

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

BEATRICE CAMP

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INTERVIEW

Q: Let's begin with where you were born and where you were raised.

CAMP: I was born in Montgomery, Alabama in 1950; my father was a civilian working for the Air Force. After a few years in Alabama we moved to San Antonio, then to the Washington area.

Both my parents were in the military in World War II; my father was from California and my mother Illinois. They met after the war in New York while both were studying at Columbia and living in the same building on West 116th. The story is they met while hanging out laundry on the roof.

Q: There are plays that begin this way.

CAMP: They communicated between apartments by knocking on the radiators; the landlord was on the verge of ripping out the pipes to find out what was wrong. One of my mother's roommates married one of my father's roommates as well.

Q: Amazing

CAMP: My mother got a Master's from Columbia Teachers College and my father studied sociology; he began working for the early Gallup Poll company and for CBS News, doing survey research. My brother was born at New York Presbyterian Hospital; another family story relates how my mom took the subway to the hospital in a December snowstorm.

Q: Where were their families from?

CAMP: My mother came from a German farming family in central Illinois. When I interviewed her for a high school assignment on the Depression she told me that the farming economy was always depressed, which didn't give me much to report for class.

My father was born in Utah and grew up in Berkeley, California, just up from the university campus. Visiting my Berkeley grandmother during the 1960s provided a glimpse of some of the radical ferment of the times, like the Free Speech Movement. Grandma Camp gave us our first Tom Lehrer album. Visiting our farm cousins in Illinois was more about swimming in mucky ponds and riding along with the hay bailer.

Q: So your parents moved to Alabama.

CAMP: My father had begun working for the military, as a civilian, doing survey research at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery and then Randolph in San Antonio, Texas. Along with some of the colleagues from those projects, he then joined the research unit at the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). This was at USIA headquarters in

Washington, which had the fabulous address of 1776 Pennsylvania Ave. For years this little group of researchers, family friends, stayed together; some were still around when I joined USIA in 1983.

In 1961 my father got an opportunity to go to Bangkok in a civil service position, conducting research throughout Indochina. Public opinion research was a big part of USIA in those days, winning hearts and minds, surveying people's thoughts about the United States, assessing and advising on the impact of American foreign policy decisions on worldwide public opinion. There was a research unit at USIS Bangkok during those early days of the Vietnam War.

When we moved to Thailand in 1961 I didn't want to go, I didn't want to leave my friends, the usual pre-teen lament. That started to change as we took an ocean liner across the Pacific, stopped in Japan and Hong Kong, and finally ended up in exotic Bangkok, with its *khlongs* and cute *chingjok* lizards and a queen who was one of the world's most beautiful women.

We returned to Washington in 1963; I graduated from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School (BCC) in 1968 and went to Oberlin College.

Q: What was it like to go to school in the Washington suburbs in the mid-60s?

CAMP: Those years spanned earth-shattering events, including the assassinations of John Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, civil rights issues, Vietnam protests, and riots in DC. It was also the era of the Beatles, drugs and long hair. And the first computers. By 1967-1968, my high school was in proud possession of a remote terminal linked to a computer at a government facility. It was accessible to those of us in Mrs. Tubbs' Advanced Algebra/Trig class, which consisted of two girls and 14 boys, geeky slide rule guys.

We were given to understand that it was a rare opportunity to have this access, which made it especially shocking when Mrs. Tubbs came into class extremely upset because somebody had programmed obscenities on the terminal. I'll never forget how distraught she was and the horror over who would do this kind of thing – it had to be someone in that class abusing this great privilege that had been given to us.

Q: While you were in high school had you begun to think about an international career for yourself?

CAMP: I was editor of the high school paper and saw myself as a future journalist. The BCC *Tattler* was an award-winning paper managed by a really fabulous teacher, Benjamin Allnut, who was responsible for a number of careers in journalism.

Although protests against the war in Vietnam were heating up, I was slow to join in. My mindset was shaped by living in Southeast Asia, the domino theory, ideas about the need to protect the Vietnamese people and our close ally Thailand and so on. I can't remember

exactly what my tipping point was into opposing the war, except that I was impressed when my college-age brother joined the protests at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. A few months later, as a freshman at Oberlin College in Ohio, I was riding to Washington in the back of a U-Haul truck for an anti-war demonstration.

Q: While you were in high school did you take advantage of opportunities that Washington offers?

CAMP: My family attended Kennedy's 1961 inauguration, on a bitterly cold day after a snowstorm nearly paralyzed the city the night before. The Democrats' victory – my liberal California father hated Nixon – and my brother's role as a Boy Scout usher at the event combined to propel our family downtown in such terrible conditions.

My mother, who taught business subjects, shorthand and typing, at Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, insisted we dress up to go downtown. In those days anyone could wander around Capitol Hill, eat bean soup in the Senate cafeteria, and ride the underground tram to the Senate office buildings.

The Smithsonian was another draw, although there were fewer museums than now. American History, originally called the National Museum of History and Technology, opened in 1964; it was the first new Smithsonian museum since the Freer in 1923. Air and Space came 12 years later. As a kid, one of my gruesome favorites was the Medical Museum, now in Silver Spring, with artifacts from Lincoln's assassination and other gory items.

I also have strong memories of the old Arts and Industries Building, a gorgeous setting for boring exhibits featuring machinery and button collections. It was only years later, after I got involved with the 2010 and 2015 world's fairs, that I appreciated how many of the Arts and Industries exhibits were from the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, in which the Smithsonian played a major role.

Editing the high school paper offered opportunities for encounters with the grittier parts of DC. The B-CC *Tattler* was printed in Baltimore and sent back to us on a Greyhound bus for proofreading. Every two weeks we would trek down to the Greyhound bus station on New York Avenue, a pretty sleazy area for a couple of teenagers at night. We'd proofread the galleys at the bus station, ignoring the bums, and send the edits back to Baltimore on a late bus with final corrections.

Q: That's quite an adventure in the '60s.

CAMP: Our parents were a bit uncomfortable but we saw ourselves as dedicated reporters all but ready to shout "roll the presses".

The summer after I graduated from high school I worked at the Office of Emergency Preparedness, which has since become FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The office was located in the old Winder Building across 17th St from the

White House, a historic building with a Civil War prison in the basement, which I thought was very cool.

I had a secretarial job. Nearly a half-century later, when I tracked down my previous government service for pension purposes, I received an electronic file of ancient documents that included the official results of my shorthand and typing tests in 1968. As a business teacher my mother had insisted I learn those skills, despite early feminist admonitions against showing any aptitude for secretarial jobs.

The full-time secretary I worked for, a middle-aged black woman, had a flashy looking special government ID with diagonal stripes. The stripes meant that if there were a nuclear attack on the United States, she would get on a bus to Mount Weather, the secret place where the government would take shelter and reconstitute itself. Seeing how impressed I was she let me know that, “if there’s a nuclear attack on Washington, I’m not getting on no bus. I’m going home to my family.” An early lesson learned: no matter how much strategic planning you do, the human factor remains a wild card.

Q: Now you mentioned a brother; other siblings in your family?

CAMP: Just my brother Donald Camp. He, my husband David Summers, and my brother-in-law Hollis Summers were all in the Foreign Service, all three political officers. It became a family profession. My husband and my brother actually joined the Foreign Service together, which is another story.

Q: Okay, interesting.

CAMP: From B-CC I went to Oberlin College in Ohio from 1968-1972. Founded in 1833, Oberlin is proud of its history as the first school to admit women and blacks. During my time there two Oberlin students made the cover of “Life” magazine for early co-ed dorms; the campus was also very active in opposition to the Vietnam War. I lived in a freshman women’s dorm my first year and in co-op dorms after that -- Oberlin doesn’t have fraternities and sororities.

Q: When you arrived at college it’s in the midst of this turmoil over the war. And do you still see yourself going along a path towards journalism?

CAMP: Yes. I worked on the college newspaper, the *Oberlin Review*. My colleagues and I spent a lot of time at the dingy *Review* offices, reading galleys and pasting up the paper, which was still set by linotype.

I vacillated between majoring in sociology or history, American or Asian. When I asked the Chinese history professor if I could be an East Asian Studies major but study Thai instead of Chinese he was horrified and asked why anyone would do such a thing. The choices were either Chinese or Japanese, even though my interest was Southeast Asia. A dozen years later I found myself studying Chinese at the Foreign Service Institute, now somewhat more understanding of that professor’s East Asian-centric viewpoint.

Although Oberlin had no journalism courses, working on the *Oberlin Review* was good training and I was able to spend several winter terms – the January between semesters – in newspaper jobs. During January of my freshman year I worked at the *Elyria Chronicle Telegram*, in a town between Oberlin and Cleveland. The 30-minute bus ride to Elyria was complicated by my having broken my leg over Christmas, when I visited my freshman roommate in New Hampshire and went skiing for the first time.

After a couple of weeks at the *Chronicle Telegram*, I wrote a story that earned a byline. One of the crusty old reporters commented to me: “I see you got a byline.” “Yes”, I responded, proudly. “That’s good,” he said, “but you can’t eat bylines.” Another memorable lesson, culled from an old-timer’s wisdom about the economics of a career in journalism.

During another winter term I worked for the *Washington Star*. The *Star* was Washington’s city’s evening paper, very much a local institution dating back to 1852; it folded in 1981 and a number of the big journalistic names from the *Star* went on to the *Washington Post*. I had a position on the Action Line column, which was great fun. People would contact us about broken street lights or potholes.

Working there I got a picture of Washington’s origins as a small southern town, rather than the international capital it had become. Action Line’s mission was helping readers deal with the city bureaucracy. I would figure out who to call and get the stop light or pothole or whatever fixed.

Q: That must have made you feel good.

CAMP: It did, and it made me feel like the press really does make a difference and we really are helping people.

Q: And all this while you were in Oberlin.

CAMP: Right. I was lucky my mother lived in the Washington area, so I had a place to stay. She housed me and my friends when we came for demonstrations or winter term or internships; she hosted students for years long after I graduated.

Q: Were there any fun things that you did while you were at Oberlin, sports or band or anything like that?

CAMP: I joined the gymnastics team and swam a bit. Bicycles were a big part of our lives at Oberlin, which didn’t permit students to have cars; we would bike to a local orchard and pick apples. Less wholesomely, we would bike to the liquor store just over the town limits; Oberlin, the birthplace of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, was then still a dry town.

For three years I lived in co-op dorms, beautiful creaky old buildings where students did all the cooking and cleaning. At least one had been a dorm for missionary children in the days when it was common for Oberlin graduates to serve as missionaries in Asia, particularly China. Oberlin's Asian connections were part of the college's appeal and a factor in my own career.

Every semester those of us living or eating at the co-op would draw numbers and choose jobs, first going up through the numbers and then back down. Number one would get first pick and last pick of jobs. The job assignment process taught me that what seems unappealing to one person may be just the ticket for another person – often true in Foreign Service assignments as well.

One friend liked to clean toilets while I found it relaxing to vacuum the parlor on Sunday mornings as everyone else slept off the night before. However, the real plum jobs were elected, like granola maker or bread maker or meal planner.

Q: That's quite a busy time in a college.

CAMP: It was a time of great ferment on campus. The year before I entered, Oberlin was the site of a famous protest trapping Marine recruiters in their car. This made national news and ended military recruitment on campus. The president of the college was replaced by a young man named Robert Fuller who brought to campus some interesting, unconventional faculty. When I went back some years later students looked at me with awe: "you were here when everything was happening..."

Q: While you were there were there major protests other than the Marine recruiters?

CAMP: Several in Washington plus one in Cleveland where I used my bicycle chain to lock myself to a federal building. But the most memorable, the most tragic event, followed the death of four students at Kent State in May 1970 during a protest over the U.S. incursion into Cambodia. I remember hearing the news in world history class; Professor Robert Neil put this modern tragedy into a historical context with an apocalyptic lecture that still gives me goose bumps today.

With Kent State only about 50 miles away, Oberlin students offered Kent students asylum on our campus. While that may sound overblown today, it illustrates the powerful paranoia about the possibility of more government violence against war protesters on other campuses. On May 5, with two weeks left in the semester, Oberlin classes shut down and everybody got busy with anti-war activities. I joined friends who headed to Washington for the big protest there. It was a scary, angry time.

Q: Now when you graduated you're set on journalism, not thinking about international work other than maybe being a foreign correspondent.

CAMP: I did take the Foreign Service exam, but my heart wasn't in it and I didn't pursue the idea. I came back to Washington, and worked for a company that was in the old

National Press Building, then a low-rent place that housed both large and small journalism organizations. My job involved helping to research the first directory of women's organizations.

My increasing interest in going to Thailand coincided nicely with a new opportunity via the Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association, founded in 1908 with reparations money for American citizens killed in China's 1900 Boxer Rebellion. Six of those who died were missionaries from Oberlin, which used the reparations to found a school in Shanxi Province and send graduates to teach there. By my senior year the program was operating in Taiwan and India; I thought of applying but gave it a pass. Then, a year later, 1973, programs were broadened to include Thailand as well as several other countries. I was offered the chance to open a new program in Indonesia at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta but held out for Chiang Mai University in northern Thailand.

In September 1973 I set off for Bangkok on Pan Am's round-the-world eastbound flight, making stops along the way in Stockholm and Budapest. Somewhat improbably, I later served in embassies in both cities. On the Beirut-to-New Delhi leg we had to detour around Syria, as the Yom Kippur war began as we took off from Beirut.

Once in Bangkok I settled in at a cheap hotel frequented by Peace Corps volunteers and began studying Thai at AUA (American University Alumni Association). As one of USIA's binational centers, AUA later played a role in my future foreign service career. The center taught primarily English but offered Thai classes as well.

During my second week of study I arrived at AUA to find the gates locked. A student protest in the center of town had turned bloody and the entire city was locked down. Banks were closed. I had nine baht in my pocket and had to figure out how to get money and what to do with school closed for an indeterminate time.

The October 14 uprising in 1973 was an eye-opening beginning. My two-and-a-half years teaching at Chiang Mai University marked the height of the Thai student revolt against the dictatorial government. I left just before the 1976 crackdown and subsequent return to military rule.

Q: You were in Thailand at the very end of the Vietnam War. Did that play at all?

CAMP: News was slow to come by. I would go to the campus library and read the *Bangkok Post* a couple of days late. One day I was horrified to read that a family friend, Dr. Boonsanong Punyodyana, had been assassinated. Boonsanong had worked for my father ten years earlier at USIS Bangkok (U.S. Information Service) and our family had attended his ordination as a Buddhist monk in Chiang Rai before he went off to the U.S. on a Fulbright scholarship.

I contacted Boonsanong while I was in Bangkok and of course Thai hospitality required him to invite me to his house, although he did request that I not discuss his USIS connection. I look back at how innocent I was. The other people at his house that night

were anti-American activists, and here I was, a know-nothing young American who showed up at an awkward time. Less than three years later Boonsanong was shot by an unknown assassin; at the time of his death he was General Secretary of the Communist Party of Thailand. I read about his death in the paper.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: Chiang Mai in those days was pretty distant from Bangkok. Despite the politicized atmosphere of the time, most of my up-country students were fairly passive. The biggest issue was the dress code requiring girls to wear white blouses and black skirts of a certain length. Some of these restrictions as well as the bobby socks requirement were eased for upper class students; it was fascinating to see what the women could do within those parameters, a striking contrast to the little-girl look of the incoming freshmen.

That winter, it got down to freezing. I had no heat in my flat on campus and no hot water. I warmed water on a hotplate to wash my hair and graded papers wearing gloves. To cope, the university gave the female students the right to wear pants. But they hadn't thought about the end game, so the women just kept on wearing pants even after the cold spell passed.

Q: Roughly what was the size of Chiang Mai back then?

CAMP: Around 100,000 people in those days. The U.S. Consulate, where I later served, had opened in 1950. I didn't have much to do with the consulate but took advantage of the AUA branch in Chiang Mai, which had air conditioning. It was in a lovely old building with English classes around a courtyard and a library where you could go and read old issues of *Newsweek*.

Q: And what was the major industry or what kept the city going? It is quite far north.

CAMP: Chiang Mai had been an independent kingdom, rather like the Shan states of Burma. The son of Anna Leonowens, the heroine of "The King and I", settled in Chiang Mai and made money in the timber industry; he sold teak, jade, gems. Opium growing and smuggling were also rampant, at least partly connected to the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT) troops who settled in northern Thailand.

Chiang Mai University was founded in 1964; it was the first university outside of Bangkok as the central government was becoming aware of the need to reach out beyond the capital. The university was considered provincial by Bangkok people, but it was important for northerners. Students were from mostly well off families, fairly spoiled. When I gave my students an assignment to describe in English how to get from the campus to place X, several wrote "take a taxi."

The campus was a several miles out of town. I got around by bike, including going into town. Most of my students had motorcycles and thought it was funny that their teacher rode a bike, which seemed old fashioned to them.

My cohort was mainly Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs); several are still my good friends. We visited one volunteer up in Fang, a remote town in northern Thailand, who impressed us by baking brownies in a tin box on top of a hotplate. Western food wasn't commonly available; twice a year I would go to Bangkok and buy peanut butter at the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital. Adventists are vegetarians; they made their own peanut butter, ground fresh. I would stock up there. And then I would go to the U.S. embassy for a blue cheese bacon burger. In those days we could walk into the embassy and go to the cafeteria. I'd have my hamburger fix.

Q: And you never got sick, everything was fine in terms of food and that sort of thing?

CAMP: I never got seriously sick. For vaccinations like cholera my Peace Corps friends would give me a clean needle to take down to the municipal vaccination office. Peace Corps basically told the volunteers: whatever you get we can cure, which I adopted as my mantra. But they did take the precaution of providing volunteers with clean needles.

Although I was not part of the Peace Corps, my similar salary and teaching responsibilities made me an honorary PCV. We all gossiped about a female vice consul who was dating a male PCV. Peace Corps wasn't happy about this fraternization. The couple got married, just as a message arrived from Peace Corps Bangkok telling them not to tie the knot. Peace Corps couldn't do much at that point but got in the final word, saying "okay you can be married but he can't drink your liquor."

Q: Oh for heaven's sakes.

CAMP: Years later when I was Consul General in Chiang Mai I wanted to invite the PCVs in northern Thailand for Thanksgiving. Like his predecessor 30 years before, the Peace Corps director in Bangkok discouraged the volunteers from hanging out with diplomats; he grudgingly forwarded my invitation with a reminder that Thanksgiving was a working day in Thailand and they would have to take leave to attend. He also made me promise not to serve them liquor. So when they came for Thanksgiving dinner I told them "the wine is over there; help yourself".

Q: Well you weren't serving.

CAMP: They were serving themselves.

Q: Right, exactly.

CAMP: Peace Corps Thailand had a reputation for heavy drinking, probably well deserved. The issue was partly drinking diplomatic duty-free liquor and partly because of this reputation for drunkenness.

Q: Did the remoteness affect you?

CAMP: I was lonely initially but there was one Oberlin grad already teaching there when I arrived at the start of the semester in October 1973. We celebrated Thanksgiving together by cooking omelets on a hotplate. Despite the paltry food, and the fact that we had to work that day, it felt like Thanksgiving because we were together and we were sharing a meal.

Q: Did you have any particular fears about crime?

CAMP: Robberies were said to be more common during the rainy season because the sound of monsoon rains obscured any noise a burglar might make. To this day a heavy rain conjures up thoughts of cat burglars.

I was robbed one night bicycling home in the dark when somebody darted out of the darkness and grabbed my bag. And when we went hiking in the woods, Thai friends would sleep with their knives beside them. We saw poppies and occasionally mule trains, used to transport opium. So yes, we were aware of dark stuff going on.

Closer to home, I was more afraid of the wild dogs that sprawled across the road near my flat. When I visited Thai friends in their village outside of Ayutthaya I saw a kid who had been bitten by a dog undergoing painful rabies shots in his stomach, which left a strong impression on me. Rabies was probably my strongest fear. Years later my old fears came true when I was bitten by a dog in Taiwan; fortunately the island was rabies-free.

At one point I ended up in the hospital because I nearly chopped my finger off cutting a pineapple with a cleaver. After getting treated, I woke up in a room with other patients, staring at a grungy ceiling and feeling sorry for myself. When I found out the patient in the bed next to me had a bullet wound, I decided I wasn't so bad off.

Q: You remained in Chiang Mai until 1975?

CAMP: My Oberlin fellowship ended in 1975 but I stayed on until the next spring, moving in with my wonderfully gracious Thai neighbor, Ajaan Patcharin.

During the Thai summer holidays in April and May I traveled. In April 1975 I planned to visit other Oberlin Shansi fellows in Taiwan, Japan, and Korea; I booked my flight on Air Vietnam before switching to a cheaper ticket on Japan Airlines. Saigon fell while I was on the road; I always wondered what would have happened to my Air Vietnam tickets when the South collapsed.

Q: Absolutely. But you completed the trip.

CAMP: I completed the trip; it was great. It was particularly interesting to go to Tunghai University in Taiwan where two other Oberlin alums on Shansi fellowships were

teaching. Chiang Kai-shek had just died and all the students were wearing black arm bands.

Korea was a new experience as well; Yonsei University, where I visited another Oberlin Shansi fellow, was shut down by a strike. Thanks to an introduction to Horace Underwood, the fourth generation of a long-time missionary family in Korea, I was able to visit the Demilitarized Zone. Underwood took me along when he addressed U.S. military wives who were there unofficially and concerned what would happen to them if the North Koreans came over the border. It brought home to me the consequences of the unfinished hostilities of the Korean War.

