Near Eastern Bureau. He retired in 1988. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 31, 1990.

Q: What was the situation? Could you, for the record, explain what does the Consul General do in Jerusalem? It stands by itself, it's unique.

CLUVERIUS: Yeah it stands by itself because the original UN resolution of November '47 which partitioned Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state called for the "Internationalization of Jerusalem." Then of course that partition never took place according to the UN mandate because the Jew,.; of Palestine accepted it very reluctantly but accepted it. But the Arabs didn't. They went to war against the new Israeli state. Just hours after the British left in middle of May 1948. In fact the Western world maintained its position that Jerusalem should have a special status and therefore never recognized Israeli sovereignty in West Jerusalem or Jordanian sovereignty in East Jerusalem, as it was divided from '48 to '67. And therefore the Consuls General in Jerusalem were independent. I think there are 7 in the Consular corps and they do not report through the Embassies in Tel Aviv and prior to '67 they didn't report through Amman, Jordan either. They were independent missions of their own. And there's the British, the French, the Americans, the Belgians, I believe there's a Swedish guy but he may be Honorary, the Vatican representative there and a Greek and maybe one other. As far as the Americans go, the mandate is basically the West Bank and Jerusalem. After '67 it became the West Bank and Jerusalem. Before '67 it was just Jerusalem, both sides of Jerusalem, East and West. There was an office on both sides.

Q: You've been a real Near Eastern hand by this point, so it wasn't somebody coming up and saying--Wat we want you to do such and so--you knew what you were supposed (to do). What were sort of your instructions to yourself. What did -you put as your goal or what did you want to do while going out to Jerusalem.

CLUVERIUS: The Peace Process in a wider meaningful sense was still largely on hold, and was going to stay that way. They were still wrestling around with this vain attempt to make it a Treaty with Lebanon. And of course things were getting, by the time I was going out to Jerusalem, we'd had the explosion of the Embassy, we'd had all this nasty business with the marines, all of that. We had this nonsense of putting the battleship, New Jersey, off the coast of Lebanon lobbing 16-inch shells....

Q: 16-inch shells.

CLUVERIUS: Unbelievable stuff. You know I use to be a naval officer I know what 16 guns can do, you know. In fact my grandfather commanded 2 different battleships, the West Virginia and the Texas. I thought my job really was to talk turkey to the Palestinians so that they'd understand. I mean they're full of illusions and missed opportunities. As Abba Eban used to say--The Palestinians never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. A lot of truth in that. I think that's really what I wanted to do for the Palestinians. To tell them, you know, they've got to exert themselves, no one is going to do this for them. And basically they're going to have to pay some prices. That was really what it was all about.

Q: Well, tell me now, the very, important thing is that you are a self-sustained unit, at the head of a major mission in Jerusalem which had its own clients, you might say, the Israelis. Very politically sensitive. You were also in a very politically sensitive position dealing with the Palestinians. If most American politicians had their way, they would just go away. They don't want to hear from them because there ain't no Palestinian vote and there certainly is a Jewish vote. What were your relations like with the Embassy, who was the Ambassador there?

CLUVERIUS: First it was Sam Lewis for my first year I guess. Then Sam retired and it was Tom Pickering. And of course I was also the first Consul General in Jerusalem that the Israelis knew from some other life--in the negotiations and I'd served in Israel years earlier. So I had pretty good credentials. I had a lot of Israeli friends and that kind of thing. So that made it different for the Israelis. They had a harder time being nasty to the Consul General because they knew him.

Q: Usually part of the modus operandi is to portray the Consul General as anti-Semitic, unfriendly to Israel, the whole thing.

CLUVERIUS: They couldn't really do that with me, they didn't try and of course the only Israeli officials of any kind that the Consuls General were accredited to is the Mayor of Jerusalem. Which is Teddy Kollek who is a wonderful man. And I had a lot of Israeli friends. I knew Israel well, I'd served there for 3 years prior. Sam, I got along with very well. There were times when Sam probably didn't like it that I had an independent input into things. But in fact we worked it out all very well and it was the same thing with Tom Pickering. He's one of the smoothest professionals, easy professional to work with that ever was. And I hope the rumors of his elevation are true, if there's a Clinton victory. But there's some very good rumors. So that worked out pretty well. We did use my house a lot in Jerusalem because the Israeli government is in Jerusalem, so Sam Lewis was up there all the time. And the guy was tired. I use to just tell him, anytime you come to the house, someone will get you a sandwich and you can flake out on the bed or the sofa which Sam would do. He was very tired of running up and down the hill all the time. I remember we had Bud McFarlane in the living room with Fairbanks, myself, Morris Draper, all these people. Phil Habib would be through. Lots of arguing about what they were doing in Lebanon. I just said, I told McFarlane, the dumbest thing I ever heard was to put the New Jersey out there. That would not impress Hafez Al-Assad, he doesn't care. And all we did of course was rearrange some hilltops out there and some villages. But

Assad wouldn't care if your targeting was perfect and you destroyed all the division of his troops. He didn't give a damn. I said, but if you wanted to impress him that you know the rules of- the game you're in, you'd clean out all those markings on one of those attack helicopters and go in and strafe the hell out of the Franjeh palace up in the hills behind Beirut. Because Franjeh is Assad's agent in Lebanon, the former President of Lebanon.

Q: Was he the Druze? He was the Maronite.

CLUVERIUS: He was one of the Maronite leaders. But he had long been a client of Assad's really. I said that would make Assad take notice, you'd be going after something he cares about. You strafe that little castle compound up there in the hills and it didn't matter if you hit anybody or not. Assad would know that you're in the same game he's in. But all this other nonsense. But there were a lot of arguments like that. So in that sense the Consul General's living room was a very good place to get messages, to sit down and have a drink, to get a sandwich. So there was a lot going on there that had nothing to do with being Consul General in Jerusalem. But it's also a marvelous job if you can stand the schizophrenia. Because you might spend lunch with a bunch of Israeli journalists and politicians, and in the evening talking over the same issues with Palestinians around your own dinner table. And you'd think you'd been on 2 different planets all day long. So you could really go to bed feeling schizophrenic.

Q: The Palestinians, it must be very difficult to get across what we're after with them. One, in a way particularly in the West Bank, they have to rely on us being the sort of the major person to maybe do something. Yet at the same time, every time they looked around we were in bed with the Israelis.

CLUVERIUS: It's hard for them. It's also they were very much in the mode of the Lebanese, the Greeks, the Cypriots and some others that everything bad that happens to them, it's somebody else's fault. They're very given to that syndrome. And if anything good is going to happen to them it'll be by someone else's efforts, not their own. Because they're not responsible. There's a lot of that syndrome there. I think it's obviously changed in recent years a bit. But then again there were a few brave souls out there. Mayor Freij, Elias Freij of Bethlehem, very outspoken. The Israelis were always trying to shut him up. The Palestinians were always trying to shut him up. But basically he was saying, almost 10 years ago, what the Palestinians now take as conventional wisdom. But in those days he was under some threat for speaking out very very candidly and honestly about what it was going to take. In other words, what kind of sacrifices are going to be necessary. And he's still in the game and he's one of the delegates on the Palestinian side. There were some others. But of course you also had the bombing of the Palestinian mayors in '81 I think.

Q: 3 or 4 had their legs blown off.

CLUVERIUS: Karim Khalaf later died of a heart attack, but Karim was quite a guy and after he had his legs mangled, not blown off, there was another one up in Neblus who had his legs blown off, he wouldn't deal with anybody. But Karim had been badly hurt and

had to use two canes, his legs were badly damaged. Most of the Consulates give 2 National Day parties, one for the Israeli side of town and one for the Arab side of town. And I didn't do that. I started to just give one. Hardly anybody came from the Arab side. But the next year I talked to Karim Khalaf who was basically under house arrest down in Jericho, whether he would come. He said, "No, no, I'm too embarrassed. " I said, don't be silly, it's some Israelis who blew your legs off. You know, who blew you up. You come to the party, if anybody is going to be embarrassed it'll be the Israelis. And he didn't quite understand my thinking on that but he came. And hobbled around my garden with his two canes. Some of the Israelis present were embarrassed. Because by that time, this is now 2 years later, they had pretty well broken it and they knew it was done by Israelis. In fact it was done by Israeli fanatics who had also let one of their own Druze sappers, who was killed or badly hurt, approach the bomb. They didn't tell the guy that he was about to get blown. So there was a lot of challenge in Jerusalem. It was a very interesting place. And it's one of the nicest houses in the Foreign Service.

Q: Did you feel bugged or under threat or anything like that?

CLUVERIUS: There were times when it was pretty nasty, I think. There were times when people felt there was a threat. And certainly that was the case just after I left that job. When the Intifada started in '87, I think there was a lot of security concern.

Q: I would have thought, I mean after all, you're talking about religious emotions and you have these, I don't come from the area, but you have these Israelis who were well into the settlement process. Many who came from a very right-wing and almost fanatical religious side and here the Consul General of Jerusalem is sort of the source of saying you're being nasty people and all. I would have thought this would have made you a target of religious fanaticism.

CLUVERIUS: I thought that you're probably in more danger from Jewish terrorists than an Arab one in that job. One, they're harder for the authorities to detect. And they are armed. The Israelis have had a hard time breaking into their own fanatical groups. They're very tight knit and all of that. So, yeah, I think it's probably a more serious danger.

Q: Today after a long pause this is the 25th of March 1994. Let's talk about, as we mentioned in this last tape, reporting. Obviously the human rights reports but there are other reports. Could you talk about what you were after, how you went about it and how these reports, your concerns, how they played at our Embassy in Tel Aviv, how they played back in Washington?

CLUVERIUS: Well you have to remember that Jerusalem is an independent post. So you didn't have to send things through the Embassy in Tel Aviv. But of course you were often reporting on the same trends or singular events that the Embassy in Tel Aviv might be reporting one perspective and you might be reporting as a different kind of event. Because the Embassy in Tel Aviv was going to have their own interpretation but also the Israeli interpretation. And the Consulate General in Jerusalem might have its own

interpretation and of course a Palestinian interpretation. So it could be difficult I should think if you didn't work closely with the Embassy. And we tended to do that, And there really wasn't that much occasion for conflict and conflicting views. Because in fact the turf is reasonably, recognizably separate. There is an awkwardness in a sense that the Embassy, traditionally since the '67 war, covered the Gaza Strip. Which of course is Palestinian in its political life and it's Palestinian in most of its human life. Although there are some native Gazans, maybe 100-150,000 out of 850,000. That was a little awkwardness because one, the Gazans didn't really like that the US Embassy in Tel Aviv was their American contact so to speak. They preferred to deal with the Consulate in Jerusalem, for example, to get visas. They didn't want to show that they had visas issued in the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, they were much happier to show that they had visas issued in the American Consulate General in Jerusalem. When they went across the bridges to Jordan and elsewhere in the Arab world that was a less problematic point of issue for a visa than Tel Aviv. But in fact of course what we were trying to do in Jerusalem, we were trying to report on what was happening in the West Bank in Jerusalem itself. Because in fact, this has always been a problem, I think, that in fact you were suppose to have, Jerusalem is suppose to be your turf, Jerusalem and the West Bank. But in fact of course the seat of the Israeli government is in Jerusalem and that's the Embassy's turf. So there was a certain amount of schizophrenia in that situation. The Consulate General is not accredited to any government except perhaps to the Mayor of Jerusalem. Teddy Kollek was my principal Israeli point of reference, he was a pleasant man and a joy to work with. And I'm sorry he's not still the Mayor but of course it's a bit frustrating because you're dealing with the Palestinians who are intensely concerned with what the US is doing and thinking. Some of that syndrome that, well example Tom Friedman described in his book From Beirut to Jerusalem, about the Lebanese, that they really thought that some morning the Americans would wake up and make a new president of Lebanon. You know, this kind of omnipotence kind of feeling they had. So they were constantly taking our calls and we were constantly taking theirs. It's a bit incestuous but you had some very interesting characters to work with. Elias Freij the Mayor of Bethlehem is an extremely fine man. And of course was a prophet not honored in his own country because he had been preaching for 15 years what the Palestinians should be doing vis-à-vis the Israelis. And of course now they're doing it, which is talking directly. So Freij was very interesting. Natche the mayor of Hebron whom the Israelis deposed but in fact most of us considered him the legitimate political leader in Hebron. Natche is a very, very astute political animal. Then there's the crowds in Nablus--The Kanaan clan and the Musris. So there was a hierarchy, not a hierarchy, there's a political establishment which is now mostly gone. These people are much less influential now than they were then.

Q: We're talking about the mid-80's. You were going, I mean these were some of your principal points of contact for political reporting. Just a little how-to which I think is interesting. What would you do, go down and chat with them, sort of have an agenda? What would you do?

CLUVERIUS: Well there were 2 things you wanted to do. One of course was to keep your finger on the pulse of day-to-day events. And of course there were frequently day-

to-day events. And I think it was the week that I arrived as Consul General in '83, which was after the 4th of July party.

Q: You mentioned that the last time.

CLUVERIUS: There was the shooting at the Islamic University in Hebron.

Q: What was that?

CLUVERIUS: Some Israeli settlers went out and shot up the student union or something like that and there were people killed. And it was some crazy guys from Kiryat Arba or wherever they were from, I'm trying to remember. But the interesting thing was my USIS guy, the Cultural Affairs kind of guy in the Consulate, was in the office of the President of the University when this shooting started. He grabbed the phone off the President's desk and called me. And you could hear the shooting in the background and he was lying on the floor. It went on for some time. So there were those kinds of dramatic events. But of course you were always trying to keep up with which Palestinian groups were influential where. There was always the disputes amongst the Palestinians of the West Bank themselves. Along what you might call the traditional fault lines in the society. The Hebronites didn't trust the people from Nablus, certain clans didn't trust other clans. There's also the town and the village disputes. At that time also the Israelis were pushing something called the village leagues. Which was trying to create basically a collaborative group of Palestinians. That didn't work. Its probably long forgotten but it did create a lot of tension among the Palestinians. There was a guy named Dhudin, whom I think was from the southern part of the West Bank. And they tried to set him up as the leader of the village leagues, which would be those Palestinians who were willing to cooperate with the Israelis. Not in the sense that Elias Freij of Bethlehem was talking about, which is the kind of thing that's going on now. It was basically collaboration for the village leagues. So you're trying to keep track of all these trends and all the fault lines. To what ultimate purpose other than to have the knowledge of what was going on and who was doing what to whom. At that time there wasn't a hell of a lot of ultimate purpose. But it was always felt that whatever was going on in the broader peace process, you really had to know what the Palestinians were thinking and what they were feeding to the Jordanians, what they were feeding to the PLO leadership in Tunis. Which of course at that time was only a year or two after having been thrown out of Lebanon. And Arafat was becoming increasingly irrelevant, to the joy of the Israelis, until he was rescued as a political animal really by the Intifada which broke out in '87. The uprising in the fall of '87. Which still goes on in some way. So you're always trying to know what these folk were up to. Now some of the means you used, one of the things you had to be careful of was that the Palestinians had the smarts of the survivors. And very carefully they tell the Israelis one thing, they tell the Americans another, they tell the British another, the Jordanians something else and the PLO in Tunis probably got a different story. And this wasn't malicious dissembling, this is what survivors do. Also try to find some advantage in the fault lines of the world around them. Just like we were trying to understand the fault lines in their political culture. But that was always kind of fun. And of course then an Israeli election came along. You would have the various Israeli parties dabbling in the

Palestinian political scene. Trying to find people they could work with, trying to find people who could carry accurate messages to the Jordanians, to the PLO or whatever. Some of the means we used were pretty straightforward. Traditional political reporting means you go out and have coffee with the guy and we all knew each other quite well because it's not all that big a piece of turf. It wasn't hard to have a meeting at 10:00 and have coffee in Hebron and then be back in East Jerusalem for lunch and go to a dinner party in Nablus. We also had a political officer, Tom Dodling, who was a very clever fellow. He had very good Arabic and spent a lot of time in the old city. He met a guy who reads coffee grounds and there are certain events, kinds of groups that meet and they'll have somebody in to read the coffee grounds. Not that anybody believes it but it's kind of traditional. Kind of traditional stuff. But what was interesting was that very often the meetings amongst the notables of the West Bank in which they would have this traditional event take place were meetings in which we'd be very interested to know what was going on. We'd find out from the "coffee grounder." They often did this for example when they received some important Israeli official, particularly a Labor Party official or something like that.

Q: Did you ever, for example, and this could probably work both ways, in perspective, see a report that would come out of our Embassy in Tel Aviv and say--Gee, that's really presenting one point of view, in a way fair enough? In other words, frame some of your reporting to show the other side of the moon on this. In order to give a balanced view?

CLUVERIUS: Absolutely. But usually you would, if your relations were good, and I think ours were when I was in Jerusalem, they usually are between the Embassy and Jerusalem. You'd usually know in advance that someone was working on a matter that would kind of illuminate this subject from the Israeli perspective. And it would be useful if Jerusalem would do a counter-piece that would illuminate it. So that it'd often be done cooperatively. Now on fast breaking stories, you might have to do it by phone very quickly. You know the Embassy might call and say we're going to do this. Or I might call and say, Look this is what the papers are saying, it ain't right from what I'm getting. You know what the press are saying and all of that. There's something else back here that's going on. And here's how I'm going to play it. Occasionally you might be in conflict with what the Embassy is reporting but very rarely.

Q: I would think that on your reports, a report that would be eagerly awaited, or maybe not eagerly awaited, but expected would be on the human rights side. Essentially we have an Israeli at this time, an Israeli occupying force in a land that doesn't want it. And the Israelis are not sweet, kind, considerate and gentle people particularly when they feel that their national security is at stake. Can you talk about what you would do, how you went about it and the problems therein?

CLUVERIUS: You do pretty straight reporting jobs. The Israelis were saying as they did and even for a number of years they published an annual report published by what was called a Civil Administration which means the military occupation government, basically. To say how wonderful it all was and what a benign occupation it was and all the things we've done for the local folk in the past year. It was pretty kind of outrageous PR stuff.

But we would take it and my staff would tear that thing apart in a report to Washington. And say this is BS, and back it up. The annual Human Rights Report is a big problem because human rights is not a black and white subject. One man's violation is another man's benign mistake. And the way we did it was to call a spade a spade and the politicking would take place in Washington between the bureau, NEA, and the Human Rights Bureau. And depending on who was running, which political animals, which political appointees were in the Human Rights bureau, you'd have a hard time or an easy time getting the facts published as we saw them in the field. There was a lot of negotiation over language, you know lots of negotiations over adjectives and stuff like that. You know, it's a painful process.

Q: Elliott Abrams was not the Human Rights person when you were there, was he?

CLUVERIUS: No, I think he was an IO person at the time. There were some other political appointees, frankly whose names I can't remember and don't want to remember. They could be pretty tough. There was a negotiation in Washington one year I recall, it was really trading off language. The people in the Human Rights thing were pretty protective of the Israelis, but they wanted to land with both feet on the Syrians. So you had some tradeoffs. I mean you can't use those terrible adjectives about the Syrians unless you let us use reasonably descriptive adjectives about the Israelis.

Q: Just to give an idea to move one layer down, what were some of the problems that you were reporting on with the Israelis in dealing with the people there in the West Bank?

CLUVERIUS: You mean on the ground problems. Well you had continued land expropriations. I remember we did lengthy reporting on the Israel claim that this is all state land. And therefore the state can exercise eminent domain etc., etc. And we did some very extensive historical reporting. Because in fact there had been, just before the '67 war, the Jordanian government was going through the West Bank, north to south, modernizing the records and things which traditionally are held by the Muktar of the village, some of it is almost verbal. Because everybody knows that Muhammad's land extends from this rock to that tree and over to this. And in fact the Jordanians had only designated about 17% of what they had covered as state land; they had not reached south of Jerusalem. Only about 17% of it was designated state land which meant roadways, rights of way, things like that. Whereas the Israelis were claiming huge percentages of state land. And made the argument that as an occupier you can't change the status. But of course there were some very complicated Ottoman rules of squatters rights and kind of thing--how many years has this land been tilled by this family before ownership passes. And all kinds of things. But we would tear into those subjects to illuminate the facts.

Q: Had the Israelis confiscated? I heard in stories that taking the records and putting them somewhere meant they had control over, they could call the shots because people didn't have the original records.

CLUVERIUS: Sure and very often they got some of it by bribery by Muktars who did hold the records of the whole village. And if he turned those records over to the Israeli

authorities then they knew who owned what and they could make the records disappear or whatever. There were a lot of very sophisticated shenanigans going on about land. And of course the Palestinians were almost always the losers on that. So it was very difficult. And if Palestinians could prove a claim that land had been taken, at any time in the recent historical past, then they had to go through the Israeli legal system. Which occasionally gave some justice in that, but not often.

Q: What about, was Israeli settlements going on at that time?

CLUVERIUS: Oh sure.

Q: Could you talk about that and how you were viewing, reporting your impression?

CLUVERIUS: You were getting that and you getting this tide from the Likud government, you know they really put a lot of investment out there. Lots of people moved out there for purely economic reasons. Some land would be expropriated for a settlement by the government and the military would fence it, the Jewish National fund would pay for the bulldozers and the infrastructure, the housing was subsidized, the water and electricity rates were lower than Israel proper. So a guy could get 3 times as much house for the same money. But then again you also had the ideological characters and people forget, perhaps, but for the most part the settlers in North Sinai who as you recall had to be moved out as part of the treaty with Egypt, most of those real settlers took compensation from the Israeli government for about 300,000 some dollars per family and left. It was the hard line ideological settler,, who had then moved from the West Bank, particularly from Hebron's Kiryat Arba, moved into those settlements. Those are the ones you saw on TV in the Spring of '82. They had to bring them out, water cannons, they were threatening suicide. Those were not for the most part the settlers who had lived there the previous decade. They had already been bought out. These were the hard-line guys, the ideologues. Who moved down from the West Bank into the settlements, in the Yammit area. That was a full swing in the early 80's. It really got going after the Likud came to power in '77. So there were settlements going and there were increasing numbers of these very vocal folk. And you were getting these very vocal folk from Brooklyn who were bringing in a lot of money. And in traditional American social and political activism they were really rocking the local boats. They were always trying to get me into a settlement. Claiming that they were on the West Bank and the Consulate General had to provide services to Americans in the West Bank and why wouldn't I show up at the settlements. I would send my vice-consul out there and sure enough there they had a TV camera crew it was a setup to get recognition for the settlement. You know, it's a silly game but that's part of things.

Q: But then you had to watch it.

CLUVERIUS: At the same time it was a legitimate claim to the services. So I just sent the most junior vice-consul out there, renew passports or whatever needed doing.

Q: The settlers, were they, the ones from America? Were they keeping their American passports tucked in the back pants pocket or not?

CLUVERIUS: For the most part yes, you had Levinger, who was one of the founders of the settlements in Hebron. His wife had been an American but gave up her citizenship. While I was Consul General we served Meir Kahane with his loss of citizenship papers. Which I think ultimately was overturned at the court anyway. Because, the way the law is written, it's almost impossible to deny anyone citizenship anymore. You have to prove intent. And as any lawyer will tell you, intent is almost impossible to prove. But it was kind of fun to send the notification of loss of citizenship over to Kahane's house.

Q: He was the head of the Jewish Defense League. What was your impression of the settlers? Were there constant confrontations with the Palestinians?

CLUVERIUS: There were some. And it was growing because their numbers and their aggressiveness in the streets were growing- People were looking for a little bit of trouble I think. Of course Levinger had served 5 months for killing a guy in the streets of Hebron, a Palestinian. And you had more and more of that. And of course it was that summer, I think '83 or '84, but in '81 there were attempts on the lives of 3 or 4 prominent Palestinian mayors done by some underground Jewish group. And they finally broke into it and arrested these folk, I think it may have been '84 or '85 when they broke the case. But it took them maybe 3 or 4 years. In the Spring of '84, a group, thank God, was caught preparing to blow up the Dome of the Rock mosque on the temple mount. And they were caught fortuitously because the Muslim mosque guards are not armed, It was a rainy, cold spring night and they heard the noise and saw these guys coming up the ladders with satchels of grenades and explosives and all of this. But nearby was an Israeli unit that would not normally have been there. They were preparing to do a sweep of the temple mount the next morning because I think it was the German Chancellor who was visiting. So it was just fortuitous that these guys were caught. But so, yes, all of this was happening, you had the Gush Emunim which were shall we say ideologically motivated but not to the violent extremes of the Kahana movements. These guys were dangerous and the Israelis were very nervous about it. But they had a very hard time penetrating these groups and I think they still do. Because, one, they didn't take them seriously enough to begin with and, two, it's all done by face-to-face contact. It's hard to infiltrate small dedicated movements where everybody is known to everybody else.

Q: You were mentioning the shooting at the University. What happened there?