Another summer I traveled to Indonesia. I went south through Malaysia with a fellow teacher, a Brit. We were accompanied by the 18-year old son of the British consul in Chiang Mai. His long hair caused us to be stopped at the Malaysian border until his status as the son of the British diplomat took precedence over his hippie look.

In Malacca the three of us checked into a cheap hotel recommended in The Golden Guide to Southeast Asia, where we were woken at 3:00 a.m. by a police raid. Most likely they were just raiding that hotel as a hippie hangout, but the police searched through our stuff looking for drugs. They took out the aspirin and similar medicine asking what's this, what's this, what's this? After deciding we didn't have anything illegal they left, but kept our passports. We spent most of the next day at the police station, where I became aware of how much more impressive British passports were than American passports. Much heftier, with additional pages inserted with ribbon and a wax seal.

Q: Yes the old British passports were something out of the old raj.

CAMP: I feared my friends were going to get released and I would still be stuck there. They finally let us go, stamping our passports with orders to get out of Malaysia within 24 hours and not return.

I went on to Singapore and then by freighter to Indonesia. I went to Jakarta, Bandung, and then to Yogyakarta where the Oberlin fellows were teaching, finishing in Bali.

Q: So you really got to know Southeast Asia rather well in two to three years.

CAMP: I kind of skated across the surface of a region experiencing dramatic changes. One holiday trip took me to Laos in 1974, the year before the communist take-over. I traveled with another American teacher to the Thai-Lao border for a flight to the royal capital of Luang Prabang. Late in the afternoon we crossed the Mekong into Laos and went to a grass airfield where a DC-3 was parked. We heard gunfire, which we were told was between the White Lao and the Red Lao. We initially thought the reference was to hill tribes until realizing that the reds were the communists and the whites the royalists.

When a general commandeered the plane we were supposed to board, we had to cross back into Thailand for the night. The next day we were able to fly to Luang Prabang and a few days later to Vientiane.

We went on to Cambodia, through Thailand, and crossed the border surreptitiously to visit Khao Phra Viharn, a Khmer-era temple on the border. Although the World Court in 1962 ruled that it belongs to Cambodia, the easiest access is from Thailand; the Cambodian side faces a cliff. We found soldiers on top, guns stacked on the side, playing volleyball. In hindsight they may have been Khmer Rouge.

Q: Dramatic times indeed. Now you're coming to the end of your initial time in Southeast Asia.

CAMP: I returned to the United States in 1976, the bicentennial year. First I traveled down the length of Thailand to Penang in Malaysia where I could take a ferry to India. I visited Indian friends in Madras, now Chennai, and then went to see my brother Donald Camp, who was in Sri Lanka on his first foreign service assignment. From Colombo I flew to Moscow on Aeroflot, the cheapest flight. My goal of getting back to the United States in time for the bicentennial was thwarted when I found all flights were booked.

In the fall I went to Oberlin for an optional "return year" on campus. After that I worked in Washington for a media company that published specialized newsletters for businesspeople on subjects such as electronic fund transfers or privacy. The owner, Sue Meyer, was truly a character; as a privacy advocate she staunchly believed that Social Security numbers shouldn't be used for anything but financial transactions and therefore gave a false number when we applied for our Capitol Hill press passes. I wouldn't try that today.

I lived initially at 21st and R in a lovely row house with two friends, next door to Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn, and later in a group house at Phelps Place, the former embassy of Botswana with threadbare red carpet and chandeliers that hadn't been cleaned in years. The house was magnificent, wonderful for parties, and across the street from the Russian agricultural mission. We figured it was likely a KGB station; with a guard on duty all the time we felt well protected.

Still interested in going abroad, I put in an application for a job at AP Dow Jones. My resume ended up in a different pile, with the result that I got hired for a new electronic news service, one of the first of its kind. This was 1980, in lower Manhattan by the still-new World Trade Center. I spent my first two weeks as a trainee on the Dow Jones news ticker, at one point dropping a couple of zeros from IBM's quarterly earnings.

The electronic news service was the first time any of us had used a video display terminal (VDT), which had headache-inducing green and black graphics. The lighting in the cavernous old newsroom was not conducive to computer screens and there was concern about radiation; we were all learning how to use this new media tool together.

For Wall Street, being first with any news was what counted – as soon as we got information, we rocketed it out to subscribers. When the report came in that Reagan was shot we sent it on without waiting for confirmation. Speed was more important than accuracy. It didn't quite correspond with my journalism training about two sources.

In 1981 I left Dow Jones to marry David Summers, a fellow Oberlin grad and foreign service officer who coincidentally had joined the State Department at the same time as my brother. They had also worked together in the Op Center on their second tours. The coincidences got even freakier when both landed assignments in Beijing, to be preceded by two years of language training.

David and I married in June 1981; my brother married his college roommate's sister in July 1981, and in August 1981 all four of us started two years of Mandarin training at FSI.

Q: Did that entail one year at FSI and one in Taiwan?

CAMP: We studied one year in DC and a second year in Taiwan, where we had to relinquish our diplomatic passports while in residence. There were about 30 of us studying Chinese in that 1981 cohort, an unprecedented number. Meanwhile, I took the Foreign Service test and was offered a political position in a class starting in June 1983. Since I wanted to join USIA – not to mention that I was pregnant with our first child due on the same day the class started - I took my chance on getting an offer from USIA, which came a few months later.

I gave birth in Taiwan, learning a lot about Chinese birthing customs along the way. Because my husband had dreamed that I gave birth to a koala bear, our teacher named our son William *Meng Xiong*, Dream of a Bear; she predicted a bright future in accord with the Zhou general whose bear dream foretold his becoming emperor.

This classically auspicious name didn't work very well once we got to the Mainland, where post-1949 names eschewed animals and flowers in favor of red flags or red army. Most people thought naming a child Dream of a Bear was ridiculous. But one day an old calligrapher at Ritan Park surprised us by volunteering "that's a very auspicious name." We later learned this man was from the former imperial family. Educated in the palace, Aixinjueluo was a well-known calligrapher, especially sought out by Japanese tourists. We have several pieces he did for us, including one with a calligraphic inscription for Dream of a Bear.

I returned to the U.S. in September 1983 with baby William to begin Junior Officer Training at USIA. Fortunately, with my 3/3 in Mandarin already on record, I was given a Beijing assignment, to start in January.

In my absence, David was working at the embassy in Beijing and living at the Huadu Hotel waiting for housing to come available. Because of the serious housing shortage, the embassy gave each incoming officer points based on arrival date, tandem couple status,

and number of children, with bonus points for kids under five. Thanks to baby William and our tandem assignments, we went from the bottom of the list to near the top, while others, including my brother and sister-in-law, spent a year living in a hotel.

Q: So '84 begins your Foreign Service career in Beijing. And you are what USIA called a junior officer trainee at that point, a JOT, which meant rotating through a lot of sections. What was the embassy like?

CAMP: The embassy had a major real estate problem. When the communists took over they allotted embassy location based on who recognized China. The Russians still had a huge piece of land, even though their presence had shrunk when relations deteriorated. The Czechoslovakian embassy was a whole city block, as was the Polish embassy.

As for us, the Ambassador's residence, along with the political and econ sections, were in *Yiban*, Building #1. Before we arrived the embassy had acquired a second building, known as *Erban*, where I worked. Just before we left post, the embassy opened a third building, *Sanban*. Everyone doubled up; for a while I shared an office with the Deputy Public Affairs Officer. One colleague was working out of a former bathroom.

All the Chinese local employees worked in one room, which also housed the Xerox machine and the long distance phone line. To make phone calls we would crouch under the table to shield from the noise, just to talk to someone in Shanghai.

After so many years of the country being closed off, lots of Americans were eager to visit or work in China. American Citizen Services had their hands full dealing with elderly tourists who fell to the strains of China travel – we morbidly called it “death by duck” – and the young people who jumped at opportunities to come as teachers. Many signed on to deals in which Chinese institutions would promise air fare, lodging, and other benefits that sometimes didn't materialize. When the eager American teachers got to China and found themselves stuck with the flight bill, or in housing with no heat, they would come to the Embassy for help.

They also came to the Embassy looking for teaching materials. I'd be in the office on Saturday morning trying to deal with unfinished work when an American teacher would show up asking for a map, which I would have to fetch from a dust-ridden crawl space under the stairs.

Q: So the housing and working conditions were rough, but there was still so much excitement to be able to go.

CAMP: It was exciting even though we lived under a lot of restrictions. Diplomats weren't allowed to drive more than 25 kilometers from the center of Beijing and we needed permission to travel outside the city.

A year in Taiwan had immersed us in slogans about retaking the Mainland and exhibits demonstrating poor living conditions in the PRC. We were particularly struck by one

exhibit caption noting that “people living in the Mainland are very happy to have even a black and white TV”, as we had yet to own a color TV ourselves.

With no direct flights between Taiwan and the Mainland, we spent several days in Hong Kong, where we were reunited with our diplomatic passports. From there we flew to Beijing, feeling as though we were going to an alien world. Reinforcing our initial nervousness was the dark road from the airport. China had a law against using your headlights at night, apparently on the theory that the lights would blind the oncoming bicyclers. We had our first demonstration of this driving into the city.

The two-lane road from the airport on that hot August night was impeded by people, mostly elderly men, crouched on the street playing cards under the streetlights. They’d move for our car to pass, then return to the weak street lights and the relative coolness of an outside breeze.

Bicycles were still the main mode of transportation in Beijing. David and I brought from Taipei two pale blue 10 speeds made by a new Taiwan company called Giant. These drew great attention in Beijing, where all the bikes were black, one speed, and heavy.

Q: Like the old Model T you can have any color you want as long as it’s black.

CAMP: My brother’s decision to wait until Beijing to buy a bike became a standing family joke when we learned that purchasing a bike in China required a letter of authorization from the buyer’s work unit. In Donald’s case, he had to get the U.S. embassy to authorize his purchase. Meanwhile, we were commuting from the Huadu Hotel to the embassy on our blue 10 speeds, fielding questions about our eye-catching bikes from curious Beijingers. Although we were initially reluctant to reveal our bikes were from Taiwan, our questioners reacted positively. They were excited that these super-modern machines were made in China.

Q: Was the air already as polluted as everyone now knows?

CAMP: When the wind blew we could see the western hills. But in the winter everyone burned soft coal; whenever I encounter that distinctive soft coal smell I think of Beijing. We were warned not to take anything white to China. I had a pair of white ice skates that I hung on a peg in the apartment; when we left the skates were black; the soot seeped in everywhere.

While the embassy was well heated, Chinese offices were not. On a day you planned to go to a Chinese office you had to dress warmly. We would be taken to a meeting room and served tea, which we would drink for the warmth. When your bladder couldn’t take any more, it was time to leave. The Chinese were still wearing blue Mao suits but underneath many had pink silk long underwear, visible at the cuffs. We all bought silk long underwear in Beijing.

Q: And this was the ‘80s when China had begun down the road of changing the economy.

CAMP: Yes, socialism with capitalist characteristics. Change was becoming visible, often just in small ways. One day bananas appeared for the first time; word spread like wildfire and we all rushed out to buy this previously unseen commodity. Three months later another banana boat arrived, sparking the same rush. By the time we left Beijing, bananas had become regularly available.

In 1985 we attended the first Western pop concert in China, featuring WHAM! with George Michael. The Great Wall Sheraton opened in 1984 as the first international hotel in China and hosted the first Western banquet for President Reagan's visit. The Open Door Policy announced by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 was beginning to take effect.

My JOT rotation took me not only to the commercial, econ, and consular sections, but provided a stint in Shanghai. True to its reputation, Shanghai was several years ahead of Beijing, with some women even wearing dresses.

Q: So you're a junior officer with USIA officer; what was the make up of the embassy and what were your main responsibilities?

CAMP: We were lucky to have two strong China hands at the top. Ambassador Arthur Hummel was born in China, Shanxi province, son of a missionary who later went on to head the Oriental Division at the Library of Congress. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Chas Freeman was already legendary in our circle because our teachers held him up as a paragon among language learners; he interpreted for Richard Nixon during his 1972 visit to China.

In those days one of USIA's core products was the daily Wireless File, produced in Washington to deliver U.S. government official texts as well as news stories of direct regional or local interest to USIS posts. For decades it was the most accessible source overseas embassies had for current guidance on U.S. policy.

Sent by shortwave around close of business in Washington, the File reached Beijing in the morning, spewed out on a teletype printer. One of my jobs was to skim through the 30-40 pages to make sure there was no mention of the "Republic of China", a political no-no that the Washington writers couldn't seem to shake. Once or twice this formulation slipped past my eyes as well, only to be caught by the ever-vigilant Chas Freeman.

I also helped edit articles for our one-country magazine *Jiaoliu*. Published in Chinese, the magazine supplemented the Wireless File and VOA as USIA efforts to promote information about the United States on the Mainland in the pre-digital age.

Q: Were there any high level visits while you were in Beijing?

CAMP: President Reagan visited China in 1984, traveling to Beijing, Xian, and Shanghai. It was a huge deal with an enormous entourage – Bill Brown's ADST account describes the incredulous reaction of Ambassador Hummel on hearing that the

president's party numbered over 800. For a politician like Reagan who had blasted China in his presidential campaign, it was a bold move. For the Chinese, it was a very welcome symbol of acceptance.

I helped prepare briefing materials – including details such as the correct length of a Chinese cubit as used to describe the height of the terra cotta warriors in Xian – and worked in the press center in Shanghai. In Beijing, one of my responsibilities was making sure that *The Wall Street Journal* got delivered to each of the rooms at the Diaoyutai State Guest House every morning, a task I had no control over as it was totally dependent on whether the plane arrived from Hong Kong with the newspapers.

As with all presidential visits to China, but especially for the first since the normalization of relations, every detail was a negotiation. One of these involved the return banquet. The Chinese system for state visits dictated that the hosts gave a welcome banquet at the Great Hall of the People on the first night; the second night the guest hosted a return banquet, also at the Great Hall of the People. Well the White House, which is to say Nancy Reagan, wanted to feature Western food. With a new hotel, the Great Wall Sheraton, about to open, the White House decided to use it for the Reagan return banquet.

Word arrived that Nancy Reagan wanted to serve turkey. Now we had been taught by our Chinese teachers at FSI that Chinese don't like turkey – the meat is unappetizingly dry; having knives at the table is barbaric – so we sensed trouble even before the press got wind of the plans. At that time Beijing hosted just over a dozen American journalists, who were pretty much always in a cantankerous mood from their struggles with Chinese stonewalling. When they picked up the hot news story that Nancy Reagan, who already had a reputation for extravagance, was flying in turkeys from California, this small press corps turned on the embassy. We became the ones doing the stone walling, under strict orders from the front office: “don't say anything about the turkeys”.

The embassy held a practice banquet with some Chinese diplomats to test the menu that had been developed by James Rosebush, Nancy Reagan's chief of staff. The first dish was the cutely named Panda Salad, which featured raw bean sprouts to provide an Asian touch to the Western menu. When a senior Chinese diplomat observed in polite, British-accented English, that “when we Chinese eat raw bean sprouts we vomit”, the menu was quickly reworked to replace bean sprouts with hearts of palm.

The banquet went more or less as planned, served Western style with the turkey and the potatoes and vegetables all on one plate. The Chinese guests at my table didn't know what to do with the plated food; they were used to sharing central dishes.

They were probably also disappointed at not getting to enjoy a second state banquet at the Great Hall of the People, with sea slugs and all the exotic foods reserved for festivities. They'd been deprived of that and were picking at the strange food on their plates. When the Panda Salad course arrived, featuring soft brown hearts of palm, the guest at my right confessed it was the first time he'd eaten panda meat.

I would love to see an account from a Chinese official at that dinner; we got a small taste of the reaction a month later when David and I stood in for the Ambassador at a banquet that the mayor of Beijing was giving for middle school students from Greenwich, Connecticut on an art exchange program. As we worked our way through the many course all-duck meal, a very polite girl asked us to “please tell the mayor it’s not that I don’t like duck tongue it’s just that I’m not very hungry.” We took the opportunity to chat with the Chinese officials about the Reagan banquet, and as they loosened up the mayor allowed as how he had never had food like that before. “You know,” he said, “the problem with Western food is that an hour after you eat it you’re hungry again.”

That was my first presidential visit and it was a memorable one.

Q: Wonderful. That is sort of the quintessential junior officer experience.

CAMP: Yes. And the JOT rotation, which entry level officers don’t get anymore, was great. In addition to working in the commercial, econ, and consular sections in Beijing, I spent time in Shanghai. The Branch Public Affairs Officer there was Lloyd Neighbors, a long-time China expert. During my two weeks we had the opportunity to meet a distinguished group of American writers who visited as guests of the Chinese Writers Association.

The American group included Toni Morrison, Francine du Plessix Gray, Leslie Marmon Silko, William Least Heat Moon, Maxine Hong Kingston, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, William Gass, Robert Rees, and Harrison Salisbury. Watching these famous writers holding a conversation with Chinese writers was an extraordinary experience. I’ll never forget hearing Gary Snyder proclaim – to a group of people who had suffered through the Cultural Revolution not many years earlier – that “the true oppressed of the earth are the grass and the trees”.

Another memorable USIS-sponsored visitor was historian John Toland, whose program at the Chinese Institute of History might have been the first exchange between Chinese and U.S. historians about the Korean War. The Chinese call it the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea; we had very different views on this subject.

Q: Where else did you travel?

CAMP: On work assignments I went to the consulates in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenyang. Tourism was never easy, but we managed to visit Qufu, the home of Confucius; to climb Huangshan; to see the terra cotta warriors in Xian; and to take a train to the beach at Beidaihe. Road travel to Tianjin for foreigners was opened during our time in Beijing, so we jumped in the car to drive there mainly for the fun of hitting the road.

As a former Oberlin Shansi fellow in Thailand, I very much wanted to visit the original Oberlin-funded school in Taigu, Shanxi, now the Shanxi Agricultural University. In 1980

the Oberlin connection had been reestablished there and every year we invited the four Oberlin fellows to Beijing for Thanksgiving dinner.

Despite a denial from the relevant authorities for travel to Taigu, we were able to get on a train to the provincial capital of Taiyuan. One-year-old William, who drew crowds wherever we took him, was a big hit on the train. In Taiyuan, we were met by a car sent by the university in Taigu, and taken to campus an hour's drive away. Our official hosts deposited us with the resident Oberlin fellows, who were living in one of the little brick cottages built with Oberlin funds after 1908.

Although we could have been in trouble from both the Chinese authorities and the embassy for traveling without official permission, the whole weekend played out like a *commedia dell'arte* plot. It was only after we went to bed that the foreign affairs office showed up to register us. Our American hosts explained that we had turned in for the night; the foreign affairs office said they didn't want to disturb us and left. I figured they waited until they saw the lights go out in the bedroom to knock on the door. The whole thing was choreographed by the university -- our Oberlin connection earned us protection. So we got away with our unauthorized trip. We weren't busted by the Chinese, we weren't busted by the embassy, and I got to visit the old Ming Hsien campus.

Q: Very interesting. Now you're reaching the end of your time in Beijing. Anything unusual about the end of tour?

CAMP: The market economy was developing under Deng Xiaoping's policy of reform and opening. We had personal experience with this when a the mother-in-law of one of our FSI Chinese teachers asked us to sell our car to her son so he could profit from the new law permitting private ownership of cars. Mrs. Tien, a doctor, had suffered greatly in the Cultural Revolution because she had lived in the U.S. before 1949 while her husband attended university. After the establishment of diplomatic relations, her American-born daughter was able to immigrate to the U.S., but her two sons left behind didn't get an education and were washing dishes in restaurants.

Mrs. Tien proposed we sell her our car, to be reimbursed by her son-in-law, our teacher in the United States, so her son could start a taxi service and make money. We agreed to give it a try, which led to my husband having several meetings on dark street corners. In the end we were denied permission, on the grounds that the gap between our rank and Mrs. Tien's son was too great for the transaction.

We felt obligated to our teacher and we liked Mrs. Tien, who had one of those heart-rending Cultural Revolution stories, but the transaction just wasn't possible. When the denial came we had barely a week left in country and still had a car to get rid of. Fortunately, an Egyptian navy officer wanted it, although he refused to pay the full asking price. When David pointed out that \$4,000 was a bargain, the navy officer remonstrated: "I am Egyptian; I can't pay the asking price." So we went down a few dollars and he handed over a wad of cash just before we got on the plane.

Q: So you went back to the U.S. for a year of Thai before going to Bangkok.

CAMP: Studying Thai at FSI was very pleasant, totally different from studying Chinese. And I gave birth to our second child during this time, making both of these language training experiences equally productive. Daniel was born at Virginia Hospital Center, a much-more-modern and correspondingly less personal environment than the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Taipei.

Q: And did the Thai have to give the baby a Thai name?

CAMP: No, instead, we went back to our Chinese teacher for a proper name. Besides having “bear” in his name, William’s Chinese surname was *Su*, for Summers, which is also the character used for “Soviet”. To counter this Russian tilt and indicate Daniel was born in the U.S. we suggested “Dream of an Eagle”. Our Chinese teacher rejected the idea outright, exclaiming that eagles are rapacious, dirty birds; you would never burden a child with that. Daniel later studied Chinese and was given a different name, but we were disappointed he couldn’t be an eagle.

Three months after Daniel was born we went to Bangkok, another great place for little children because the Thais – like the Chinese - love kids.

David was Political Military Officer, working in the main embassy on Wireless Road. I was Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer with the U.S. Information Service (USIS), in a beautiful old building on Sathorn Road a mile or two from the embassy. We were there 1986-1988 under Ambassador Bill Brown.

The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) was Paul Blackburn, who had previous experience in Thailand, great ideas, a bouncy enthusiasm for public diplomacy, and long-term vision. Paul and I had lunch in Washington when I was still in language training; one of the issues he talked about was HIV-AIDS, which wasn’t on most people’s foreign policy radar at that point. Paul was seeing the beginning of the epidemic and thinking about how it would affect Thailand and our relationship.

My direct boss was Ginny Farris, the Cultural Affairs Officer. She was another outstanding officer, beloved by all the staff.

Embassy Bangkok was one of the largest posts in the world, with multiple USG agencies and three consulates – Chiang Mai, Udorn, and Songkhla. Thailand was very pro-American; the reigning King Bhumibol was born in the United States, we provided a lot of assistance, and the military relationship was still strong, even though we had closed the Vietnam-era bases in 1976.

USIS Bangkok was actively involved in every issue – narcotics, refugees, economic development, POW/MIAs, education – and our Thai staff was superb; they had a creative solution to every problem. When 90 Amer-Asian children were transported from Vietnam

to the U.S. via Bangkok, we ordered American flags for the children to wave at the airport. The flags arrived without sticks; one of our clever local employees bought 100 chopsticks and we spent an afternoon attaching the flags to the chopsticks.

On another occasion we arranged a reception on the Chao Phraya River, realizing only after all the guests had boarded and the boat left the dock that there was no liquor on board. Quickly dubbed “the cruise without booze”, the evening was saved from disaster as the staff put out calls for replenishment. In less than 30 minutes a fleet of small boats were pulling up to our craft delivering Johnny Walker and other necessities for a diplomatic reception in Thailand.

All of this was a great contrast with Beijing, where getting speakers around the country or helping random English teachers had been ordeals. I particularly remember a day in Bangkok when two Peace Corps Volunteers showed up in hope of getting some material for their students. Beijing-style grumpy over this interruption to the mountain of tasks before me, I took them downstairs and asked a local employee if we had any English teaching materials to give them. Oh yes, here’s book one, here’s book two, book three... as their eyes got wider and wider.

The two teachers were delighted, and I started feeling pretty good too. The cherry on the top came when the super-helpful local employee asked them whether they were planning to stay in Bangkok awhile. When the volunteers nodded, she said “you’ll probably want to go shopping while you’re here and won’t want to carry these books around so I’ll ship them to your village.” They were immensely grateful and I realized that I got the credit for this wonderful, generous U.S. embassy just as I sometimes took the blame in Beijing for obstacles not of my own making.

USIS Bangkok carried out the whole spectrum of USIA cultural and educational programs: Fulbright, AFS, the International Visitor program, educational advising, book translation, musical performances, an annual economics seminar that drew top officials, a film festival, an American Studies association, a narcotics seminar. Even though USIS Thailand had only three branch posts versus 13 a decade earlier, USIS had tremendous reach and high level contacts.

One cultural program that should have been run of the mill skirted tragedy. It involved a husband-wife musical duo, who came to Bangkok under USIA’s Artistic Ambassador Program. The wife played the piano, the husband violin. Learning that the duo was bringing a Stradivarius, the Thai media used the press conference we had arranged to badger the violinist about the value of his instrument. A million dollars, was the reluctant answer, which he asked not be made public. Of course it was all over the papers the next day. The now-fearful violinist explained to us his concern - the violin had been a gift from the Shah of Iran to his father, who had been the Shah’s cultural minister; Ayatollah Khomeini’s regime claimed it as property of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

That night, at the conclusion of a recital at the Ambassador’s residence, we discovered that the pianist had lost her sight during the performance, which she completed anyway

from memory. Doctors eventually determined that the temporary blindness was a reaction to the vaccines she had received before leaving the U.S., but we had no idea of that as we rushed her to the hospital. I accompanied the husband back to the hotel room to gather his wife's belongings, then watched in horror as he hid the violin under a pile of dirty clothes in the closet. The pianist recovered, the violin left Thailand safely, and the recital guests never knew what a virtuoso performance they had witnessed.

For a second tour officer it was fabulous training in the full range of USIS programs, working with great officers and possibly the best local employees I have ever met.

Q: You're doing all of these exchanges at a time in the sort of political development of Thailand when there's still instability. Did that affect you?

CAMP: Although there was a coup attempt in 1985, before we arrived, that aspect of the political situation was quiet during our time. There was lots of instability in the countries bordering Thailand. The aftermath of the Vietnam war was still evident in the refugee camps and POW/MIA issues loomed large. The embassy warehouse, located on the USIS compound, had still-in-the-wrapper appliances and reams of JUSPAO (Joint United States Public Affairs Office) stationery that had been meant for Saigon over a decade earlier.

In Burma, anti-government discontent turned into a student uprising on August 8, 1988, known as 8-8-88. Embassy Rangoon evacuated to Bangkok; our USIS compound, which also housed the embassy recreation facilities, became a gathering place for the evacuees and temporary school for the kids.

In contrast, Thailand looked pretty stable, despite friction over Indochinese refugees, rice exports, and narcotics. The Thais were strong allies, the King was beloved, and much of the USIS focus was on helping strengthen civil society. Although the USIS presence had decreased following the end of the Vietnam war, we still sent a lot of Thais to the U.S. on USIS-funded fellowships and exchanges; USAID and DOD had additional programs, better funded.

Q: So you have the exchanges and the special projects; were there any major visits as well?

CAMP: Cabinet level and of course lots of Congressional Delegations (CODELs); members of Congress loved to come to Thailand. In his oral history, Ambassador Bill Brown describes a number of these, including their pressure on issues such as refugees, textiles, rice, and POW/MIAs.

Elizabeth Taylor sailed into town on Malcolm Forbes' yacht, with a monkey in tow that she had picked up in Indonesia. One of our colleagues in the consular section was assigned to go tell her she had to surrender the pet because it had been imported illegally into Thailand.

Q: Wow, what else was going on?

CAMP: In 1983, USIA created a television channel called WorldNet to bring our communications with foreign audiences into the modern world. We put up a huge WorldNet TVRO (television receive only) dish on the USIS compound in Bangkok, with monks coming to bless the final installation, and plunged into WorldNet programs. Most of these were less-than-exciting interviews with USG officials, who sat in a DC studio at 7 am while our Thai audience braved rush hour traffic to ask questions at 7 pm in Bangkok.

While these were useful as video press conferences, the one that drew the most attention was a semi-finalist for Miss Universe, a Thai woman living in Los Angeles. Paul Blackburn describes in his ADST history how this WorldNet program, which was viewed skeptically in Washington for its fluffy content, dominated all the Thai channels that night and the print media the next day, a public affairs coup. For my part, we were pleased that we managed to disguise Miss Pui's weak Thai language skills via an off-camera interpreter who helped her understand and respond to the questions. Thai audiences reacted very positively to this young woman who movingly described how she missed her homeland while expressing her love and appreciation for the United States.

Bangkok was my first encounter with the practice of raising money from corporations for government programming. In honor of the King's 60th birthday, the Thai Foreign Ministry asked every embassy to contribute to the celebrations. The Japanese built an entire new cultural center while we contributed the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, with funding help from Diner's Club. The King was a saxophone player and a composer and a jazz fan. The concert was fabulous and the group jammed with the King at the palace afterwards.

In honor of the King's birthday we also produced a second edition of a book called The Eagle and the Elephant. The first edition had been for the 150th anniversary of Thai-U.S. relations in 1983, when it proved a great gift item for the Ambassador and other embassy officials to present to Thai counterparts. For the second edition I became one of the editors, working with local employee Sukhon Polpatpicharn, to revise this bilingual history of Thai-U.S. relations. Some years later, when I was the Southeast Asia desk officer in Washington, the embassy did another update and I got involved again, this time getting materials from the National Archives. Every new ambassador wanted a new edition because it made such a good presentation book.

Inspired by that project when I was in Chiang Mai years later, I created a booklet focused on American contributions to northern Thailand. I told Sukhon, by then retired, that American Threads in the Lanna Fabric: U.S. Involvement in Northern Thailand 1867-2007 was my homage to our work on The Eagle and the Elephant.

Bangkok also provided my first introduction to email and to car phones. The idea of being able to send an electronic message from USIS Bangkok to USIA Washington was exciting, but seen as fraught with risk that had to be carefully managed. After drafting an

email, we would send it to the PAO (Public Affairs Officer) secretary who would pass it to Paul for clearance. Once cleared, the secretary would send the email.

Q: Oh my gosh.

CAMP: Around the same time a radio phone was installed in the PAO car. Paul would be at a meeting at the embassy, about two miles away. On his way back, usually stuck in traffic, he would call to say "I'm on my way", which is about the only use we could imagine for a car phone at that point.

Q: So that takes us to just about the end of the Bangkok tour in 1988.

CAMP: As a tandem couple, we had to declare whose assignment took the lead. After our first two assignments together in Asia, my primary area of interest, it was David's turn. Already fluent in several European languages and a big fan of Ingmar Bergman movies, he bid on the job of staff assistant to the ambassador in Stockholm. Once I got a corresponding assignment as Information Officer, all seemed to be working out well -- until a new ambassador was appointed who didn't want a staff assistant.

We learned about this issue via a phone call to our home in Bangkok on April Fool's Day, late at night. HR (Human Resources Bureau) informed David that they had canceled his assignment as staff assistant and offered him instead the job of computer manager in Stockholm. This followed security breaches at overseas posts, notably the case of Marine Sergeant Clayton Lonetree in Moscow, which led to a decision that computer operations at all posts should be supervised by an American officer, rather than local employees as had been generally the case.

Not only was this out of David's area of expertise as a political officer, but I was skeptical because my effort to teach him the Wang processing we were using in USIS had not gone well -- still in typewriter mode, he kept pushing the return key at the end of every line. He however, saw it as "just another language", which involved five months of computer training for him while I took Swedish at FSI.

The Ambassador-designate, Chuck Redman, was also studying Swedish. Redman had just finished his stint as Department Spokesman, which meant I was going to be press spokesperson for the primo press spokesperson. His wife Eileen was a graduate of Cordon Bleu and a caterer who would occasionally bring in fancy leftovers from some high level event that she had catered.

We were excited when the ambassadorial couple went off to the National Gallery of Art to select art for the residence, only to see them return discouraged at being offered the dregs of the National Gallery collection from the museum basement. The Redmans were modern art collectors themselves and soon transformed the residence in Stockholm, previously occupied by a Mormon political appointee, from Norman Rockwell to Robert Mapplethorpe.

Swedish was yet another fun example of FSI training reflecting the country and culture; we laughed that the Swedish textbook was the first time we'd ever had a dialogue about kissing. Even better, I got permission to finish my language training in Sweden when David was asked to get to post early.

Q: And that's not frequently allowed.

CAMP: No, although USIA tended to be more flexible on such things than the State Department. We arrived on May 3, 1989, our younger son's third birthday. This was the start of a four-year assignment that was both family friendly and an exciting view of momentous changes in the region.

After six weeks in a temporary apartment we moved into a house on Lidingö, a suburb of Stockholm. Our house was one of four identical modern buildings on a cul-de-sac, which put us in close contact with our Swedish neighbors. Up a hill we could watch the big ferries that went to Helsinki and Leningrad from Stockholm harbor; waving at the ships, particularly when friends were aboard, became a favorite pastime.

Our four years we were there were great in terms of sports for the kids. They learned to ice skate; both joined hockey teams.

Q: Even though they were quite young.

CAMP: Daniel went from three to seven while we were there and William from six to ten; besides skating they learned to play soccer, ski and sail in Sweden. Sweden was also good on adult sports; I participated in the 30 kilometer women's version of the famous *Vasaloppet*, a 90 kilometer race that commemorates a journey by Gustav Vasa to defeat the Danish invaders.

Q: Now I know why the ship was named The Vasa.

CAMP: After the Vasa kings. The Vasa Museum, built to house the war ship that sank in Stockholm harbor immediately after launching, opened while we were in Sweden. Many have pointed out that it is one of the few national memorials to military failure.

The *Vasaloppet* is a rite of passage for many Swedish men; King Carl Gustav has participated. Women were banned until 1980, with a 30-kilometer women-only race called the *Tjejvasan* established in 1988; that is the one I participated in.

The finish line is an arch with the motto "*I fädernas spår för framtids segrar*" -- in our fathers' tracks for future victories. As skiers pass under the arch, an announcer calls out the name. When I approached the finish line in 1991, my husband ran to video the moment. On the way he slipped on the ice and, intent on protecting our new video camera, smashed his elbow. He became the only man injured in the women's *Tjejvasan*.

David's two nights in a small town Swedish hospital have since become our touchstone for contrasts with the U.S. health insurance system. When I submitted the modest bill (\$200 for an overnight stay and surgery) to Blue Cross for reimbursement, our claim was rejected because the charges weren't delineated. I had to write the hospital for a breakdown; the best they could do was \$100 for the hospital and \$100 for the doctor. Blue Cross accepted it.

Q: What was Redman like as an ambassador?

CAMP: Ambassador Redman was well-known from his time as Department Spokesman, when he appeared almost nightly on network news. He was a good ambassador, on top of all the issues, although his fast Washington pace didn't always fit with the more relaxed Swedish way of operating. Provincial papers would headline "Ambassador on lighting visit", as he made 15-minute drop-in calls. One paper played this to the hilt, describing how the editors had laid out coffee and pastries for a civilized discussion, the limousine pulls up, everybody's excited, Redman comes in and talks for 15 minutes, and leaves without even drinking his coffee. That was his style, very much to the point. A Swede wouldn't depart before drinking the coffee.

Q: Oh dear.

CAMP: I sat in on one interview with a Swedish journalist who didn't bring a tape recorder; Redman questioned him on it. Following standard practice, I taped the interview. The reporter called me later asking to borrow the tape, apparently he had second thoughts about relying on his notes. I agreed, suggesting he pick up the tape before the three-day weekend. "No, that's okay, just mail it to me", he said. The journalists were more laid back than what Redman had dealt with in DC.

But those were exciting years, 1989-1993, marking the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Soviet Union, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the restoration to independence of the Baltic states. When General Vernon Walters, our famously outspoken ambassador in Germany, visited Stockholm in the fall of 1989, we arranged a press briefing at the ambassador's residence. His prediction that Germany would be reunited within five years made headlines and drew a rebuke from Washington, which was not yet talking publicly about such possibilities. Of course things moved much faster than even Vernon Walters could predict.

With the NATO alliance central to the U.S. goal of a Europe, "free, whole, and at peace", USIA had created a program to familiarize European journalists with NATO institutions. In 1991 I led one of these NATO tours for Swedish journalists. In addition to the standard briefings in Brussels and a tail-hook landing on an aircraft carrier off Naples, we included a stop in Prague, the first time one of these tours visited a non-NATO country. Although we didn't know what to expect from this innovation, the result was eye opening for all of us. The Euro- and U.S.-skeptical Swedish journalists were taken aback by Czech enthusiasm for NATO, forced to re-think their assumption that a former Warsaw Pact

nation would not want to place itself under the western alliance. The Czech Republic joined NATO eight years later, along with Hungary and Poland.

These changes in Europe affected relations with Russia and the Baltic states, which declared their return to independence. When the flags of the Baltic countries first showed up in Stockholm we didn't know what they represented. Suddenly the concept of "captive nations", a term dating from the Eisenhower era, changed from a quaint cold war trope to political reality.

After some hesitation to see which way the wind was blowing, the Scandinavians rushed to recognize the sovereignty of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Reporters were calling me to ask whether the U.S. had done so yet. There was a kind of holier-than-thou moral superiority in being first.

Thanks to our cold war support for "captive nations", I had the satisfaction of pointing out to inquiring journalists that the U.S. (unlike Sweden, I didn't have to add) had never recognized the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. We had kept their embassies open during the whole period of Soviet rule; one of the original Baltic ambassadors was still in Washington, over 80 years old by this time.

The Swedes also found themselves on the wrong side of historical justice when these restored countries asked for the return of gold they had deposited in Sweden, the UK, the U.S., and other countries before World War II. After the Soviets took over these nations and asserted that the gold now belonged to them, Sweden was one of the countries that complied. Having long since turned over the gold to the USSR, Sweden resisted the idea of having to pay back an equivalent amount to the new states. Instead they argued that Sweden was providing aid in the amount of the gold. The Baltics rejected this, pointing out that "aid is aid, our gold is our gold, give it back". Sweden eventually did, but it wasn't pretty.

Unsure how long this new situation would hold, David and I seized the opportunity to see for ourselves, as tourists. Regular cruises traveled between Stockholm, Helsinki, and other Baltic ports; these were popular short trips because they were duty free and liquor is highly taxed in Sweden. Suddenly it became possible to go to Tallinn, Riga, and Leningrad – which became St Petersburg during our time in Stockholm. In biking weather our commute to the embassy took us past the port, which had a directional sign for Leningrad. Then one day the sign read St Petersburg. We saw the changes in small as well as big ways.

In August 1990 we took a short trip to Estonia, thinking that we better go before the Soviets cracked down. No one knew whether this opening would last. Tallinn was a fabulous medieval town, one of the Hanseatic trading cities. Riga was quite different, more art deco. By the time we visited Latvia in 1992, the U.S. embassy had just opened. I stopped by to say hello to the PAO, who had nothing but a desk; everything was still being pulled together.

We traveled to St Petersburg by boat on a cold Columbus Day weekend in 1992, a three-day trip, sleeping on the ship. Although everything was cheap, there wasn't much to buy. Back on the boat we discovered we had missed the chance to pick up a bargain accordion, as all the Swedish travelers had done.

The new political situation also resulted in turf battles with the embassy in Moscow. Although we never recognized the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, within our State Department apparatus they still fell under the responsibility of Embassy Moscow. Our folks in Moscow couldn't travel to the Baltics, while colleagues in Finland and Sweden were making tourist trips and coming back with observations about what was happening. Moscow, jealous of its turf, didn't want us reporting about those states but was hamstrung to get information itself.

Q: Interesting. Even though they couldn't travel there they were responsible for the reporting.

CAMP: Although we didn't recognize those countries as being part of the Soviet Union, they were nevertheless part of Embassy Moscow's territory.

My assignment was for four years, which was standard for USIS. The State Department norm was three, but David got a one-year extension to put us in sync. We thoroughly enjoyed our tour and the many opportunities it afforded us and our children. While many things in Sweden are expensive, the government subsidizes sports, culture, language learning, and health care. Our children played soccer, hockey, and sailed. David and I took a sailing class and spent a weekend attending a free Swedish-for-immigrants course, learning about Swedish customs alongside Kurdish and Somali refugees.

Our younger son went to a Swedish Montessori school while our older son went to the International School of Stockholm. I was the Ambassador's representative on the school board at ISS, a sometimes difficult position because we didn't have the kind of influence common at most embassy designated schools.

The school refused to take State Department funds, recognizing that the small amount of money came with major strings. One of the problems this caused is that the school wouldn't give preference for admission to American embassy kids, something that incoming families counted on. If families were assigned late or didn't contact the school, their child might not have a place.

The U.S. embassy was represented on the board because we were one of the three countries with the largest number of students enrolled. Yugoslavia had the second largest number of nationals enrolled, which gave our family a personal window on the break-up of that country. Our son William designed a poster for UN Day in first grade with the UN flag in the center flanked by the flags of the U.S., Thailand, Sweden and Yugoslavia. He told us that he included Yugoslavia because they had the second biggest army in the world, according to his friend Jovan.

As the divisions in Yugoslavia increased, we learned that Jovan was Serbian; his family ran a yachting rental service in Macedonia, a popular sailing vacation for Swedes. The business collapsed when the war prevented travel there. Another parent, one who could always be counted on to supply cakes for first grade parties, turned out to be Croatian. All these people we knew as Yugoslavs, including the embassy representative on the school board with me, either went home or melded into Swedish society.

Sweden had a lot of Yugoslav migrants, many working in the auto industry. So Sweden and the Swedish newspapers were paying more attention to the worsening situation in Yugoslavia than the U.S. media.

Q: You don't imagine that Yugoslavia would be sending workers to Sweden but things like that happen.

CAMP: And aside from guest workers, Sweden tended to take in refugees from places where the U.S. wasn't in good odor. As press attaché, I was often the one dispatched to receive petitions from protestors about some aspect of our foreign policy.

We didn't have as many protests as the neighboring Turkish embassy, which attracted rock-throwing Kurds. But we had our share. After a few experiences receiving angry petitions in front of the embassy, I suggested, in vain, that the political section might take the heat some time. The next group to come were Somalis; as I went to meet them the Marine guard assured me "I've got your back; I'm watching you". To my surprise the Somalis presented me with a large bunch of yellow roses to thank the U.S. for our assistance. You never know when the situation is going to turn up roses.

In September 1990 I went on temporary duty to Helsinki for the Bush-Gorbachev summit, working in the press center. Much of the discussion focused on Saddam Hussein's August invasion of Kuwait; the summit marked another step away from Cold War antagonism to cooperation, although there were lots of things going on on the margins.