CLUVERIUS: That was the summer of '83.

Q: How did the Israelis respond to the shooting? What happened to the people who did the shooting?

CLUVERIUS: I'm trying to remember, I cannot. You'll have to look in the newspapers, I think. Whether they caught anybody for that, or not, I just don't recall on that particular event.

Q: It strikes me. You say that Levinger killed somebody in the street and he got 5 months?

CLUVERIUS: Something like that. A reduced sentence for manslaughter or something.

Q: I would think that at a certain point it would be very difficult for an American who is not ideologically in any camp, the Palestinian camp, the Israeli camp, the American-Jewish camp or something. To be sitting there watching a group of settlers, we're talking about these Israeli settlers who are coming in armed, who seem to be treated very leniently. Who are able to use armed force and all against the Palestinians. Because every time something happens, it's still going on even today, it always seems that if anything happens in Israel, it ends up a bunch of Palestinians including women and children getting killed. I would think that if the Jews are caught who have done this, I mean they get 5 months or something. I would think that this would buildup a feeling of outrage after a while. It would be very difficult.

CLUVERIUS: It was rather disgusting as these guys would get caught on the Israeli side, the Jewish side. And even if they got a pretty stiff sentence they would get a presidential pardon down the road somewhere. And of course some of them were American citizens who would go on trial. We would have a Vice-Consul go attend the trial. And of course it was like a circus and these guys showing open contempt for the court and taking their sentences as a badge of honor. And then being treated basically as good boys gone wrong and first they would get weekends off to spend with their family and then they'd get a presidential pardon. While for exactly the same offense a Palestinian might be doing 18 years. Now in the wake of this Hebron massacre thing, it comes out--Oh my God, there's been 2 laws. I mean that's just the funniest thing you've ever seen. Of course there's been 2 laws and 2 applications of the same law or whatever you want to call it. Obviously people were treated differently under different circumstances.

Q: Could you explain, we're talking in 1994, could you just explain for the record what the Hebron massacre was?

CLUVERIUS: The most recent one? Harold Goldstein one of the very ideologically motivated settlers probably part of the Kach movement, going into the mosque in Hebron which is a divided building, because it's the also the tomb of the patriarchs and it's very important, to the Jews and the Christians as well. And just during Ramadan on a Friday shooting up 7 clips of ammunition from a Galil assault rifle and killing dozens, 30 people or more, and 60 or 70 wounded. Before the crowd managed to kill him. And that has put a spotlight on both the militant settlers and the Israeli attitude and treatment of Palestinians vis-à-vis their attitudes and treatments towards the Jews.

Q: I assume that you were reporting it and others were reporting it, there have been 2 laws and 2 ways of looking at it. It took something like this in 1994 for it to at least reach the headline.

CLUVERIUS: I think some of it came out during those first months of the Intifada which broke out in about December '87. In the first 3 or 4 months you had enormous amount of TV time and headline time devoted to what was happening. Which was basically the young people of the streets in Gaza and the West Bank taking on the Israelis with stones. So there was a lot of dramatic stuff there. We're going to break their bones kinds of things from Rabin who was Defense Minister and there was some extremely damaging footage for Israel's image. You know, heavily armed soldiers beating the bejesus out of some 15 year old. So this isn't the first time, this most recent event. It tends to be cyclical. It comes and goes and its all over the papers and CNN and then nothing happens. It goes back to being a fact which is no longer a public fact. And there's lot of facts out there that aren't public facts.

Q: Did all of this have an effect not only on you but on 'your officers that you have to work, on it? It's a difficult thing to be in the country, of what is considered to be a very close friend of the United States where you feel that, you know, tremendous injustice is being done or being misrepresented. I mean how did this affect you?

CLUVERIUS: I think it affects you. It's saddening, and occasionally it's maddening that on some occasions it's very difficult to get the attention. And of course at that time between the Likud and the Reagan administration there was a close ideological match, so to speak, which I think was nonsense. But it was played up very simplistically in conservative circles here. Which was--Oh, the Israelis now have a conservative government so they must be ideologically closer to us than that Labor Party bunch they've had for years. Which was nonsense. But the Israelis were smart and they played it up to their advantage as they played up the relationship with the religious fundamentalists in this country. They got a lot of support there.

Q: We're talking about the religious fundamentalists, the religious right of the Christians, the Baptists and other groups of this nature.

CLUVERIUS: Yeah, there was certainly an alliance there of that kind. I think it was rather nonsense. Then of course you had the other propaganda line or whatever it was called, the strategic asset. That Israel was a strategic asset in the Middle East of the United States. And that was played up by a lot of Israeli politicians. And was welcomed in the Reagan administration, I think. That this was a strategic asset. That made a lot of Israelis very nervous because a lot of them were thoughtful Israelis, shall we say, who understood that the real relationship between the United States and Israel is founded on something more profound than "strategic assets", which can be a passing phenomenon.

Q: How did you deal with Junior Officers? By the time you reach the rank you had you take a more world weary point of view. You understand political realities and all of this but Junior Officers come in with piss in vinegar and they are learning it's a pretty awful world out there, no matter where you are. And they take causes much more to heart than we do. Maybe they're right. But anyway, you must have had a problem, not a problem, but it was a challenge to you with your Junior Officers.

CLUVERIUS: Not really so much a challenge. If there had been a great deal of, shall we say naive idealism, amongst young folk. I think it disappeared after a while. These Junior Officers I was dealing with anyway, had their own cynical experiences and views. You know, the Vietnam thing and all of that. They already knew about a world in which all of justice is not done. Even when many people are screaming out that the emperor has no clothes, the emperor may still continue on. So I didn't see that as a problem. As a general sense what you would occasionally get was a member of the staff would get totally outraged at something that was going on. Some specific kind of injustice or wrong being done. And really want to make a huge issue out of it. You might have to sit down and say--Look, this one, you're right, but I don't see the backing for it, politically, to fix it. And that might occasionally entail a serious discussion with the Embassy in Tel Aviv. Saying that you guys have more clout and this one really is a outrageous. Such as a denial of consular access to an American citizen or something like that. Cause we did have American-Palestinians out there as well as Jewish settlers from Brooklyn. Events of specific outrage, yeah. And yes, perhaps the younger people would feel that more keenly than those of us who had seen more of it.

Q: Let's say you get a case where a Palestinian-American, the Israeli won't let you have access. This is always the great cause in consular business. This is where you really get on your high horse and wave the flag. Did you have to get the Embassy support?

CLUVERIUS: Well, the Consulate couldn't deal directly with the government of Israel, we could deal with other kinds of authorities out there. But then you don't have a problem because the Ambassador would jump on them and the Embassy would jump on them and say, "Get off, this is unacceptable." And it usually got fixed pretty quickly.

Q: What was your impression of the Israeli army? I'm asking this because the image of the Israeli army in the United States, maybe it's diminished somewhat. But that this is a very well oiled-machine, very efficient, knows what it's doing and yet when you look at it closely you have the feeling that here are the soldiers who are quite willing to fire. Almost as though they're treating the Palestinians like a subspecies or something like that. Did you have any feel for this looking at it on the ground?

CLUVERIUS: I think there's been a trend in the Israeli military that immediately after they took these territories in the '67 war under Moshe Dayan's both practical and philosophical direction, they put very good people out there. Some of their best Lieutenant-Colonels and Brigadiers who would be in charge, who understood that they were going to have to rule these people for a while. They wanted to do so in a way that would not ultimately damage the possibilities of making peace with them. They were very careful about confiscations, the settlement issue didn't start in full swing at that time. There was pretty good quality out there. And there was also close direction from the top. There was in the Labor Party in the late '60's quite a dispute, a philosophical dispute. Whether they should increase the number of work permits in Israel for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. That this might be socially damaging to Israel. To have these people come and be the drawers of water and the hewers of wood. That argument was basically won by the pragmatists led by Dayan. He said, I don't care about your

philosophical argument. I've got these people in Gaza, they have to work. Otherwise, we're going to have a hell of a mess. So the pragmatists won that one. And of course by the time of the Intifada in late '87, you had about 100,000 Arabs a day working in Israel. Gradually when the Likud government came into power, a decade after the '67 war, in '77, they had quite a different view since they had no intention of ever giving up that land. So you're going to deal with the people quite differently. And they increased the settlement budget. Even though ultimately as Abba Eban called it, it was a failed enterprise; the settlement effort, but nevertheless it was a different attitude. And there was also a different attitude within the military. Gradually there had been, you know people don't like to go places where the job isn't career enhancing. And after the first 6 or 7 years, I don't think West Bank, Gaza assignments were career enhancing at all. And they were at first. The military government in Gaza in the late '60's, right after '67, was Mota Gur, who is now the Deputy Defense Minister, and he was very good at it as I recall. Because I covered Gaza from the Embassy then. But gradually the quality went down. The attitude toward the folk hardened or became less-sensitive, however you want to call it. Plus, you had the ideological drive of a right-wing government that really had no intention of doing anything except arranging things so that it would be impossible to give up those territories. Which they didn't succeed in doing. But they made a hell of a lot of trouble in between. You began to get little snippets of things in the newspapers. That so-and-so had been arrested for his activities while he was the junior military governor in Jenin, or one of the smaller towns. You know, the occupation began to corrupt. On the basis of the old saying, when you have absolute power it's corrupting and they had absolute power. And there began to be more and more tales of bribery by the Palestinians and of course this was terribly cancer like for the Israeli military. When a Palestinian bribed some captain or major in order to get his zoning permission to add a room to his house, he got his house and also had committed a nationalist act of which he could be proud. But of course the Israeli was corrupted. And you also got some Israelis increasingly, with very little publicity, refusing to serve in the territories. Very often this was handled as just: Okay, next time you come on reserve duty, we'll send you to the Negev or something. But on some occasions people were punished for refusing to go, didn't want to serve in the West Bank, did not want to go out there and break heads. So all of this occupation really was corrupting and it certainly did affect the army. It affected their morale, it affected their attitude towards these people. Because, after all, these people out in the streets throwing stones at them were about the same age. They're teenagers. And for awhile of course the really nasty work wasn't done by the army anyway. It was done by the border guards. So the army is kind of there as the background as the ultimate source of power and authority but didn't have to do much. Until the Intifada started in '87, the border guards did most of the dirty work.

Q: Were the border guards a different breed at that?

CLUVERIUS: Yes, the border guards are often, they had a lot of Druze. You see, the Druze do serve in the Israeli army. The Israeli-Arabs do not, but the Druze do. There are Druze and they're tough and they don't like the Arabs very much. They're pretty tough and they are different units. They're not regular army units, they're border guards and they are the ones that chase the infiltrators in the Jordan Valley on those rare occasions

when they come across and things like that. They're the trackers and they do indeed guard the border in a military sense but with a kind of police function. But they're the ones that they used if there were some trouble in the refugee camp. They were the ones who'd go charging in there, break a few heads and see what was going on. But once it became very wide-spread, this kind of uprising, then the army had to get into it, including reservists. Because the border guards were not that large an organization so the army had to get into it. Some of them didn't like it.

Q: Well is there anything else we should cover? On Jerusalem, you think?

CLUVERIUS: I don't think so.

Q: On this thing, by the way when you get the draft, you can add or expand anyway you want.

CLUVERIUS: Of course some of that has been used though.

Q: So let's move on. Back there in 1985, what did you do?

CLUVERIUS: In the summer of '85 there was of course, following the expulsion, you know, of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June '82, and of course the completion of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty was the end of April '82. And then there was the commitment to the Egyptians, to the other Arabs, that we would then make a big push to implement the other half of Camp David. Which was the West Bank thing. And of course the Likud government had no intention of giving anymore. But it was felt then, of course the Israelis invaded Lebanon, and that delayed the whole thing, the Fall of '82. Alexander Haig was fired or quit, whatever. George Shultz took over feeling he had to make a real push on this Lebanon thing. I think there was a debate, a conflict so to speak, in the Fall of '82. Remember there was a Reagan Initiative that September 1st of '82 which Ned Walker, Bill Kirby and I wrote. Charlie Hill, who put the finishing touches on it as the wordsmith. And then we were going to push forward with the Middle East process. At that point there was a real policy disagreement, basically. On the one hand there were those who said: Fine, we'll push the Lebanon angle. and bring Lebanon to be the second country to have peace with Israel. But I was not in that group. I was in another group which were the losers, basically, that said: Forget Lebanon, push the main peace process elements of the Reagan Initiative and let Lebanon come along, wagging its tail behind it. Don't make Lebanon the center piece. One, they can't make the Treaty, there's no government there, they can't make the Treaty, Syria won't let them. But this line lost really. It was the Lebanon push: Get the PLO out, make a deal, And it's described best I think in Tom Friedman's book. But it was a policy difference. I think the late Phil Habib didn't so us a service there. Phil had such prestige in this town. If he said he could bring the Syrians and the Lebanese towards a Lebanon-Israel Treaty, people tended to believe him. Why not. I mean Phil had enormous prestige, a wonderful man. But he didn't really come to the Middle East until he had been Under Secretary of Political Affairs. And he really thought he could deliver. He was also personally angry at the Israelis and the

Syrians because he had worked the deal in '81. So anyway, by the time '83 came around I had been back in Washington since '78.

Q: *Well '85.*

CLUVERIUS: Yeah. But that was the background to Shultz's push to try to get a Peace Process going. Dick Murphy was Assistant Secretary, Dick was spending an awful lot of time on this and it wasn't going very well. Because we couldn't talk to the PLO and you couldn't do all these other things. And of course George Shultz had much bigger fish to fry vis-à-vis the Soviets and other major issues. But he thought Murphy was spending too much time on this. So they asked me if I would leave the job in Jerusalem early, because it was a 3 year assignment and I'd been there just a little over 2, and stay in the area and become the roving Peace Process guy. And with some doubts about it, I said sure I'd do it, because when the boss says you do it, you're a pro, you do it. But I made a deal I had to stay in Israel as a base, I had to talk to the Jordanians and some other people because my daughter was in high school in Israel, in the American school in Tel Aviv. And I didn't want to leave there and I also didn't want to leave the house in Jerusalem until January of '86. But actually I started this roving business based in Israel in the Fall of '85, that Labor Day weekend. I was back here in Washington, King Hussein of Jordan was here, that was when we first tried to get something going. That was basically what I did until the summer of '88. You know the Intifada started and we had various initiatives some of which were secret at the time and now are not. It was basically trying to see if there was any way to get the Peace Process going. It was very difficult of course because you had a Likud government. Then Shamir became Prime Minister, Arens is Defense Minister, these are people who either voted against or abstained on the Treaty of Peace with Egypt. You know they had not a lot of interest in this. Shultz I think gave it his very conscientious good shot but he didn't like the Middle East issues. He thought people were extremely tricky to deal with. He thought a lot of them were dishonest and lied to him on one occasion or another. It didn't have all the nice cleanness of going to an ASEAN meeting in Singapore where the issues are economic and the people are knowledgeable and straight forward. Middle East was a mess. And at the same time he had to deal with the Conservatives back here, people who never thought he was on the "Reagan team" and there was all this sniping. And of course his big issue in life as the Secretary of State had to be relations with the Soviets. Where I think he did win. I found that part of his own book very interesting. So I knew I was working for a guy who's conscience was in trying to make something happen in the Middle East but his political judgment probably was that it wasn't really do-able but you've got to keep trying. And of course then I was the guy who had to run around and keep trying. And it was a little frustrating.

Q: *Let's talk a bit about, I suppose maybe try this country by country, I mean maybe that might be the easiest way to do this. What would you do in Egypt? They were already in the Peace Process, did they have a role in a way?*

CLUVERIUS: They had a role in a big way. They were trying to bring the PLO into the orbit of respectability, shall we say, by trying to push the PLO to meet the American conditions for dialogue. They were also trying to get the Americans to manipulate those

conditions so they'd be easier to meet. And of course all of this finally did happen in the Fall of '88. And the Egyptians worked very hard in the Peace Process. Not only out of conscience, which I think is genuine, but also out of a desire not to be so goddamn isolated in the Arab world. Even though the Arab League headquarters had been taken out of Cairo and there was no money flowing through from the Gulf Banks and the Gulf fees and all of this. So they had a pragmatic, and political and diplomatic and moral reason to push the Peace Process. To work with the Jordanians and all of this. And of course we had that strange Israeli government that came along in the elections of '84. The rotational government that Peres would serve as Prime Minister for 2 years and then Shamir would be Prime Minister for 2 years. And meanwhile Rabin would remain as Defense Minister throughout. And that was very strange. And as that came to an end, Rabin and Peres worked very hard trying to get something going. The problem was that on the Arab side, my sense of it was, the Jordanians and the Palestinians didn't think that Peres could deliver. They were a little nervous about him, some Israelis, that he's a little flaky. I don't personally think that's true. I happen to be an admirer of Shimon's. It's just that the pieces weren't there. And Shultz would come out and we would run around and then he would go away and I would run around and try to make something work. As it came closer to Peres having to give up the Premiership of his government, which was really a national-unity government, which was a national paralysis government actually, but when he had to give up the Premier-,hip of course he would lose a lot of the levers available to him that he was trying to pull to get something going in the Peace Process. I think the Americans, including me, I suppose, and George Shultz certainly, we thought we had to get something going so that Peres can put something in place that the other guy can't tear down. And we got a little frantic about it, trying to get something going and yet refusing to agree to what the Arab side said they had to have. And this is where I did have problems with George Shultz and his immediate staff. He said no international conference because the Israelis didn't want it. But in fact the only way you were going to get these folks under one roof was under the label of an international conference which had the UN flag, at least, standing in the corner. Because the Israelis didn't want it, Shultz wouldn't push for it and I kept writing messages that there is no way forward except through an international conference. And I would get phone calls saying what are you smoking out there'? The Secretary doesn't want one. And I would say, I don't care, I'm supposed to tell him what I think would work and what I think won't work. But Shultz was always very nice about that but in fact that was what was needed. Shultz would keep concentrating on what can we do to help Peres. A public meeting between Peres and the King of Jordan. The King wasn't having any part of it. He kept saying: Look I told you, I'll meet Peres or whoever under the UN flag in an international conference. Which of course is what eventually happened in Madrid in '91 but that could have happened in '86 or '87, but it didn't.

Q: What was the opposition about for the international meeting in Israel and why were we buying into this? I mean why were the Israelis opposed to having an international meeting and why did we?

CLUVERIUS: Because the Israelis always want direct discussions. They thought the international conference would dilute that, it would dilute the value to them of dealing

directly with their neighbors and their enemies. On the other hand, it would provide a forum in which they could be ganged up on by the world community . In fact that was BS most of it. In fact they didn't want a conference, because they didn't want to talk about these issues. The Likud didn't want to talk about these issues. The status quo with them in control of the occupied territories was far more appealing to them than any possible alternative to the status quo.

Q: So the key player didn't want to play?

CLUVERIUS: And there were endless excuses why they didn't want to play this game or that game and you could reshuffle the deck but in fact he didn't want to play cards. So the constant effort to find a card that might appeal to him was doomed from the outset, basically. Because he'd always have a reason for saying: No, no I can't do that because; Oh I'm still interested in the Peace Process but I can't do this, I can't do this, I can't do anything. So it was frustrating. But it's also a useful part of diplomacy. With something as sensitive and important as that, you have to keep trying. And even though you may have a private judgment that it isn't going to go anywhere, you have to keep it alive.

Q: You keep it alive, I mean the basic thing that sort of sustained you, would it be I, obviously you're doing your job. But the other one did you have the feeling that, okay, the players that are in place right now, I mean the Likud and all, things change. I mean you never know what's going to happen. And you've got to keep the apparatus alive because who knows what's going to happen.

CLUVERIUS: That's right and also I think it was worth doing. It was worth doing for the United States, it was worth doing on, shall we say, humanitarian and ethical grounds to end that miserable conflict. And things do change. You had rising stars in the Likud who had quite a different view in some of these things. Like David Levy who once he became Foreign Minister did play a subtly different role. So people do change, Begin disappeared from the scene, along comes Shamir. People do change. And you also have to know it as a professional in diplomacy. Sometimes going through the motions is necessary even though you know that you're probably not going to get anywhere on this particular round of going through the motions. You might have to do it a year or two in order to refine the issues, keep things alive, clear a little underbrush but no breakthrough is to the cards. But you still have to keep the ground reasonably well tilled until something new can spring up.

Q: How would you till the ground? I mean what would you do personally?

CLUVERIUS: Well there were a couple of occasions when we were making a real effort through the Jordanians or the Egyptians to having the PLO meet our conditions. And so it was, under law, that I couldn't meet directly with the PLO. You'd have to work through various intermediaries such as the government of Jordan. And so you would try that for an intensive 2 or 3 week period until you realized that wasn't going to happen. Because also Arafat was in a very weak position following the expulsion of the PLO from Beirut in '82. He was searching for a role and while someone is searching for a role he's not in a

position to make great concessions. Because he probably couldn't deliver on them anyway. But you nevertheless kept pushing along.

Q: Who would you meet with say in Jordan or in Egypt?

CLUVERIUS: In Jordan usually with the Prime Minister who was then Zaid Rifai, occasionally with the King. The King in conference with the Foreign Minister and these guys. In Egypt usually with the Foreign Minister, Ismat Abdul Majid was the Foreign Minister through that period. And occasionally we do a stop in Damascus to keep the Syrians at least informed of what we were doing. Not that they agreed with any of it. And I'd have to go down to the Gulf to see the Saudi Foreign Minister occasionally, just to make sure they understood where we were coming from, what we were trying to do. Again you keep the ground tilled because something of interest might spring up even though you're not really expecting it.

Q: Did you have any problems with Congress? Would they get into the act at all, the staff or the members of Congress, about what you were trying to do?

CLUVERIUS: No. The tendency is to get involved when things are very high visibility. This was a period of very low visibility, And I think as far as that Administration went, '86 would have been the end of it.

Q: That was the end of Peres.

CLUVERIUS: Yeah, and that might have been the end of it for the United States in any serious way except for the Intifada breaking out in the Fall of '87. In which George Shultz, I think he felt he really owed it, with all of this miserable stuff happening, he really owed it to himself, to everything and to the United States to make another effort at it. And he did but it was election year and it just wasn't going to go.

DOUGLAS R. KEENE
Deputy Principal Officer
Jerusalem (1983-1986)

Mr. Keene was born and raised in Massachusetts and graduated from Colby College. He joined the Foreign Service in 1967, serving first in Viet Nam and subsequently at Middle East posts including Jerusalem, Karachi, Cairo, as well as Amman and Muscat, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. His Washington assignments also concerned primarily Middle Eastern matters, including the Arab-Israel problem. Mr. Keene was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: All right. Now you were there in 1983. How would you describe the situation in Jerusalem in 1983, when you got there?

KEENE: A consulate that was very heavily focused on supporting the Habib mission, on trying to deal with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. That was Habib-Draper.

Q: That was Morris Draper and Philip Habib. Morris Draper...

KEENE: Who visited frequently, going shuttling around the area, trying to work out a deal after Sabra and Shatila to get the Israelis out of Beirut. And because the UN also had their regional headquarters at Government House in Jerusalem, and the involvement of UNIFIL (UN Interim Force in Lebanon) and UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization), and various other organizations, as well as the Israeli government—they came to Jerusalem very frequently.

Q: How would you describe sort of the attitude of the officers—American officers—you were dealing with about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon?

KEENE: Well, I remember one of them saying something to the effect that this was different from the Palestinians: the Lebanese shot back, and that sort of stunned the Israelis, because it really wasn't the Lebanese government—it was various factions, like Hezbollah...and the Palestinians. They were there too. I think by and large everybody saw it—and certainly after the Sabra and Shatila massacres—as orchestrated as much by Sharon as anybody else, and they certainly had no enthusiasm for the Israeli invasion.

Q: Well, what was happening in the Con Gen Jerusalem's area responsibility—was it eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank?

KEENE: It was actually all of Jerusalem, which gave us an opportunity to enjoy a bit of a window into Israeli thinking as well as Palestinian: and that was one of the really great things about being there. It was sort of two for the price of one. Many days you could have lunch with an Israeli official and dinner with a Palestinian—the only place, really, where you could get both sides, and it was endlessly complex and fascinating.

Q: You were there from '83 until when?

KEENE: '86.

Q: What were the Palestinians—You didn't have Gaza, or did you?

KEENE: No, we didn't have Gaza. That was covered out of Tel Aviv, although we went down there frequently, because there were just natural connections.

Q: What were the Palestinians doing during this period of time? I mean looking back—a rather quiet time?

KEENE: Yes, in retrospect, yes. After the deal was struck to get the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) out of Lebanon, the focus shifted more to trying to restart the peace process. At that time, it sort of fell to the assistant secretary, Dick Murphy, to take the lead in that effort, so

we did a lot of work on that, too. That actually became our focus—trying to understand what was going on in the West Bank and what it might take to promote some sort of progress in the peace process.