Secretary Baker arrived late at night from Cairo, accompanied by the traveling press. Not having regular access to CNN, I embarrassingly didn't recognize Wolf Blitzer and had to ask his name as I was checking journalists off my list. Most of the press corps conversation was about having to convince their editors to pay two hotel bills for the same night – Cairo, where they'd just checked out, and now an expensive hotel in Helsinki. The high cost of living in Finland caused more problems the next morning when several journalists got the bill for the dry cleaning they had blithely handed over to the hotel on arrival.

I went again to Helsinki in 1992 for the CSCE (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe) summit. (CSCE later became OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.) As a USIS public diplomacy officer, I was very impressed with the way the Finns used high tech and Scandinavian design to promote Finland. Instead of the usual table piled with background papers for the press, the Finnish Foreign Ministry

provided floppy disks touting the beauties of Finland's lakes and mountains, a technological leap ahead of what we were doing at the time. The press packets for each journalist also included a fishing lure and fishing permit. It was a good lesson in another country's public relations.

Q: That's amazing. It's not what you would typically expect to get, like a flag.

CAMP: The Swedish Foreign Ministry also recognized the Finns' skill in this area and sent people to learn some of these techniques in advance of an international conference they were hosting in Stockholm.

Q: Everything is very expensive in that neck of the woods.

CAMP: It all depended. We were invited to the opera by some young people, who wouldn't let us pay for what we were sure were expensive tickets. So we took them out for a beer afterwards and realized that the price of the beer surpassed the price of the opera tickets. The opera was subsidized and the beer was taxed.

Q: Sure. And of course alcohol in Scandinavia is famously expensive.

CAMP: For sure, which made diplomatic receptions very attractive. Chuck Redman replaced a Mormon ambassador whose receptions were known for limited liquor. Ambassador Redman got off on the right foot with Swedish journalists by arranging his first reception for the press, and serving lots of alcohol.

When Thanksgiving rolled around, *Svenska Damtidning*, the women's paper, approached me about doing a spread on Thanksgiving with Mrs. Redman, an accomplished chef. Not only did she agree, she prepared an entire Thanksgiving dinner. Once it was done, she invited the journalist, me, and some others to sit down and feast, which I had not expected. About that time the Ambassador came home from work and she said "Chuck, would you go down and get a bottle of wine for us?" The Swedish journalists were charmed.

Art was another area where the Redmans provided a sharp contrast with the previous ambassadorial couple, who had covered up the nude fresco over the fireplace -- over the years embassy staff had dealt with the alternating sensibilities of ambassadors via a mirror that could be put up or taken down as needed. The fresco was made visible again under the Redmans.

The Redmans also brought their own art, including a Mapplethorpe plate displayed on the piano. This was soon after Cincinnati had censored the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibit there. Having not been satisfied with the Art in the Embassy offerings, the Redmans borrowed art from galleries in Stockholm, displaying it in the embassy with a little plaque acknowledging the loan and giving the galleries publicity.

Q: That's wonderful because that's not true in every country. You can't always borrow; not every gallery will let you.

CAMP: No, and there might even be some restrictions now because you could be showing favoritism. But there weren't any problems in Stockholm.

Q: Well you can't go wrong with something like that: It's fantastic.

CAMP: Having taken in a number of refugees from far-flung places, formerly homogeneous Sweden was beginning to grapple with diversity. Our family helped by explaining the exotic American holiday of Halloween. One day when I was out of the office a call came in from *Svenska Dagbladet*, one of the two major papers, asking to talk to an American about Halloween. One of our local employees thought to transfer the reporter to my husband. Unknown to me, David regaled the reporter with stories of Halloween pranks from his childhood, including one involving a mean old man, his prized Cadillac, a cat, and Ex-Lax. This story made the first page of *Svenska Dagbladet* the next day.

Meanwhile, in an effort to get more diverse stories in educational materials, the Swedish school system decided to produce a booklet about holidays around the world, with each month a different holiday in a different country. Halloween was chosen for October. The book producers spent Halloween with us, observing the limited trick or treating available to embassy kids and their friends.

We put a table across an interior doorway with an empty picture frame covering the top half. David stood behind the frame, in the dark, wearing a Bush mask I had bought for the 1992 election events. I invited the kids over to the candy bowl on the table; as they reached for the candy, Bush would lunge out of the picture and grab their hands. The kids were screaming. It was pretty effective.

The writer put together her story of Halloween, noting that it is a time when American parents like to dress up as politicians to scare the children. David approved the text and it got printed that way, along with a picture of our son William with a pumpkin; I don't know how long it was used in Swedish schools.

Q: That's great. And they knew so little about Halloween.

CAMP: Which is amazing today because Halloween has become such an international holiday. But it was exotic then.

USIS had the responsibility of responding to letters from Swedish citizens unhappy with U.S. policies. We had template responses on the death penalty and the prevalence of guns in the United States. Another sticky issue, this one at the governmental level, was our "neither confirm nor deny" policy regarding nuclear weapons on ships. As press spokesperson I got very fluent at that one. We still managed to host a U.S. naval ship visit, which went well despite the Greenpeace protests.

Less controversial was the visit of the tall ship “Pride of Baltimore”, with USIS arranging press tours and other fun events on board. By this time our son William had learned to sail at a Swedish camp not far from where we lived. David and I followed suit by going to adult sailing camp on an island in southern Sweden. The camp began with a meeting that looked rather like Alcoholics Anonymous, in which we all explained how we had gotten to adulthood without knowing how to sail, a rarity in Sweden. When it got to our turn we simply said we’re Americans, which was sufficient explanation.

Q: Once again, these are some of the lovely warm weather things you can do. Now of course Sweden also has some relatively large lakes.

CAMP: Beautiful lakes, including one on Lidingo near our home where we would ice skate in the winter. Again, ice skating classes and hockey equipment were very cheap, with a lot of secondhand stores for kids’ skates, hockey pads, sticks. Both of our sons were well below the level of the Swedish kids but classes were good and other parents were helpful, including a Romanian Olympic-level speed skater. This guy was an ethnic Hungarian who had competed for a spot on the Romanian team; he was barred for refusing to take a Romanian name. After defecting to Sweden he was working in a pizza parlor and practicing on a public rink; maybe he offered to help our boys because we were also outsiders.

Q: Did you also take part in the Swedish custom of eating crayfish?.

CAMP: Oh yes. August 6 is the first day that you are allowed to buy crayfish in Sweden, a restriction that was originally to prevent overfishing. By our time, however, most of the crayfish consumed in Sweden was imported frozen from the U.S., which made the arbitrary date kind of ridiculous. Still, it was a big occasion, celebrated with vodka and colored lights. Swedes use white lights at Christmas and commented every Christmas that the colored lights at the embassy looked silly, as though we were celebrating *kräftpremiär*.

Ideally you eat crayfish outdoors, but it rained the year our cul-de-sac neighbors decided to celebrate. Although we offered to host in our house, which was identical to the other three, we were told a garage would be more appropriate. First all the garages were inspected to determine the tidiest. Then we were questioned about David’s age, because the oldest person must sit at the left of the hostess. It seemed awfully formal to place so many rules on a summer picnic that involved eating crisp bread with cheese and crayfish and drinking lots of vodka while making toasts.

Q: Oh okay.

CAMP: Another event that fell to USIS was the visit of the Swedish-American of the Year, chosen by the Vasa Order of America. One year it was Chief Justice Rehnquist, who was terribly dull. Even the press conference we arranged with him was boring, as he deflected all questions.

The Vasa Order and its Swedish counterparts hosted a 10-day program for the honoree all over the country, with many set events repeated each year. The year they selected John Nordstrom, however, he insisted on three days max; he had to get back to the U.S. to open two new stores. Although the organizers weren't happy with this busy American who couldn't spare ten days to explore his heritage, they acquiesced to a condensed schedule.

Even in that limited amount of time, it was fascinating to watch John Nordstrom's interest in and knowledge of Sweden grow. At the first night's banquet he gave a short toast noting that his grandfather had left Sweden by boat for the United States, where he started a shoe store. By the third night Nordstrom was waxing longer, adding ever more details to the family tale. Later a story went around that he was so taken by his new-found Swedish heritage that he added two dots over the "o" in "strom" at the new stores. I'm pretty sure the story is apocryphal.

I certainly gained a lot from this intense cultural experience, enjoying the opportunity to explain to John Nordstrom the many different kinds of potatoes in Sweden or relate the story of Jon Erickson, the Swedish engineer who built the Monitor. One of the annual events was a re-enactment of the battle of the Monitor and the Merrimack on a lake in central Sweden, with lots of fireworks. The Swedes are terrific with explosives - Nobel, Bofors, etc. Despite being a very safety oriented society, it's easy to buy fireworks. And Stockholm hosted a bang-up international fireworks competition.

Q: Lovely, a very nice tour. Even though Europe was going through historic changes, it sounds like Sweden was not particularly affected beyond the political issues you mentioned.

CAMP: Although it's on the periphery, Sweden has always had an active foreign policy; they are engaged in a lot of countries and the breakup of Yugoslavia was bigger news there than in the U.S. And of course the Baltics are near neighbors.

With all the changes in Europe and new posts opening, our missions in Scandinavia took cuts. Stockholm went from three USIS officers to two. In my final year my title changed from IO (Information Officer) to APAO (Assistant Public Affairs Officer). I was still the embassy spokesperson and just kept the same business cards; it was easier than explaining

Q: The peace dividend-- we could cut back.

CAMP: This was also a time when the Swedish foreign ministry was grappling with personnel issues related to foreign service spouses. A group of female spouses forced their way into the Foreign Minister's office to protest the way they were treated. The Minister, Sten Anderson, initiated a study, which included research into how the U.S. State Department was handling similar concerns.

Q: Very interesting.

CAMP: I arranged a roundtable with a variety of American embassy spouses - one who was working locally, one with an embassy job, one who wasn't working, me as part of a tandem couple. We talked for nearly two hours; they were very interested in our range of experiences. Six months later the foreign ministry instituted some rather drastic changes that jumped way ahead of anything we did. I always thought we should adopt some of their new accommodations, including being allowed to spend as much as 10 years back in the capital on a one-time basis, which helps get kids through school or with other family issues such as elderly parents.

Q: That's quite remarkable that it happened that suddenly.

CAMP: And as with other occasions in Sweden, our ideas of what was progressive differed. For example, during the election the Social Democratic women campaigned to have stores closed on Sunday. Thinking back to our "blue laws", this seemed to me a very conservative position, and not one I would call feminist. From the Swedish feminist liberal democratic point of view, however, the concern was to ensure that mothers were out picking mushrooms with their children in the woods on Sunday, rather than working behind a counter in a grocery store. The way I saw it, however, it was the mother who usually ran to the store on Sunday when the family was out of milk. The Swedish response to that argument was that you should plan better.

Q: Did you get into any imbroglios about U.S. policy? With Sweden tending to be more in favor of revolutionary groups, perhaps?

CAMP: Yes, for example on our refusal to recognize Cuba. Swedes like to go to Cuba on holiday so our policy of isolation seemed ridiculous. And they had been big critics of the U.S. role in Vietnam. But with Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the weight of opinion was on our side. And certainly the fall of the Berlin Wall had an effect. Those were years in which our Cold War policies were reaping results. Not that the Swedes gave us much credit, but we were looking good on several fronts.

Meanwhile, however, Swedes were more attuned to the deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia than most Americans. One journalist in particular kept writing columns arguing that something had to be done, criticizing the United States for not paying enough attention to the pending disaster.

Q: Well he wasn't the only one saying that.

CAMP: There was also a Swedish connection to Pan Am 103, which exploded over Lockerbie in December 1988, six months before we arrived in Sweden. One suitcase linked to the bomb contained clothes bought in Sweden, which brought FBI and other investigators our way.

The only cabinet level visitor I remember was Lloyd Bentsen, the secretary of the treasury and 1988 vice presidential candidate. Bentsen had been in Russia and stopped in Sweden on what was described as a refueling stop, even though everyone knew there was no need to refuel in Sweden. In any case, because of his short time on the ground, we settled on a press event out near the Arlanda airport.

Wanting to at least get a little benefit out of this brief visit by showcasing some beautiful scenery, the foreign ministry proposed Bentsen meet with his Swedish counterpart on an old steamer on the lake near Arlanda. After a lovely lunch on the beautiful steamer, the two would answer questions from the press on the dock, an attractive photo op in front of the lake and the boat.

Although this sounded fine to us at the embassy, the plan sent Washington into inexplicable panic. No boats, they insisted, adamantly. We finally cracked the cause of the panic. The administration had recently been burned by photos of another cabinet officer enjoying a cruise on someone's sleek yacht; when they heard "boat", they pictured luxury. Once Washington realized that we were talking about an old steamboat, we got the green light. But it took some time for us to grasp why Washington was objecting and for Washington to understand this was innocuous.

Q: You are right. It does take some time because there are often unknown sensitivities to deal with. But it did happen?

CAMP: It did happen. I don't remember any policy being made but the Swedes got their photo.

Q: So now it's 1993 and you're beginning to think about the next location. What's going through your mind?

CAMP: We decided it was time to come back to the United States and I was aiming for the Southeast Asia desk job in USIA. George Beasley, who had been my boss first in Beijing and then in Stockholm, had gone back to Washington as deputy director of the East Asia office. That worked out well for me; I was delighted to work for George again.

David's path wasn't so easy. A State personnel officer came to Sweden with the oracular pronouncement that management experience and languages skills were key to promotion. This turned out not to be true, the supposed focus on management skills was mostly lip service. David's career development officer warned him that after doing a management job for four years, he didn't "look serious" as a political officer. So he ended up desk officer for the Dominican Republic, in a region and a bureau totally new to him. We went back to Washington with our two small kids, where we were faced with all the things involved in coming back here.

Q: Absolutely.

CAMP: I waited until after Labor Day when school started to begin my new job. I was not two hours in the office when the school called to say they didn't have immunization records; the boys would be sent home unless I produced the shot records. I had put the records in air freight, having failed to heed the advice to hand carry such documents. It took a desperate rush to re-create the records with long distance help from the med units at our embassies in Stockholm and Bangkok.

Child care issues proved a forewarning of the different cultures at State and USIA. Although our initial arrangement had me seeing the boys off to school in the morning and David picking them up from an after school program in the evening, this proved the reverse of the way both our agencies worked.

At State, it was not important when you got to the office but it was crucial to stay as late as possible. After a few incidents, with my husband rushing out of the State Department and the kids nearly stranded, we switched -- I went to work early and picked up the boys in the afternoon. We adjusted to match our office work styles and survived.

Q: There's this habit in the American workforce of hanging around late even if you're not particularly doing something. Many other countries don't quite understand.

CAMP: Waiting for your boss or your boss's boss to clear a cable, which is at the bottom of his crowded desk, was a State Department routine that USIA didn't share. Once we figured that out we set up a workable schedule.

Q: We are continuing with your assignment in Washington, DC. That was from when to when?

CAMP: 1993-1995. This was my first Washington assignment; I was USIA Country Affairs Officer for Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines. I overlapped with three State Department desks: Thailand/Burma (TB), Vietnam/Laos/Cambodia (VLC), and Philippines/Indonesia/ Malaysia/Brunei/ Singapore (PIMBS), although I had only the "P" from that set. Here again the differences between USIA and the State Department stuck out. Even though my husband, my brother and my brother-in-law were all political officers and I worked overseas with State Department employees, the differences between the agencies were more noticeable in Washington.

Q: You were living in Arlington, Virginia, relatively close to the Department but not necessarily to the USIA building on 4th St SW. Besides location, what were some of the differences?

CAMP: In addition to the State and USIA regional divisions being not quite aligned, I was the first Vietnam desk officer at USIA since 1975. Unlike the State Department, USIA saw no reason to have a desk officer for a country where we didn't have a post. Now that we were back in the business, I would get calls for research help from retirees working on their memoirs; this is how I got to know the USIA historian, Martin

Manning. He and his files were located in the basement of the Switzer Building across the street from USIA; most of the files were kept in shoe boxes on rows of open shelves.

Whenever I visited the State Department, escorting International Visitors or attending meetings, I was struck by the visual contrast between frumpy State and the contemporary décor at USIA. The office of the director for Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia was furnished with old leather couches and chairs, with nothing on the walls. USIA in those days still looked bright and modern, with colorful art and posters.

My job included reviewing grants from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), mainly for Burma, many of which seemed quite sketchy. One grant proposal asked \$10,000 for a conference of Burma exiles, inside Burma. There were no details how the money would be used; we joked that it might be for \$10,000 worth of shoes so the exiles could walk across the border into Burma. It was hard to get any details on this kind of stuff; NED was not happy with our criticism of the proposals.

We also reviewed VOA (Voice of America) editorials. These had begun some years earlier with the intention of stating U.S. policy, but the often hardcore language favored by the editorial division frequently caused trouble for the department and for posts. One of my countries, Burma, was regularly criticized in VOA editorials on human rights issues, while China might get a pass. Different parts of the public diplomacy bureaucracy were not in agreement.

The East Asia Area Office Director was Jodie Lewinsohn, a legendary figure in USIA with a dragon lady reputation. One of the rules was that only Jodie could use red pen. If you saw anything written in red, you knew it came from Jodie. She kept a steady hand on the region during a time of great turmoil.

Jodie also had an influence on my orientation trip to the region in 1993, when I visited all my posts except for Hanoi, where we did not yet have an officer, and Chiang Mai, where I had taught English 20 years earlier. Chiang Mai, the sole remaining branch post of the 13 USIS operated in Thailand in boom times, was being considered for closure; Jodie thought – probably correctly – that I was too biased to weigh in on the decision.

The U.S. relationship with Vietnam was evolving; President Clinton lifted the trade embargo in 1994 and normalized relations in 1995. Pre-normalization we had three State Department officers in Hanoi on POW/MIA (prisoner of war/missing in action) tasks, working out of a place referred to as “the Ranch”.

As the first U.S. representatives in the country in two decades, the three officers at the Ranch began expanding their job responsibilities and relationships. One contacted me to explore U.S. participation in an international film festival in Hanoi that the French were organizing. Although we couldn't swing it, I remember the proposal as one of the first attempts at cultural outreach post-Vietnam war.

Burma, with programming restrictions tied to the U.S. policy response to Burmese government repression, was the biggest problem child and consequently most fascinating of my five countries. Five years earlier, as I was finishing up my ACAO tour in Bangkok, the Burmese military had reacted to student protests that August by mowing down students and closing universities. Embassy Rangoon evacuated to Bangkok, where the families were given school and recreation space in the USIS compound. Although they later returned to post, we did not send another ambassadorial-level representative until 2012.

Somewhat incongruously, at a time when USIA was closing American Centers elsewhere, little Rangoon had the most active center in the world. With universities shuttered by the government, students found a welcoming space in our library; there were no other choices. The center also had an impressive outreach program, sending book boxes out to villages. Even now, with relations restored, the American Space in Rangoon ranks as most active and retains its special status with a new U.S.-funded building at a cost of \$29,000,000.

Q: And one of the things I learned about the American Center in Rangoon was that because the military government did not allow associations of any more than just a very few people, if you had a club or some kind of group it was the only safe place to meet, as I understand it.

CAMP: After 1988 most universities in Burma were closed. Students came to the center to learn English, to use the books, to study. It was extremely active.

Rangoon was crumbling and evocative, a somewhat sleepy backwater. Even the financial fraud we uncovered at post seemed quaint. It turned out that a local employee who had been collecting money under USIA's "recycling" program, which gave posts the ability to charge for service, such as English teaching or educational advising, had simply stuffed the kyat bills into a drawer, with no accountability. Auditors descended on the post to try to figure out what money belonged where.

Q: During this time U.S. policies are changing; all sorts of things are going on. What relationship did you have with Congress at the time?

CAMP: There was some sentiment in Congress towards normalizing relations with Vietnam, although we were still tiptoeing around that potential policy earthquake twenty years after the fall of Saigon. At the end of my two-year tenure on the desk we established diplomatic relations and Senator John McCain made a dramatic trip back to the country where he had been a prisoner of war.

Even as we had this warming up with our old enemy Vietnam, Burma remained toxic; it wasn't politically correct in Washington to say anything nice about the country or use the regime's preferred name of Myanmar.

The PAO in Rangoon, who had experience in Romania, got on the bad side of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for human rights by suggesting that the programs that had helped end communism in Eastern Europe could work in Burma. The DAS slapped him down, denying any point of comparison. Any overtures we suggested were immediately rejected, a situation that was still true when I was Consul General in Chiang Mai 2004 to 2007, dealing with Burmese activists in exile. More normal relations finally came under President Obama, 25 years after I was on the desk.

Cambodia was another special case, just pulling out of the devastation caused by the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese takeover, and the ensuing political uncertainty. We restored full relations in September 1993; when I visited on my orientation tour USIS Phnom Penh was a new, one-officer post feeling its way in difficult political and living conditions. The embassy offices there were minimalist, as were programs. The Cambodians needed everything;

One Cambodian NGO worker who came on the International Visitor program desperately wanted a fax machine. In all his meetings, as State Department or other government agencies asked how we could help, his response was “we need a fax machine.” But no USG office could grant that wish. We could send speakers, provide grants, but we couldn’t give him a fax machine.

Q: What other programs were you involved with?

CAMP: Having worked on the second edition of The Eagle and the Elephant when I was in Bangkok, I was delighted to help with a new edition, going to the National Archives for additional pictures. And then, as backup desk officer for the rest of Southeast Asia, I assisted the Indonesian embassy in preparing a commemorative book for the 50th anniversary of their foreign relations with the United States. The search for photos of official Indonesian visits to the U.S. took me to the I Bureau, which was just being reorganized.