Q: This is the period of time when you couldn't talk to the PLO?

KEENE: That's right. And the Israelis—official Israel--wouldn't talk to us either. We were officially confined to the protocol and consular sections of the Foreign Ministry. But in practice, there were quite a few contacts, socially.

Q: Was the mayor—Teddy

KEENE: Teddy Kollek, yes. We had contacts with the municipality. Teddy had a foreign policy advisor, an Arab affairs adviser, and a religious adviser, all became good friends.

Q: Kollek. He was the mayor at the time. He just died, just a few weeks ago. How was he viewed?

KEENE: Very favorably. He understood the situation and was tolerant, tried to promote the Arab sector as well as the Israeli sector. He tried to promote peace and harmony. He had an advisor for foreign affairs from the foreign ministry who sort of was our liaison point within the mayor's office, and he also had an advisor on Arab affairs and we dealt with him too. Teddy was a good guy; he liked a good cigar and a glass of scotch, and he was accessible.

Q: Right now—looking at The Washington Post yesterday, they had a long article about how the Israelis are gobbling pieces of Arab Jerusalem. What was the situation, let's say first in Jerusalem; were the Israelis being aggressive to grab things, were there settlement groups?

KEENE: This is the same old story that's been going on since '67, really. In those days, they were focusing more on building pretty major settlements surrounding Jerusalem, including what we would have called the West Bank, so as to make it very difficult to re-divide the city. And they were controlling—putting major settlements on the major roads and lines of communication. Building new roads. The same group that you read about in the Post the other day, the Ateret Cohanim, were active then, and they'd started that then--buying a few properties in the Old City (of Jerusalem) and occupying them.

Q: Well, what happened? At that time, were we calling the settlements illegal settlements?

KEENE: At that time we were, yes.

Q: So essentially, these were settlements in the Arab territory, is that right?

KEENE: Yes.

Q: Therefore they fell under your jurisdiction?

KEENE: Yes.

Q: Could you do anything with them? Did you go there?

KEENE: Oh yes, we did. In fact, we started that; the consulate hadn't done that previously. We started visiting settlements and trying to get to know the leadership of the settlement movement.

Q: What was your impression of the settlements at that time?

KEENE: Well, there really were two types: there were those that were ideologically motivated, hard line, right wingers, many of them American citizens; and then there were those who were attracted by the subsidized housing that made it cheaper than settling in Israel proper, and those settlers just sort of used them as a convenient place to live--bedroom communities, if you will.

Q: How about the American hard-liners? I speak as an old consular officer. People who fly flags of convenience overseas—these are generally people whose allegiance is with the country where they are located—they may be immigrants or not immigrants, but are people...they enjoy all the rights of being citizens of the host country until things get tough, and all of a sudden, they're Americans. Did you find that flag of convenience type thing?

KEENE: Yes, there was a lot of that, and a lot of dual nationals, and whatever worked that particular day...Almost everybody would keep their American citizenship--I think as a safety net if things really went south, they'd have a place to go. It was a funny kind of place. We did have the great pleasure of carrying out the Department's decision to lift the citizenship of Meir Kahane while we were there.

Q: He was the head of the Jewish Defense League

KEENE: Yes, among other kinds of...

Q: A very aggressive American-Jewish activist attacking the soviets, and all that.

KEENE: And always attacking the Arabs, too. That was the day of the Jewish Underground, when there were secret violent groups...very right-wing Israelis who were doing things such as putting anti-tank rockets into the side of civilian buses and bombs in the cars of the Arab mayors. They were terrorist groups, really.

Q: They killed...they blew the legs off some of those Arab mayors.

KEENE: Yes, they did.

Q: It's so difficult to lose his citizenship. How did they take away his citizenship?

KEENE: He became a member of the Knesset. You're not supposed to hold foreign office. That's how they got him. I know the minister of defense was an American citizen also, but when he became minister, he voluntarily surrendered his passport. There was a lot of that.

Q: What was the attitude of the Arab leadership? Did they treat you as a last hope or did they treat you as just a bunch of stooges of the Israelis, or what?

KEENE: I think they were ambivalent. They resented the American role, but what they tried to do, I guess, was to convince us of the righteousness of their cause, so that they might turn American policy around a little bit. It was just a place on both the Israeli and Palestinian side where people lived and breathed politics. And they both loved to talk, so you had no real troubles making contacts, getting information. You really got around and knew a lot of people.

Q: Did you go all over the West Bank?

KEENE: Yes, all over. Everyday.

Q: How did the Israeli occupying force treat you?

KEENE: It wasn't too bad. We weren't supposed to have too much contact with them, but occasionally we could make a few contacts inside what they called the civil administration, which was mostly the military administration. We were allowed to talk to some contacts who dealt with refugee affairs, the head of UNRWA (UN Relief and Workers Administration) we could deal with; we had some secret meetings with the head of the civil administration, and tried to do what we could to help out with individual issues and just broader issues of the way the military occupation acted. There were a lot of arbitrary arrests, lots of stories about mistreatment of prisoners, many of whom were Arab-American citizens, so we had the consular function on that side of the issue, too. We went into the jails, visiting these people, doing what we could. We were also allowed contact with Israeli MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) consular officials, religious ministry officials and informal contact with many others.

Q: What was your impression, and of the officers at the consulate general, of how Arab-Americans who were arrested were treated?

KEENE: By and large, they were not treated well. They were sometimes physically abused. There were actually quite a large number of them throughout the West Bank, and a lot of them ended up running afoul of the occupation, one way or another. There were actually whole villages which were almost all American citizens in it. We'd go visit them sometimes, and they'd be out there playing baseball. It was a surreal scene.

Q: You can understand Jewish-Americans who go to Israel for Zionist causes, but why would Arab-Americans go back to Palestine?

KEENE: Some because it was a lot easier to live on your social security check there than in the States, some for family reasons, but overall it was more emigration than there were people coming back. That was particularly true of the Christian Palestinians, whose numbers continue to this day to fall kind of dramatically. There aren't too many of them left.

Q: How did you find, let's say, Arab-Americans who ran afoul of Israelis? I assume you made

representation to Israeli authorities. In general, how did this work?

KEENE: Well, we could do it several different ways. Officially, it should have been to the consular department of the Foreign Ministry. It also happened during visits to jails. Raising our concerns also occurred during our more informal contacts with higher level officials.

Q: Did you find them responsive?

KEENE: Not very. We also had a channel through the embassy, the ambassador sometimes....

Q: Who was the ambassador?

KEENE: At first, Sam Lewis, and then Tom Pickering.

Q: How were the relations with the embassy?

KEENE: When I got there, they were pretty lousy...a lot of mutual suspicion, and, you know, clashing cables and things like that, but they improved. We had set up a system where we went to their country team meeting every week, and we had a couple of people designated as liaison. It got pretty good. I mean we were never going to see things perfectly eye-to-eye, but it wasn't bad.

Q: Well, did you find that particular junior officers who were assigned to Jerusalem, would take up, you might say, the cause of--because they were the ones who had seen the mistreated Palestinians and others--taking up the cause of the Palestinians, and in doing so became critical of the Israelis. Was this a problem for you?

KEENE: It could be, and in some cases...we did strive for a balance, and certainly it was easy to not like what you saw going on. But we had some very good junior officers. We had an AID program too, and one of them usually was designated as the point of contact for that. That was run through grants to NGO's (non-governmental organizations)—grants to NGO's. One of them who worked with me on this was a young Nick Burns.

Q: Undersecretary for Political Affairs. Number three in the State Department.

KEENE: Right.

Q: Within the, you might say, Israeli organizations, was there any particular group within this that you had to deal with that was particularly hostile, or was it just plain a mixed bag?

KEENE: There were definitely very right-wing groups that were very hostile. Not *so* much in the government, although certainly that strain of thought was present in the Likud and some of the other far right Israeli parties. And that was the time when Begin and then Shamir, the Likud was in power. It was hard to get much out of them.

Q: How about the Israeli religious community—I think about the Orthodox. Were they sort of off to one side of everything, or were they...how did you find them?

KEENE: Well, you had the ultra-orthodox, the Hassidics, that's one group; and then you have just sort of the right-wing orthodox, and shades in between to pretty totally secular. That's a big thing in Israeli society and remains so today; there are real splits between the very right-wing religious and the more secular westernized segment of society. It was kind of a... a lot of the real right-wingers—you might get to talk to them, but they didn't want to have a *lot* to do with you. We knew a lot of Israelis; we'd go to their homes for social affairs. You could talk to a pretty broad spectrum of people. And they have a lot of organizations, too... you had this group or that group that you go call on and talk to. We got to know a lot of former officials who were in academia who really knew---well-connected people—former generals, this, that and the other thing. We'd be up at Hebrew University all the time, talking with them, too. We got around.

Q: How did you find Hebrew University? Were they trying to work as a bridge with the Arab population, or were they really representative of the sort of straight Jewish side?

KEENE: No, I think that they were... Well, there were people up there that ran the spectrum, too, but on balance, I thought it was a pretty impressive organization. They had a lot of very impressive people working there who did try to understand what was going on in the Arab sector and in the Arab world. Some of them knew a great deal and were pretty well connected.

Q: Well, right now when we've over time seen places that can really start clashes in the various holy sites, particularly Muslim holy sites. During your time were there any particular problems there?

KEENE: Oh, yes. We had a big issue over the so-called Hasmonean tunnel, Israeli archeological digs near the Western Wall that provoked protests.

Q: What was that?

KEENE: It was an ancient tunnel they were trying to excavate, but it was right next to the wall, to the Haram Es-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary, and suspicions always run high when the Israelis do that that they're trying to make a territorial grab in what has been an area that Palestinians consider administered by the waqf, for the trust, the Islamic trust. So that went on for a long time, and we had stuff like that happen all the time—occasional riots after Friday prayers, occasional shutdowns of the Temple Mount. Always an issue, but that was typical of the whole area and wasn't just an Israeli-Arab thing; you also had all the Christian groups fighting among themselves over control of the various parts of the various holy places. It was a unique place, and you just really had to well... you got interested in it—not everybody would be, I guess, but you can get into the differences between the Greek Orthodox and the Russian Orthodox and the Ethiopian Orthodox and the Syrian Orthodox—all of those groups and their interaction. One that was very interesting was we had the white Russians and the red Russians, and Russia had no representation at that time, so they used the church members as their unofficial channel. So, it was interesting.

Q: First, let's talk about the American tourist, the strange sort of Christian tourist. Were they a problem or not?

KEENE: Generally not. I mean you're always going to have the stray citizen who gets in some kind of trouble, and you have to try to help them out--citizen services and things like that. But a lot of the Christian groups would come in fairly large, organized tour groups. They'd get on their bus and go around; we had a lot of Jewish-American groups came too, as tourists, or as part of their American-Jewish Congress sponsorship or something like that. They were generally not much trouble either. That wasn't a big issue. Well, you had the guy who thought he was the reincarnation of Jesus Christ; he'd get himself eventually in trouble. You know, the people who have psychiatric problems.

Q: Well, I went to the archives and did a--this was back in '84, so I was in the historian's office the year before I retired, and I did a paper on our consul in Jerusalem in the 1870s. The American Colony, for example, one of the cults at the time, where the leader of the Americans there...I can't think of his name--the family's still around, but he and the senior members--male members--absorbed the wives of some of the other members. I mean, there was a lot of that sort of hanky-panky going on, which often happens in cults. And then, again, we had one guy--he was earlier, who arrived, declared he was the consul, American consul, had never been approved, and then eventually converted to Judaism and disappeared into the woodwork. But the Turks accepted him as the American consul for awhile.

As a consular officer, how did you treat...I arrive in Jerusalem and decide I'm Jesus, and am wandering around declaring this and maybe putting out robes, or something

KEENE: We had a few.

Q: How did you deal with it?

KEENE: Well, it's pretty hard to deal with them until their actions become so bizarre that they trigger a reaction by the host government. Sometimes they'd go violent. I mean, they're just troubled people. If they got into some trouble, you tried to get them some help...either from their family or if they needed psychiatric help or repatriation...every situation on its own merits, I guess. We had a few.

Q: How about Congressional delegations; you must have been deluged with them.

KEENE: Absolutely. I think I had a count at one point. When I was there I think I met over 400 members one way or another.

Q: You know, this is such a political almost third rail, that I would think that ...I mean, every time that there is a presidential primary in New York state, all the candidates support moving our embassy to Jerusalem. Although we all know this is sort of a charade, I would think with politicians you couldn't talk about that.

KEENE: Well, some politicians know that, and some don't. It depends. It was usually a little different there, because we would usually split these CODELs with the embassy in Tel Aviv. They'd take them to go see the prime minister or whoever and then some of them wanted to

come and talk to a few members of the Palestinian leadership and see how things were. And some of them did it but weren't too interested in spending a lot of time doing it. So we would maybe get them only for a day, and we'd host a lunch or a dinner or take them around the West Bank to call on some of the mayors or tailor a program to what they were interested in. There were a lot of them.

Q: How did you find life there?

KEENE: I loved it. It was fascinating. It was before the *intifada* (Palestinian uprising); I didn't feel a lot of danger. I never knew, but we used to say they hated each other so much they'd sort of ignore us. That turned out to be pretty much true until later on.

Q: What about immigration: were you running a fairly large visa program?

KEENE: Yes, pretty large. We had two different buildings in those days--one in the west side and one in the east, and the consular section was in the east. We had lovely buildings—old, beautiful, historic landmark-type buildings. A lot of the Israelis didn't like that because they had to go to east Jerusalem to get their consular services. But it really wasn't deep into East Jerusalem; it's not very far from the American Colony, which in those days, at least, was one of the very few sort of neutral meeting places where both sides didn't mind going at the same time. So we could have stuff there and get away with promoting dialogue a little bit.

Q: Was there a fairly active USIA (United States Information Agency) program there?

KEENE: Yes—modest, but yes. We only had a single American officer.

Q: Who was that?

KEENE: Well, Bill Cavness at first and then his successor, David Good. But that was curious, too, because the embassy also had an office in Jerusalem, staffed by another USIA officer Arthur Green. So, you had that coordination problem that you had to work out, too.

Q: Well, did you feel that you spent an awful lot of the time vetting anything that anybody...every piece of paper that you put out, or letters, or announcements, or anything else, to make sure that you weren't setting off vibrations that would come back and haunt you by showing that you were either too pro-Arab or too pro-Israeli?

KEENE: Oh, yes, for sure. It got to be second nature after a while to find out where all the land mines are. But that was part of the fun...and all the diversity and different views and trying. I mean we consciously set out to try to improve relations with the embassy and the Jewish community and the Jewish-American organizations, and the consulate was generally hated by them and mostly "biased" and "anti-Israeli."

Q: Did you have problems of your officers being accused by newspapers in the halls of Congress as being pro-Arab and anti-Israeli?

KEENE: Yes, it happened. It wasn't too bad then. We got to work with the Arab-American groups, proactively helping them schedule appointments with our CODELs and things like that. Socializing with them, getting to know them. We got to know a lot of the Israeli press, too. That helped.

Q: How'd you find the press?

KEENE: Well, they have a right-wing press, but they have a lot of people who are pretty good.

Q: The Jerusalem Post. How is that?

KEENE: In those days it was liberal. Now it's right-wing. They had good, solid, English-speaking reporters—it was an English-language paper, and we got to know them well. That helped. They'd come to our receptions.

Q: How about the Hassidic community? They have big enclaves in New York...they used to have up in New Hampshire, too. They're a group apart.

KEENE: They're a group apart. There's a very big area in Jerusalem that's Hassidic, Mea Shearim. They are ultra-orthodox: no driving cars on Saturday, or anything like that, so if you tried to drive through that area, they'd throw stones at you. There were riots sometimes. There are some 90 separate Hassidic groups, and it's very hard to figure out all of them.

Q: Such as Lubavitcher. They consider that the messiah hasn't come yet and therefore the whole Zionist cause is a fraud.

KEENE: Yes. And there's another even more screwy group, Neturei Karta, who believe that the state of Israel is illegitimate, and they support the PLO. Really! When the PLO went to Madrid two or three Israelis of this sect went with them. And the leader of that group's an American, so he would bug us all the time. He was quite a character. He knew he was running a fraudulent operation, but...

Q: Did you feel under any particular threat, you or the consulate of bombing and other things like that?

KEENE: You know, not particularly. We had bomb threats and we had—that was the era when we were starting to tighten up on security and we had a major security upgrade program which caused us some little concern, because we were in an historic building and had to preserve that under Israeli law and we didn't want to put ugly concrete barriers on the sidewalk out front. Kollek didn't want them either, so we had to do some nice planters out there. But I didn't really—I mean we tried to be prudent, but it wasn't something that kept me up at night, no. We felt we had a pretty good network and knew a lot about what was going on. There was violence. I know one of my very good contacts was the mayor of Nablus, and he was assassinated by the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) while I was there.

Q: What was that group?

KEENE: Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine. It was one of the...they were splintered into five or six groups; that was one of the more radical ones. Anyway...and then we had the Jewish underground to worry about, and the mayors certainly did. There was violence, but it just didn't...we just didn't seem to be major targets.

Q: Well, you left there when?

KEENE: '86. I lived in east Jerusalem. Then we had people living in east Jerusalem; we had people living in Bethlehem.

Q: Where'd you live?

KEENE: In Lazaria, which in English is Bethany, Mount of Olives, near Lazarus' tomb.

Q: Who was the consul general after Cluverius?

KEENE: Well, we had...I started with Grove, then Cluverius, and then Draper.

MORRIS DRAPER
Consul General
Jerusalem (1986-1988)

Morris Draper was born in California in 1928 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 1952. An Arabic language officer, Mr. Draper served in a number of Middle East posts including Beirut, Baghdad, Jeddah, Ankara, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC. Mr. Draper was interviewed in 1991 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: After your tour with the Board of Examiners, you were assigned to Jerusalem as Consul General from 1986 to 1988. Could you explain the uniqueness of our representation in Jerusalem and what your responsibilities were?

DRAPER: Jerusalem is unusual in many different ways. From the American diplomatic aspect, it is unique because the US has never recognized the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. We have always maintained, going back to 1948, that its final status should be decided within the context of a peace treaty. Consequently, we have a mission in Jerusalem which is not subordinate to our Embassy in Tel Aviv and which is only nominally recognized by the Israeli. There is no real parallel except maybe for Honk Kong which reports directly back to Washington rather than London or Beijing. The Mission in Jerusalem reports directly to Washington, although in the real world, any Consul General would be stupid to ignore the American Ambassador in Tel Aviv. There has to be close coordination. This scheme of representation gives the United States considerable leeway in that the Consul General has relationships of sorts with the Israeli authorities--very tenuous with the Defense Ministry--but satisfactory with the Foreign Ministry

and others. At the same time, the people in the occupied territories see the C.G. staff as officials they can talk to and who might be potential intermediaries, as protectors, as people who follow human rights policies. There are many American citizens in the West Bank and Gaza; they see the American passport as an entry into a better life. Our consular staff is overwhelmed all the time by the Palestinians seeing entry into the United States to work, to study--there are an enormous number of students who apply for study visas. Then there are a vast number of Israelis who want to visit the United States; there is a very sizeable group of ultra-religious, ultra-conservatives Jews who came originally from Eastern United States--Brooklyn, New Jersey, etc--who settled in Jerusalem, but maintain their American citizenship; some of them at least do not recognize the secular State of Israel and do not want to acknowledge its existence by becoming one of its citizens. There is a growing population in Israel and in Jerusalem so that you can see on any given day in the consular section a handful of American tourists in polyester and shorts and a vast number of Palestinians dressed in everything from business suits to tribal costumes and Israelis wearing their traditional costumes--fur hats, etc--with full beards with lots of children. It is tough duty; we reject many Palestinian visa applications if we suspect that the visitors might become permanent residents in the US. It is also a painful process for Israelis who are accustomed, after having spent two or three years in the army, to travel around the world for a year before they return to their jobs or schools; we have to turn down some applicants who are suspected of seeking an excuse to go to the United States to get their "green card" or otherwise stay in the US beyond the visa time limitation. We have to observe our laws and consular regulations. This leads to considerable friction and a lot of pressure on the part of powerful people--politicians, educators, etc. It is a human problem.

While I was in Jerusalem, I spent vast energies in promoting more contacts between Israelis and Arabs, particularly those who were politically acute who had been unwilling to talk to each other over the years. I held a number of quasi-secret meetings--lunch or dinners at my house, where people could come inconspicuously to meet others. One of the big problems is that so many Israelis and Arabs have never had such things as a sensible conversation with each other. There was always a great divide. When Israel first occupied the territories in 1967, the Israelis walked and marched and were bussed through the territories, but gradually, as the hostilities of the Arab population increased, fewer and fewer Israelis visited the territories. In 1986, when I arrived, I found that in fact the "Green Line" had been reestablished. Of course a lot of people still went into Israel and the territories, but it was very common to find Israelis who had never talked to an Arab in their lives and vice-versa. So I was trying to introduce and encourage many of the Palestinian nationalists to meet with certain Israelis, and not just the peaceniks. I encouraged the Palestinian militant to talk to the Israeli militants at my house or in other places. My success was uneven, to put it mildly, but at least there was a process. I made it a habit that all my social functions at my house would have a mixed Arab-Israeli guest list as much as possible, trying to find a concept that might be unifying. I remember we had an American ballet company, we had guest conductors and sometimes we could get Israelis and Arabs together in that kind of setting which was non-political and non-threatening. We couldn't do it in other ways. The Fourth of July party always had a mixed group from all sectors. Some people refused to come because they didn't want to talk to other groups. Particularly in 1986, we had a lot of interesting episodes. I spent a lot of time on this "exchange" program and there were some fruitful outcomes. It didn't always work well; in one case, two strong Palestinian Liberation Organization supporters carried on talks with a junior member of the Beirut branch of the Likud coalition, which was in power at

the time. They came out with a manifesto of sorts which was quite moderate and pragmatic. Likud conservatives spanked the young politician for having that conversation, not to mention co-authoring a manifesto with Arabs. Then there were other such events.

There were other problems. The Palestinians can be pretty exasperating. As Abba Eban, the former Israeli Foreign Minister said one time, the Palestinians never lose an opportunity to lose an opportunity. It was very much rolling half up the hill, only to roll all the way to the bottom. Even my most pragmatic friends with whom I discussed the problem as recently as this past February knew that the Palestinian support of the Iraqis after their invasion of Kuwait, but the Palestinian "main-stream" including the most conservative and the most pragmatic, tended to see Saddam Hussein in a light which differed from that of the rest of the world. They are so frustrated.

We did some things for them in the early '80s. We had a modest economic assistance program which was doing a lot of good work, including then establishment of an Arab owned bank in the territories, which was an essential ingredient. Few Americans, even including officials, recognize the economic death-grip around the territories, particularly in Gaza. These people are doubly frustrated because they can't sell what they produce and they can't farm what they want. These restriction exists sometimes for practical reasons, such as the shortage of water, but people who grow vegetables, fruits, melons, nuts on the West Bank could have found a market in Jordan and in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, but were constrained not only by Israeli regulations, but also by Arab indifference and Arab road blocks or those set up by their competitors. A West Bank truck, loaded with fresh grapes, would cross, after paying an enormous fee to the Israelis, the River Jordan to Amman only to find that the farmers and businessmen there would see to it that the truck stayed in customs for three or four days until the fruit had rotted. It was a continuous series of frustrations for the Palestinians in the territories. The Israelis would not let them compete and in fact gained considerable revenue from the taxes on the trade that the Palestinians conducted. But it was a "Catch 22" arrangement and some of our assistance programs were designed to overcome this. We introduced new animal husbandry techniques, better irrigation facilities, better sanitation, better medical facilities, etc. But the day to day life of people who were subjected to these constant economic and social frustrations and who had to deal with the Israeli bureaucracy which is unbelievable was just a major burden.

Q: What causes the Israeli bureaucratic problem?

DRAPER: I don't know why the bureaucracy is so complicated in Israel. It parallels the French bureaucracy, but the French at least have learned over centuries how to deal with it. But Israel, for example, it might take as long as six months to obtain a driver's license. The applicant has to pass a series of examinations; he has to take required courses by a fly-by-night outfit in some cases; and it is accompanied by implicit, if not explicit, bribery to facilitate the process. It is very painful. In many countries of the world it is difficult to get such things as telephones because of the shortage of equipment or technicians or other logistical problems. But in Israel, many of the obstacles are institutionalized. From a social point of view, one of the major problems is the extensive housing development, but the inability to complete a house in a reasonable period of time. Once all the licenses and approvals are obtained, it may take two and half years to build a house, which might take six months in the US. A house in the US can go up in two or three

months with landscaping--and it has to be done that quickly if the builder is not to lose his financial shirt. In Israel I have seen homes that were unfinished after two years. Of course, there are different styles and materials, but that doesn't really explain the gap. It is a very serious problem. It means that, just as in the Soviet Union, young people who want to get married have to live with his or her parents in a small apartment, with all the complications that this arrangement generates. It is a serious social problem. When people don't get married when they are young, there are fewer children and that is a concern to the state.

There are a lot of problems of this kind. When the average Israeli needs six months to get a driver's license, imagine how long it takes a Palestinian who in addition to everything else has to undergo the scrutiny of the police and security authorities who could be very arbitrary if they suspect the applicant of being a secret member of the PLO or sympathizer or a person who could communicate with the PLO; they might just refuse to grant permission for a driver's license altogether. It is not the harsh part of the occupation--the night visits and some of the humiliation which are visited on the Palestinians (although those are very important to the Arab psyche)--but the day-to-day living experiences can be pretty bad for people unfamiliar with that kind of bureaucracy and its complications. The Arab businessman who needs capital has to go through a lot of complications and has to borrow money from Israeli institutions at very high rates of interest. It is very difficult.

Q: You mentioned humiliations visited on the Palestinians. What kind were they?

DRAPER: Just going through check-points all the time; seeing Israeli troops moving into villages; the attitudes of some of the Israeli soldiers towards the Arabs; the feeling of being a second-class person. These things don't apply to all; you have to give the Israelis credit. Many Israelis soldiers are reservists--every Israeli has to serve three weeks every year until they reach 55--who after having served in the territories, come home and write for their newspapers about the horrors of serving in the territories--about the things they didn't like. Many hate that duty; it is very difficult to be in a occupation army. We discovered that ourselves. While I was there, the Intifada began on a major scale. The Israelis still haven't learned how to deal with it effectively--I am not sure that anybody really could. It is a very difficult thing to do. The average Israeli soldier does not like to carry out a policy of repression, doesn't like to fire guns at kids throwing stones, but he doesn't have much choice. It is pretty exasperating.

Unfortunately, 1986 was a transitional period that might have led to something and didn't. Today, it has just gotten worst; it has degenerated greatly since 1988, partly because of the Iraqi policies and the ostensible support that the Palestinians in the occupied territories and in Jordan gave Saddam Hussein. It now will be much more difficult for the Israelis to compromise. The peaceniks in Israel--"The Peace Now" movement, for example--are in disarray and much weaker and less interested in making a deal with the Arabs. Israelis who a few years ago were willing to give up territory--parts of the west Bank and Gaza--no longer feel that way, in part because of their experience with the SCUD missiles from Iraq. They want territorial depth. They are also very unhappy with the Palestinians who were so eager to support Saddam Hussein.

Q: Have the changes in demographics in Israel played a role in this new attitude? Is not today's Israel different from the one we perceived decades ago when the European Jews were predominant?

DRAPER: I think that is true. The dominant forces in the creation of Israel, going back to the beginning of the century, were Ashkenazis--European Jews--from Russia, Poland, Germany. They dominated up to 1948 when Israel was established. Ashkenazi leaders--the Ben Gurions, etc--were in the Labor Party at the time; they had migrated to the kibbutz and had fostered pro-Zionist sentiment. During the founding of the new state, however, many of the so called oriental Jews were brought into Israel from Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, India--all over. Their birthrate was higher and their attitudes were more Middle Eastern in many ways--their synagogue is different in appearance, for example and so is their ritual. They have gotten to the point where they are now the dominant element numerically in Israel and that has changed the culture. I first visited Israel in 1958 and the differences are considerable. The music you hear in the streets emanating from cafes and restaurants is very Arabic in nature. In fact, a lot of the so called oriental Jews grew up primarily in an Arabic-speaking culture--Morocco and Yemen especially. They never lost their affinity for that culture. The Jews from Morocco tended to know Arabic and French much better than Hebrew, which they only learned after arriving in Israel. Unfortunately, in Israel's early days, there were great biases directed against the "orientals" by the Europeans to the point that as late as 1970, there were no "oriental" Jews among the top fighter pilots in the Israeli Air Force. All this began to change in 1977, as the "oriental" Jews became increasingly important. Begin, an Ashkenazi, reached out to the "oriental" Jews to gain their support which made it possible for him and his party to win elections after having been out in the wilderness for a long time. In 1958, when I first visited Israel, I was a guest in an Ashkenazi home and they referred to "them"--the "oriental" Jews. There were considerable racial undertones in their comments as if the "orientals" were all second class people. In more recent years, inter-marriages have broken down the barriers and it is clear that the "oriental" Jews are now getting an education which is at least the equivalent of that received by the European Jews. Now the "orientals" are really the balance of force. The Labor Party, which was the home of the Ashkenazis and the Zionists, is no longer in a position to gain a numerical majority, even with its alliances, in the Knesset. The "oriental" Jews tend to be more anti-Arab, are much less willing to be accommodating with the Arab states. They tend to be more conservative religiously although that varies considerably in specific instances. That has effected all kinds of things in the Israeli body politic, including the explosive issue of religion--for example, the definition of what is a Jew. So Israeli life has really changed since its founding, but it has made it in some ways more lively. Israel, in 1991, is much more democratic culturally than it was in 1958 because of the inter-marriages and the co-mingling of various parts of society. An "oriental" Jew from Yemen can succeed in society just as well as his European colleague.

Q: The Palestinian at one time was considered the merchants of the Middle East--shrewd trader--who was interested in education and self-improvement. That drive seems to have atrophied.

DRAPER: I don't think so. The Palestinians at the turn of the century were not considered at the top of the heap by other Arabs. Through the years, starting even before the establishment of Israel, they tended to respond to the Jewish challenge and emulated certain attributes such as respect for education. Therefore, today Palestinians whether living in Kuwait or Jordan or the

West Bank tend to have a very high degree of education. They want it. They also tend to be travelers--people who go abroad to seek success and have found it. They migrate the way the more aggressive Chinese did. Today, the Palestinians are considered pretty strong in the sense that they have responded very effectively to the Israeli challenge. It has in fact brought them up to the level where the Lebanese have been all along--excellent traders with a great respect for education. I remember years ago being in a typical Palestinian home in Amman, Jordan, visiting friends; their children were not allowed to watch television after five o'clock in the afternoon; they had to do their homework. They would sit down at the dining room table or where they could and go to work until 10 when they went to bed. It was very interesting.

Q: When you were in Jerusalem, who was the Ambassador and were there any particular problems?

DRAPER: None what so ever. Tom Pickering was the Ambassador. He and I had been good friends for many, many years. We did have problems with an American citizen of Palestinian origin who was a pacifist; he wanted to generate a genuine pacifist movement, a passive resistance to the occupation. It drove the Israelis up the wall. We tended to think that the Israelis tend to overreact to these kinds of activities. They were very upset by another Palestinian, who was not an American citizen, who published an Arab newspaper in Hebrew in an effort to show the Jewish community that there were moderate Palestinians. The Israelis did everything they could to stop distribution of this paper--harmless as it was. There were other incidents of this kind.

It is very difficult to be Consul General in Jerusalem because if you stop just beyond a certain line, the Israeli will consider you and tell you and publicize you as being anti-Israeli or worst, anti-Jewish. The Arabs do the same. You have to walk down a very narrow path. You can stay out of trouble by never saying anything or doing anything, but if you want to encourage interchanges and to know people and if you want to show the flag in different quarters, you have to take risks and can get into a lot of trouble. My wife was criticized the first week we were there by both Arabs and Israelis; so we knew she was doing something right. But you do antagonize people and that has its reverberations. I remember making a sarcastic remark about Meir Kahane, an American born rabbi who headed the Jewish Defense League which supported the expulsion of Palestinians from the territories. I found him repulsive and I told that to a Jewish American group that was visiting; I received scores of letters of complaint to me, to the Department, to the White House. I was always in that kind of trouble. I escaped some of it because Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem, defended me vigorously before the members of the Jewish American community. But it was a hard task. I was criticized by the Jordanian government for some of the positions I had taken, mainly because the Jordanians wanted more jurisdiction over our modest economic assistance program. The American employees of the Consulate General were also laboring under impressions left by previous generations of Foreign Service officers. Congressmen would come on visits and sort of automatically expected that the Consulate General's employees would tilt irreversibly toward the Arab side. That was very hard on junior officers. As I mentioned before during our discussion of UN forces, American officers tend to sympathize with the "under-dog". The Palestinians are the "under-dogs". Some of that creeps into your views, but you can't afford to let that bias your reporting.

Q: Did you have seminars with your officers?

DRAPER: Yes, of course. These biases work both ways. We couldn't fantasize the Israelis as people who turned the deserts into gardens. You have to be objective as possible, although it is very difficult. We tried to handle this in various ways, by making sure that we had bonding with both sides. The Chief of our Political section, who spoke beautiful Hebrew and beautiful Arabic, was one of the people who emulated my example and brought Arabs and Israelis together. So we had ways to bridge the gaps. Many Israeli organizations took the initiative and invited our staff to see their kibbutzim or their organizations. We were particularly interested in organizations on both sides that tried to hold out a hand to the other side.

There was another not-too-well understood factor of living in Jerusalem. There were certain people who sought to be stationed there for reasons that weren't so imperative, including religious reasons. So there were some Americans in the organization that were fine people who did excellent work, but had come to Jerusalem for cultural or religious reasons. That is a major factor; you could be an atheist in Jerusalem and yet you would have to be affected by being at the well-springs of major monotheistic religions--Islam, Judaism, Christianity. There are many parts of Jerusalem that look the same today as they did 2,500 years ago--absent the television aerials. You can easily see the marks the many invaders have left, going back to Chadians to the Mamelukes, the Turks, the Jews, the British, etc. It is one of the most fascinating and attractive cities of the world because of the interplay of history.

Q: How would an officer with strong religious views be affected by an assignment to Jerusalem?

DRAPER: We had Jewish officers there, including one who was very exposed because he was the chief of the Consular Section. It never hurt his performance or the attitude that the Arabs had towards him. They regarded him as a very tough individual, but they thought he was fair. They didn't think that he made decisions on the basis of his Jewish heritage. That didn't work with everybody. It worked with this officer because he made such an effort because he made a conscious attempt to have a mixed of national employees, both Jewish and Palestinians.

We were improving our language capacity all the time; our junior staff was very good. Often they had had Arabic training before they got to Jerusalem and then they studied Hebrew while they were there and used it. I didn't see on the staff any very militant Christian, but had there been one, it could have effected his performance. I am speaking theoretically because many of the fundamentalist Christian groups in the US are vigorous supporters of Israel, partly because they believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible, which includes designation of the Jews as the "Chosen People". I used to tease my Israeli friends by pointing out to them that they were getting such strong support from Southern Baptist groups; I said that the reason was that when Judgment Day came they expected the Jews and their supporters to be chosen. I can only speak to the question of the effect of personal religious convictions on a Foreign Service officer from a theoretical point of view. I do think that a person in the Jerusalem Consulate General has to watch out very carefully for the hidden agendas that some people have. In Jerusalem, there are inter-racial tensions, compounded by inter-religious differences. In the C.G., among our national employees, we had Israeli Jews, we had Israeli Arabs, we had Palestinians of various denominations. When one person died, who was an Armenian, the Armenian Patriarch called and

said that he had a number of candidates that we should consider for what he called the "Armenian slot" in the American mission. So we had pressures of that kind.

Q: Did you feel that there was an Israeli intelligence officer among your staff?

DRAPER: We had to fire one person that we were pretty sure was a *de facto* Israeli agent; on the other hand, there were a couple of Arab employees that we were sure were passing along everything they could to their clandestine organization. But a lot of this doesn't matter. We used to speak on the phone in the hopes that the intelligence service would pick it up. We did that for our own purposes. There was only one case where we had a problem and that resulted in the discharge of the employee, as I mentioned earlier. It was complicated because not only was there an Israeli angle to it, but there was also a third country angle.

We had the usual other problems sometimes compounded by the need of people to get along with each other, but who were jealous about other's promotions. We had an inspection at the end of 1986 or the beginning of 1987 which was very useful. In the inspection group was a wise old consular officer who looked at our rather large consular establishment which was doing more business than Tel Aviv with only about half the staff. This inspector suggested that we should have a greater hierarchy--more leaders, sub-leaders, etc. We were concerned about doing this because it inevitably an Armenian might come out ahead of a Roman Catholic or Jew ahead of a Palestinian. But we wanted to make the section work better. The logical answer was a more hierarchal answer in rank, specialization and duties; we had one Chief and a lot of Indians. This inspector had served in Canada and Belgium where friction between religious and ethnic groups was very much a problem. He convinced us that we could restructure; we followed his advice and did so, with good results, even though the jealousy arose. We handled it in the public relations way by telling all that the rivalries were negated by the advancement opportunities that the new organizational structure provided.

There were other complications resulting from wars and invasions, including that our old-time employees--people who had been with us before 1967--claimed exemption from Israeli income taxes by the virtue of their Jordanian citizenship, which theoretically made them still subject to Jordanian law. Oddly enough, Israel applied Jordanian as well as British mandate law to the territories as well as some part of Israeli law. Even to this day, I expect that there are pressures on these employees to pay Israeli income taxes. On the other side, Israeli citizens who were clearly subject to income taxes insisted all along that they be paid in cash and not by check so that the income paper trail is not so clear. This is something that virtually every Israeli citizens wants done; otherwise he would be wiped out by income taxes were the rates are 70 percent or more. The inspectors looked at our financial system both in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. We used some common arrangements. They pointed out that up to one half of our manpower could be saved by switching from a cash to a check basis. The head of the Israeli national employees immediately made it clear that every Israeli would walk out of the C.G. and out the Embassy in Tel Aviv if we switched systems. So here was a situation where the US could have increased efficiency and saved money, but was limited by local customs. Finally we worked out a system by which the Israeli citizens hired a retired employee, who would keep the books. The checks were sent to him and he would then pay the employees in cash; it required this fellow to spend ten to fourteen days in the Embassy and the C.G. to make the system work.

Q: There is a point of view in Washington which believes that everything reported from American officials in Israel ends up sooner rather than later in the Israeli Foreign Ministry and on Capitol Hill. Is there any truth to this?

DRAPER: It was a factor that inhibited some people from declaring forthrightly what they wanted to say. I made it very clear to our reporting officers that we had to bend over backwards to appear objective. That meant use of "code" words and the tone of objectivity had to be clear. That however should not stop them from stating forthrightly what was happening. In some areas as human rights violations, we had to be accurate. We couldn't say that three houses had been demolished last night at 12 a.m. when in fact it had been four at 1 a.m. We had to describe our sources; we tried to follow as much as possible the newspaper rules that there be at least two sources to verify a story. It was kind of interesting, but we got very little flack and our reporting was held up as a model around the world. Actually the C.G. was chosen as one of the ten best missions inspected that year and our reporting was ranked as highly as possible. When you think about "code" words, it is very easy for things to creep in--all too easily. For example, we reported very assiduously about how people were arrested. In a series of reports, we showed that Israeli prosecutors had a 100 percent record of convictions in military courts. That is not possible statistically. These arrests included Palestinians and American citizens. One citizen was arrested because he happened to be on the fringes of a riot in Rammullah; he was brought before the Israeli authorities and even the violation citation contradicted the testimony in court. We had a full record of the proceedings. The prosecution didn't have any basis in law even to charge the defendant. The judge took secret testimony from an "intelligence" source which was customary in Israeli courts and then came out and handed down a sentence on the American citizen. It was a trumped up case, but the judge tried to mitigate by not giving a sentence even though he found the defended guilty. So the American citizen was not actually harmed except that a sentence appeared on his record. We had many cases like this which clearly showed that the Israeli establishment was not willing to admit that it could be occasionally wrong or that in some cases it did not have adequate evidence. Our reports were very strong and aroused considerable controversy in Washington--so much so that our then assistant secretary for Human Rights--Dick Schifter--came out and talked to me privately about the nature of our civil right complaints. I was able to show him that we were being extra careful in our conclusions and in reporting the facts so that others could draw their own conclusions. Finally, he agreed to some degree. It was a tricky issue because the mission in Jerusalem in the past had gone a little overboard without adequate facts. That had been remembered by many people, including me. But we didn't get too much flak about it; our human rights submission was so carefully done that the real battle occurred in Washington on the question of how much of our reporting to include in the final report. The Israelis were very upset when the report came out and blamed us quite a bit for it, but not as much as I thought they would. The Israeli press was tolerant. I had many interviews with the Israeli media and was very outspoken about such matters as the Jewish lobby in the United States, about the need for objective reporting by the Consulate General, about the need to portray a balanced picture--some of which helped us, some didn't--, but they got a straight story from us.

I had a situation in which one of the most distinguished, successful and revered attorneys in Israel, whose pro-Zionist sentiments could never be challenged in any way, told me once in great confidence about his disappointments with the Israeli judicial system. He described what he

called its corrupt nature starting from 1947-48 and up to the present. He confessed that he had gotten to the point where he no longer went into a courtroom willingly because he was so disgusted by the corruption of the system. This was a conversation worth reporting to Washington, but I could not identify him by name because I had to anticipate that this would become known to quarters that might try to get even with him and that might even try to ruin his reputation unfairly. Besides, his story was given to me in confidence. There are cases like this where we had to report the substance, but not divulge the source. That does weaken the report to some extent, just like a newspaper column that quotes "unnamed sources" is sometime suspect. But by identifying the source too closely, it would have been harmful and perhaps dangerous. So there were cases where we didn't change the thrust of the report, but we did not divulge the sources. That was done for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Q: On the question of corruption, what kind was he referring to?

DRAPER: He was particularly unhappy with the appointment of judges, beginning in 1977 with Begin's assumption of power. He and his party had been out in the political wilderness since the formation of the state; therefore he had to find jobs for his followers. Many were put into the senior ranks of the Civil Service and the Labor Party incumbent was pushed out. My lawyer friend pointed out that many of the judges appointed by the Likud Party had no knowledge of the law; they were appointed for political reasons. It was getting worst. At the beginning at least these new judges tried to get help from lawyers and law students, but by the time I was there, not even that much was being done. He confirmed to us that the military courts were even worst; they had, as I mentioned, a 100 percent conviction record because of their willingness to use essentially illegal or unethical methods to make their point--"we have secret evidence that shows, etc". So the lawyer was very unhappy; he had great respect with what Israel had originally tried to do with the law--a system much of it based on British mandatory civil law, which incorporated the Judaic laws and customs. He was very proud of what had been done. he had been educated in England and had been a member of the bar--Queen's Council--he had very high standards and felt very strongly about the problems.

We often run into charges of corruption of this once clean and wonderful society. One friend of mine had been a young man in Palestine before the formation of Israel and lived in a Jewish community in Tel Aviv. He said that there, even with all the frictions, people left their doors open and that there was very little crime. After Israel became a state, a police force had to be set up which very few Jews had ever willingly joined under the British mandate. Suddenly, there were crime waves which had been unheard of before. Jews became crime lords for the first time in this little idyllic Zionist-inspired community. All of a sudden, all the vices of the world descended on them almost overnight. I saw this even in the '70s or '80s when Israel was essentially a non-consumer of narcotics, although hashish and other drugs were easily available. Very few Israelis ever used drugs and rank only very modestly. Much of that change although Israelis by and large do not drink very much alcohol; it is not a major problem, but the use of drugs has exploded in Israel in part because of the partial occupation of Lebanon starting in 1978. The drug smuggling trade has moved in part across Israel in route to Egypt and other places. The country has changed. The drug use is a problem, not to the extent we have in the US, but is it pretty significant for a society that never had this problem before.

Q: Did you feel that there was ever a disinformation campaign, not only against you, but also against our Consulate General in Jerusalem?

DRAPER: Yes, but I had some historic perspective on this because I had watched the efforts to discredit the mission going back to late '50s. I recall that in 1981 it was the first time that an Israeli Foreign Ministry official showed up at the C.G., wishing to see me when I was working on the withdrawal of the Israeli from the Sinai. As part of that effort, we had to talk to Israeli officials in our offices which were in the Consulate General. It was the first time that an Israeli official walked through those doors because of the prohibitions that had existed until then. When I became the Consul General, I knew the whole Israeli Cabinet and most of the top officials in the army from my previous incarnations and therefore was able to invite some Israeli officials to my house that had never been there before because they had been prohibited from visiting the American compound. There are still prohibition against Foreign Ministry people and certain others like Mossad intelligence people, but I broke a lot of those barriers when I was assigned to Jerusalem. I saw Israeli Cabinet officials and politicians regularly; so the situation has eased. It would not have happened with some of my predecessors; no Israeli official would have been seen in public with the American Consul General except perhaps at a party. We also reduced some of our foolishness. We used to be very strict about officials visiting Jerusalem and not being in the company of Israelis. This got to be ridiculous when it came to someone like Teddy Kollek, the mayor, who wanted to show hospitality. So we altered a lot of rules as well to be more pragmatic. When Vice-President George Bush came, he wanted a lot of photographs showing him in Jerusalem and he was in the company of Kollek who escorted him around. That would not have been possible fifteen years earlier because of our strict regulations of what could be done in Jerusalem. We did not recognize an Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem. There was clear prejudice against us; when I mentioned that I was the Consul General, it was quite clear that both the staff and I were viewed as automatically as anti-Israeli. That went with the position.

Q: Did you deal with Palestinian leaders? You were, I believe, not permitted to deal with the PLO.

DRAPER: We tried to deal with everybody across the board including the super militants. Many of the Palestinians would not talk to any of us. When the Intifada began, much of the leadership switched to the hands of young people--17, 18, 19, 20 year olds. Very, very few of them would come out of the woodwork to talk to us--very few. They were in the forefront of University students who were viciously anti-American. They were also very difficult to communicate with any young person in a refugee camp. Very few of the so-called refugees live in camps; most live in towns and villages. It was almost impossible to get to the people in the camps. It was very difficult to get to the real hot-heads in Gaza--which was both in and outside of the C.G.'s district. Ambassador Pickering and I had an arrangement; we often visited Gaza together to see particularly some of the old time politicians. I went to Gaza to talk to the people there, but most of the contact work there was done by the Embassy staff. That was an arbitrary arrangement which helped our consular problem. We had quite a few economic assistance projects in Gaza which were managed out of Jerusalem, so that we had to go there periodically. Some of the non-governmental organizations--the charitable organizations--operated in both areas so that we had to be contact for that reason. But we had a working arrangement with Tel Aviv and the coverage of Gaza was not a problem.

The other group that was almost impossible to deal with was the militant Muslim faction, with a few exceptions. That great Chief of the Political Section that I mentioned before had made real inroads with some of the relatively youthful mullahs--the non-traditional Moslem clerics--in various parts of the territories. I made a sort of a break-through with the Grand Mufti who for the first time ever paid a call on me in my residence in Israeli Jerusalem. It was the first time he had ever crossed the "green" line. But it was very hard to get into that Muslim faction. We had an insight in what was happening because people in contact with these groups would report to us what was going on. We used the newspapers, the media, the journalists who had a comradery with these groups. We didn't ask whether someone was a PLO or PLPF (The Palestinian Liberation Popular Front) agent.

We had one problem with the Mayor of Nablus who was assassinated the day after he had dinner with me. I was on lists of assassination targets, made by a couple of the extremist groups--one being George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine--, which effected my security. The situation was comparable in some ways to countries where we have a very difficult time being in contact with the young rebellious elements to the extent we would like to. For example, it was somewhat comparable to Turkey in 1970 when I was there; we didn't have clue about what the young university students were thinking or doing. Otherwise, the average Palestinian is a real talker and finds it difficult not have an exchange even with the "evil Americans". So we were able to keep our fingers on the pulse, except for those two groups.

Faisal Husseni, who is now the leader of the Palestinian group who seems to be in dutch now with Secretary Baker and others, was a difficult man; he didn't want to ruin his militant credentials by seeing Americans, but we were able to be in touch with him, but we had to be careful about his own security and his own credibility. We had to be careful about being seen with persons who were in trouble with their own people. The Mayor of Bethlehem was a good example. He was considered as an "Uncle Tom" by a lot of the Palestinians and then when Americans would show up at his house regularly that added to his woes. Sometimes that increased the threats on his life.

Q: What about AIPAC (American-Israeli Political Action Committee)? Did they visit you and view you as an agent for the enemy?

DRAPER: I don't think so. I was friendly with most of the AIPAC leadership and many of their major contributors because of my previous position as Deputy Assistant Secretary. The President of AIPAC and others when they came to Jerusalem would get in touch with me and we would speak very frankly to each other about what was going on. AIPAC is pretty professional; I was more concerned about people who were not so and were much more amorphous and super sympathetic to Israel, but not so knowledgeable about the Israeli domestic scene. Or people who had a load of prejudices. The people who were really venomous were the followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane; some I refused to have anything to do with. One was the publisher of a newsletter which was poisonous, vicious and racist. He wanted an interview with me and I didn't want to give him even that much respectability. That caused me a certain amount of problems among certain Israeli loyalists, but not the main-stream Jewish community.