Q: The I Bureau was what part of USIA?

CAMP: The I Bureau published magazines, reported stories for the Wireless File, took photos of official visits – in many ways it was a government-run media organization staffed by government journalists. The counterpart for exchanges was the E Bureau. These are more or less the ancestors of today’s Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA).

In the reorganization that year, which was part of Al Gore’s “Reinventing Government”, the I Bureau photographers had been reclassified as writers. The man I was told could help me find the Indonesia photos was stretched out at his desk wearing a photographer’s vest with all the pockets, a hat over his eyes - I couldn’t tell whether he was asleep or not. I gave him a nudge and said that I was looking for pictures of Sukarno and Suharto, the first and second presidents of Indonesia.

“You came just in time,” he growled; all the photos were about to be shipped off to the National Archives. As he thumbed through the “S” drawer in a file cabinet, I was fascinated to see names like Sihanouk and Souvanna Phouma, once leaders of Cambodia and Laos; the files were filled with contact sheets taken by USIA photographers in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. The next week they were due to be carted off.

Q: It is amazing about that with USIA. Even in embassies you have old files that are still around.

CAMP: When USIA was disbanded, selected material was dispersed to the Archives and the rest probably discarded. Some materials the Archives didn’t want, such as old Fulbright files, are in a Public Diplomacy collection in the Bunche library.

Q: Sure, sure.

CAMP: With Embassy Phnom Penh newly reestablished, it was especially exciting to reconstruct some past history of U.S.-Cambodian relations. David Chandler, an Australian expert on Cambodia, contacted USIA in search of three films the agency produced about the Cambodian royal family in the ‘60s; he asked for help getting copies of “Royal Wedding,” “Royal Funeral,” and “Royal Ballet”. Working with the Archives, I succeeded in recovering the latter two.

“Royal Funeral” contained a fascinating segment with a young King Sihanouk putting ceremonial kindling on his father’s cremation pyre in 1960. The other showed the Cambodian ballet troupe, most of whose dancers lost their lives under the Khmer Rouge. We made copies for Embassy Phnom Penh as well as for David Chandler. The post presented the two films to Sihanouk, who had reassumed the title of King in 1993; although he had received copies of the films in the ‘60s, all were lost in the Khmer Rouge era. I wrote an article about the find and presentation for *USIA World*. There must be a treasure trove of USIS films in the Archives for someone to explore.

POW/MIA issues were politically volatile, with a strong lobby pressuring Congress and State to do more, plus cranks pushing conspiracy theories and people in Southeast Asia peddling bones and information that were as likely as not to be false. Of course, when remains could be identified, it was a great comfort to the family and wonderful satisfaction to everyone involved. I visited the military’s Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii, CILHI, which conducted forensic examination on bones that had been found. I was amazed to learn how they could identify an individual and details of death from bones, teeth, clothing, watches, whatever remained.

While most attention was on Missing in Action (MIA) from the war in Indochina, the MIA effort also encompassed World War II remains. Sometimes we would get information about a World War II plane crash in, for example, northern Thailand; an old man remembered from his childhood a plane that crashed near the village. CILHI does all that and Korean War missing too.

Q: That's extraordinary. Now after two years you were bidding on your next assignment.

CAMP: Once again we hit some obstacles with the tandem process, but ended up in good positions. My husband had already accepted a job in the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES) when the political counselor position in Budapest opened. This was one of his dream jobs, because of a beloved Hungarian college professor. Plus, there was an ACAO (Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer) job open for me, a down stretch in rank, but one I would be happy to take.

Resolving various issues for David's job took eight weeks, which left me in limbo as USIA got increasingly restless about holding the ACAO position for me. Once everything was settled I baked cookies to thank the USIA personnel office for standing by me. As it happened, the day I brought the cookies to the office, personnel called asking me to come sign a form attesting that I understood the job was a down stretch from the rank I then held, presumably to protect them if I decided to grieve the assignment in the future. I took them the cookies and signed the forms.

Our jobs came with 10 months of Hungarian language training, which we were looking forward to taking at the new Foreign Service Institute (FSI) campus that had opened two years earlier not far from our house. Unfortunately, things did not go as smoothly as we anticipated.

The problems began with a budget fight when USIA refused to pay the high fees FSI was charging for non-State students. This led to a cascade of consequences. I was one of three USIS officers scheduled to start Hungarian language training, along with Bill Morgan, going out as Public Affairs Officer (PAO), and Jennifer Denhard, who was to be Assistant Information Officer (AIO). When USIA pulled us out of FSI to a private school, my husband David was the only student left in FSI Hungarian. That in turn meant layoffs in the Hungarian section, which resulted in bad blood not only between State and USIA but with the Hungarian teachers who did the testing.

At the private school, we used an FSI text from the '60s, very outdated, with dialogues asking whether it was possible to own your own cow in Hungary.

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

CAMP: At FSI, meanwhile, the teachers were developing a new book, with David as the guinea pig student. It was considerably more modern than what we were using at the private school. David gave me a copy and I gave it to our teachers, which made the FSI teachers mad when they learned about it.

When time for our first test rolled around, my two colleagues and I trekked over to FSI, where we all scored poorly, especially in reading. When we reported what was on the test and the results to our teacher, she said "That's not fair. They can't test you on that; you haven't studied that." True enough, but that's not the way it works.

At the end of the year none of the three of us got a 3/3. We all needed language waivers. I eventually tested 3/3 at post.

Another hurdle were the government shutdowns, which lasted a total of 27 days. We stayed home listening to the same language tapes over and over. Before we could go back to class a blizzard shut the government for another week, forcing us back to the same tapes.

After all that, we were very happy to get to Hungary. David's office was in the main embassy building while USIS was in the Bank Building, a modern structure about a block away. I was assigned as ACAO with the understanding that I would move into the CAO position when the incumbent, Peter Becskehazy, left a year later. However, Peter curtailed and I became CAO almost immediately; the ACAO position was abolished as part of ongoing downsizing in Budapest.

Q: Right.

CAMP: When we arrived, the ambassador was Donald Blinken, a gracious, cultured New York investment banker. His wife Vera's Hungarian origin was a main motivation for seeking the job.

The Blinkens had been at post for two years when we arrived; he was settled in and easy to work with. He was very interested in art and had served on the board of the Mark Rothko Foundation. Donald Blinken's brother was ambassador to Brussels; his son Tony Blinken became Deputy Secretary in 2014.

Much of our focus during those years was on Hungary's entry into NATO, the conflict in the Balkans, democracy programs, and the continued transition from communism. It was a fascinating, active time.

Q: The ambassador had a connection or a friendship with Congressman Lantos.

CAMP: Tom Lantos, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, was a frequent visitor, as was Ron Lauder, former Ambassador to Austria and President of the World Jewish Congress. Both had a role in the reopening of the Great Synagogue in Budapest, renovated with support from the Estee Lauder Foundation. The synagogue is the largest in Europe; it's just stunning.

Although some property had been returned, such as the synagogue, there were a lot of unresolved art restitution issues. Ron Lauder's family was one that had lost art work during the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross regime. Many of these cases involved forced sign overs, which were harder to prove than outright seizures.

A young American woman came to see me about her family's art collection, which included several Van Goghs that were hanging prominently in the Hungarian National Gallery. Her grandfather had signed over his art holdings under pressure from the Axis-

allied government. All these years later, her mother was looking for nothing more than a plaque at the Gallery recognizing the donation, but after coming to Budapest and diving into this issue the daughter became more and more determined to get something back. When I saw the movie “Woman in Gold” I thought of this young woman; she had never previously visited Hungary before and had been unaware of her Jewish background,

Q: Other than the art restitution issues, did you do anything else with Holocaust education or any other thing related to Holocaust?

CAMP: Blinken was very interested in Holocaust issues and his wife served on the board of the International Rescue Committee.

Every year we participated in Holocaust Remembrance Day. Having lived in Sweden, we were especially interested in Raoul Wallenberg, his role in rescuing Jews in Budapest, and his mysterious disappearance in early 1945, probably at the hands of the Soviets. And of course Tom Lantos came regularly, especially while the Blinkens were in Budapest. Our next ambassador, Peter Tufo, was less welcoming.

Q: By the time I arrived in Hungary in 2005 there were issues over history textbooks. Had that already begun as an issue when you were there?

CAMP: Ambassador Blinken would sometimes push on those issues, both officially and unofficially. There were anti-Semitic groups and right-wing political parties peddling both covert and overt anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism was entangled with other left-over conflicts of history, including communism. Hungary has done a stronger job of commemorating the victims of communism than the victims of anti-Semitism. Advocating for the rights of Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries is another priority, an appeal to nationalism that harks back to the irredentism of the pre-war era.

We arrived just before the 40th anniversary of the October 1956 revolution, a revolt that was crushed by Soviet tanks. After 200,000 Hungarians fled the country, public discussion of the revolt was suppressed for 30 years. The 1996 commemoration included guided walking tours of the main sites augmented by personal accounts from some of the former freedom fighters.

The 1956 events brought some 35,000 Hungarian refugees to the United States, joining earlier immigrants to form a large anti-communist ethnic lobbying group. In December 2005, the House of Representatives approved a resolution declaring that the 1956 Hungarian Revolution led the way to the collapse of communism in 1989 in Hungary, throughout East and Central Europe and eventually, in the Soviet Union.

Q: They did a very big deal with the 50th anniversary; I was there in 2007.

CAMP: Hungarians pay attention to their history although often ignoring the inconvenient parts. It was fascinating to hear from eye witnesses about the students marching to Parliament, seizing the Radio Budapest building, toppling the statue of Stalin. We also visited the cemetery where Imre Nagy and others had been buried in unmarked graves.

NATO enlargement was a primary foreign policy goal in Europe and the focus of many of our USIS efforts, even while expansion remained controversial. A number of U.S. policy experts opposed including Central European nations, arguing that enlargement would dilute the alliance and antagonize Russia. Within Hungary, there were anti-NATO groups arguing against membership. Many objected to any kind of foreign influence, after years of Soviet and Warsaw Pact control.

Nevertheless, by the time we arrived in Budapest in 1996, Hungary had already joined the Partnership for Peace and allowed NATO to open a logistical base in Taszár to support U.S. military operations in Bosnia. In USIS, we threw most of our programs into building support for NATO enlargement among the Hungarian public.

After an invitation to join NATO was extended in July 1997 to Hungary, as well as Poland and the Czech Republic, Prime Minister Horn announced a referendum for November. We worked with groups such as the Hungarian American Coalition in planning an informational campaign for Hungarian voters.

As a side note, we invited Yale historian John Lewis Gaddis to Hungary to speak on the Cold War, even though he opposed NATO enlargement. After bringing him through the USIA speaker program, it was a little uncomfortable to see Gaddis' subsequent op-ed in the *New York Times* arguing that moving NATO's borders east risked alienating Russia. All we could do was cite USIA's commitment to presenting multiple views.

In any case, the November referendum drew over 50% participation, with 85% in favor of joining NATO. The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty on May 1, 1998; the ceremony marking the formal accession to NATO of Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic took place in March 1999, in Independence, Missouri, where President Truman had announced the initial creation of NATO fifty years earlier.

In the midst of all this, we went through a difficult ambassadorial transition. Given various stories about dreadful political ambassadors, maybe I should consider myself lucky to have had only one bad experience in this arena, but Peter Tufo was a doozy.

As the incoming ambassador, Tufo desperately wanted to be on the ground before the referendum, which by that time was expected to come out favorably. We figured that he was eager to be there on the day of the vote in order to claim credit, despite the fact that that this was the culmination of an intense 18-month campaign to promote NATO entry.

That supposition turned out to be accurate. A self-centered bully, Tufo made our lives so difficult that any discussion of the rest of our time in Hungary has to start with some of

Tufo's foibles.

Q: Romania had a difficult political appointee as well; James Rosapepe, who had been in the Maryland House of Delegates.

CAMP: Yes, and the two were difficult in opposite ways. I heard Rosapepe insisted on driving his own car, to the great consternation of the security folks; Rosapepe saw himself as a man of the people. Tufo, on the other hand, insisted on having a lead car and a chase car; he had imperial tendencies. Both were extreme examples of the down side of political appointees, but we were certain that our ambassador was worse than their ambassador.

Tufo was married to a woman who was heir to the Fox empire and a reporter for the Wall Street Journal. We later learned that she filed divorce papers the day of his confirmation hearings, after finding out about an affair he had started in the ambassadorial course.

Tufo, who was of Italian heritage, had coveted the ambassadorial position in Rome. He had no knowledge of or interest in Hungary. He was totally out for himself and a kleptomaniac; he would borrow things like shaving cream or a pen and not return them. On a small scale this character trait was annoying; on a larger scale it was flat out unethical. After Tufo hinted during a visit to the Ford factory that he would like a car, the company came through with an offer; the management officer had to intercede to stop it. On another occasion he requested and got the chance to fly in an F-16. The U.S. Air Force provided a flight suit, which Tufo took home; the military were in a tizzy trying to figure out how to get it back.

On top of these transgressions, Tufo thought we should invade Serbia through Hungary, which was a terrible idea; he was freelancing foreign policy.

The up side was that dealing with such a difficult ambassador united the embassy; in bad times everybody pulls together. One of our local employees came to me in tears, worrying that "Ambassador Tufo is going to ruin U.S.-Hungarian relations." I assured her that relations would survive, although we might not.

Q: And during this time Hungary was important to our NATO efforts and the many changes in Eastern Europe.

Although NATO membership was in the bag by the time Tufo arrived, there was lots of action in the former Yugoslavia. An old Russian base in the town of Taszár had been transformed into the logistic base for IFOR (Implementation Force) and its 1996 successor SFOR (Stabilization Force). Hungary became a popular destination for CODELs (Congressional Delegations) that would use the comforts of Budapest as a jumping off place to visit the troops in Bosnia, the base at Tuzla.

Q: What was the situation in the former Yugoslavia by this time?

CAMP: The situation was tense; even though the Dayton Accords brought an end to the 3 1/2 year-long Bosnian War in 1995, clashes between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians led to the Kosovo War four years later. We had friends at Embassy Belgrade who were evacuated three times to Budapest during our time there.

Q: By this point in the late '90s had the issue of the return of the Marine House and some of the older buildings that the U.S. had since World War II, had that begun?

CAMP: The Hungarian request for the return of the historic property where the Marines lived was a long standing issue. Located in the Vár, the castle district in the Buda Hills, it was an old prison; national hero Kossuth Lajos had been imprisoned there after the 1848 revolution. The U.S. government received it and other properties in Budapest after World War II as compensation for U.S. property that had been seized.

It made a fabulous Marine House, great view and great parties. Halloween was especially memorable, with a haunted house in the dungeon where Marines sprang ghoulishly from coffins.

The Hungarians wanted it back while Tufo had his own idea; he didn't like his residence and proposed to swap it with the Marine House. While he didn't succeed in that plan he did move the Fourth of July reception there, which worked well except for the terrible traffic in the old streets of the Vár.

Q: History still plays a role in many of our interactions.

CAMP: Hungary is a marvelous place for anyone interested in history; there was always something to commemorate. A Hungarian professor approached me about the upcoming anniversary of the U.S. returning the Crown of St. Stephen to Hungary in 1978. This was not an anniversary on the embassy radar, and my proposal to stage a commemoration was not an easy sell. As it turned out, however, it was a perfect opportunity to connect Hungary's NATO membership with the "return to Western Europe" theme initiated by President Carter's decision to return the Crown 20 years earlier.

Today the return of the Crown merits its own page on the embassy web site, which explains the 1000-year history of this symbol of the Hungarian nation and notes that "The decision by President Jimmy Carter to return the Crown in 1978 was a controversial one, and one which took political courage," adding "the return of the Crown was both an occasion for improving U.S. - Hungarian relations and a device for pulling Hungary towards the west. It allowed the traditional warm relations between the two countries to resurface."

Years later I saw Jimmy Carter in Shanghai and expressed admiration for this difficult decision; it's one of the things he doesn't get much credit for. We had received the Crown from Hungarians guarding it after World War II who didn't want it to fall to the Soviets. It sat in Fort Knox for many years; I was told that one of the responsibilities of the Hungarian desk officer was to go visit it once a year at Fort Knox.

Q: Oh, interesting.

CAMP: The Hungarian-American community, many of whom were refugees from the 1956 uprising, had opposed returning the Crown as long as the country was under communist rule. Carter came up with a formulation under which we returned the Crown to the people of Hungary, not the government. The White House and State Department made sure it was received by all the main religious groups, including the chief rabbi, and placed in the National Museum, not the Parliament.

Coverage of our commemoration reminded Hungarians that the Crown's 1978 return initiated the process of drawing Hungary back into the West, and noted that the resultant good feeling allowed the first Fulbright grants in 1979.

I started pulling together information for a reception at the National Museum and speech by the Ambassador, with help from a local employee who had saved all the old newspaper clippings – fortunately for our research, she had ignored admonitions from a succession of American officers to clean out her overflowing office.

I sold the idea to Ambassador Blinken without considering the coming change in ambassadors. By the time Tufo arrived in November, plans were in place for a January 6 commemoration. Eager to put his own imprint on the event, he declared that we should pair the celebration with a call for Russia to return a library stolen from the Sárospatak theological school by the Soviet Army in 1945 and shipped to Nizhniy Novgorod. (In 2006, the books were given back to Hungary, and are now on display at the Budapest National Museum.)

I tried to explain that there was no parallel in the two events. The U.S. was given the Crown for safekeeping by Hungarian patriots while the library was stolen by Russian soldiers. We didn't want to suggest any equivalence.

Q: Correct. And the Crown was the vital symbol, of the Hungarians' national statehood, even during the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

CAMP: It remains an extremely important symbol, featured on the national coat of arms. As I learned from the old news clippings our employee saved, the U.S. delegation that brought the Crown to Budapest was led by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. It included Congressman Lee Hamilton, and Nobel Prize Winner Dr. Albert Szent-Györgyi. The ceremony to turn over the Crown was to be in the morning, so, reportedly, the delegation guarded it by sitting up all night playing poker.

I sent draft remarks to Ambassador Tufo a week in advance but didn't hear anything back. On January 6, I joined the Ambassador in the car; he took my pen and started marking up the speech. As we drove up to the Museum, I saw the Minister of Culture standing at the top of the imposing steps, ready to receive the Ambassador, who remained inside the car going over the speech.

Not moving to get out of the car, Tufo insisted that he should include in the speech a call for the Russians to return the Sárospatak library. I reminded him that the country team discussion had concluded that we not equate the two issues. He finally got out of the car, greeted the Minister, and began the ceremony, leaving me in suspense that he might actually insert this misguided equivalence. Fortunately, he did not, but it was the first of several struggles with this capricious ambassador.

The Crown stayed in the Museum for a number of years before the government moved it to Parliament, where it now resides. I guess at that point we didn't care so much, although that was a crucial part of the original agreement.

Q: Yes. There was a decent interval and then they moved it. What other programs were you involved with?

CAMP: I was on the board of the binational Fulbright Commission and helped select grantees. We had a very creative director, Huba Bruckner, who did his best to expand the number of Hungarians receiving fellowships.

I was also in charge of democracy grants, funded by USAID but administered by USIS. A few years earlier, a decision had been made in Washington to put USAID rather than USIA in charge of new programs aimed at building democracy in former communist states. USIA argued that we were better suited to run these programs because of our experience with education and exchanges, whereas USAID had been focused on development, usually in third-world countries. In the end the funding went to USAID, which passed on the money to grantees, including USIS, to carry out the programs.

Under the small grants program, which averaged \$5-10,000, we looked for Hungarian NGOs that were building civil society in a post-communist country. One problem was that every grant application asked for computers, which many applicants seemed to see as the holy grail for community development. We decided not to fund equipment, given issues of maintenance, ownership, and possible theft,

Q: Or whether they are even used for the original purpose.

CAMP: Right, plus we wanted to stimulate more creative ideas. We gave one grant to jump start a national association of female politicians and another for a political watchdog group to compile the first comprehensive record of parliamentarians' votes. Basically we focused on helping NGOs become advocates for citizens' needs.

Roma issues were a big concern. We pushed hard to include more Roma in the grants and international visitor programs and worked with the Central European University's Roma journalist training, bringing speakers such as Betty Friedan.

Q: That's interesting.

CAMP: When Washington first asked whether I wanted Betty Friedan as a speaker I responded immediately: I was very excited at the prospect. A few hours later I got a call from John Jasik in the USIA speakers office warning:

“Bea, I want you to know she’s very difficult. You may not want to take this on.”

But I couldn’t pass up the chance to program such a legendary leader of the women’s movement, even though she was famously abrasive.

Q: Oh, you’re braver than I am. If John told me don’t take it, I would say in a very nice way let her off the hook. But go ahead.

CAMP: I picked her up at the airport and took her to her hotel. She needed money so we went to an ATM, where I learned that her pin was “SusanB”.

When I came to fetch Friedan the next morning she wasn’t in the lobby; when I rang her she growled that she wasn’t coming down. Fortunately, the hotel had given me a second key card, so I went up to her room.

Friedan was nowhere near ready, complaining, “I’ve got a cold; I feel like shit; I can’t find my earrings; I’m not going until I find my earrings.” Costume jewelry was spread out on the bed; I started pawing through the stash holding up matching earrings, anything to get her to the program at the Central European University. Once there, it was amazing to see her come alive in front of an audience.

Q: Okay.

CAMP: That night we took her to Gundel’s, a famous restaurant owned by George Lang, the Hungarian-born owner of New York’s Café des Artistes in New York. Lang had told Friedan she must order apricot X -- she couldn’t remember what -- so we had apricot liqueur, lamb with apricots, and apricot dessert. Her hearing wasn’t good; we had to shout, but it was a fascinating experience.

Friedan’s interests had turned to gerontology; she gave me an autographed copy of her 1993 book The Fountain of Age. She was also very interested in her Jewish roots, repeatedly asking about a town in Czechoslovakia -- a country which no longer existed, although we couldn’t convince her of that. We figured out the town was Sátoraljaújhely, on the Hungarian-Slovak border. Estee Lauder’s family was from there, as well as the ancestor of a friend of mine who had sent us in search of the Jewish cemetery.

She was indeed difficult, but I had no regrets at this chance to rub shoulders with a foundational figure of the women’s movement.

Q: What were some of the other Roma programs?

CAMP: One day I heard on the radio a story about villagers in northeastern Hungary, Uszka, on the Ukraine border, that had opened their doors to a few Roma who had been evicted from another town in a particularly egregious example of anti-Gypsy bias. I was struck by this simple, human gesture and thought it might be worth nominating the village for the EU-US Democracy Prize, a one-time \$20,000 award to commemorate the Marshall Plan.

To make sure we had the facts straight, a colleague from the EU Commission and I took a train to the remote village, which was separated from Ukraine by a narrow stream. (I declined an invitation from the villagers to wade across.) The EU colleague and I both concluded there really was something noteworthy in what had happened in the village, and that it could serve as a terrific symbol for human rights and decency. Sadly, the national coverage of this gesture had earned the mayor and village abusive phone calls and threats, all the more reason to shine positive publicity in their direction.

We went ahead with the nomination and the village won, against dozens of nominations from all over the EU. The President of Hungary insisted on presenting the award himself, in a ceremony that led the evening news.

Q: That is lovely.

CAMP: After being off the grid in the village, I experienced a rude return to the news cycle on the trip home when a reporter in the town of Miskolc ambushed me with questions about President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. I had been out of touch for three days and didn't have a clue who Monica Lewinsky was.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: The speed of the post-communist transition in Hungary could be measured by the precipitous growth and equally rapid shrinking of our USG presence. Over a period of about a dozen years, USIS climbed from one officer to a peak of six, and then back down to three by the time I left in 1999. Peace Corps sent its first volunteers in 1990, then closed the program six years later. Similarly for USAID, which ended its bilateral program while I was there. We were still receiving SEED (Support for Eastern European Democracy) money, but other countries crowded out Hungary on the neediness scale, which tipped in favor of our new embassies in Central Asia.

Q: The country had gotten into NATO and so on; the post was quite diminished by the time I arrived there in 2005.

CAMP: Yes, things changed rapidly. Our two boys went to the American International School of Budapest, in a former Young Pioneer camp in the Buda Hills. Another rather charming legacy of communism in that area was the children's railroad, a small gauge train with teenage conductors. For my husband's fiftieth birthday, which happened to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the railroad, we booked the whole train for his party.

Q: In addition to the CODELs and people like Betty Friedan, did you have any other notable visitors?

CAMP: We had a fair number of Hungarian-born American visitors, such as Tom Lantos and film producer Andrew Vajna. Richard Holbrooke came for a conference with his Hungarian-born wife, Kati Marton, where he talked about the '56 Hungarian revolution and the ongoing struggles in the Balkans.

I met photographer Annie Leibovitz and writer Susan Sontag at an exhibit of Leibovitz's work; Sontag had flown up from Bari to be there. Ambassador Tufo's office had not responded to an invitation to open the exhibit; I ended up doing the honors after a pleading phone call from the gallery the day before asking for embassy participation. Leibovitz was lovely, very down-to-earth friendly.

Q: Did you have a chance for any significant travel elsewhere in Central or Eastern Europe?

CAMP: We went to Romania several times, to a village in Transylvania where my husband had done folklore research pre-foreign service. He also had friends in Poland, from his first assignment; we drove through Slovakia to visit them in Kraków. For spring break every year we went skiing in Austria with friends from the embassy.

Thanks to these annual ski trips, I remember when the German-Austrian border controls disappeared, under the Schengen Agreement. Our drive took us across the Hungarian border into Austria, then through a small tongue of Germany, then back into Austria. When we reached this area our first year, we passed through German border controls and a few miles later re-entered Austria, showing our passports again. By our second year, the border controls between Germany and Austria had disappeared; it was thrilling to experience a Europe moving closer to the ideal of whole, free, and at peace. We could see things changing, mostly for the better. Except for the Balkans, there was a lot to be optimistic about.

We also traveled to Garmisch, Germany, a popular destination for its PX (Post Exchange) and Bavarian alpine attractions. Staying in the military facilities there was a vivid reminder of World War II and the U.S. military occupation.

We took several car trips to Italy. One extremely cold Christmas we decided just to drive south until it got warm. In Bologna we met snow. In Rome we slogged through sleet. Finally, in Naples on New Year's Eve we reached short-sleeve temperatures. The fireworks that night in Naples were wild, triggering car alarms and setting trees on fire. We just had time to visit Pompeii before heading back to Budapest and cold weather.

In 1997 we dropped plans for a trip to Egypt after the horrible massacre at the Valley of the Kings. We went the following year, however, booking with a Hungarian tour group; it

was not only cheap but also good language training -- the Egyptian guide would speak in English with the Hungarian guide providing translation, so we got to hear the tour twice.

Coincidentally, our Egyptian guide revealed that he had been the guide for Peter Tufo, our ambassador, when he traveled clandestinely to Egypt with another U.S. ambassador. They reportedly hooked up in ambassadorial charm school, leading to Tufo's divorce from his second wife. I believe he married two more times after that, but I lost track.

Q: Interesting. And now as you are finishing up in Hungary, we're reaching the end of USIA.

CAMP: The merger was announced in April 1999, a shock because we all thought that Sen. Jesse Helms was gunning for USAID and that USIA would survive.

[Note: USIA was created by President Eisenhower in 1953 with a mission "to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions and their counterparts abroad." To achieve these goals, USIA used a wide range of overseas information programs, including radio broadcasts, libraries, press motion pictures, exhibits, to both explain and support American policies, society and culture abroad. USIA was merged with the State Department in 1999.]

At the country team meeting in Budapest when the news was announced, one colleague assured us "we welcome you with open arms". I knew he meant well but all I could conjure up was a traditional Chinese bride being turned over to the mercies of her husband's family. The agency's coming dismemberment also led to musings over who would get the PAO house and the PAO china, which were not part of the embassy housing pool.

I'm sure this was going on at embassies all over the world. With a separate budget, USIA was ahead of State on new technology to carry out our mission. Sometimes embassy colleagues would come over to the USIS offices to use our computers and wonder why our equipment was so much better, finding it hard to grasp that we were in a position to allocate funding to suit our work.

And of course we had our own USIA email and other systems that had to be integrated with State over the coming years. The actual merger -- the arranged marriage - happened October 1, by which time I was back in Washington.

Q: It's April 28, 2016, and we are picking up again with Beatrice Camp at the end of her tour in Hungary.

CAMP: We left Hungary in 1999. My husband, who had turned 50 with 25 years of service, decided to retire on the day we left Hungary. Suddenly he and the kids became my dependents. We returned to the U.S. and I started an assignment at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs as the head of the educational advising office.

Coincidentally, I followed Peter Becskehazy, my predecessor three years earlier in Budapest.

Q: Oh interesting. And once again this job begins 1999 in Washington.

CAMP: My first months back saw the merger of USIA with State. I stood in front of the USIA building at Federal Center Plaza Southwest on October 1, 1999, as Madeleine Albright promised: you will become a part of the State Department, you will be integrated into everything we do, you will have a seat at the table.

Despite months of work in advance of the merger, lots of issues remained unresolved. Something called the “crosswalk” determined how people would be moved from a USIA office to a State one, including embedding some public diplomacy officers in State’s regional bureaus. On the tech side, we had a system called PD-Net as well as remote capability that was beyond anything at State. It was an unsettled time. My office didn’t change much because there was no equivalent at State, but we all spent a lot of time on the shuttles going over to Foggy Bottom.

Overseas the changes were more disruptive, especially in the administrative area. USIS cars were transferred into embassy motor pools, greatly reducing the flexibility that our officers had to manage programs and meet contacts. In some embassies, these cars were later reassigned to USIS after it became clear how much the changes had hampered our programming.

Q: Absolutely. And I can tell you because my very first tour as a public diplomacy officer began in the year 2000 in Bucharest, we did lose our dedicated car and driver and they did work out something that was reasonable. It was never as good but it was reasonable so that we could most of the time get where we needed to go on short notice.

CAMP: In Hungary, the local employee who handled all the administrative, budget, and personnel issues for USIS was initially cross walked over to the embassy management office. In the end she was brought back, as the only one who knew how the USIA account system worked, the grants and other functions State did not have. The jobs of PAOs became a lot more administrative after the merger.

In Washington discussions about the merger a number of “best practices” were identified, such as USIA’s four year tours versus the three-year norm for State officers. I don’t know if any were adopted; I know the practice of longer tours was not. Our new State colleagues got fed up with hearing about how we used to do things and we finally learned to keep our mouths shut.

Q: Yes.

CAMP: Jumping ahead, in 2004, as the fifth anniversary of the merger approached, I contacted the Foreign Service Journal to let them know I would be interested in contributing to an issue that I naively assumed would focus on the results of the merger. I

learned that no one had given any thought to the anniversary, but the editors said they would welcome an article. That put me on the hook; I submitted a “Speaking Out” in the October issue, titled “A Failure of Imagination” [[link](#)]. The 10th and 15th anniversaries passed unnoticed.

Back to my ECA job, 1999-2002, I oversaw educational advising centers worldwide as well as the regional educational advising coordinators (REACs). The REACs functioned somewhat like Regional English Language Officers (RELOs) as well as regional librarians, who became what we now call Information Resource Officers (IROs) [Note: In 2017, IROs were again renamed, this time as REPS, Regional Public Engagement Specialists]. The difference is that RELOs and IROs are Foreign Service specialists; the REACs are not and they were employed under a hodgepodge of arrangements that became increasingly untenable as embassy security and management restrictions tightened.

Each of the educational advising centers operated differently, based on local conditions and choices. We divided the centers into three levels, basic, intermediate and advanced, providing resources according to the level. Some of the advisors worked for the embassy, some for an NGO or Fulbright Commission or the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Whatever their employment status, I can testify that educational advisers tended to be wonderful, helpful, kind individuals. As head of the office, I enjoyed knowing that I could walk into any advising center in the world and be welcomed warmly. These were people committed to helping launch foreign students into the right university in the U.S.; they embraced their mission of providing information and assistance.

Our code of ethics forbade our centers from promoting specific institutions or pointing anyone toward for-profit schools. This brought us into conflict with the Commerce Department, whose fee-based “Gold Key Service” would shill for Joe’s Barber School without regard for the skills or experience the school would provide a foreign student. We had some contentious discussions with Commerce on this subject

While most of our work was focused on bringing foreign students to the U.S., we started to get involved in increasing opportunities for a more diverse group of Americans to study abroad. Congress funded, and my office developed, a new Gilman Scholarship Program for lower income students from underserved institutions, including community colleges. In shaping the program, we had to decide the minimum length for a study abroad program. Many community college students have families and jobs; it’s hard for them to leave for any extended period. Is it enough to just touch down in a foreign country or do you have to be there two weeks, three weeks, four weeks to derive benefits from a foreign experience?

Safety for American students was a growing concern, pushing universities to take more responsibility for their students abroad. One catalyst was the death of several students on the well-regarded Semester at Sea. The program offered optional add-on trips while in

port, contracting with local organizations to run the trips. On one of these in India, the contracted bus rolled over and several students died. I attended the Congressional hearing, where the president of Michigan State was called to testify, with bereaved, crying parents in the audience. This tragedy, as well as incidents of rape, assault, robbery, led to increased safety measures, such as universities offering 24/7 call centers that a student could reach from overseas. Study abroad became a lot more regulated in the following years.

Q: Was Semester at Sea a U.S. Government funded program?

CAMP: No, it was not. But my office was the closest thing to a U.S. government unit that was dealing with American students abroad. Of course American Citizen Services sections in embassies deal with individual situations, but for issues related to how universities conducted study abroad programs or recruited and assisted foreign students, we took the lead, working with NAFSA, an organization representing foreign student advisors on campus.

My office also oversaw the annual “Open Doors” report, which IIE prepares with State Department funding.

Q: And once again, IIE’s “Open Doors” details how many foreign students are going to the U.S.

CAMP: The report also provides numbers for U.S. students abroad, although those are harder to count. Thanks to this report, we have statistics going back years to show the rise – and sometimes fall – in the number of students coming to the U.S. from every country. In 1979 the largest group of foreign students in the United States came from Iran; now it’s China and India.

Using this report and other statistics, we prepared press releases for the bureau and briefing materials for Congress showing the financial benefits to each state derived from foreign students. During my time we calculated a total of \$13 billion; now it’s up to \$30 billion.

Q: Yes, very much so; foreign students are a big economic factor.

CAMP: Every Memorial Day weekend I attended NAFSA’s annual conference, where we staffed a booth and participated in panels. Student visas were always a hot button issue, with many U.S. universities feeling that consular officers were being too restrictive. One frequent complaint was that consular officers were more inclined to grant visas to applicants accepted at Harvard vs a no-name school. To remedy this, my office got involved in consular training to encourage a less-elitist approach to determining the legitimacy of student visa applicants.

At a time when Chinese students were applying in ever increasing numbers, universities were particularly rankled about the visa process at our missions in China. Embassy

Beijing sent the consular chief to NAFSA in San Diego, where he spoke to a capacity crowd of 500, the best attended panel at the conference.

The conference also featured booths and displays from universities, educational services, travel agents, and other country's educational promotion offices, such as Study Australia. As at any conference, NAFSA booths featured lots of promotional give-aways; we were acutely aware of the limitations of our skimpy government budget as we handed out pencils.

With the department starting to pay attention to branding, we developed our own brand, "Education USA", with a logo that we could use on all our presentation materials around the world. The design we came up with, which we belatedly realized resembled the 2000 Gore/Lieberman logo, lasted 15 years before ECA hired a professional designer for a redo.

My office's budget was about \$3 million a year. Realizing that our work encouraging foreign students to study in the U.S. was little known, we started focusing on ways to bring attention to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits brought by these foreign students. The International Education Week we started continues today, bigger than ever. Our lobbying did have an impact; there is much greater awareness today of what foreign students bring to our country.

Q: Just a very quick word about the trajectory of educational advisors. In the years that I worked in public diplomacy from the year 2000 to the years 2013 you're right; every single place I went it became ever more important to support the educational advisor who also went out from the embassy to regional cities to try to drum up interest in foreign students attending U.S. universities. And it became ever more important to report the results of these things.

CAMP: Right.

Q: Because of the growing interest in making U.S. education a larger export, a larger piece of the U.S. economy.

CAMP: We made some progress with Congress by touting the billions that international students brought into the economy annually, broken down by congressional districts. In addition, many universities have become dependent on foreign students, particularly Chinese students. My office emphasized that increased numbers on campus required increased assistance, such as pre-departure and on campus orientation programs, to make sure the students had positive experiences in the U.S. While the economic benefit was an important lobbying statistic, cultural and educational exchange is ECA's core mission. We never lost sight of that.

Q: Now you were working there on 9/11. How did that affect your programs?

CAMP: Believing strongly in the mission of educational exchange made coping with the tragedy of 9/11 especially harrowing. As everybody who was on the east coast remembers, it was a gorgeous day. I rode my bike in from Arlington, passing through the Pershing Gate at Ft Myer as usual. That gate has been closed to the public ever since.

We had one TV in the office. When somebody reported that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center, we all watched, commenting on the horrible, tragic accident, and went back to our desks. When the second one hit a bit later my first thought was: I hope foreign students weren't involved.

We never received official instructions that day. Thanks to the secretary in our office, whose mother worked at Main State, we heard that the department was evacuating. My colleagues and I agreed that everybody should go home.

Once everyone left I checked that the computers were off, changed my clothes, and went downstairs to the lobby, where I found a crowd milling around from an interrupted Fulbright meeting. Nobody knew what to do. I continued down to the garage, retrieved my bike, swished past all the cars jammed up trying to get out, and headed down the Mall. Memorial Bridge was closed and police were starting to block the area around the Lincoln Memorial, but I was able to cross the Potomac on the Roosevelt Bridge, from where I could see smoke rising from the Pentagon.

September 12 brought a lot of second guessing and recrimination. ECA Acting Assistant Secretary Helena Finn, who had not been at SA-44 on 9/11, scolded us for not leaving the building earlier. Meanwhile one of the DAS equivalents in IIP had threatened people their pay would be docked if they didn't stay. The truth is we were forgotten, even though SA-44 was close to the Capital and would likely have been impacted by the plane that was presumed headed there.

IIP was able to keep working because of its internet connections and teleworking capacity; there was pride in that. From my ECA standpoint, however, the fact that two of the hijackers had entered the U.S. on student visas was calamitous, leading to congressional inquiries, new restrictions and new registration for foreign students.

Q: I remember thinking when the first one hit that it had to have been a terrible air traffic lapse. And then when the second one hit I thought the air traffic control must have had a blackout because how could commercial airlines otherwise hit these buildings. And then slowly it dawns on you.

CAMP: Nobody knew what to do. All the security training we had received proved useless. We had no information, no one knew whether we should stay in the building, leave, go out to the open Mall -- everybody made his own decision. Add to that the next day recriminations, with one person saying you all should have left earlier and another person telling her staff not to leave.

I was lucky to have ridden my bike that day and was able to get home fairly quickly. My brother was at the Truman Building, where my mother was volunteering in the book room; he found her there and they walked to Rosslyn together.

Q: Of course they'd have to because bridges were closed.

CAMP: Traffic was terrible; people took hours and hours to get home. Although my kids were in school in Arlington, they were old enough that I wasn't overly worried. But people with children in elementary school were beside themselves, especially with schools dismissing students and staff.

Q: I had gotten back to the U.S. on September 10th and arrived in Atlanta because my intent was to drive up through the Smoky Mountains to Washington. I went into a general store along the way, saw what happened and said forget it. Who knows what's going on; I might as well go straight up 95 and do the Smoky Mountains another time.

CAMP: We had a group of foreign student advisors in town for training, staying at the Key Bridge Marriott in Rosslyn. They were stuck; everything was shut down, airports were closed, they couldn't go home. So on the Saturday my husband and I took two of them for a trip into the countryside. Everybody was stranded.

In the following years, 9/11 prompted major changes in the regulations, with the development of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to track and monitor schools and students.

Q: We went into the much more detailed system that had, theoretically, greater accountability. Essentially the burden fell on the colleges or the educational institutions.

CAMP: The universities naturally resisted taking on the burden and the expense of registering all these students and then being responsible for them. If a school provides the SEVIS form and then the student doesn't show up on their campus in September, what is the school's responsibility; what do they do? If a student transfers to another campus the SEVIS registration has to change. All of that was brand new and being hashed out my last year in that office.

Q: All of those were major events. I was overseas in Bucharest and it took a very long time to work itself out.

CAMP: Despite that I really enjoyed the assignment, extending for a third year. I felt like I was accomplishing something and supporting the overseas advisors, who were just delightful, dedicated people. Advisors don't make a lot of money but they really believed in it and they felt they were helping. It was a good environment to work in.

Q: Absolutely. I have also wonderful memories of the people who did that work whether they were in the Fulbright office or the local bicultural center or whether they were attached to the embassy.

CAMP: They tended to be really dedicated, sort of social worker types.

Q: Absolutely, I agree.

CAMP: With our kids in high school, I wasn't eager to go abroad yet, so I got a job in IIP (Bureau of International Information Programs) heading the European team. The designation was IIP/G/EUR. G stood for Geographic; the other half of IIP was designated T for Thematic.

Q: By now USIA had been completely absorbed by the State Department and all of USIA's old offices were under the responsibility of the undersecretary for public affairs and public diplomacy.

CAMP: USIA functions basically divided into two new bureaus, joining the Public Affairs Bureau that was already part of State. The two that took the bulk of USIA people and programs were the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and International Information Programs (IIP), which wasn't initially given the designation of bureau. Now 17 years later, the department has yet to designate the head of IIP as an Assistant Secretary, sticking to the term "Coordinator" despite OIG and other recommendations to the contrary.

IIP took over from USIA the speaker programs, magazines, pamphlets, Wireless File, WorldNet, video production, and web sites. IIP had undergone a major reorganization under Al Gore's reinvention of government program in the mid-1990s; part of the redesign tried to flatten the hierarchy, creating "teams" rather than top down divisions. The reinvention also eliminated most private office space and put everyone in cubicles.

Joe Duffy was the last director of USIA, a mild-mannered academic who didn't do anything to save the agency from death by incorporation. After the merger the remaining parts of what became known as public diplomacy were grouped under an Under Secretary. Evelyn Lieberman was the first in this position; she had a reputation for toughness and had already made a name for herself for having kicked Monica Lewinsky out of the White House. Word went out she didn't want women in sandals or bare legs; for meetings with the Under Secretary we wore stockings and ditched the open-toed shoes.

Lieberman tried to rally her new troops with a town hall meeting; we all gathered in the VOA building auditorium, the one with wonderful murals from New Deal days. The most controversial issue was her decree that all staff would have security clearances. Some of the writers, AFGE union members, argued that, as journalists, they didn't need access to classified materials. The controversy was aggravated by the fact that anyone holding a clearance was subject to random urine tests for drugs.