Q: Were you asked to present the Palestinian side to American Jewish groups that visited Jerusalem?

DRAPER: No, not for that purpose, but I did make presentations to these groups; they wanted to know what was going on--how the Arabs felt, about the human rights situation, etc. I would tell them. Many first time visitors to the United States, after seeing Disneyland, want to go find militant blacks. So we had many American Jews coming who wanted to talk face-to-face with one of the opponents of Israel; they wanted to see one of those "killers". I mentioned that I had briefed a Jewish group during which I had criticized Meir Kahane in very graphic terms; I thought most of the people there were pretty sophisticated and not particularly secular, but I did get some of the group very upset because of my criticism of the rabbi. I called him "irrelevant" and that really bothered some. The person who was particularly concerned was a very secular minded Jewish businessman from Philadelphia. So you never know. If you criticize a Jew, you are liable to be called anti-Semitic.

Q: While you were Consul General between 1986 and 1988, the Intifada began. How did it look to you at the time?

DRAPER: I recently have reviewed an interview I had given at the time. I pointed out at the time that we had been tracing a rise in tensions, measured statistically by number of incidents, violence, etc that had taken place in the previous two years. There was unquestionably a steady increase. We had been predicting for some time in our reporting that there would be an explosion. I also said in that interview that after the predicted explosion, the situation would stabilize but at a higher level of tensions than before. Frankly, we were a little surprised at the endurance of the Intifada. It was beginning to resemble what had happened between 1936 and 1939 when the Arabs rose *en masse* against the British and the Jews.

The uprising was well covered by the media. It took the form of demonstrations and rock throwing, fires, etc. by kids in grammar school and junior high school equivalent and high school. We watched fires and the closing of streets in part of Arab Jerusalem by young people 15, 16 and 17 years old. They got into big trucks and walked up alleys, etc. It was the young people who were taking charge at the beginning. Part of what was done at the beginning was the closing of shops by the merchants. There was a total boycott of business activity for certain hours, weeks and days which was only relaxed for the purchase of food stuffs and other necessities. There were boycotts against Israeli manufactured goods. Some of this was happening spontaneously in school yards where things like this always happen. The middle aged traditional leaders were dying to get a grip on the uprising. They didn't know what to do. The PLO was very slow to react; it didn't know what was going on. In fact, it is always slow; when something did happen in the occupied territories, it took it a week to make up its mind what to do. If a university were closed, there be no reaction from the PLO for four or five days; then it would come down on it. The PLO surrogates in the territories didn't have anything to say initially about the Intifada; I know because I was talking to them. Finally the PLO sort of embraced it and then the main stream PLO leadership in the territories also came along, after a week or two. The young people were quite clever; they were natural leaders--some better than their elders. These young people came from everywhere--private schools, camps, etc. the camps were more obvious because the troops would enter the camps more often for confrontations. The troops were told to

tear down Palestinian flags; they would look at a refugee camp which was mostly a slum and they would see these flags and go after them. That is what created the major part of the confrontations. But there were just as many in private schools, religious schools--many were run by Christian organizations--and there was just as much uproar there as in the camps. The camps were simply more conspicuous because the troops were there and some are on main roads and intersections and the demonstrations could cause real problems for entryway. In Nablus, there are two main refugee camps which straddle the two main highways leading into the city from the East and North-South. The troops had to something just to keep the traffic flowing. Our mission cars were stoned regularly going through the gauntlet. These areas were point of confrontation, but the Intifada was very wide spread. It could be found in all sorts of places. The press told all kinds of great stories of what was going on because at times they would go into dead ends or little villages and find people who were shouting for the Intifada, particularly when they found out that the stranger was a newspaper man. There were a lot of narrow escapes. The resentment was very wide spread.

One very clever man that I knew--rich middle class who owned a business--, who might be called a PLO moderate said that he got very excited about what was going on. He thought the real stimulus came a few weeks before the Intifada broke out when a Palestinian guerrilla team from Southern Lebanon had entered Israel and had attacked an Israeli army camp with only indifferent success--they killed a few Israelis, but the guerrillas were also killed. This man said that as a Palestinian, he felt proud of these people because they were young, had never lived in Palestine and they had risked their lives and most importantly had attacked Israeli military targets instead of schools or other civilian targets. He always felt embarrassed when the Palestinians only seemed interested in terrorism--bombs in city markets, killing school children, etc. For the first time, they had attacked Israeli soldiers. This was a team that was airborne--kites or balloons or whatever. He was very proud of that incident and felt that had helped to spark the Intifada because it showed that Palestinians were willing to die fighting Israeli soldiers.

Anybody who was familiar with the territories knew that something would blow. We didn't know how high it would blow. We in the Consulate General in Jerusalem were far more concerned about some nuts who might set fires or try to destroy some of the Islamic monuments, like the Mosque on the Temple Mount. We knew what had happened in 1968-69 when riots broke out all over the Islamic world if they thought Americans had anything to do with what had happened. We were always concerned with that kind of reaction. The real Jewish "crazies" tend to be from the United States. There is still a group, mainly of American born Jews, who do not recognize Israel as a secular state who have a Yeshiva--a religious school--yards away from the Temple Mount, Sherif, what the Arabs call the "noble enclosure". We were more worried about that possibility than a massive Palestinian uprising.

I think the Israelis were taken by surprise; their standard techniques of intimidation and control did not work, so they resorted to actions which drew vast criticism and justly so. They ordered the troops to break arms and legs and to beat up people. The Israelis have found it very difficult to get a handle on the Intifada; it is very difficult to know what to do when 8 year olds throw stones at you; it is very difficult for anyone to make war on children. One Israeli police officer described to me once a situation in which the police had to control a riot by the super-ultra-conservative groups in Israel, which came mainly from Brooklyn. The policeman told me about

coming up against one of these bearded men of 60--very venerable, scholarly--and a person with very little physical strength because he spent most of his life behind a desk, studying. The policeman had quashed the riot, but found it personally difficult to move against this gentleman, because he looked so much like his own grandfather. So it was very difficult for young Israeli soldiers, even if they despise Arabs, to make war on children. They didn't know what to do and they still don't.

Q: Was your staff covering these uprisings and were they effected by what they saw?

DRAPER: In the two years I was in Jerusalem, there were quite few riots and disturbances of various kinds and killings. Our officers would cover these events to try to see if they could get in contact with various leaders to get a feel for what was happening. We had some success with that. We always got copies of the handbills; we monitored the media to see what the two populations were being told and what effect that might have on their attitudes. We knew the major trends and could describe those. But we did not go to see a riot for a riot's sake. Some visitors were interested in seeing some of the action. We had one Congressman who wanted to see some stone throwing. That somewhat upset me. One of our officers took him to the outskirts of a refugee camp in the company of the UNRA officials. Sure enough, some of the school children started throwing stones at an Israeli patrol that went by. One thing led to another and the Israelis threw back tear gas. The Congressman got a good look at what was going on, but that I had to tell him later that we were not in the tourist business for this sort of thing; it wasn't worth it and took too many of our resources and that I didn't want our junior officers out looking for trouble. I am familiar with the process in the United States. If you want to get attention, you can manipulate a press attendance at an event; we did in Jerusalem get wind of a lot of upcoming incidents because the media was being notified by the perpetrators.

The Israelis, particularly Teddy Kollek, the Mayor of Jerusalem, did a lot of things to head off problems and to forestall events that might have gotten out of hand. He was trying to keep peace in Jerusalem; he instructed his municipal police on what they could and could not do and they were much better than the Israeli army at controlling disturbances. For a long time, Jerusalem was fairly quiet, besides the occasional stabbing. Many of the problems could be forestalled by not allowing or keeping control of religious demonstrations. For example, once a year, there were groups of Israelis who thought they had a right to visit Temple Mount; that can be done if you are very careful and you warn the Arabs that it would happen. Teddy would often let me know what was going on to see whether we could help in various ways. There are always people who want to exploit tense situations. Riots can easily get out of control, especially in the Temple Mount-Harash el Sherif area because there are loud speakers all over the area. It is has been a custom for the Mufti and others to shout over the speaker if there is any perceived danger. Before you know it, there are tens of thousands of people running to defended the Holy places as the Mufti has encouraged them to do; they drop whatever they are doing and are all running for one spot. It could have been a very innocent situation or a modest problem; when the police force armed with only a few shotguns watch thousands of people carrying knives rushing into their vicinity, it gets kind of nervous.

Q: What was your impression of Arafat's leadership in the 1986-88 period?

DRAPER: There were a few pictures of him around, but it wasn't much. Arafat had a lot of influence; there is no question of that, but he was losing it with the younger people and the Muslim militants. His strength was in the refugee camps among people who didn't move out of the camps. There is a division in the Palestinian movement; there are some Palestinians who are in effect willing to forget going back to Haifa or any part of Israel proper and are willing to take the West Bank and Gaza and be satisfied with that. The other group who insist on returning to the same spots where they lived in 1947 and will never be happy until that happens. Too much time has passed for the latter group. Arafat, until about a year ago, always took the line that the Palestinians had to return to where they lived in 1947 and had to recover all the land they lived on then or at least he was ambivalent on the issue. A lot of the people who supported Arafat did so because at least he had not given up to returning to their former towns and settlements. On the other hand, the pragmatists, who wanted to make a deal with Israel would have been satisfied with East Jerusalem and the west Bank and Gaza. So there were always those tensions between the two groups. There were some of Arafat's deputies, including the ones that were assassinated in the last two years, let the word out that they wanted to destroy Israel. The pragmatists and those who finally got Arafat to move a little in his position were those who were willing to make a deal with Israel. But they did not have the charismatic quality that Arafat had. From an American point of view, that is of course mystifying because we don't see Arafat a charismatic; to me he looks like a druggist in Jerusalem. But he had a fatherly, avuncular quality; he has been a survivor--he has good luck; he has his tail dragging, but it is still wagging; he has gone through a lot of difficult situations. He is called the "old man" in an affectionate way by his cohorts and by the masses. The trouble with the Palestinians is that if they didn't have the PLO, they would have to invent it. They haven't been politically sufficiently aware to make a difference. There is no home-grown movement in the territories; it is easier for them to owe quasi-allegiance to Arafat and the PLO, now stationed in Tunis, than to organize themselves. And why is that? Because the Palestinians themselves are balkanized--Christian Palestinians against Moslem Palestinians, people from Hebron against those others. These tensions are endemic. Even in municipal elections, families counts; it is a very traditional, old fashioned society and very tribal. People in the South end like Hebron are very conservative--no liquor, no beer. It is like Saudi Arabia--super conservative. On the other hand, 75 miles to the North, it is just the opposite. The Palestinians are very fragmented and they do not have any sense of unity. When we used to get together Palestinian groups to meet with Secretary Shultz or others, it was very difficult to get a group of less than fifteen because otherwise you couldn't represent all the Palestinian factions. Many of the ordinary Palestinians looked down on the refugees, especially those who lived in camps. In fact, some Palestinians felt that anyone who came to live in one of the West Bank cities after 1949, he was just a refugee and was not one of them. There were those splits. These tensions explain why the people in the territories have never been able to organize anything for themselves; they could never agree on their own leadership.

A start was made some years ago, with our encouragement, when there were free elections for Mayors of towns and cities. Some of the winners were strong critics of Israel--in fact, they were all strong critics--, but most were pragmatists and not radicals. But the Israelis couldn't even tolerate the moderates; so they expelled many of them, including one who is now the main PLO representative in Amman, who is about as moderate as one can get, but the Israeli have no tolerance for that kind of opposition and did not allow home-grown development of Palestinian leadership. The Israelis are now paying the consequences of that misguided policy; there are no

leaders in the territories. The Israelis would argue that if the leadership had existed, the Intifada would have been much worse; they may be right.

Q: What happened to you after your tour in Jerusalem?

DRAPER: After my return to Washington, I did some short term assignments, such as a study of security problems in rehabilitating Embassy buildings abroad. That was partly related to the question of what we should do about our Embassy in Moscow. And I did some other studies. Then I retired.

Q: From your long time perspective, what do you see as the future of Israel and Palestine?

DRAPER: First of all, I agree with an Israeli journalist, who is a friend, that despite the changes in Israel's culture and politics and despite the fact that a lot of the elan has gone out of the Israeli national esprit, Israel will somehow prevail and survive the threat. A few years ago, I wasn't quite so sure, but I feel more strongly about that prediction today. As far as the resolution of the Arab-Israeli problem, I am pessimistic, but I am not despairing. I am intrigued by some of the signals coming out of the Middle East now--the hints that Syria might possibly make a deal with Israel, the desire of many countries to get on the good side of the United States. I believe that we never had a better opportunity to make some progress since the 1973 War in part because of this magnificent coalition the US put together against Iraq and in part because of our spectacular military success and in part because the Russians are no longer a major negative feature and in fact are cooperating to a certain extent with the United States. They are not acting as a rival or as an opponent, for the time being. Finally, the opportunity exists because George Bush probably has another five years in office. It is a virtual certainty that he will be re-elected in 1992; so there won't be the same problem that arose in 1979-80 when President Carter was unwilling to put his prestige on the line for another major effort of the kind that had exhausted him earlier when the Egypt-Israeli treaty was negotiated and signed. We won't have the same problem we had at the end of the Reagan administration when Secretary of State Shultz was trying to do something, but the President was then a "lame duck" and wasn't putting any enthusiasm behind his Secretary's efforts. So there are a lot of features at the present which will be helpful assuming that we want to push. Also on the positive side, there are some Israelis who are embarrassed by the negative stance that Shamir and others have been taking for all these years; they would like to find a second best arrangement that would still protect Israeli security. On the other hand, there are more deep seeded negative feelings and features than we have seen for several years, including the wide spread support by the Palestinians throughout the world for Saddam Hussein. One of the consequences of the Iraqi SCUD missiles attacks on Israel was to heighten the Israeli feelings of vulnerability against future hostile attacks on their little, narrow country. This feeling is spread throughout the population; it can not be ignored. The Israelis took modest casualties, but there was a lot of damage, including the strengthening of the feeling of insecurity. After all, if the Iraqis had managed to put poison gas or atomic or germ warheads on the missiles, there would have been far greater panic than there was with very serious consequences. That makes the Israelis want the depth; they don't want to be decompressed into a smaller country. That makes it very difficult for those Israelis who a few years ago were willing to trade "land for peace" with the Arabs; they no longer have the influence and their own enthusiasm has waned. It will be very difficult for any mediator such as the United States, but we are stuck in the Middle East and

it would be shameful if we did not press our advantage, such as it is. Even during this last week, we established refugee camps for the Kurds in North-west Iraq and that is a remarkable development. What are we getting into and how soon can we get out? We made a major morale commitment to doing something about the Middle East and that is not something that can be ignored. We should not forget that the emotions aroused by the Kurds' plight, as communicated to European and Americans, caused turns in our policy while similar disasters in the Sudan and Africa have not had the same results.

So I think it will be more difficult to deal with the substantive positions than it has been, but it will be easier to deal with the procedural situations. The Israelis are now willing to talk about the possibility of a regional conference, perhaps they are not that concerned about the Russians anymore. This would not have been possible a few years ago. The problem is permanent though for us in one sense; we always had the problem of how to arrange the substantive aspects of the Arab-Israeli problem--the procedural obstacles and problems we face getting there and combining these all with the American and Israeli domestic political problems. It is a very complicated approach. We have been talking about this during the last week at the Institute for Peace; one of things that we all agree on is that the Arabs by and large have regarded procedural matters as a means of protecting their substantive positions; Americans have often looked at procedural issues--where to hold the conference, how to organize it, etc--as a way through which substantive positions of one or more of the parties can be changed, which is a very ambitious concept. But let's face it; there will never be the kind of peace and stability that we need unless the substantive positions of all the parties change to some degree. Ambassador Hart, who is a pretty savvy guy, said to me once that, with reference to Yemen in the early '60s after the Egyptians had invaded the country, if we can leave things alone in Yemen, they will eventually come out with some kind of workable solution which will allow them to live with the Saudis and maybe shirk off the Egyptians, but it will be very untidy and messy solution which we Americans and other Westerns will never understand; but Arabs can sometime put something together like that, however illogical. I think ultimately something like that will have to be developed in the Middle East because it is a society in an area which we Americans do not really understand very well--we have a feel for it, but no real deep understanding. It is basically a bazaar and the parties will have to work out an arrangement in the same way they reach a selling and buying price by haggling. If we forget that it is a bazaar and try to approach the resolution as if it were a labor dispute in Detroit, it will not be worked out. We will have to encourage the process at least through the haggling.

PHILLIP C. WILCOX, JR.
Consul General
Jerusalem (1988-1991)

Phillip C. Wilcox, Jr. was born in Colorado in 1937. He received his bachelor's degree from Williams College in 1958 and then immediately after received his law degree from Stanford University in 1961. After graduation he went and taught in Sierra Leone from 1961-1963. During his Foreign Service career he had positions in Laos, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Washington D.C., and Jerusalem.

Mr. Wilcox was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in April 1998.

Q: Today is June 22, 1998. Phil, let's move on. 1988 you went to Jerusalem where you served from '88 to '91 as consul general.

WILCOX: That's right.

Q: How did you get the job?

WILCOX: I had been serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary in NEA with responsibility for Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. I previously had been Director for Arab and Arab-Israeli affairs, so I was prepared for Jerusalem, and when I was asked to go, I readily agreed.

Q: Was there any vetting of you at that point or had you already been vetted by the various, I'm talking about the American-Israeli organizations.

WILCOX: I don't think there was any vetting process outside of the administration. I had been involved in the issue and the policy and knew the players, including the Israelis and the leaders of the American Jewish community, and I was qualified by experience for the job

Q: By any chance during this time that you were in Washington, did you run across Martin Indyk?

WILCOX: Yes, I knew Martin quite well. He was the Director for Research at AIPAC, and I had considerable contact with him while I was on the Israel and Arab-Israel desk, and when I became Deputy Assistant Secretary.

Q: What was your impression, I mean where was he coming from during this time?

WILCOX: He had by the time I left NEA, Martin had already moved over to the job of Director of the newly-created Washington Institute for Middle East Policy Studies. Some of the board members of the Institute were also directors of AIPAC, so there was an intimate relationship between the two groups. Martin himself had been a scholar in his earlier days in Australia and had written his doctoral thesis on the Egypt-Israel peace process, and so he had expertise on the area. I worked with him and other officials of AIPAC when I was on the Israeli desk. It was a friendly, but often adversarial relationship, since AIPAC often opposed administration policies concerning the Middle East, Israel, and the peace process.

Q: Did you find that AIPAC reflected the politics of Israel in that you had equivalent to the Likud which takes a very strong and pro-Israeli line as opposed to Labor which is how can we get along in this difficult part of the world?

WILCOX: AIPAC came of age during the Likud era after 1977 and it grew into a very skilled, well financed and sophisticated lobby. AIPAC's role was to enhance the American-Israeli relationship, and it generally reflected views put forth by the government of Israel. It worked

very hard to promote stronger support in Congress, and later began to give attention to the executive branch, the Department of State and the Department of Defense. It had an effective, capable group of people who were knowledgeable, dedicated, hard working, tough, and single minded.

Q: Did it seem to reflect, most of the time in the people who were brought on were true believers even to use an old biblical term zealots as far as the cause of a greater Israel?

WILCOX: No, I wouldn't call them zealots. I think that the leadership in AIPAC were people who believed deeply that a strong U.S.-Israel [relationship] was valuable for the United States, that our interests converged in all major respects. The major point of friction with AIPAC during that time were U.S. arms sales to Arab states, and AIPAC worked aggressively to prevent or postpone or to subject to conditions the sale of U.S. weapons to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other Arab states which had not made peace with Israel. AIPAC argued that to sell sophisticated weapons to these states would erode the qualitative military edge that it was U.S. policy to preserve for the state of Israel. So there were very difficult and almost chronic disputes whenever an Arab state would propose to purchase U.S. arms, and AIPAC would almost invariably oppose them. AIPAC also preached the Israel view that it was necessary to retain the West Bank and Gaza for security reasons, that there were no moderate Arab states, and that the Palestinians were permanently committed to the violent destruction of Israel.

Q: Could you describe Jerusalem in 1988 when you arrived? The area was kind of keyed up. Okay, we wanted to go back to AIPAC first.

WILCOX: AIPAC was opposed to the administration's view that the basis for peace lay in a land for peace arrangement based on resolution 242. We were also at odds with AIPAC over the question of the PLO office in Washington. The administration realized that this office, which was run by American citizens, would continue operations under some other name if it was closed down, but eventually acceded to strong pressure from the Congress and from AIPAC to shut down the office. As usual, AIPAC played very hard ball on this issue.

AIPAC is a single issue organization. Its members lacked the knowledge and perspective of other foreign policy issues and for that reason, did not have the understanding that there were other U.S. interests that had to be weighed in considering our policy toward Israel and the peace process. So at times it was an adversarial relationship. But the Administration also recognized AIPAC's influence and courted its able Director at that time, Tom Dine, as an important player.

Q: Was the issue raised say particularly with Saudi Arabia, because Saudi Arabia was essentially no threat to Israel. It just didn't have the military capacity, the population. Was the protection of the Persian Gulf, because this obviously became very important in our next episode we are going to be discussing, but was that raised at all with AIPAC saying, you know fellows this is all very nice but Saudi Arabia is being threatened by both Iran and Iraq, and we have to have AWACS and protective weapons and all that.

WILCOX: That, of course, was part of our case. It usually didn't prevail with AIPAC or Congress. The administration won an early fight with AIPAC and Congress over the sale of

AWACS surveillance aircraft to Saudi Arabia. After that defeat, AIPAC vowed that it would never be defeated again in such a stand up contest. It wasn't. I believe that AIPAC was every bit as concerned about its own power and influence as Israel's interests. Steve Rosen, AIPAC Director for Research who succeeded Martin Indyk, once acknowledged this to me, saying "we are a fighting organization, and we like to win."

Q: Well, then let's move to Jerusalem. At the beginning things obviously really heated up. Let's talk about when you arrived there in '88. What was the situation? We are talking about the whole area, but basically centered around Jerusalem.

WILCOX: Well, at that time the Likud government and Prime Minister Shamir were governing Israel. Its policy was to promote the Israeli settlements and to hang on to the West Bank and Gaza which they regarded as part of greater Israel. The Likud never proclaimed an intention to annex these areas and absorb them into Israel, realizing that were they to do so, the Palestinians in those areas would have to be enfranchised. That would upset the Jewish demographics of Israel. Still, they wanted to maintain control of these territories under some form of limited autonomy where the major decisions and security would be controlled by Israel. To prevent the emergence of a local Palestinian leadership and self governing institutions, the Israelis removed or deported Palestinian mayors, for example, who had nationalist views, and appointed Arabs who were puppets. Local leadership, therefore, scarcely existed. The Palestinian PLO leadership abroad was in retreat having been driven out of Beirut and landed in exile in Tunisia. There was a deep stalemate.

Q: How had the previous incumbents reported from Jerusalem? How did they perceive their missions as consuls general?

WILCOX: I think reporting from Jerusalem over the years made a real effort to try to understand the dynamics of Palestinian politics, the society, the economy of the West Bank. The embassy was responsible for Gaza.

As for the role of consuls general, by definition they all led schizophrenic lives, living in West Jerusalem among Israelis, and dealing professionally with Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. I and some of my predecessors thought it was important to keep an eye on the Jewish side of Jerusalem to keep our Palestinian analysis in context and to look at the city as a whole. While my official contacts were with the Palestinians, since Israel prohibited its officials from dealing with the consulate, I also developed very close contacts with Israeli writers, journalists and academics, especially those who were interested and involved in the peace process and human rights and had contacts with Palestinians. In any case, I viewed my role as the American representative in the City of Jerusalem, as well as our channel to the Palestinians.

While the bulk of our contacts were with Palestinians and we concentrated our reporting on that sector, I gained perspective and insight by keeping in touch with Israelis. Our job, of course, was to encourage the Palestinians to take a more creative and positive view toward peace.

By and large, it was not possible to bring Palestinians and Israelis together at the consulate because of the depth of Palestinian feelings about the occupation and their Israeli adversaries and

the embarrassment they felt in associating with Israelis under American auspices in a setting they could only regard as political, not social. We did so only on rare, carefully controlled occasions. Nor did we try to bring together peace-minded Israelis whom we knew were already in touch with Palestinians, since this probably would have been counterproductive. These relations were close, though very discreet, and did not need U.S. sponsorship.