Lieberman wasn't prepared for the angry opposition; she responded with a shake of the head and the comment that "this is a good illustration of the adage no good deed goes

unpunished”. I imagine she saw her decision as a form of workplace equality; if anybody’s going to have a clearance, everybody should have one. But the clearance and the urine test requirement became points of contention.

Q: Did those eventually get put in place?

CAMP: The security clearance yes; the urine testing process eventually faded away after one notable case that involved teleworking, which was much more common at USIA than at the department. The drug test issue came to the fore when a woman teleworking from Maryland got a call to report within two hours for a random urine test. She responded that she couldn’t comply; she lived far away and couldn’t leave her child alone. Of course, under telework agreements you’re not supposed to be babysitting your kid.

Q: Ah yes.

CAMP: For a while this case was a cause célèbre, focused on the lack of prior notification of this policy. Nobody had ever told this woman to sign an agreement that she had to be available to come to the office within a two-hour period. It was a hot issue that later disappeared; I’ve never been called for a drug test.

Q: At this point were the people of the former USIA still in the Southwest building even though it was part of the State Department?

CAMP: It was still in what became State Annex 44, SA-44, aka Federal Center Plaza Southwest.

A number of East Asia folks pointed out that four is a very unlucky number in Chinese, a homonym for death. The designation of 44 therefore connotes double death. And my office was on the fourth floor.

I was head of IIP/G/EUR, the European team. From my non-hierarchical cubicle I supervised 18 people, which included program officers, a web manager, Russian translators, and Information Resource Officers (IROs) based in Europe. We managed speakers going to European posts, prepared articles on U.S. policy and culture, did Russian translations of presidential speeches, and helped with post websites.

IIP had developed a content management system, and one of my tasks was to convince PAOs in Europe to relinquish partial control over their post websites in favor of a common style mandated by IIP. Many did not like the idea, believing that their own home-grown sites were superior to anything that Washington could provide.

I understood the resistance, having worked in Sweden in the early 90s with a tech-oriented local employee who developed what we thought was an impressive site. Runar Bjorn provided my first intro to Java script, clip art, and other web marvels that soon became commonplace. Using his computer magic, Runar produced an embassy website with a flapping American flag and purple borders. Ten-plus years later I was the

Washington bureaucrat telling our posts that individualized websites were history. Everyone had to conform to “a common look and feel.”

Q: And once the new website was adopted, embassies had to go to the 2.0 version. I was in Costa Rica from 2009 to 2012 and it took us my entire tour to click through every single connection on every single page in order to change it to the 2.0 version. It took forever because we only had one person capable of doing it and he had other jobs as well.

CAMP: It was unpopular many places. One of the goals, definitely a worthy one, was that if something happened at the post, an evacuation or other breakdown, the website could be updated from Washington.

Q: The problem was that it was extremely complicated, I couldn't hire additional help, and I only had one person who was technically capable to go into all this code and rewrite it to make all of this happen. That also applied to other things that Washington wanted in all posts as we began to shift to more website based activities. They gave in essence an unfunded mandate.

So 2002 to 2004 you're in the Bureau of International Information Programs.

CAMP: Even though the merger was three years behind us when I came to IIP, the issue of titles was still under discussion. My USIA-era title was team leader, which I thought was just fine, but “team leader” didn't exist in the State lexicon, so we became office directors. Conversely, USIA's powerful area office directors, previously considered at least Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) level, became regional Public Diplomacy (PD) office directors. Perhaps the most visible result of State's approach was denying Assistant Secretary status for the head of IIP, a bureau with some 400-500 staff.

Q: Oh wow.

CAMP: In the last couple of years they've created PD DAS positions, back to where we thought we should be 16 years earlier.

The regional office director/team leader positions in IIP were divided between foreign and civil service. I headed the European team; Bob Holden, who was civil service, ran the East Asia team; Rebecca Winchester had the Middle East. Bob had the Chinese translators, Rebecca had the Arabic translators; I supervised the Russian translators and website.

In addition to technology, telework was another area in which USIA was out ahead, with the department finally coming around in recent years by recognizing the benefits for the environment, transportation, flexibility, and – after 9/11 as well as the 2003 blizzard - continuity of operations. But supervision is crucial. The three Russian translators were entrenched civil service employees with their own way of doing things and their own embedded enmities, skilled in waiting out the rotating foreign service supervisors. I

discovered that one was abusing telework while another had a racket going with comp time; I cancelled telework for both.

More than probably any other bureau, IIP is subject to redirection every time the leadership changes. One area of change was in defining our target audience. Throughout USIA's existence and into the present, we've swung from a focus on the grassroots to elite, then back again. When I was in Bangkok we had a large library, much frequented by students and others. The collection included children's books, until the command came from Washington to get rid of them; children were not a strategic focus. By the time I was in IIP the primary goal was to be able to deliver a speech by the President to the host country Prime Minister in 15 seconds. Several years later the pendulum swung back to youth and English teaching.

Post 9/11 everything was focused on the Global War on Terrorism, and then the Iraq war. Anything else was deemed not strategic. Secretary Powell's speech at the UN detailing Iraqi weapons programs (later revealed not to exist) was top priority for translation, with results measured in minutes as each translation team raced to complete the work – Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, and French.

Q: You were in IIP from 2002 to 2004. When I was there, 2011-13, it had been reorganized again and given new mission goals and objectives that were not entirely clear again.

CAMP: IIP is a prime example of a bureau that has been repeatedly reorganized to meet the priorities and plans of each new leader. In my time remnants of the old I Bureau still existed. We had a lot of former journalists on staff, writing articles for the Washington File (formerly known as the Wireless File) or the eJournals. As a former wannabe journalist myself, I enjoyed working in a bureau where good, concise writing was valued.

Twice a day, an editorial meeting determined what the File would cover, who would attend and report on an important congressional hearing, what kind of material would be useful for posts. IIP still had these vestiges of a media organization.

File editorial board attendees would stand around a table and discuss what was happening that day – maybe the Secretary testifying on the Hill - and assign someone to cover that. My role was to represent posts in Europe, be aware of what they needed, and inform them about what was available.

I liked IIP and was proud of what we were producing. But the job involved dealing with constant changes, telework issues, and stubborn staff, especially in the union-oriented Civil Service. In both ECA and IIP, foreign service officers are a minority, which puts a crimp in the kind of career networking that FSOs rely on. Both bureaus felt quite different from the more traditional pieces of the department.

Q: And where were you headed next?

CAMP: Earlier, while I was still in ECA, I was asked to bid on a DCM job in the Baltics. My husband was game but our younger son balked, reacting with “you can go, but I’m not.” He wanted to graduate from high school in Arlington. That seemed like a reasonable request, so I took the IIP job.

Then Consul General Chiang Mai appeared on the bid list. As a tandem couple our strategy had always been simply to find good jobs together, but with my husband now retired the bidding process was less complicated. And now the top job was open in the place where I’d taught English 30 years earlier.

Although I still think the merger of USIA with State was a mistake, it did open new opportunities for me, and others. The flip side is that previously plum job such as PAO Bangkok lost some of their significance. Those big PAO jobs, which once attracted the top officers in USIA, now sometimes go begging while I and others head for principal officer and DCM positions.

Q: No question. Since I joined the public diplomacy cone in 2000 every tour something was downgraded either in my section or close by.

CAMP: Right, the old structure has been whittled away.

In any case, I got the job, saw our younger son off to college, and headed for Chiang Mai in 2004. It was tremendously exciting to return not only to Thailand, where I had lived as a child and served as a second-tour officer, but to the place where I spent 2 ½ formative years as a teacher.

That said, after five years in the U.S., we found the move particularly difficult. I hadn’t appreciated that each year you stay state-side, your roots grow deeper. And it turns out that moving doesn’t get easier with experience.

Chiang Mai was our first post without kids. Before leaving Washington we drove our son Dan up to Rochester Institute of Technology for orientation, which included a session for parents advising us not to change our child’s room, at least for the first year. Oops, too late. We drove back to DC, finished emptying the house, boarded Korean Air in a state of exhaustion, and flew over Rochester on our journey to Asia.

I had always assumed that once kids are in college, foreign service life would get simpler. In reality I found that their absence meant the loss of a part of my identity and connection to a larger community. I was struck by nostalgia as I heard two colleagues complaining about the third grade teacher giving too much homework. Suddenly I missed discussing teachers, thinking about the school spring party and who’s going to bring what cake. Plus, having children at a post is another way to get acquainted. On the other hand, we had plenty of other activities to occupy us in Chiang Mai.

Q: What was the consulate like?

CAMP: The consulate in Chiang Mai is the former palace of the prince of Chiang Mai. Northern Thailand was an independent principedom, similar to the Shan states. The prince built it in western colonial style, with lovely teak floors. Our residence was on the same compound as the offices; I just stepped out my back door to get to work.

Q: Very nice.

CAMP: The consulate offices were in several small buildings on the compound and we had a wonderful household staff who made our three years extremely enjoyable. The consulate staff was terrific as well. Henry Jardine was in his fourth year as management officer; I benefited immensely from his experience and skills in dealing with the department.

As the chief U.S. diplomat in northern Thailand, I led a consulate with 30 American and 50 Thai staff representing five agencies. We reported on political, economic and social developments in the Burma, Lao and China border areas, handled visa and American citizen services, ran cultural and educational programs, and dealt with issues ranging from narcotics to Burmese exiles. My three years there covered the 2004 tsunami, 2005 flood, and 2006 coup.

State officers were in a minority at the consulate, which hosted several other government agencies. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) had eight agents, as part of their long time presence in Chiang Mai. Although opium from the Golden Triangle had been on the U.S. radar for decades, the percentage of Southeast Asia heroin in the U.S. had much decreased by 2004 (as heroin from Afghanistan increased).

I was surprised that DEA still had such a strong presence. Part of the justification was the rise in meth (*ya ba* or “crazy medicine” in Thai) coming over the border from Burma. As one of the agents told me, “Heroin is an old man’s drug”, with meth the modern drug of choice. And the smuggling routes were much the same, with meth factories under the control of warlord types in Burma.

This did not stop the long-standing practice of an annual poppy-slashing expedition hosted by the Thai military for the U.S. Ambassador and Consul General. Although it was no longer easy to find good poppy fields in northern Thailand, a scenic helicopter ride took us to a picturesque hilltop where we slashed the flowers off poppy stalks and then shared a Thai picnic prepared and transported by our hosts. Meth eradication doesn’t offer the same opportunities for outdoor enjoyment.

Q: Ah ha, interesting.

CAMP: The consulate was established in 1950, primarily to keep an eye on China after we closed U.S. missions in the Mainland. During the Vietnam war we also had consulates in the south and northeast of Thailand, as well as 13 USIS branch posts around the country. By the time I was Consul General (CG), Chiang Mai was the only U.S.

consulate left in Thailand; the Chinese took over our building in the south for their own consulate when we closed in Songkhla.

There was no longer a branch Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in Chiang Mai, which meant I easily slipped into that capacity as well. This was my first non-Public Diplomacy (PD) job, which afforded a chance to think about these roles. Even though my colleagues and I regularly visited universities, hosted speakers, and organized cultural events, the absence of a PD officer meant Chiang Mai showed up with zero activities under the PD reporting system.

Q: Yes. From 2004 to 2007 the department had a new effort to create a reporting system for PD activities to show their effectiveness, a system that wanted to look at absolutely everything PD did from donating books to conducting events and of course reporting on election parties and contacts. You go out to a regional library and you report that as a contact visit. It was just kicking off; it was not yet perfect.

CAMP: It never became perfect.

Q: It gives a little context of what it meant to show zero public diplomacy activities.

CAMP: Right, because we were doing all those activities. It was another example of flawed bean counting, but otherwise didn't affect our activities.

We had two successful projects funded by ECA's Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. One to renovate murals in a village temple was particularly satisfying for me because it was managed by a Thai professor that I had known 30 years before.

We developed some great Earth Day programs, helped jump start an anti-littering campaign, and nominated a local professor for the then-new Woman of Courage award.

Tammy Duckworth, a disabled Iraq vet who's now in Congress, came as a speaker; we organized programs with students with disabilities. With a Thai mother, Tammy didn't need an interpreter as she showed the kids her prosthetic leg. She was an inspiration to students with disabilities, a Thai-speaking American hero with an \$80,000 bionic leg funded by the U.S. government. She won everybody over.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

CAMP: When I first arrived the Ambassador was Darryl Johnson, who had been a Peace Corps volunteer, Thai Group 3, in Lamphun, not far from Chiang Mai. In the early 1980s he had been my husband's boss in the Beijing political section. We also discovered that he had lived in our house in Arlington after returning from the Peace Corps in the 1960s – long before we bought it.

Darryl's background and affection for Thailand matched mine; I very much enjoyed his several visits during my first three months, which were his last. The Boxing Day tsunami

of 2004 hit just days before his scheduled departure; with a new ambassador soon to arrive there was no way he could stay longer in the job to help with the recovery.

Ambassador Skip Boyce arrived in early 2005 with previous Bangkok experience and amazing linguistic skills. His introductory calls in Chiang Mai included a vice governor who was very interested in northern Thai culture, encouraged by questions from the Ambassador. I was particularly struck by Ambassador Boyce asking the vice governor for the spelling of a specific local curry, *gaeng ho*, asking “do you write that using *ho hip* or *ho nok-huk*”, distinguishing between two letters in the Thai alphabet that both have the “h” sound. That night at the consulate reception we organized, I watched in admiration as Skip used northern dialect and worked into his speech a remark about how much he loved *gaeng ho*. What a great performance; I enjoyed working with him.

The embassy guidance on reporting was minimal, which I found very welcome. I made my own decisions about consultations in Bangkok or what kind of reporting needed to be cleared with the embassy. It wasn't a heavy hand and we did some good reporting.

The management job, which also served as second in command, changed hands after my first year. The new officer was a train wreck. Colleagues at FSI reported he was doing poorly in language class, so I went to bat for him to come to Chiang Mai early for language immersion. It soon became apparent that language was not his only weakness; a delegation of local employees came to me with their concerns. After he curtailed, I was advised not to push for an immediate fill, which would risk taking the first person who came along. Instead, we got intermittent support from Bangkok.

The vacancy made it harder for me to travel as much as I would have liked in the district, but on the plus side, I learned important management skills by paying attention to electricity bills, housing issues, and other administrative duties.

The big Indian Ocean tsunami struck during my first year, on December 26, 2004, Boxing Day. Although in the north we were far from the destructive power of the waves, the aftermath affected everyone. December 26 was a Sunday, the day David and I regularly spent with the Chiang Mai Sunday Bike Group pedaling wherever the group leader, Professor Nirandon, decided would be fun and educational. Food played a big role as well.

Before we left for the ride, we noticed that the chandelier in the dining room was swinging. After we steadied it, the movement resumed – either a confirmation of the legend that our residence housed a ghost or the result of an earthquake someplace, we speculated.

Q: Is northern Thailand earthquake prone?

CAMP: Not very much. Burma has had some major earthquakes but Chiang Mai rarely gets more than tremors.

In any case, we went on the bike ride and were out of touch for several hours. Sometime in the afternoon I got a phone call asking if I was all right. The caller knew we had initially planned on vacationing that week on Phi Phi Island and was concerned on learning of the devastation there; the island was nearly wiped out. Our plans had changed when Management Officer Henry Jardine and I agreed that he would take vacation during Christmas week and I would go the following week. At that point we realized that the shaking in the morning was part of a massive earthquake.

Even though we were far from the scene we fielded calls from people looking for friends; there were a lot of phone calls along the lines of “last we heard Billy was in Chiang Mai”. An American teacher we had invited for dinner once called from Phuket. Although she was from Montana, she had instinctively run for high ground when the water first receded, summoning her son-in-law who had gone down to the water’s edge to help a fisherman with his stranded boat. She and her family spent the night on a hillside, with nothing but their bathing suits. She called me because I was the only person she knew to ask whether it was safe to go back down to the beach cottage to get their clothes, passports and other possessions.

Q: I remember some reporter at a high point literally looking down on the water, on the tsunami that had come in. And it topped over buildings.

CAMP: The videos were unbelievable, mesmerizing.

Q: Sure.

CAMP: My first reaction to her phone call was to point out that I was far north, what did I know? But I realized that I could tell her CNN was reporting little danger of another massive wave, “it’s safe to go back down and get your stuff”.

I have RH negative blood, urgently needed for foreign victims because it is rare in Asia. I donated blood, side by side with the governor’s wife, part of the massive impulse to help.

Bangkok of course was totally occupied trying to account for American citizens. Although we couldn’t send help immediately, because of our own vacation shortage, we did dispatch one officer a few weeks later, as the task of tracking missing persons continued for months.

Meanwhile, my mother and our sons were arriving for the holidays, which we had been planning to spend at the beach. I also wanted to arrange a get together with a Thai woman who had been an AFS student hosted by my mother’s neighbors 20 years earlier. Failing to get through on her cell phone I finally called her office at Thai International. “I’m sorry to call at the office but I keep getting a message on her cell phone,” I said. The person on the end responded “oh the cell phone is at the bottom of the ocean”.

We later heard Dhani’s story: she had flown down to Phuket for the weekend and was eating breakfast on the front porch of a cottage when the wave hit. She described

grabbing a pillar as things started flying around her. “First I was hit by a refrigerator and then I was hit by a dishwasher.” As a Thai International employee she managed to get on a flight to Bangkok, where she went straight to the hospital. She spent weeks there, suffering through a series of operations to strip the sand out of her legs. Doctors had to keep reopening the wounds to vacuum the sand out; she has leg scars to this day and always wears long skirts.

There were many tragic stories. The king’s grandson died in the waves. There was colossal destruction. That was our first Christmas/New Year in Thailand, 2004.

Q: What a start. How did it go from there?

CAMP: The other event that reverberates today was the September 2006 coup that toppled Prime Minister Thaksin. Although Thailand has had a long history of coups, we thought that era was past. The last previous coup had been in 1991, 15 years earlier.

Thaksin was in New York at the UN General Assembly; the military generals took the opportunity to depose him, ban his political party, and declare martial law, launching the political tug of war that continues today, a decade later. I learned about the coup around 10 pm from a friend’s email. Sure enough, CNN was reporting a coup.

The next morning at dawn I went out the residence/consulate gate, finding several armored personnel carriers (APCs) in front. I wasn’t sure whether it would be prudent to take photos, but the consulate guard, seeing my camera, said ‘Would you take a picture for me? They won’t shoot you.’ In good Thai coup style, the soldiers on top of the APC posed with smiles and I sent the pictures on to the embassy. This proved helpful, because the coup leaders claimed they were protecting the U.S. consulate. In fact, they were keeping an eye on the municipal office across the street, with the mayor a known Thaksin ally. Just to make sure, we called up the Japanese and the Chinese consulates and confirmed there were no armored personnel carriers protecting those diplomatic missions.

Even though northern Thailand was Thaksin territory – he grew up in Sankampaeng, just outside Chiang Mai – most of the bureaucrats flipped quickly to support the military coup leaders. On the diplomatic front, the Chinese government immediately declared support for the new government, scoring cheap propaganda points while the U.S. took heat for not falling in line. In discussing the coup with local government officials I regularly pointed out the U.S. government does not condone military coups or the overthrow of democratically elected governments. “But YOU understand, don’t you?” they would plead.

Q: Right, right.

CAMP: Many consulate local employees were also sympathetic to the coup, easily sliding into the “yellow shirt” story line of protecting the monarchy. I okayed a proposal to take water to the soldiers but drew the line at collecting money to buy them food.

Ambassador Boyce had been out of the country; on his return he was caught on camera saying something diplomatically anodyne. Although he was following Washington's line, his statement was interpreted as more supportive than intended. So we had seesawing politics during my final year there as the embassy was dealing with all this.

We also had big floods in 2005, giving me a three-year timeline that went from tsunami to floods to coup.

Having worked on a popular presentation book about U.S.-Thai relations, "The Eagle and the Elephant", during my Bangkok assignment, I decided to create a smaller one on U.S. involvement in the north. From 1867, when U.S. missionaries started founding schools and hospitals, many Americans had played positive roles in the development of the region. The king's father trained as a doctor at an American founded hospital in Chiang Mai, a story that fit well with the long-term U.S. policy of supporting the monarchy as a unifying element in the kind of democratic nation-building we had focused on for decades. There were also plenty of interesting characters who had left their mark on the region; I featured 10 of them in the book along with stories of consulate engagement during its nearly 60-year history in Chiang Mai. I researched and designed the booklet with a local employee; we printed 1000 copies of American Threads in the Lanna Fabric and posted it on our website.

Q: Nice.

CAMP: Burma was another major issue; since the 1988 student revolution and the aborted 1990 elections in Burma, Chiang Mai had become a central gathering point for Burmese exiles and dissidents. As Southeast Asia desk officer ten years earlier I had worked on the Burmese refugee scholarship program, but I was still surprised at the extent to which these issues dominated the consulate agenda.

USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funded projects out of Thailand; Embassy Rangoon officers, including the Chargé, would come to Chiang Mai to talk to Burmese exiles. We regularly arranged programs for them as well as for Department visitors. I hosted a dinner with Burmese exiles for EAP DAS Eric John, who later served as Ambassador in Bangkok. Although I was disappointed that his only interest in visiting Chiang Mai revolved around Burma issues, I slipped in a windshield tour of the city to make sure he got some of the flavor of our post.