The only major mixed event at the consulate was our annual Fourth of July reception. In the past, following the practice of other consulate generals in Jerusalem, the U.S. held two receptions, one for Palestinians and the other for Israelis. One of my predecessors, Wat Cluverius, broke with this tradition and combined the two parties. I agreed with this policy, since it was designed to demonstrate that the U.S. saw the Jews and the Arabs in Jerusalem as neighbors who had to live together. The Palestinians saw our policy differently, however, and some of them regularly boycotted the event, while otherwise maintained close relations with us. I think they suspected that holding a Fourth of July reception for both communities implied that the U.S. had accepted Israeli control over all of Jerusalem and had abandoned the policy of leaving the question of Jerusalem's status open for future negotiations. That certainly wasn't the intention of having a single reception, but all things in Jerusalem are political including Fourth of July receptions. Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem made things worse for us by constantly saying in public that he was responsible for persuading the U.S. to hold a combined Fourth of July reception. This made it look to the Palestinians that we were doing the Israelis' bidding, which was not true.

Q: In your talk just now, you always state in Jerusalem and Jerusalem and Jerusalem. What about the West Bank?

WILCOX: The West Bank was under our jurisdiction, and I and all my predecessors traveled extensively in the West Bank, using our Arab drivers. We used Israeli drivers in West Jerusalem. My officers were out in the West Bank every day talking to people, administering a small economic development assistance program, promoting U.S. views, and trying continuously to persuade the Palestinians to take a more activist and positive view toward the peace process and to accept resolution 242.

Q: Could you explain what resolution 242 was?

WILCOX: Resolution 242 has always been the foundation of U.S. policy in the peace process. Essentially, it calls on Israel to withdraw from territory occupied in 1967, that is the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, in exchange for peace and mutual recognition. It is essentially a bargain for the exchange of land for peace. Resolution 338 calls for the negotiations to bring that process about. The Palestinians for years had been paralyzed in their political approach by refusing to recognize the existence or the permanence of the state of Israel. They clung tenaciously to this view in public that because Israel had taken their land, they had a right to recover it and compromise with Israel was not acceptable. I think most of them did not believe that this was a realistic policy, but nevertheless, they would not bring themselves to admit that, and for reasons of pride they clung to this uncompromising position. So there was a terrible intellectual and ideological lag among the Palestinians on the West Bank. Their policy was one of steadfastness, to hold firm to their views and to hope that somehow someday their cause would prevail. It wasn't prevailing. Their land continued to be taken by the Israelis, settlements were expanding,

and steadfastness was a failed policy. We worked to urge the Palestinians to look at their own situation more realistically, to find ways to engage with Israel, and to make peace through a compromise that would salvage something for them and their children. Our view was the only route to peace was a division of the land and a mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians.

This was a hard sell, not just because of traditional Palestinian stubbornness and the lack of strong, visionary leadership, but because the Likud governments in those days offered the Palestinians little in return for peace. "Peace for peace" was Shamir's policy, and he envisaged a future of permanent subordination of the Palestinians under effective Israeli control, since his view and that of his colleagues was that the West Bank and Gaza belonged to Israel. It was difficult, to say the least, for the Palestinians to recognize Israel when Israel refused to offer any compromise itself or to recognize the Palestinian as a people with rights and aspirations of their own. The Israelis until well into the late '80s clung to the view that the Palestinians were basically Jordanians, and that Palestinian nationalism and the idea of a Palestinian state were not only illegitimate but dangerous. So there was a grave ideological time warp on both sides. Both thought they were stuck in a zero sum game in which one side had to win and the other had to lose.

Q: Did you have dealings with the Jewish settlers?

WILCOX: Yes, we did. We would meet occasionally with settler representatives in Jerusalem, and members of my staff would sometimes visit settlements and talk to settlement leaders. It was important to learn more about it and to report on the internal politics and dynamics of this movement, which represented a threat to an ultimate peace. We also reported in great detail on the expansion of settlements.

Q: Were you viewed with hostility by the settlement leadership?

WILCOX: Absolutely. The leadership of the settler movement were religious fundamentalists and ultra-nationalist Jews who believed that they were fulfilling a Biblical prophecy by reclaiming the ancient Biblical homelands and had a God given right to take that land and to live on it. The Palestinians would somehow have to make do or leave. They were deeply angry at the U.S. for suggesting that settlements were a threat to peace and stability in the region. Up until the early 1980s, the U.S. government held that settlements were illegal. Unfortunately, President Reagan changed our policy, and our opposition to settlements thereafter was more attenuated and spasmodic.

Q: Did you find when you were there particularly dealing with the settlers, much of the impetus for this movement was being supported particularly in Jewish circles in New York I would have thought. Almost everything you did would be on a hair trigger, and the hair trigger would be almost in New York. New York City I am talking about.

WILCOX: The impetus for the settlement movement didn't come from New York, it came from the various Zionist revisionist ideologues and religious leaders like Rabbi Kook who created a new variant of Jewish philosophy which held that to recover the land of ancient Israel was a

divine mandate, central to the future of Judaism and linked to the coming of the messiah. This was a very powerful concept emotionally and religiously. It grew after the Israeli victory in 1967 and the takeover of the West Bank which the followers of this stream of Judaism saw as a miraculous act of redemption. It is true that this movement drew support and funds from some American Jewish donors and religious cohorts. Also, a significant number of the most enthusiastic and ideological settlers were American Jews from New York and elsewhere in the U.S., although many were born in Israel.

Q: Did you find yourself caught between you might say this ideological group which was essentially doing something which was against our policy, but the spearhead of which was often American, I mean holding dual passports. When things went wrong of one sort or another, did you have to go in and sort of help Americans who were really Israelis? Did this cause problems?

WILCOX: Any American citizens who requested assistance from an American consulate or embassy would always receive assistance, irrespective of their political views. But militant settlers who were also Americans tended to avoid the consulate. I don't know how many of the Americans who chose to live in Israel retained their American passports. Some did, some did not.

Q: I would have thought that you would have had a problem dealing with your staff Particularly your officers, I mean here in a way was comparable to the situation in South Africa in dealing with what was considered an oppressive government, the white government on the blacks. Here from the perspective of a junior officer, they are focused on the plight of the Palestinians. Yet it is very tricky. The older officers can understand the dynamics of American politics, but young people tend to see things in black and white. This is just; this isn't just. I would have thought that this would be a problem.

WILCOX: Any American diplomat who served in Jerusalem quickly became familiar with the realities of the Palestinian problem. Those who had some previous experience dealing with Israel knew the other side of the issue as well. My officers were young, but while they were deeply involved and had strong views about the situation, they were professionals, did not go off the deep end, and maintained a necessary degree of detachment. I made it a point in myself and encouraged my staff to report objectively and honestly about what was going on, and we called our shots as we saw them. We worked hard to be honest and objective, without glossing over the unpleasant realities of the Israeli occupation and Palestinian failings as well. We saw ourselves as American diplomats representing U.S. interests in the midst of a problem that required a solution.

Q: How did you find your reporting, yours and with your officers. How was that received both in the embassy in Tel Aviv and in Washington? Did you find you had to fine tune the reporting; how did you deal with that?

WILCOX: I paid a great deal of attention to our reporting, and I wanted to make sure that our reporting was not special pleading on behalf of the Palestinians, while at the same time accurately conveying the situation and Palestinians views. I also sought to put our reporting in the larger context of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. I thought I was in a good position to do that

having worked on the Israeli side of the street for some years. I was proud of the reporting the consulate general did at that time. I thought it was timely, analytically rigorous, and directed to the Department's policy concerns. Our reporting officers were in the field constantly. Some of them spoke Arabic and Hebrew. We knew the political and business community in the West Bank and East Jerusalem very well, and reported voluminously on what they were doing and what they were saying.

The response to the reporting was varied. Among colleagues in the department it was appreciated. There were often positive comments, but there were also those in my time and during the tours of all previous consuls general whose reporting I previously read in Washington who thought the consulate's reporting was biased toward the Palestinians. In any case, we believed our professional vocation was to report objectively and honestly. I also thought my job description obliged me to make policy recommendations from time to time and I did so. Those recommendations were sometimes welcomed and sometimes not welcomed, but that is to be expected. I tried to make recommendations with recognition of competing factors, including, sometimes, Israeli equities that Washington policymakers would have to balance and to give my best advice.

Q: Can you comment on any of the recommendations that you made positive and negative back in Washington?

WILCOX: During the Intifada, a young Israeli reservist at a bus stop near Tel Aviv killed a group of Palestinians and serious rioting broke out in Gaza. Israeli forces responded in an excessive and heavy handed way, killing seventeen Palestinians. Palestinian emotions, already running high in the midst of the Intifada, grew even more intense. The local leadership was already involved in a hunger strike against Israeli policies. The PLO introduced a resolution in the UN Security Council condemning the use of excessive force by the Israeli forces. I recommended that we engage in negotiations on this resolution rather than veto it as we were increasingly doing. If we were unable to achieve balanced language, we should abstain from the resolution. Our policy was to oppose the use of excessive force against the Intifada in violation of recognized human rights standards. We were also working to defuse the conflict and to encourage the Palestinians to consider a political solution. I reasoned that a veto would further reduce U.S. influence among the Palestinians and undermine our efforts to get the Israelis to pursue a more sensible response to the Intifada. My recommendation for an abstention was not welcomed in Washington and the U.S. cast a veto in New York. The upshot was that the local Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and Gaza decided to boycott further official contacts with the U.S. officials, including the consulate. This was a foolish, counterproductive move on their part, but it demonstrated their sense of anger, despair and powerlessness.

Some time later while on consultations in Washington, John Kelly, the Assistant Secretary in NEA, who had earlier urged me to give my best advice to Washington, told me, by way of cautioning me, that Robert Gates, the then Deputy National Security Adviser in the White House, had said that "Wilcox has gone off the deep end." I surmised that my recommendation for an abstention in the Security Council vote, which I thought I had presented in a thoughtful way, taking into account my long experience in Washington dealing with U.S. votes in the UN, was regarded as a radical proposal.

Q: Well, it sounds as though we were locked into almost the same sort of diplomatic response that the Israelis and the Palestinians were. At a certain point we wouldn't engage in any talk. It sounds like a rather sad commentary on diplomacy.

WILCOX: We were frustrated by the tendency of the Palestinians, with the help of some of the Europeans, to go to the Security Council every time there was an issue that should have been addressed through negotiations. We had been trying for years to promote negotiations on the Palestinian issue, but were making little headway with either the Palestinians or the Israelis. The Israelis would not recognize the Palestinians, much less the PLO, as their negotiating partner, the Palestinians expected the U.S. and the international community to do their negotiations with Israel for them, and the U.S. at that time would not deal with the PLO, whom all Palestinians regarded as the address for negotiations. The tendency of the Arabs and the Palestinians to run to the Security Council every time they had a serious grievance, combined with domestic pressures in the U.S. to veto all UN resolutions critical of Israel, tended to increase alienation between the U.S. and the Palestinians and their Arab friends.

I always thought we should have used the Security Council more creatively, with our influence and our leadership, to craft resolutions in the Security Council which would go beyond sterile Israel bashing and help the situation. Instead, the policy in Washington was that when it came to Security Council resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we should not negotiate and that the “worst” draft resolutions were the “best” because they were easier to veto.

Q: What was the state, I am a little bit foggy on the chronology, one the Intifada, the uprising. When did or was this to take place? The other one was the beginning of talks with the Arab, the PLO in Tunisia and all of this.

WILCOX: The Intifada began in November, 1987, with riots in Gaza and in the West Bank city of Nablus sparked by the deaths of Palestinian youths in confrontations with the IDF. It spread spontaneously, with strikes, marches, barricades, and stonings of Israeli forces.

In a matter of months a full scale mass protest movement emerged, led by a clandestine Intifada leadership dominated by the PLO Fatah faction. Protesters had no firearms, but used stones against the IDF. The leadership also issued regular leaflets which contained propaganda and calls for strikes, boycotts against Israeli products, and the withholding of Palestinian day laborers from work in Israeli factories and homes and fields. The leaflets contained a lot of rhetoric, as well as the core of the Intifada's ideology and tactical advice to the Palestinians. We read these documents with great care and reported them.

The Israelis were caught by surprise, since the Palestinians had been relatively passive since 1967, and had never before mounted a sustained protest movement. The IDF was forced to deploy many more Israeli troops in the West Bank and Gaza than they ever had in the past. Its strategy was to respond with major force, for fear of being seen as weak, instead of ignoring the riots and letting them play out, which would have been a sounder strategy. So thousands of young Israeli conscripts and older reservists found themselves involved in street battles with stone-throwing Palestinian kids. The IDF saw themselves as a fighting army and they were cast

in this new role as policemen to put down street riots. They were unprepared. Although the policy was to use live fire only in self defense, the death toll from live fire grew. Many Palestinians were also killed or wounded by rubber, steel-cored, bullets that were widely used. The IDF also used beatings, curfews, massive arrests, and the confinement of people in whole villages or areas, a form of collective punishment.

Rather than subduing the Intifada, these Israeli practices intensified it, and the IDF was put, increasingly, on the defensive. The uprising had a profound effect on Israeli public opinion which in the past has assumed that the occupation could be maintained without much effort and that the Palestinians had been subdued. Now they were sending their sons and husbands to subdue Palestinian teenagers and they found this troubling. The troops themselves disliked the new role they had been cast in, and a process of soul searching about the occupation began.

At the same time, the Palestinians began to sharpen their propaganda and to articulate more carefully their cause to sympathetic Israeli journalists and to the western media. The western press reported on the Intifada intensively and the specter of heavily armed Israeli armed forces beating up unarmed Palestinian youths created a lot of sympathy in the United States and Western Europe for the Palestinians. [As a result of] this renewed interest and attention to the Palestinian cause, many for the first time saw the human dimension of the occupation and all its anomalies. In Israel, people began to ask how the occupation could be sustained - and the peace movement and political ferment grew.

Some Israelis advocated harsher crackdowns on the Palestinians, but many others said this [was] an untenable [price] for a liberal democracy to pay in terms of repression and violation of human rights and began to advocate a political solution. The Palestinians, themselves gained a new sense of pride. [They] gained new respect and increased understanding in the world, where they had often projected a negative image. This external recognition, plus the fact that the Palestinians had for the first time stood up to the Israelis, gave the Palestinians a new sense of confidence and, in return, realism and honesty about their situation with the Israelis. The fact that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza took the initiative in the Intifada themselves, without prompting or direction from the external PLO, added to their sense of confidence. As a result, Palestinians began to talk among themselves and to us about recognizing Israel and a negotiated peace which would result in the creation of a Palestinian state which would live peacefully with Israel. Such talk was almost never heard in the '70s or the '80s when I had first met Palestinians. We engaged with Palestinians and encouraged them.

There had been signs over the years of pragmatism and moderation within the PLO, but the mold of rejectionism had not been broken, in part, I think, because the U.S. did not engage with the PLO. A major change in Palestinian doctrine came at the Algiers meeting of the Palestinian National Congress in 1988 when an aide of Arafat's, Bassam Abu Sharif, published a paper, with official blessing, that called for the creation of two states, the recognition of Israel, and peace between them. At first, Washington was skeptical and paid little attention, but this was a seminal document that reflected an important shift in Palestinian thinking.

The Intifada was the impetus for this change. The Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza, for the first time, began to assert themselves with the external PLO. They were in constant touch with

Arafat and the PLO leadership and were urging them to be more creative and to seek a political solution with the Israelis. Arafat and his leadership reacted positively, recognizing that they had to be responsive to their constituents in the occupied territories who had initiated and were bearing the brunt of the Intifada. A new synthesis emerged in the PLO that led to its commitment to forswear terrorism and recognize resolution 242 and to the beginnings of a U.S.-PLO dialogue in Tunis. That dialogue was suspended when the gang of Abu Abas, a radical member of the PLO executive committee, staged an abortive attack against Israel on the beach at Herzliyya, near Tel Aviv.

To summarize, the Intifada created real political movement on both the Israeli and Palestinian side in the direction of accommodation. It was an important event in the history of the conflict and the peace process.

Q: What was your role during this time, when the Intifada had reached full proportions. Could you talk about how we were seeing it there? Was there a different perspective from our embassy in Tel Aviv and also with Israeli officials, sort of how did you fit into this and what were you reporting?

WILCOX: The embassy in Tel Aviv received the full weight of Israeli views and reported them. I think the embassy in Tel Aviv also understood that the Intifada was a serious crisis and that it created a new situation which [called] for renewed diplomatic efforts. Tel Aviv was also responsible for covering Gaza, so it had a window into Palestinian affairs. Naturally, since most of the embassy's interlocutors were Israelis, they tended to pay more attention to Israeli urgings and demarches, but I do not think the embassy's reporting was biased or unbalanced. I made a point of visiting the embassy almost weekly and consulting with our ambassador. The ambassador was Tom Pickering when I arrived, and Bill Brown during the latter part of my tour there. I felt it was very important for the embassy and the consulate general to avoid an adversary relationship and become the advocates of their respective clients. I urged my staff and embassy likewise to get our two staffs together so that we could talk about a common U.S. approach to these things. There was not always agreement, but there was regular contact by phone and in person, and I felt it was critical to maintain this. There had been times in the past where there was severe tension between the consulate general and the embassy. In some respects it was kind of built in to this situation. I was aware of this and worked hard to avoid it.

Q: What was the great focus of the press, TV news, CNN with particularly cable news. I mean you can always lead with a story showing Palestinian youths throwing rocks at Israeli troops and groups of Israeli troops firing back. I mean here you were, this was your area of responsibility. Did you find it difficult dealing with the press?

WILCOX: I dealt with them regularly as I always had in Washington. I tried to give them the most objective appraisal I could to expound U.S. policy. The press did a particularly good job of reporting on the Intifada. The U.S. press helped illuminate the issues to the American public, as did the Israeli media for the Israelis. Media reporting helped create the political catharsis on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides that was quite encouraging.

Q: What did you and your staff do during this time to sort of get out the word. You know, this is

an opportunity. Whom were you talking to about this?

WILCOX: There wasn't an elected or formally recognized leadership structure in the West Bank. The old municipal leadership had been undermined by Israeli deportation, and the Israelis discouraged the emergence of other leaders by arrests and deportations. This lack of a coherent recognized political structure on the inside made it difficult to find the points of authority and key interlocutors.

The Intifada leadership were young people who were unidentified and carefully concealed. There was an overt tier of respected pro-PLO Palestinians, however, including journalists, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, notables, and political figures like Faisal Husseini who were influential and served as a kind of local leadership. We saw these people regularly. They and the younger clandestine Intifada leadership were all trying to persuade the PLO to move further toward compromise.

There was chronic rivalry among Palestinians, as there had been historically, that threatened their unity and sense of purpose. This rivalry, based on regional and clan ties, weakened the cohesiveness of the community and its ability to deal with their situation. Arafat and the external PLO encouraged this rivalry, since they did not want strong political leaders to emerge in the occupied territories. Disunity was a constant problem when we had American visitors either from the Congress or the executive branch who wanted to talk to Palestinians. Our job was to invite Palestinians who have some stature and who might in some way be representative to meet with Americans. But because of rivalries, it was not always easy to get a group of Palestinians who would come to meet with senior Americans. Often they were interested in who else was coming. That was part of our burden in the consulate general, but we generally succeeded. We had to work very hard with the Palestinians to identify a team of Palestinians to meet with Secretary Baker when he began his round of diplomacy.

Most Palestinians viewed the U.S. as partisan and pro-Israel, and this complicated our relations with them, but most realized the value of contacts with the consulate, and during my first year in Jerusalem we had superb access. However, after the U.S. veto of the Security Council resolution following the killing of the Palestinians at Rishon Lezion and in Gaza in the midst of the Intifada, the most prominent Palestinians decided to boycott all further contacts with Americans. This interrupted some of our contacts, but we stayed in touch with many others and with intermediaries of the boycott group.

Q: During this time of great tension and confrontation, I would have thought you would have been quite concerned about Americans who were settlers there. Just by the filtering process as you say, these tended to be the most zealous of the group who have come over and made this choice. Were you kind of keeping an eye out of saying You know I am a little worried about this guy or group or something. They might start shooting, because they were armed.

WILCOX: One of my colleagues, Bob Silverman, who spent a good deal of time following the settler movement, once approached a settlement and was accosted at gun point by a settler and forced to leave. At my request the embassy protested this to the government of Israel.

Q: What about dealing with the Israeli officials in Jerusalem?

WILCOX: The only relationship we had with Israeli officials was with the municipality of Jerusalem. That tradition was established many years ago, so I would regularly deal with Mayor Teddy Kollek and his deputies. We had housekeeping, security, and logistic problems, so we needed to have contact with the municipality. Those relations were usually cordial and direct.

On the other hand, we did not have formal relationships with the foreign ministry and the foreign ministry instructed its personnel not to deal with consulate officers. Nonetheless, having worked earlier in Israeli affairs, I had friends in the government of Israel and occasionally they would come to my residence, but they did so after hours. There was no formal relationship. Israeli doctrine of the indivisibility of Jerusalem and permanent Israeli control of Jerusalem was vigorously asserted, and the Israelis resented the fact that the Americans had an independent diplomatic mission in Jerusalem that reported directly to Washington, while we maintained our embassy in Tel Aviv. There was always tension there, but it has existed for many years. By and large, Israeli diplomats were professionals, very sophisticated people. They generally handled this in a civilized way.

There was one major exception. Several members of my staff who lived in West Jerusalem reported over a period of months that their apartments had been broken into and items were moved in a way designed to show that someone had been there surreptitiously. Nothing was stolen. When I was convinced that there was a pattern to this, I called on the Director of Protocol at the Foreign Ministry to alert him to this problem. I strongly suspected that Israeli security personnel had entered the apartments as a form of harassment or game playing. I wanted to let the Foreign Ministry know of my concern [by] alleging official involvement. Thereafter, there were no further entries.

Q: When did you go to Jerusalem.

WILCOX: In 1988 in April.

Q: I'm not sure whether you missed it but it is almost a rite of passage that in any election year around the time of spring is when the primaries come. That's when every candidate for anything goes to New York and promises that they are going to see that our embassy is moved to Jerusalem. That hasn't happened, I mean it comes up all the time. It may happen some time. Did that come up in your watch?

WILCOX: It came up constantly. We kept our embassy in Tel Aviv in 1948 after the [Israeli] government moved to Jerusalem, and maintained the independent status of the consulate general in Jerusalem to demonstrate that the status of Jerusalem had to be resolved in negotiations, not unilateral acts. When Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967, we regarded that part of the city as occupied territory.

Today, the Palestinians demand the recovery of East Jerusalem and the establishment of the capital of the Palestinian state there. They no longer seek to recover West Jerusalem where many tens of thousands of Palestinians lived before 1948 and were forced out of their homes to East

Jerusalem or the West Bank or elsewhere.

There was a wall between the East and West sides of the city between 1948 and 1967, and Jews were denied access to their holy sites. Some Israelis fear that if the Palestinians are given East Jerusalem they will re-divide the city. The Palestinians, [however], say they want and need an open city in which the two communities can deal with each other. Jerusalem has enormous emotional significance for both Israelis and Palestinians, and it is wrong to assert that one side or another has a superior claim to Jerusalem or that one or another has more historical significance. The fact is that it is of supreme political and religious importance for both Palestinians and Israelis will ultimately require a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem and perhaps some novel arrangements for shared sovereignty in certain areas. This can be done, although it is increasingly difficult because of the construction of huge Israeli settlements in large areas of East Jerusalem on confiscated Arab land.

Because a solution of the Jerusalem issue is critical to a comprehensive Palestinian-Israeli peace settlement, the U.S. must continue to insist that the final status of East Jerusalem must be settled by mutual agreement. If we move our embassy to Jerusalem before that happens, we will undermine or role as intermediary and therefore risk prolonging conflict, with resultant damage to our interests in the Middle East and a stable peace for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Q: How did the Gulf War between Iraq and the United States and other powers impact on you?

WILCOX: Staying with Jerusalem, for a minute, there has been a lot of rhetoric about the unity of Jerusalem. But it is, in fact, a deeply divided city in which 30-40% of the population are Arabs who oppose Israeli rule. The city is divided politically, socially, and psychologically, and there is chronic tension. The Jewish-Arab geographical division is far less distinct now because of the settlers in East Jerusalem. The current arrangement is unsatisfactory in every way. I have always believed that a political division of the two peoples in the city will bring about a closer social, economic and cultural relations between them and create a much happier city. The city would remain open, in any case, since the Arabs want an open city as much as the Israelis do.

Q: When you are talking about Jerusalem, did you and your staff have any problem with the tensions there during the time you were there or with the extreme orthodox element?

WILCOX: The ultra orthodox ignored us, but the settlers disliked us because the U.S. opposed settlements and advocated a territorial compromise with the Arabs. However, we watched security very carefully. I think Washington often exaggerated the threat to American citizens in Jerusalem through the frequent issuance of travel advisories, especially during the Intifada. At one time there was pressure to actually move my staff who lived in East Jerusalem into West Jerusalem. I successfully resisted this.

Q: That would be a political move, too.

WILCOX: It would have had profound political significance and would have crippled our mission. The mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, was quite unhappy with our security advisories on Jerusalem, and he once called me in and told me that there had been 11 homicides in

Jerusalem in I think it was 1989 whereas, there had been X-hundred homicides in the city of Washington that year. He said we should pay more attention to security in our own country and avoid our alarmist security advisories about Jerusalem because it hurt tourism, which was and is hugely important to Jerusalem's economy.

Q: Well, then let's go to the Gulf War. Could you explain one, what the Gulf War was, and then talk about its impact on your operations.

WILCOX: In 1990 and 91, President Bush, mobilized a brilliantly successful coalition of western states who deployed multinational forces led mainly by the U.S. ultimately to drive the Iraqis out of Kuwait. That required vigorous diplomacy with our allies in the UN Security Council. The coalition victory against Saddam Hussein and was a great victory for the United States and the west. The Gulf War drew in Israel because Saddam began to launch SCUD missiles against Israel. The United States, fearing that Israeli retaliation against Iraq would undermine the U.S. Arab cooperation against Saddam, urged that the Israelis forebear from retaliating against Iraq. Deputy Secretary Eagleburger visited Israel in an effort to persuade them not to, and succeeded.

Q: You were saying the Israelis did not respond to these attacks in part because of the Americans and in part because...

WILCOX: The Israelis decided not to respond to the Iraqi attacks in part, because of our urging, but also in part because of the lack of militarily effective means of retaliating. The SCUDs were being launched from the deserts of Iraq. They were very difficult to pinpoint. Aerial attacks from Israel against Iraqi sites would require over flights of Jordan or Syria which those countries certainly would not have permitted, and therefore would have meant a violation of the airspace. The Israelis probably recognized they couldn't find these sites, some of which were mobile, and that bombing them wouldn't be an effective response. They probably also recognized that they did not have the capability of sending ground forces to Iraq to destroy these missile sites, even if they could locate them. Another over flight route would have been over Saudi Arabia.

So, they did not retaliate, departing from the normal tradition of hitting back hard. The Israeli public hunkered down and withstood the missile attacks. Miraculously, they killed no one, but did considerable damage in Tel Aviv in certain neighborhoods. The Iraqi SCUDs were primitive and poorly guided. To help Israel, the U.S. deployed batteries of Patriot anti-missile missiles in Tel Aviv. There was a controversy about how effective these missiles actually were, but it was a political gesture by the United States which helped reinforce the Israeli policy of not retaliating against Iraq.

Q: What about your staff in this? What changes in your work was happening?

WILCOX: There was real concern about the safety of Americans, and a good many Americans from Tel Aviv were evacuated with their wives. A number of my own staff were evacuated also including spouses. My wife Cynda also left, reluctantly. No missiles were launched against Jerusalem. I predicted this, because Jerusalem was also an Arab city, and the site of many Islamic holy places. But, there was real concern. These missiles were also quite inaccurate. We

could see their trails passing overhead in the night. You could never tell where they were going to land, so there was much anxiety.

Q: Were you hit with a wave of visa requests?

WILCOX: Some Israelis left the country. Tourism virtually stopped. But for the most part the Israelis hunkered down. There was a massive, well organized civil defense effort. There was great concern about chemical warheads on these missiles, and Israelis were issued gas masks and vinyl sheeting to seal up their houses and Atabrine, a medical antidote, were available. The Israelis did an excellent job in reacting to this. There was no panic.

Q: How about within the West Bank community? One, reaction to Iraq's war and two, how they reacted to the missile threat and what the Israelis were doing to them.

WILCOX: Before the war started, Palestinian intellectuals were for the most part contemptuous of Saddam Hussein. They saw him as an Arab tyrant, not a leader they wanted to emulate. But when the war began and the missile attacks started, there was a spontaneous support among many Palestinians for Saddam. There was shock and chagrin of course, on the part of the Israelis and West that the Palestinians could support Saddam. But this behavior was quite understandable, if regrettable, given the Palestinians enmity for their Israeli occupiers and their apparent helplessness to do anything about it. Arafat, you will recall, actually went to Baghdad and was photographed embracing Saddam., a step he later regretted when Saddam lost the war. The Palestinians support for Iraq alienated them, for awhile, from the U.S. A more important consequence was the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from Kuwait.

Q: Did you have either a problem or a situation to deal with let's say before the missile attacks, because there was a period of a few months almost six months I suppose. The Iraqis went into Kuwait in August of 1990, and we really didn't start attacking until January guess, of 1991. The United States was sort of shocked to see particularly these Jordanians jumping around with joy about what Saddam had done to Kuwait. Did you have the same thing in Jerusalem and the West Bank?

WILCOX: Palestinian support for Saddam was influenced, I think, by the inferior status that the Palestinians had been given in Kuwait where there were thousands and thousands of Palestinians, professionals, working people, businessmen. Very few had been given Kuwaiti citizenship, although they made important contributions to Kuwait. As for Jordan, King Hussein's support for Saddam also infuriated Washington, but given Jordan's critical economic relationship with Iraq and support among the masses for Saddam, the King had less room for maneuver than the U.S. realized.

Q: Did you find yourself having to say come on fellows, Saddam Hussein is our enemy, and you are not helping yourselves. I am talking during this time.

WILCOX: Of course that was our message. We said it was crazy for the Palestinians to support Saddam Hussein when it was in the interest of the Palestinians to make common cause with the United States which was better positioned than anyone else to try to help the Palestinians make

peace with the Israelis and do justice to the Palestinians. It was a disaster for the Palestinians.

Q: What was your take when you went out into Jerusalem on Arafat and his leadership, and did this change over the time you were there?

WILCOX: Arafat and his PLO leadership were in part responsible for the stalemate and lack of movement toward a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. Arafat as I said earlier, his leaders clung for years to the notion that Israel was not a legitimate entity, that it should not be recognized, and the policy should be steadfast confrontation. There were people in the Palestinian national movement and the Palestinian diaspora who saw clearly some years ago before the Intifada that this was a hopeless position. Israel was a strong powerful state. It was there to stay and had powerful friends, and if the Palestinians wanted to salvage something from the disaster that had befallen them, they would have to treat with Israel for peace and try to divide the land. This view did not prevail in the PLO until 1988. The moderate voices were overruled and some of the moderates were even assassinated by PLO extremist groups, such as Abu Nidal's gang. Arafat's first goal was to preserve a tenuous unity among the PLO factions and to stay on top. He had devoted his career to keeping this diverse group of Palestinian exile organizations. They ranged from the moderately peaceful to the most violent and fanatic. Arafat did this quite successfully over the years.

If Arafat had been a leader of broader vision, he might have faced down the radical factions of the PLO much earlier and pursued a more pragmatic policy toward peace with Israel. If he had done so, he might have found a willing partner in Israel, but he also might not have. Israel is also to be blamed for rejectionism, since for years, there was no interest in Israel in dealing with the PLO, which was regarded as a terrorist organization, and the great majority of the Israelis were in denial about Palestinian nationalism and the need for a Palestinian state and a withdrawal from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. So was the United States, which had forsworn any political contacts with the PLO or Arafat. Like Israel, the U.S. failed to understand the reality and depth of Palestinian nationalism and the centrality of the PLO, and continued to pursue the chimera of a Jordanian solution to the Palestinian issue. So, the radicals, the hard liners prevailed for decades among the Palestinians and the Israelis until the Intifada and the Gulf War precipitated changes that led to the Madrid conference and the Oslo Declaration of Principles.

Q: Did Jordan have any, did you see the hand of Jordan any time you were there?

WILCOX: Yes, Jordan itself has a fascinating history of pragmatic relations with the early Zionists and the state of Israel going all the way back to King Abdullah. He was the only Arab leader during the 1930s and '40s who recognized that Zionism and Israel had to be dealt with. Abdullah was also fierce opponent of the Palestinian national movement and saw the Palestinians and the Hashemites as competitors for Palestine, and for this reason he saw that he had a common interest with the Zionists.

In 1948 Jordan assumed that it would remain the sovereign power in the West Bank and Abdullah let the new Israeli government know that he was interested in peace. King Hussein inherited his grandfather's interest in coexistence with Israel, and viewed Palestinian nationalism as a threat to the Hashemite Kingdom. He unwisely bowed to Egyptian and Arab pressure and

allowed Jordan to be dragged into the 1967 war, and lost the West Bank to Israel. Jordanian-Palestinian enmity grew worse when in 1970, the PLO, in the Black September movement, challenged Jordan militarily, and lost. Over the next two decades, Hussein gradually began to recognize that it was not in Jordan's strategic interest to recover the West Bank. This would have meant the absorption of two million Palestinians into Jordan which already was composed of a populace that was at least half Palestinian. To have absorbed this additional burden of Palestinians would have threatened the future of the Hashemite dynasty. So, in 1987 as the Intifada was taking root, King Hussein made an historic announcement that he no longer aspired to recover the West Bank, and that the Palestinians were on their own. This reflected his vision as a statesman and a politician.

Q: Although he renounced it, we didn't.

WILCOX: Right. We were still behind the Jordanians. Now we were not committed in any articulate way to the Jordan option, but it was implicitly what we wanted. It was also the arrangement the Israeli Labor party wanted. By the mid-1980s the Labor Party was willing to cede part of the West Bank to Jordan, because it recognized that the status quo was not tenable. They trusted Hussein, and saw the solution in a Jordanian-Palestinian arrangement, with Jordan as the senior partner.

Q: Was there a let down, a disappointment. Iraq collapsed rather quickly. I mean there was supposed to be this great battle, and it turned out that the Iraqis didn't stand up to the allied forces at all, although Saddam Hussein maintained it so. I would have thought that you would on the part of the people in East Jerusalem and the West bank had invested quite a lot of emotional capital in this. Did you see a let down?

WILCOX: There was deep despair. There had been this euphoria, an unrealistic view that somehow the Arab world, the Islamic world would rally to Saddam Hussein. The U.S. victory created a sense of disappointment, and political defeat. By that time the Intifada, which had caused great suffering, was faltering, and it was clear that the Israelis would not yield to the Palestinians. Israeli repression, economic restrictions, various forms of collective punishment had been effective in blunting the Intifada. Internecine rivalries among the Palestinians also played a part. And radical Palestinian groups began killing other Palestinians for political reasons, and to settle scores. It was an ugly business. The early sense of hope and euphoria had faded. So, at the end of the Gulf War, whereas the Intifada had inspired a sense of sort of hope and confidence earlier, this spirit was replaced by disillusionment.

It was at this time that Bush administration recognized the opportunity which the victory of the U.S. in the Gulf and the fall of the Soviet Union offered for a resurrection of the peace process. Bush and Baker seized the moment, using the greatly enhanced power of the U.S. and the favorable new geo-political situation to launch a new peace initiative, and they did so in a very determined way.

Q: When did you leave Jerusalem to get a feel for the timing?

WILCOX: I left Jerusalem in September of 1991, after Secretary Baker had visited there five

times for negotiations with local Palestinians and with the Shamir government, a process that ultimately led to the Madrid conference, the beginning of the renewed peace process.

Q: What was your impression of Secretary Baker's engagement, and this was really his first time. I mean we had the collapse of the Soviet Union which was enough on anyone's plate, and in a way he was sort of dragged in to this thing by the Gulf War.

WILCOX: The collapse of the Soviet Union was as you say a factor in emerging American supremacy, and it greatly enhanced our diplomatic leverage in dealing with the Middle East where the Soviets were no longer a factor on behalf of the radical Arabs.

Q: Could you talk about your impression of Secretary Baker, particularly from what you saw because oral history is trying to focus on the view, and also members of his team, Dennis Ross and others.

WILCOX: Baker was a tough, skilled negotiator who understood that here was an opportunity for American leadership and for another effort to resolve this chronic, decades-old problem. The convergence of forces which I have mentioned brought about a genuine, full blown negotiating effort. Baker and Bush deserve great credit for taking this initiative. As Baker became more involved, he got the bit in his mouth and began to push both sides hard. He ultimately succeeded in bringing the parties together at an international conference, one of his finest achievements as Secretary of State.

Q: Did you have much contact with him?

WILCOX: Yes, in Jerusalem when he came, he would meet with Palestinians at my residence. He was tough, persistent negotiator, human, and frank. The Palestinians respected him; I think he respected them too. He understood that they had something to say, and I think, had some sympathy for their position. Of course, I was never with him when he was with the Israelis, but he had the same style with the Israelis. Shamir resisted Baker, all the way, but Baker prevailed, and dragged Shamir against his will to the Madrid Conference.

Q: Well, in a way, this was a real historic thing in that the secretary of state was treating the Palestinians as real people.

WILCOX: The U.S. had never had high level contact with the Palestinians in the past, above the level of the consulate general, at least until the dialogue began in Tunis in 1988, but that was quite limited in content. George Shultz made a gesture to the Palestinians in 1987, I think it was that year, when he offered to meet with a group of Palestinians at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem. They foolishly boycotted him and no one came. So Baker's contacts were really the first at the level of Secretary of State. Shultz met once in Washington with Edward Said and Abraham Abu Loughud, but they were Palestinian-American citizens.

Q: Did you have a responsibility to get the right Palestinians there to talk. You talk about these factions and going through a period of depression, I would have thought it would be difficult to get the right group together.

WILCOX: Very difficult. There was jealousy and no recognizable center in the Palestinian community. I think that's the way Arafat wanted it, and the Israelis had also done their share to prevent the emergence of a strong local leadership, for example, by arresting and often deporting nationalist political leaders, and undermining local government by appointing puppet mayors. One of the most able and respected Palestinians, Faisal Hussein, had been repeatedly jailed by the Israelis for his nationalist views, as had others.

The idea of meeting with Baker was controversial because the Palestinians had a sense of grievance against the U.S., which they saw as pro-Israel. Indeed, at the time the Bush-Baker initiative was conceived, the Palestinians were still boycotting official contacts with all American officials, including the consulate. Also, they had no local representative institutions for choosing leaders to negotiate for them, and none of the local leaders were ever sure where they stood vis a vis the PLO. The meetings that ultimately happened required Arafat's approval, so there was a lot of to and froing with Tunis, by fax and phone, which the Israelis doubtless monitored. So, it was touch and go, and I was never certain whether the first of these meetings would come off.

My principal interlocutor with the Palestinians had been Faisal Hussein, the son of Abdul Khader Hussein, the famous Palestinian military leader, was killed in the battle at Kastel near Jerusalem in the 1948 war. Faisal Hussein was an educated man, committed to the Palestinian cause, from the dominant Palestinian clan that had produced the leader of the nationalist movement in the late thirties and early forties, Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem.

I called on Faisal Hussein soon after my arrival in Jerusalem after he had been released from prison and established a relationship with him. He had had no contacts with the consulate for many years, and was still considered a dangerous radical by the Israelis. I found him a thoughtful man who had studied the Palestinian-Israeli conflict very deeply and was beginning to evolve a new and realistic view of the need for peace and compromise. Notwithstanding his long imprisonment, he took a statesmanlike view of things and avoided the anti-Israeli hatred and the doctrinaire bombast one often heard from Palestinians. While in prison, he had learned Hebrew, and he was developing close contacts with Israeli liberals and the Peace Now movement.

Husseini had a lot of stature in the Palestinian community, in part because he was smart, steady, and incorruptible, and in part because he was the son of Abdul Quader and the grand nephew of the Mufti. But his aristocratic family lineage was also an obstacle, especially among young radical Palestinians who believed that the time of the old families and "notables" had come and gone, since they had failed to rescue the Palestinians.

When Assistant Secretary John Kelly called me from Washington and announced that Baker wanted to meet with a representative group of Palestinians, I began working to assemble a delegation, putting the word out by phone or in meetings with intermediaries with whom we had kept in touch despite the boycott.

One evening late at night, Faisal Hussein called me at my residence and said it is time to - I think he used the phrase - "turn a new page," that the Palestinian-U.S. impasse should give way

to dialogue, and that the Palestinians recognized Baker's initiative as an opportunity and would agree to meet with him. This showed courage and leadership on his part, and indicated he had overcome the rejectionists who wanted no contact with the U.S. It also indicated that he had been given the green light from the PLO in Tunis. So working with him, we gradually assembled the right group of Palestinians, and the first meeting took place with Jim Baker. He made five trips while I was in Jerusalem, and there were further meetings when Molly Williamson took over as my successor. Through his meetings with the Palestinians and separate meetings with the Israelis, Baker put together agreed terms of reference for the Madrid peace conference, a major diplomatic breakthrough.

Q: What was the role of Dennis Ross at this point?

WILCOX: Dennis Ross had become Secretary Baker's principal aide and advisor on the peace process. Others on the team were Dan Kurtzer, who later became Deputy Assistant Secretary. Dan is now Ambassador to Egypt. John Kelly, the Assistant Secretary of State, and David Welch who at that time was working on the NSC staff with Dennis Ross.

Q: Did you find yourself having sort of post mortems after these meetings with the Palestinians. You know they would come to you and say what was that all about? I mean it is a normal thing, figure out what we would talk about.

WILCOX: Yes. I tried to set the stage for further meetings and to refine the issues and to urge them to focus more clearly and to sharpen up their understanding of what we were looking for. We didn't start immediately with the concept of an international conference in Madrid. That emerged. Baker's approach was "Here is an opportunity for peace. It is good for you and good for your neighbors and good for us. Let's be realistic and pragmatic, and see what we can put together." This big sticking point, of course, was that the Israelis would not talk to the PLO, who by then Washington had finally realized represented the Palestinians. Also the Israelis feared an international conference, fearing a gang up. Ultimately Baker sold the Israelis a formula for an opening conference, to be followed by bilateral negotiations.

As Baker's meetings with the Palestinians developed, it was implicit that the Palestinians were not speaking for themselves, but the PLO. Baker understood this, but persuaded the Palestinians to go along with the fiction that the PLO was not involved, so that the Israelis could be brought on board. In the end, all sides agreed to a formula that Baker finally sold, though the Palestinians didn't like it, that the Palestinians would not have their own delegation at Madrid, but would be joined with the Jordanians. At Madrid, the facade of Jordanian primacy was quickly broken and it became clear to the world that the Palestinians were speaking for Palestinians, not Jordan.

Q: Did you have a feeling that you were helping to create Palestinian or at least a West Bank Jerusalem leadership?

WILCOX: We didn't create it, but we encouraged it to think realistically and to engage with the United States and ultimately with Israel. I think that was really the main mission and accomplishment of the consulate general at that time, to cultivate, encourage the local leadership to move in the right direction. This took a lot of sympathy, encouragement and diplomacy. We

wanted the Palestinians to know we respected them and that we saw them as a people with equities and a cause that deserved our respect and attention. They needed this, because they felt, justifiably, that their cause had been neglected and misunderstood, and there was a lot of resentment.

The Palestinians on their part did not understand the United States. They had limited grasp of the West and they did not know how to project their cause or articulate it. They had done a lousy job of this over the years, in part because they lacked knowledge of the U.S., and in part because their cause was so clear to them that they assumed everyone else should understand and accept it. Also, I think those elements who used terrorism as a political weapon gravely undermined their cause. For many in the U.S., the Palestinian movement was identified with terrorism rather than the legitimate claims of a people who also deserved our support and respect just as the Israelis did. And terrorism played into the hands of the Israeli hard right who preached that the Palestinians were determined to destroy Israel and that efforts to compromise with them were naïve and dangerous. This view was often promoted, of course, by the Likud and other right wing elements who wanted no compromise and for whom hanging on to the occupied territories was more important than peace. Demonizing the Palestinians provided a rationale for their expansionist ideology.

So giving the Palestinians a sense that they were important and we respected them and they had equities and rights was very important. Baker's willingness to engage with them helped a lot. Of course, that was our job at the consulate.

Q: Were you seeing any growth in a political movement in the United States? You know there is a Jewish Israeli one; there is the Greek one, Irish one, and there are a considerable number of Arabs in the United States from various places in the Arab world, and yet they never seemed to be very cohesive.

WILCOX: It hasn't been very cohesive because it is a very diverse community. The Arab world is vast and varied, and this is reflected in the ethnic, religious, national origin differences among members of the Arab-American community. The Arab American community has sought assimilation as its first goal and has not coalesced into a strong and influential lobbying group. So it hasn't been a major force in articulating the Palestinian point of view in the Congress or the executive branch.

Now they certainly have improved their performance. The National Association of Arab Americans and the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee has an articulate, thoughtful leadership now. They support the peace process and an equitable solution with Israel. There are similarly many American Jewish organizations that have been pro-peace and also backed the Madrid and Oslo processes. Many American Jews were relieved and pleased with this turn of events and strongly supported it during the Peres-Rabin era. When the Likud returned to power, official American Jewish opinion became somewhat more conservative. The voices of the moderate and liberal voices within the American Jewish community were not as prominent as they were during the days of Labor governments, and AIPAC has become more right wing.

DAVID WINN
Deputy Consul General
Jerusalem (1989-1992)

David M. Winn was born in Texas in 1942. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1964, received an MA from the University of Texas in 1966 and an MPA from Syracuse University in 1969. He served in the Peace Corps and then joined the Foreign Service in 1969. He has served overseas in Vietnam, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, France and Senegal. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: How was the Intifada?

WINN: Well, the Intifada had geared up pretty heavily by the time I got to Jerusalem. As I say, that was the only post in the Foreign Service I bitterly regret, for internal professional reasons. The situation on the ground had become bad of Deputy Principal Officer in Jerusalem - much too bad to take a sick spouse to (her MS had gotten much worse). I was long since used to bombs and rocks and whatever, but it developed so quickly, that from being the most heavily bid post in the Foreign Service - 82 souls bid for the job when I got it, "more than for the Court of St. James," as one diplomat put it Now you cant force people to go to Jerusalem. Virtually no one bid on my job when I left. So, it had become quite a source of concern although nothing like it is now. There were not any suicide bombers then. It was the risk of being brained by rocks every time you got on the road in Arab East Jerusalem, not in West Jerusalem. There were no problems in Israeli Jewish West Jerusalem, by the way where half of our staff lived, but my wife and I lived far out in East Jerusalem, where young Palestinians would throw rocks at my wife.

Q: Why was Jerusalem considered such a good job?

WINN: Oh, for years and years and years, you were in the thick of things, you were at the center of the Arab Israeli problem, it was a very nice city, it was then, but not now. Your reporting always got read in Washington. Its funny how that deputy's job over the years was regarded as a plum. We had a very nice house up in the hills overlooking Jerusalem and East Jerusalem, a beautiful house which had become a slum by the time I got there and was given up when I left. People were living the past, you know the Mandelbaum gate and all that. Everyone in that job looked back at the old British mandate in a way. The '67 War had been just one huge adventure, as indeed were the events of 48. The Consulate was a historic building. Its been there for 100 years. The fact that the job seemed to destroy everyone who served there, their careers were sort of quietly ended with a few exceptions, was overlooked. Everyone was living in the past.

Q: Well, you were there from '89 to?

WINN: '89 to '92.

Q: Who was Consul General?

WINN: When I arrived and for the first two years, a fellow by the name of Phil Wilcox, whom I had never met. He chose me sight unseen from among the candidates. The last of the three years there was Molly Williamson. She is still in the Foreign Service. Phil has retired.

Q: I've interviewed Phil. When you got there, were you seeing Jerusalem with fresher eyes than the people around you do you think?

WINN: Not the people immediately around me because they had been in the thick of it, to their credit. I was shocked when I got there, shocked by the contrast between Jerusalem I imagined and had recalled from Amman, and the Jerusalem, that I found. I recall from Amman in the '70s that there and there was scarcely a distinction between West and East Jerusalem. Israelis on both sides, Palestinians on both sides. I got there in '89 to find a war zone, no Israelis in the East, but the attitudes had changed so gradually over the years that what I found didn't shock everyone else. Everyone else was living in a state of siege that they had taken for granted for sometime and that was more startling to me. I did not expect to find a place where no Israeli socialized with a Palestinian, where you could not have a dinner in your house and mix Israelis and Palestinians. It was incredible, because you could do that back in the '70s. I didn't expect to find a city so strictly divided that no Israeli would set forth in Arab East Jerusalem and regard us as either insane or traitorous for living over there.

Q: Well, what had caused this?

WINN: The Intifada, the stonings. At that time, just stonings would occasionally kill people. I mean our cars, the minute I got there, you know, we had to have Mylar tape reinforcement put in the windows because if you were hit in the head by a big rock it would kill you. The Israelis went around with pistols. For all I know they do to this day. Its so startling to see grown men walking around wearing holsters, I mean it was all so primitive, particularly when they would make the occasional foray for business reasons over into East Jerusalem. I would sit on my porch and look at the main road from Jericho to Jerusalem and watch these kids. In those days we didn't have video cameras and I wish we did. I could see the kids down below the road, get their rocks, I would see them spot a car and I would see them stone it and I would see the drive get out with a pistol and start shooting at them. I wish to heck I had video cameras, they hadn't been invented when I was there. Then I of course, we ourselves were incessantly stoned. They would just see a foreigner and just throw rocks at them. My car was burned up. It was burned in front of the house. So, it was such a strain, given my wife's inability to walk by them

Q: Oh boy. Well, what about how did you find relations between the consulate and the Palestinians?

WINN: Well, our brief there in many ways was to deal with the Palestinians, whereas the embassy in Tel Aviv was supposed to deal with the Israelis. Now, of course, that's very glib and superficial, but of course in Jerusalem we deal with the Israelis, and Phil did a very good job of maintaining contacts on both sides. The only Israeli officials we were permitted to deal with were at Jerusalem City Hall. We didn't go to the Foreign Ministry. We had the absurd spectacle of the Embassy personnel driving an hour up the hill to go to the Foreign Ministry, which was across the street from us. Phil had a wide range of non-governmental Israeli contacts. I had a

very few. The Israelis couldn't stand the sight of us, not to put too fine a point on it. They resented our presence in Jerusalem, as did the Israeli man on the street. The minute they found where I lived, that was pretty much the end of any contact with any Israelis, with the exception of a few fringe peace groups. The fact that we lived in the Israeli East Jerusalem was a subject of intense dislike, intense anger even. I remember even before, in Paris, the Israeli embassy diplomats I dealt with were furious that we still lived in, we had a presence in East Jerusalem. So, it was as contentions relationship with the Israelis. So with the exception of the Consul General, we dealt about exclusively with Palestinians. Remember that half or more than half of our staff was in East Jerusalem. The American staff below me. I remember being a little envious of the fact that most of them lived in safe West Jerusalem. We all got a hardship post, we all got a hardship differential in Jerusalem. But I was one of only three or four people in East Jerusalem getting brained by rocks. That's the way it goes and I gather we've all now pretty well left East Jerusalem.

Q: How about the contacts with the Palestinians?

WINN: Well, they were more than happy to see us at every level. That was our bread and butter, the usual list of cast of characters, all of whom are still pretty much active today. I mean Saeb Erekat - I almost rented a house from him down in Jericho. We used to see him all the time. They were happy to see us on the one hand and on the other hand, it was a litany of misery and complaining. The conversation was pretty much all the same as it has been for 30 or 40 years. So, it was kind of a boring job, frankly. The same damn thing over and over. Discouraging.

Q: How did you find relations with the embassy at that time?

WINN: Oh, its always been kind of an odd strained relationship. "You're the Arab lovers up the hill." I would go down once a week to attend their staff meetings, that would take all morning, after all it was an hour drive down, an hour drive up, the meeting itself. Remember, few people recall that Jerusalem is an independent post. We do our own reporting. People always assume we have to have our reporting approved by the embassy, that's not true. We'd send stuff directly in from Jerusalem. So, it didn't always track with what the embassy wanted to hear. Often its a function of the personalities, the Consul General and the ambassador and you know, Phil was his own man, as have all the consuls general there been. I think he worked out a pretty good modus vivendi with the embassy. In later years Ambassadors and Consul Generals scarcely spoke to each other. I won't name names, but rather recently there have been tales of shouting matches and epithets flung between the Consul General and the ambassador in more recent years. He worked out a good modus vivendi, a mutual respect.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

WINN: Totally forgotten. I met him twice in the three years I was there. The DCM with whom I dealt was Mark Parris, who later became assistant secretary of NEA and ambassador to Turkey and has since moved on to the private sector.

Q: How were we viewing Intifada? Did we see this as a futile effort?

WINN: Well, toward the end of my stay by the way we had the Madrid Peace Conference, but we saw it as, certainly an irritant. Another irritant and a major element of our reporting were the Israeli settlements. Steve Kashkett, whom had been the terrorism guy in Paris, whom I was instrumental in bringing to Jerusalem, was our settlements guy. They of course have expanded exponentially since then. To his credit, Phil Wilcox, we didn't have a very close relationship, but I've got to give him credit, was constantly on top of the settlement and human rights issues. Phil should have been a lawyer. I've got to hand it to him. He wrote detailed and damning cables pointing out human rights and legal abuses of the Israelis' expansion into East Jerusalem. There was a constant keeping an eye on Israeli encroachments on the West Bank. Now, that didn't answer your question. Weekly we would get the latest Palestinian communiqué of the Intifada resistance, which eventually I think numbered into the hundreds. We had a wonderful political officer there, Marc Foulon, who has since left the Foreign Service in frustration, actually writing speeches for Richard Haas now and he would translate these things every week. I gather to some extent we succeeded in focusing Washington's attention. George Bush finally tied down some of the financial aid, on condition that it could not be used in the settlements. As the months wore on, I found it increasingly irritating to drive to work; I risked my wife and I getting killed by these stupid kids with rocks. I often would pull over to lecture them in Arabic. I would say, "Listen you miserable little sons of bitches, don't you realize who I am? I'm half on your side!" It's so funny, that you could sit there and have a cup of coffee with them. In other words it wasn't personal with the guys who burned my car up. You know, I never feared them for my, never one for my bodily danger as an individual in Jerusalem. One could be a random target, but assassination was not a factor. Although we had no guards, I lived openly. It was always a political thing, these kids throwing rocks at the car because they saw a foreigner and thought it was great fun.

Q: Did you fly the flag?

WINN: Well, that might have almost been a provocation. In any case, we had diplomatic plates. Again in my house, I lived in the thick of it. I repeat, my car was burned up in front of the house, torched in front of the house, but I never once worried about my physical safety as an individual. Oddest situation.

Q: Well, what about monitoring what was going on in the West Bank?

WINN: We would drive around talking to the Palestinians all over the place. We encountered endless Israeli checkpoints as we monitored the settlements physically. That was more Steve's job, but I did my fair share of it. We were met with hostility of course by the settlers. Often the Israeli guards of these individual settlements wouldn't allow us in the settlement, and often they would and we would physically monitor - this house, this wall has been extended. We'd go around and just eyeball everything constantly, particularly Steve. He wrote some wonderful cables counting houses and settlements.

Q: Was there supposedly a stop on the enlargement of the settlements?

WINN: There were so many claims by the Israelis. They would say, we aren't building, just "natural expansion." There was at one point a freeze on new settlements, but they never to this

day claimed to put a freeze on this enlargement of existing settlements even if the enlargement was on the next mountaintop. So, they would always get around the restrictions. As I recall there was finally a freeze on settlement building, on new settlements, but never on the expansion of existing ones. Now it's quite shocking to see how enormous these settlements are. My God, there's one, Ma'ale Abumim, just basically a huge suburb of Jerusalem, halfway down to the Dead Sea by now. These settlements are enormous suburbs, the size of Reston. Some of them are just a few trailers on a hill, but some of them are huge, huge complexes. Most people don't realize that.

Q: How about American Jews who were also Israelis? Did you have much to do with them?

WINN: Again, to them, to all Israelis, the consulate was pretty much the enemy. It was bizarre how we in the consulate would cling to American policy in order to maintain a hard line, and in other ways conveniently avoid touching on other aspects of American policy - such as the fact that to this day, the USA does not acknowledge Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem - a fact we were never permitted to mention despite the fact that in the lobby of the consulate, for all I know to this day, there is the old original plaque that says, "The American Consulate General In Palestine." Now that is a provocation to any Israeli who came in. Our international mailing address was always American Consulate General Jerusalem - we would never put Jerusalem, Israel. That's why I say our pathetic little attempt to hold the course but of course we didn't use the international main anyway so because we didn't acknowledge Israeli sovereignty. We were the enemy to the Israelis.

Q: What was your impression of how the Israelis on the West Bank?

WINN: The Americans particularly the American Israelis that we were really traitors, but they couldn't stand us. Every once in a while the settlers committee on the West Bank, most of them were American Jews, Americans, would come in and talk to Phil. They'd put on a suit and tie. I was always struck by that. The Israelis never put on a suit. They would show appropriate respect and come in and have a meeting with Phil and he would hear them out. It was a contentious relationship.

Q: Were we reporting on human rights violations and that sort of thing?

WINN: Oh, boy were we. The annual human rights report was the major event of the year of the Consulate General. Again, that job was like being nibbled at by swarming bees, it was anything but fun. There was not a fun moment. The human rights reports was certainly one of the most agonizing exercises where traditionally, the Consulate General would send in a tough draft and it would be whittled back both by the embassy and by Washington. We would reach agonizing compromises, and I always thought we did a heroic job. I haven't read it in 15 years. I just walked away from that place. Remember my wife died there, so I just walked away. One of our major products was the human rights report in which I thought we acquitted ourselves well.

Q: How did you get your information?

WINN: From Israeli human rights groups, who were vigilant, and Palestinian human rights

groups, the Palestinian al-Haq was the Palestinian group that did a very good job. Betsellem was Israeli equivalent. And from our own monitoring and endless talking. It was just a lot of hard, scut work, hard research, going out and talking to people, interviewing people, comparing the notes, comparing notes of the Israeli groups and the Palestinian groups. It was hard research and my hats off to our political officers and the rest of the Consulate staff, including our overworked Consular section. I did, too.

Q: How about did we get involved in trying to protect Palestinian-Americans who were over there?

WINN: Yes, but we worked on behalf of Palestinian non-Americans, in the sense of reporting on Israeli incursions, when they would just plant a settlement in the middle of nowhere. The Israelis would buy up property in East Jerusalem or occupy property in East Jerusalem. I would go, often I'd find myself in East Jerusalem physically eyeballing the settlers with their guns who would then eyeball me. I mean, not threateningly, but they just didn't like to see us and encroachments when the Israelis would go in and just occupy houses in East Jerusalem, just occupy houses that allegedly had been Jewish in biblical times. Many settlements, I've forgotten your question by the way.

Q: Did we get involved with?

WINN: Oh, American Palestinians. Not that often. We would occasionally, yes, when one was arrested. Anne Barry, not to be confused with the consul general, the woman who was chief of our consular section, was very active. Any time a Palestinian-American was detained she would be over there at the prison and trial. Anne Barry, I think she's still in the Foreign Service, we were witnesses at the occasional trial. Yes, we were quite vigilant. Endless, some of these cases went on and on and on. My stepbrother was recently on a bus in Santa Fe, New Mexico and he fell into conversation with the driver of his bus who turned out to be a Palestinian. My brother-in-law said, "Do you know a fellow named David Winn?" He said, "Yes, David Winn saved my house from demolition." I don't remember this incident. That was another thing, we were often involved when the Israelis would threaten to blow up a house and we would occasionally, apparently, I don't recall this guy recalled me personally succeeding in preventing his house from being blown up. I take that story with a grain of salt, just an example of our high profile out there.

Q: What was your impression of how the Israelis were treating the Palestinians?

WINN: Constant humiliation just inside the law. The Palestinians were used to humiliation, with good reason. The Israeli soldiers at checkpoints, would never miss a chance to harass. They would make life difficult for the Palestinians. They would seize on small violations of a property deed or of a building permit to destroy the house. The point was to constantly keep the Palestinians off balance. To constantly remind them they were there at the sufferance of the Israelis. Frankly, the goal was to get them to leave, particularly from East Jerusalem. So, these are small things to the West, but its day to day, day in and day out. Remember this was at a time when there were no bombings in East Jerusalem. Its not like they were a problem to the Israelis, but the goal was basically to humiliate the Palestinians and to make life just miserable enough

that they could expand the Israeli presence on the West Bank, let me put it that way. You had the Intifada, which basically was an irritant to any Israeli, who went over to East Jerusalem, but it was not a problem for the Israelis West Jerusalem. It was clear, a constant pressure, lets put it that way.

Q: How about with the other officers, particularly the junior officers there? You know if you have a time of tension like this and things going on, sometimes its hard to keep almost control of the officers because if they see injustices and all they over identify and all this. Was this a problem?

WINN: I take your point. I have to say that the experience of having your car torched - which several officers had - and having rocks thrown at you mitigated to some extent the indignation of seeing Israeli abuses. Over identifying was strangely enough never a problem because the Palestinians, we got so sick and tired of having rocks thrown at us and our cars blown up and torched, it just irritated the hell out of us. "Can't you people see where your bread is buttered? Stop trashing us!" So "clientitis" was not a problem. It might have when life was more comfortable on the Palestinian side, but not when we were there.

Q: So, it was sort of a plague on both your houses?

WINN: Plague on both your houses. We were all ready to leave.

Q: What about the Gulf War and its, you left there when?

WINN: Oh, in '91, I mean the Gulf War came and went.

Q: Tell me about how.

WINN: Well, we were first of all irritated that Arafat came out and declared on the side of the Iraqis. He thought that was great. So did King Hussein as I recall. I'm trying to get back the chronology of this. We had Jim Baker coming and going. Back in January, '91, I heard on the BBC at the crack of dawn that the Iraqis had invaded Kuwait. I got to the consulate to find on my desk an all points NIACT from the ambassador in Kuwait, Ned Howell, in which he said, We've seen these press reports that the Iraqis have invaded Kuwait. Its a ridiculous rumor. Now, I cite that as an example that the embassy was taken utterly by surprise and in defense of April Glaspie. People really didn't see this coming, for all they may say so after the fact. In Jerusalem, it finally got to the point that the hostility in the East became such that we were told to move all our valuables into the embassy, just before the war broke out, so I did take all the clothes to the Consulate because we might have to pull out of East Jerusalem. (My wife was visiting her family in Paris at the time.) Then as tensions began to mount I remember Baker, Secretary of State, had his last meeting with the Iraqis, it broke down. Then, those of us living in the East physically left our houses and apartments in the East and moved into a hotel in East Jerusalem and within 24 hours we had launched Operation Desert Storm. We were woken up in the middle of the night by phone calls and said from the communicator. He said, We have just launched Operation Desert Storm. That reminds me of a colleague in Yemen when he was down in '74. We had a consulate general in Taiz, Yemen. He was woken up in the middle of the night and told that Richard Nixon

had just put the U.S. on Nuclear Alert Five. He said, I didn't know what to do but to pull the blinds. That's the way I felt, so I just went back to sleep, but within an hour the Israeli air raid sirens began going off. We had been issued gas masks. We all had our gas masks and we were all hurriedly hustled into various rooms of the hotel, where there were taped rooms with all the other hotel guests which included a large group of American Hasidic Jewish young men, teenagers. So there we all were. I had my radio and to my incredulity I was listening to the communicator talking to the DCM down there saying "We're getting SCUD missiles down in Tel Aviv, hitting Tel Aviv. This was all incredible. At that point the news began to spread around Jerusalem. The Hasidic young men crowded into the bathroom to shave off their beards, because they could not get a close fit on the gas masks otherwise, and they turned on the TV. Were all in this small room taped up and the only thing on Israeli TV was a rock and roll band, which they left on to get the news. Now this quickly became intolerable. This I mean the Israeli rock and roll music. So, I said, I have to go to the consulate. I've got to get out of here. The Israeli soldier wouldn't let me leave the room. I finally talked my way out of there blessedly and made my way to the consulate and we even took a few SCUDS over the next few months in Jerusalem itself. I don't think we took any that night. As you know, only one Israeli was killed during throughout the Gulf War, and that was from a heart attack.

Q: How about were you getting in with Americans and others trying to get out of Israel at that time?

WINN: We weren't. The rush to the airport came from the Hasidic Jewish community. They were the first to leave. A notorious display of Let me out of here, Kimosabi. But people had already left to some extent. There was a rush for the exits, yes. Now in our case the families had already been given what is the term, not ordered departure, but voluntary departure. My wife as it turned out was already in France on vacation. She had chosen that time to go on vacation, and this became ordered departure, so the dependents that were already out were not permitted back in to her fury, to her absolute fury. No, it always remained voluntary. It always remained voluntary, but anyone who had the misfortune to be out then was not allowed back in. So, many wives did stay on throughout.

Q: I think that was a real problem. I've gotten through interviews with Bill Brown who was ambassador.

WINN: Well, that's it, the name I couldn't recall. The problem lay in the Department's not allowing those who had happened to be out of the country to return. That was Renee's dilemma - she couldn't get back to Jerusalem.

Q: He was ambassador to Israel and then with Chas Freeman, particularly the problem with Saudi Arabia. We had a lot of Americans who were essential in running the oil fields even though they were closest to the action and if we got people, Americans out of other parts of the area, then that would cause the Americans, so I mean it was a very tricky situation.

WINN: Yes, we were always voluntary. I remember the fury of my wife trying to get back, couldn't get back to Jerusalem. Wasn't permitted. Finally she came up with a plan of renting a house on the Israeli on the Egyptian side of the border down at Gaza. At least she could be

within commuting distance to Jerusalem. By that time the war had ended before she implemented this plan. I remember that Bill Brown wanted it “ordered” for some reason and never got it. He was angry for a different reason. He wanted to get more money for the excuses if it was ordered. I’ve forgotten the reason why.

Q: I think then if it was there it was under government orders and that meant they had to support the people who left.

WINN: Who left, right, as opposed to those who stayed.

Q: Otherwise it was sort of like a vacation.

WINN: Yes, but yet they couldn’t come back. I remember being particularly irritated with Phil, because we had about a 48 hour notice that the war was going to start and I got on the phone to tell my wife to come back in a hurry. But the Department wouldn’t let her come back, even though the hostilities hadn’t begun. However, DCM Paris down in Tel Aviv allowed family members quietly to return without blabbing to the Department, even after the war had begun. He showed common sense in a practical concern for family welfare. Screw the rules. So, they really did diddle the family members. As I assume they diddle unto this day, but that was minor. Finally, because of her MS, after six weeks into this I had to leave to join her. You know, she couldn’t even walk by then. I finally left Jerusalem to my bitter dismay. I didn’t want to leave the action. I stayed for with her for three weeks, then returned. She came back a few weeks later.

Q: You talked about the Hasidic Jews.

WINN: Yes, that was not a very seemly spectacle, and many American Israelis, they got the hell out, too. We all had our gas masks. Some took it seriously, others didn’t. I remember the Newsweek bureau chief Ted Stanger wouldn’t even own one, much less put one on. He’s a friend to this day now, he lives in Paris. It was an eerie feeling to be sitting in a restaurant and hear the siren go off and then to see the SCUDS at night. See the scuds go over, you could see them physically go on down to Tel Aviv.

Q: There must have been a certain amount watching these things head towards Tel Aviv?

WINN: Yes, I mean, yes, well of course. Excuse me, I’ve got someone at the door.

Q: We were talking about you know watching the things heading down.

WINN: Yes, yes, down to Tel Aviv. We had a few hits in Jerusalem, but again no one hurt.

Q: How about, I mean, you know in your part and your fellow officers to see the Israelis jumping up I mean the Palestinians jumping up and down with joy. That must have really...

WINN: That really rankled us. We continued to live in these hotel rooms and we continued to go there to do our reporting realizing that there was no physical danger to us. The fact that has really irritated the hell out of us, yes, of course. The idiocy of Arafat declaring for Saddam. We had to

tell him how stupid that was, and we just would press on with our reporting. I always take the Arabs with a grain of salt in any of their public displays. They felt they had to do it and we kind of rolled our eyes.

Q: Did you have any you and your colleagues have any feel for Arafat and his leadership?

WINN: It's funny, Arafat was a dimly perceived figure. We dealt with the Palestinian fellow named Hussein al-Husseini who died last year of a heart attack, but they would pay obeisance to Arafat, but we really had a very strong impression of a local, a local leadership - Hussein and his deputies. Arafat is a dim figure.

Q: He was in Tunisia.

WINN: He was in Tunisia.

Q: Traveling around.

WINN: Our day to day contacts with the local guys. They had to tow the line when he came out and declared in favor of Saddam and of course, King Hussein for that matter. It's funny, the Americans seemed to have felt in Jordan they were in greater physical danger for some reason. They really pulled out fast there. There seems to be a greater sense of urgency. Well, its true though to be fair, we left East Jerusalem, of course, that makes sense. They were surrounded. So, as it turned out none of these bodily threats against Americans never did transpire.

Q: Well, you left there before the war ended is that right?

WINN: Yes, yes, and came back just two days after it ended.

Q: While the war was going on, did you begin to notice a change in temperature in the Palestinians as they were watching what we were doing and all?

WINN: You mean more hostility?

Q: Well, in a way less hostility, I mean a realization that Saddam wasn't going to get anywhere?

WINN: Of course, I wasn't on the ground, but I will say when we got back I didn't discover any particular anger. The Arabs, the Palestinians are always going to see which way the wind is blowing. I didn't discover any resentment when I got back. The war was over and that was the end of that and okay, lets move on. If that helps you. Had I been there I might have noticed the fact that they accepted this with some resignation. But it was amazing how it was back to business as usual when I got back. It was back to the peace process. The Gulf War was almost forgotten.

Q: On the personal side, it must have been a terrible strain on you obviously on your wife with this MS.

WINN: The house, the famous house in East Jerusalem, was a three story house so two of the stories were the living quarters and the third was a beautiful pool down below out, which I maintained out of my own pocket. Indeed the first year I was there was spent I must say in total preoccupation with her inability to get from floor to floor of the house, because her condition had worsened in Paris. Had her condition been as bad in Paris when I bid for the job, I never would have done so, and would have taken an offer to be DCM in Madagascar which of course in retrospect I should have done Renee would have had much more personal care there - household staff, etc. My first year there was spent in equipping the house for a handicapped person, to include spending \$10,000 of my own money to bring in an elevator, a British made elevator. So, I was so distracted the first year. Inexplicably, the Deputy in Jerusalem is not granted the "perks" that a DCM in an Embassy is - no household staff or expenses. So it was hard finding people to help. The Israeli doctors would not set foot in East Jerusalem. I had to physically go up and take Renee to physical therapy in West Jerusalem and take her back. You can imagine. Half the day I wasn't even in the consulate. So, that was a big strain, yes. But Renee came back after the war, and passed away of liver cancer at Hadassab Hospital once she got back. It was one thing after another. No one looks back with fond memories of Jerusalem. It tends to chew up everyone who serves there. Phil did well. He later became head of S CT and acquired the title of ambassador, but other consuls general, it was almost as if the job cast a cloud over their career. It beats me why anyone would want to be consul general out there frankly.

Q: Did you ever get involved in, I mean to Israel proper, there was this constant stream of congressmen playing obeisance to... sort of like the ones that go to Rome and hit the Pope to make sure they look good to their constituents. How about on your side of the thing?

WINN: They would come up and mainly want to see Teddy Kollek, the mayor, and occasionally they would want to, tour East Jerusalem and would want a settlements tour, not very often. We always had a bit of a tussle there. When they went to the Foreign Ministry they would be accompanied by someone from the embassy. When they went to see Teddy Kollek, they would be accompanied by someone, Phil or if he wasn't there, by me, and this always confused them because the embassy didn't deal with the mayor. Again, we always had the same problem: the Israelis would want to accompany visitors around the old city, and we would tell congressmen that they should not be accompanied by the Israelis around the old city since it was not officially under Israeli control. We had these absurd turf battles that they should be accompanied by me or Phil or someone or an embassy officer around the old city, but that we would not accept an Israeli escort. We wouldn't go with them if they insisted on an Israeli escort. Often a Congressman would take the Israeli position and insist that the Consulate officer not come! I remember once or twice giving senators, or congressmen a tour of the West Bank settlements, who was the guy? Senator Kerry the fellow who lost a leg in Vietnam, I toured him around. But many congressmen weren't that interested in the settlements.

Q: What about Teddy Kollek? What was your impression of him?

WINN: Well, I must say, I have to say that he pretty much lived up to his billing. You know so often these guys you know present one face, but no I think he was sincerely appalled by the settlements and the takeover of Palestinian housing in East Jerusalem. I think he was sincerely appalled by the encroachments in East Jerusalem. I heard him on TV recently and he talked that

way privately.

Q: Did you get a feel or was this purely coming from the Israeli side of the really hardlined settler types and all this?

WINN: No, I think they were harder lined than you could imagine. We would occasionally go talk to them, but boy they were bristling with guns. You would go into these places and almost invariably American immigrants from the Bronx. These guys were tough. I always referred to the average settler as a failed filling station attendant from the Bronx and that's only a slight exaggeration. These were just the worlds losers come out there to find meaning in their lives and they would set up these fortresses and they sure didn't want to talk to us. They were pretty mean guys and still are. Now, you got the occasional visionary, sincerely motivated by religion. But they were just a blinkered group if ever there was one out to recreate whatever they wanted to recreate on a mountaintop.

Q: Were they getting solid support from the Israeli government?

WINN: I think so sure. The Israeli government had troops around these settlements. Yes.

Q: Looking at subsidies?

WINN: Oh, subsidies, the whole thing, sure, sure. I mean they are a pretty mean bunch out there and I don't know what to add.

End of reader