Q: Very interesting.

CAMP: Our consular district included a number of refugee camps along the border housing refugees from Burma. A trip to Mae Sot was on the itinerary of many Department visitors; the major refugee camp there housed primarily ethnic Karen who had fled Burma in the 1988 period.

Q: Are the Karen Muslim?

CAMP: No, that's the Rohingya. About 15% of Karen are Christian. Western missionaries didn't have much success converting Buddhists in Burma or Thailand, but found converts among the hill tribes. The Karen were particularly receptive because of a creation story that told of two brothers who had a holy book. One brother, described as white, left with the book; the story foretold that one day the white brother would return with the holy book. When Baptist missionaries showed up with the Bible, they found an audience among the Karen.

Q: Very interesting. Chiang Mai is a busy place.

CAMP: The consulate opened in 1950 as a listening post on China but by my time there was more interest in what was going on in Burma.

Q: Yes, remarkable. And so you stayed there until 2007 and started thinking about another overseas post?

CAMP: I bid on DCM Stockholm and Consul General Shanghai, both very appealing although I doubted the powers that be would give me a second consulate.

One Saturday morning in 2006 I answered the phone to find Ambassador Clark "Sandy" Randt calling from Beijing. I had known Sandy in Beijing in the early 1980s, where he was commercial officer. He left the foreign service for an international law firm in Hong Kong; the story is that his Yale buddy George W Bush nominated him Ambassador to China over the names put forward by the State Department. His 7½ years in the post make him the longest serving U.S. Ambassador to China.

So Sandy's calling, asking me "Is Shanghai your first choice?" There's only one answer in that situation.

Q: Absolutely, absolutely.

CAMP: As we chatted, he mentioned the World's Fair in Shanghai in 2010, saying "we've got to get moving on that." "Yes sir," I responded, without a clue what he was talking about. Thus began my acquaintance with world's fairs, first in Shanghai and later as coordinator for the Milan Expo 2015.

Q: For an expo that opens in 2010, arriving at post in 2008 is literally the very last moment to do an expo of that size.

CAMP: Absolutely, but that's how we do it. That's another story.

Q: It's May 4 and we are continuing with Beatrice Camp near the end of her three-year assignment as head of the U.S. consulate in Chiang Mai.

CAMP: From Chiang Mai we returned to Washington for a year to rebuild the Chinese language skills we had worked so hard to acquire 25 years earlier. I had an option of

studying in Taiwan but wanted to be back in DC for family reasons. Being in Washington also gave me a chance to sit in on meetings focused on trying to figure out how to handle our participation in the Shanghai Expo.

First some background on the dysfunctional way that we handle world's fairs in the modern era. Once upon a time the United States was an enthusiastic participant in international expos; we hosted a number of memorable fairs in the U.S. as well until 1984. In the old days USIA had a large exhibits office with an expo unit that designed and managed our overseas pavilions. USIA officers were assigned to work at the pavilions; for example, Bill Lenderking had a foreign service assignment as protocol officer at the 1970 Osaka fair.

Congress dealt a blow to this process when it decided to prohibit the use of appropriated funds for participation in international expos. USIA cobbled together various sources of private funding for a few more world's fairs before being folded into the State Department in 1999. At that point, the responsibility for U.S. participation in international expos was handed to ECA (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs).

With no extra money or staff coming with the expo mandate, ECA has been reluctant to dive in ever since they got stuck with it. The department tried and failed to create a U.S. pavilion at the 2000 Hannover fair, then succeeded with Toyota money in Aichi, Japan five years later. Now the Chinese were putting on heavy pressure to make sure we had a presence in Shanghai in 2010.

The internal tension revolves around the fact that ECA doesn't want to participate and the regional bureau very much wants to. As the Consul General-designate in Shanghai, I knew that a decision for or against U.S. participation would have a huge impact on our relationship. I thought it was necessary to participate and figured we would eventually sign on. The question was when.

My nightmare scenario was a long-delayed decision, with Washington finally waking up in January 2010, demanding to know why we were snubbing China's big party. So I was glad to see that things were already in motion, with ECA issuing a request for proposal (RFP) in late 2006 for organizations to bid on the exclusive right to manage, design, fundraise, build, and demolish the USA pavilion.

Q: Was there a budget for it?

CAMP: No. The RFP does not come with any money.

Q: It would just be giving the official U.S. Government seal of approval to a particular agency or company?

CAMP: The chosen partner is responsible for the fundraising, as well as the design and management – even though all of this has to be approved by the State Department

ECA's 2006 RFP received two bids. The ECA panel liked the bid that came from the guy who had worked on the 2005 Aichi Expo, Doug West; he had experience. Unfortunately, West ended up withdrawing his proposal after deciding the fundraising would be too difficult. (The RFP estimated the cost "to range between \$75 million to \$100 million". The budget was later lowered to \$60 million.)

The other bid, from a cultural attractions company called BHL, proposed asking Congress for the money, which ECA considered a no-no; the bid also failed to address other requirements laid out in the RFP. At the point where I attended my first expo discussion in fall 2007, ECA had sent BHL several letters asking for additional clarification; everyone realized this couldn't go on forever; a decision had to be made. Finally, ECA judged the proposal "not viable."

Although that seemed to be the end of the road, the ECA-led committee continued to look for ways to enable U.S. participation. An attempt to get the Commerce Department involved, a perennial move by State pointing out that world's fairs are really closer to trade fairs, failed. In spring 2008 ECA received three additional proposals; although BHL cried foul, ECA ruled it was okay because the RFP remained open.

Q: Interesting.

CAMP: The unorthodox process led to BHL's accusations that the system was rigged against them. They saw themselves as "the last ones standing", they believed they should have won the bid. This grievance, kept alive by a member of the BHL team, continued long past the Expo, generating much of the bad publicity that plagues the USA Pavilion's reputation to this day.

Complicating the situation even more, one of the partners in this new bid was married to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Commerce Department. The aggrieved group claimed conflict of interest; this accusation lasted throughout the Expo and years beyond. As of a few years ago, the BHL partisan was still filing Freedom of Information requests and still writing nasty articles alleging a conspiracy.

Q: Holy cow.

CAMP: But all that was still in the future. I was delighted that chances for a pavilion were still alive and enjoyed seeing the Hollywood-style presentation of one of the new bidders to EAP (Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs) DAS Glyn Davies; the two representatives of Shanghai Expo 2010, flipped through story boards with gauzy comments such as "the architect won't be Frank Gehry, but it will be someone like Frank Gehry..." They got the nod.

At last we had a private-sector partner to work with, called Shanghai Expo 2010 Inc. It was led by Ellen Eliasoph, a lawyer with long China experience married to Ira Kasoff in Commerce, and Nick Winslow, whose background was in theme parks. Their original proposal focused on sports, in a bid to get money from the NBA. That didn't work.

Q: The expo itself was meant to be just sort of a cultural event or was it also designed to present participants' manufacturers or services or so on?

CAMP: When world's fairs first started in 1851, much of the focus was on countries presenting their industrial progress. Over time they became more cultural, more about nation branding, more future oriented. But all national pavilions have some commercial component.

Shanghai's theme was "Better City, Better Life", an urban focus. In addition to national pavilions, Shanghai had city pavilions and corporate pavilions; the Expo was huge and broke previous world's fair records, including number of companies participating and number of visitors.

While this slow drama was unfolding in Washington, the Chinese were pressuring us to participate. ECA's go-ahead to Nick and Ellen's proposal included an initial requirement that all the money be raised before we could sign the participation contract with the Shanghai Expo organization. This was later modified to \$15 million, which still proved a high hurdle. (When the Milan Expo came around five years later, the Department set the requirement at \$5 million.)

My first year at post we lurched through a series of cliff hangers as Nick and Ellen attempted to raise money and we enlisted AmCham Shanghai's help. After the sports theme fell through, Nick and Ellen came up with a different script. This new scenario was based in 2030, focused on a Chinese woman who visited the 2010 Expo as a young girl thinking about all the progress made in the two decades since. Kind of dumb.

The third and final design took visitors through several different theaters, ending with a 4D movie about a little girl who looks out at a vacant lot, dreams of creating a beautiful garden, and mobilizes her diverse community to realize her dream. While I ended up lukewarm on some parts of the pavilion, I thought the garden production was beautifully done, whimsical and effective. The 8-minute production conveyed a very American message about grassroots involvement and caring for our environment.

Meanwhile the consulate was getting a lot of flak for lack of progress, with the disgruntled BHL advocate predicting failure to anyone who would listen. Once a month AmCham hosted an evening for its members to get a briefing from and ask questions of the Consul General; these monthly sessions started to feel like a pummeling.

Meanwhile the Chinese authorities were summoning me to meetings, asking for an official decision as to whether the U.S. was going to participate. They couldn't fathom our weird way of going about creating a national pavilion.

You may recall that George Bush attended the Beijing Olympics despite calls from human rights advocates to stay away. I kept thinking it would have been a lot easier for us if the Chinese had taken advantage of his visit to extract a promise of U.S.

participation in the Shanghai Expo. I don't know why Hu Jintao didn't ask him then; somehow the Chinese leadership let that opportunity slip. But when Hillary Clinton became Secretary of State and paid her first trip was to China, the pressure was on.

Q: When did you arrive in Shanghai?

CAMP: I was scheduled to arrive right after the 2008 Olympics; my predecessor Ken Jarrett wanted to stay through that event. However, my departure from DC was delayed ten days for lack of a visa. Although I had applied in July, the Chinese government had yet to approve my visa in time for my scheduled departure over a month later. David and I had packed out and moved into a hotel; every two days I rebooked our flight. To this day I don't know what the problem was, although Joe Donovan, who was headed to Hong Kong as Consul General, faced a similar situation.

After a week of delays I went to a meeting at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce about the Expo, knowing that an official from the Chinese embassy would be there. "Oh," she said, "you don't have your visa?" That ended the impasse. It was odd, and probably a good reminder that not everything that happens in China has a logical reason.

We finally arrived in early September. I became the first woman to head a U.S. Consulate in China. My welcome reception was on the day in 2008 that all the banks crashed.

Q: *Oh my gosh.*

CAMP: Our invitees that day included the rep from AIG, who shook my hand saying, "I work for the government now too." (On Sept 16, 2008, the U.S. government took control of American International Group Inc. as the Fed negotiated a deal to lend up to \$85 billion to the insurer, giving the USG a 79.9% equity stake in the company.) The *Wall Street Journal* reporter showed up late for the reception; I was surprised he even had time to come.

Another seminal event during my first month was the melamine-tainted milk scandal, which killed a number of infants and sickened many more, estimated at 300,000. The corruption that led to this tragedy was instructive. Somewhere along the supply chain, perhaps starting with the farmers, milk was watered down to increase the volume. Because the reduced protein content of the watered down milk brought a lower price from the big milk companies, farmers and middle men added melamine to increase the protein content and the price.

Not only was this a tragic scandal that revealed terrifying corruption in the food supply, it also caused a run on all kinds of foreign milk powder. The resulting shortage affected our consulate staff as well. One of our management officers returning from Beijing by car made several stops to buy milk powder for concerned consulate parents.

During my first call on the city government, basically a friendly chat during which they let me know they'd been doing their research by talking about my journalist background

and making a flattering comparison to Edgar Snow, the vice mayor asked me what Americans thought of China. I responded that I had watched the Beijing Olympics while still in U.S. and that the opening ceremonies had really impressed American viewers. This drew a big smile from the vice mayor. But, I continued, without really thinking, Americans were horrified by stories about babies dying because big Chinese companies had adulterated milk with melamine. Seeing his face fall made me realize that wasn't the most diplomatic thing to say, but it was probably effective in conveying both the positive and negative stories that reach the U.S.

Six months later I was shocked when melamine-tainted milk powder re-appeared on the market, after it was supposedly all destroyed. Considering that a high ranking official was executed for the first scandal, whoever put it back in circulation must have been confident that he could get away with it. Another worrisome sign of corruption in the system.

Q: Wow, interesting. How about official visitors?

CAMP: Soon after Hillary Clinton was appointed Secretary of State she traveled to Beijing; her early visit was considered a sign of the importance of the U.S.-China relationship. Reportedly this was also when she first heard about the Shanghai Expo, and the U.S. failure to sign on – which made us wonder what happened to the cables we had been sending the Department on this subject. The Chinese leadership let the Secretary know this was a priority for them, an important second act on the world stage after the Beijing Olympics. She responded with a hands-on role in fund raising, setting up the Office of Global Partnership Initiatives (S/GPI) to solicit corporate contributions.

Although Clinton wasn't coming to Shanghai on that first visit, an event we were planning at the consulate almost threw a wrench in the works. My colleagues and I had decided to host a 200th birthday party for Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln is popular in China; former President Jiang Zemin was known for quoting from the Gettysburg Address, which he had studied as a middle-school student learning English. And of course Lincoln provided us an opening to talk about “government of the people, by the people, for the people”.

With our preparations well under way, including gathering Lincoln pennies from consulate kids' piggy banks and planning a menu of Kentucky Burgoo, I got a Saturday call from the DCM asking me what the hell we were doing. Relevant authorities in Beijing had heard about our Lincoln reception, considered it suspicious, and were threatening to derail the Secretary's upcoming visit.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: I couldn't believe that Lincoln's birthday could cause such anguish, but this was China and our logic was not always their logic. On Monday I was called in by local authorities, who read me a prepared statement. The only clue to all this was a question from my phone call with the DCM, who asked me whether we had invited Liu Xiaobo, a

Chinese dissident then under detention. The following year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which was strongly denounced by China. No, we didn't invite him, I said, besides, he's in jail.

When I got to the office and checked the list, I saw that we did have an invitee named Lu Xiaobo. Now in Chinese characters those names wouldn't have been confused at all; the only explanation was that somebody had provided the authorities with the English version of the guest list, leading to the mistaken conclusion that we were doing something subversive. The result was that half our guests didn't make it; they were likely told not to come or were blocked from getting to the consulate, so we had a much truncated event. It was another one of those occasions where you are left in the dark, analyzing in vain what lesson our Chinese counterparts were trying to send.

Q: Right, exactly. How would you even have imagined before the event that this could be the reason? It's such a small detail on your guest list.

CAMP: For sure, if the mix-up in names was even the reason. In fact, we had invited some dissidents with the intention of making a statement – a quiet one - about democracy and human rights. As a public diplomacy officer this was second nature; talking about Abraham Lincoln offered a good way to approach civil rights, human rights, how a society changes. But it wasn't as subversive as the Chinese chose to take it.

Q: Interesting. You mentioned being the first woman to head a U.S. consulate in China. What were the ramifications of that?

CAMP: It was somewhat humbling to find myself number 34 in a line of American Consuls General dating back to the 1860s; their imposing portraits lined the consulate entrance hall. This pantheon of male predecessors included the nephew of Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State William Seward.

While I appreciated the honor of breaking this particular glass ceiling, the real question was why it hadn't happened earlier. And in any case, I was not alone in the Shanghai diplomatic corps. Among the 65-plus resident Consuls General I could usually count five to six other women; we organized an informal lunch group.

Still, being a female CG was useful leverage to promote women's issues and American diversity. We took advantage of this status in a couple of ways, starting with hosting an annual International Women's Day (IWD) lunch at the consulate. I found it ironic that I had first learned about this occasion in Beijing in the early 1980s. While International Women's Day was barely recognized in the U.S. at that time, women in China were given a half day off on March 8 and I joined other female diplomats at a reception in the Great Hall of the People hosted by Zhou Enlai's widow, Deng Yingchao.

Twenty-five years later IWD had become a non-political be-nice-to-women day in China while the U.S. had reclaimed its standing as the originator of this event in 1909. We marked the 100th anniversary at the consulate with a lunch for female artists, writers, and

activists, taking as our theme the “Bread and Roses” message of the early U.S. labor movement. I hosted similar March 8 lunches all three years, with government officials one year and NGOs the next.

My final year, with the Shanghai Expo behind us, we launched a series of talks at universities on women’s “challenges and achievements” in the United States. Audiences, mostly female, were very receptive, asking follow-up questions that revealed their own concerns. With presentations at six universities, this topic proved an effective way to reach students that didn’t overly alarm the authorities.

Q: What else were you involved with?

CAMP: Shanghai was the fourth largest visa issuing post in the world, we had a huge U.S. business community. A number of U.S. state and city governments had rep offices in Shanghai and both NYU and Duke established branch campuses while I was there.

We hosted lots of official visitors; practically everybody who went to Beijing wanted to come to Shanghai as well. Our main consulate location was in a beautiful old mansion on Huaihai Lu. We opened there in 1980 after a 30-year hiatus following the Communists taking power; the U.S. had a consulate in Shanghai for nearly 100 years before 1950.

We started to outgrow the mansion in the early 1990s and by 2008 had offices scattered in three locations. Public Affairs, Consular, Foreign Commercial Service (FCS), and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) were located at the Ritz Carlton, the Portman Building, which also housed the Marines.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) joined us in 2010, as FDA established its first overseas offices amidst growing concern about contaminated food (including pet food items) and pharmaceuticals entering the U.S. from abroad. A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) representative based in Shanghai kept tabs on the development of a Chinese-manufactured jet, a step-by-step testing process required in order for the FAA to give approval for a new plane’s use in the U.S. We also had reps from the Department of Homeland Security monitoring container security at the port of Shanghai.

The Environmental Protection Agency, while it didn’t have an office in China, was working closely with the Shanghai EPA on air quality monitoring.

And as an example of the kind of scientific cooperation that was going on, our district included the Hefei Institute of Plasma Physics in the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which was working with the Energy Department’s Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory on fusion reaction. Given our export controls regime, I was surprised to learn about the collaborative research being done by these high level research institutions. All the more depressing then to hear the head of the Hefei lab, who had studied at Princeton, describe his problems getting a visa to attend a scientific conference in the U.S. There was nothing we could do to speed up the process, as his background required a special review in Washington.

A number of U.S. businesses were operating research and development facilities in Shanghai, including one run by GE where we regularly took visitors.

Q: You must have had a very large level of management issues. Were the USG offices managed with a common general services office (GSO) or was each agency separately responsible?

CAMP: Under ICASS (International Cooperative Administrative Support Services), every USG agency at the consulate had to sign on to certain core services and then opt in or out on other services, such as the motor pool. Our management office helped find office space for each of these agencies, all of whom needed a waiver to be located outside the consulate grounds.

Among the non-State agencies, Commerce and Ag were the largest and worked most closely with the consulate. FCS Shanghai had five commercial officers, an exceptionally large presence that testified to the importance of Shanghai for U.S. businesses.

Q: Remarkable.

CAMP: FAS Shanghai had two foreign agricultural officers, running what Ag calls an agricultural trade office. Although we have a trade deficit with China, our Ag attaché frequently reminded us that we have a trade surplus in agricultural goods. They buy corn. They buy soybeans.

Q: Pork if I remember right.

CAMP: Pork, yes. In fact, China actually bought the company - Smithfield - after I left.

The American business community was enormous. As Shanghai AmCham membership grew, I was asked to present a plaque to the 4,000th member. Remarkable, considering that less than 30 years earlier a single lonely American business man showed up at the newly opened consulate seeking an invitation to the diplomatic happy hour, according to Don Anderson, who re-opened the U.S. consulate in 1980 after a 30-year hiatus.

The way Don told the story, he and one secretary were first located in the Jinjiang Hotel, where they had established a Friday afternoon happy hour with the Brits and the Australians. One Friday an American showed up saying "I've just arrived, I'm an American businessman, I don't know anybody, can I come to the happy hour?" I was told that the AmCham actually started in the living room of the consul general, now the main reception room in the consulate office building.

One of the perks for AmCham members was a monthly meeting with the Consul General, during which I would review various developments and then answer questions. These often focused on American Citizen Services issues, such as visas, hospitals, schools, or dealing with the Chinese bureaucracy. The Expo, and concern over whether the U.S.

would participate, started to overwhelm this question time and make it much more contentious.

We were also blessed with a large number of entry level officers, a result of Shanghai's status as the fourth largest visa issuing post in the world. Many were outstanding officers; a number are now already on their second China assignments. Despite the heavy visa load we did a pretty good job of rotating them into other sections of the consulate. During the six months of the Expo they provided invaluable help with our constant stream of visitors.

Q: Now as junior officers did they interview in Chinese? Typically, junior officers only get six months of language.

CAMP: They all received Chinese language training, usually one year. We also had our own training program at post, to make sure they got the visa interview language that FSI didn't always provide. I enjoyed working with them and knowing that they were the core of our future China cadre.

Q: And while a consular officer has a relatively limited number of questions and a relatively limited kind of conversation the individual on the other side could start talking about anything.

CAMP: And not all applicants spoke standard Mandarin. Visa officers would sometimes have to call on our local employees for help. Some new officers came in with Chinese skills under the Critical Needs Language Program, which provides extra points for Mandarin. Ironically, many of the people who entered the foreign service with good Chinese language skills were blocked by Diplomatic Security (DS) from serving in the country.

I saw several frustrating cases in which a first tour officer was assigned to China and then disapproved by DS. Having relatives in China was generally a game-stopper, because of blackmail and conflict of interest concerns. The problem was a lack of consistency. My predecessor Ken Jarrett was married to a woman who was born and raised in Shanghai and had relatives there, yet Ken managed to make a whole career in China. It was hard to know what DS would approve and what they wouldn't, which naturally provoked anger and frustration.

We had some terrific officers, with lots of China experience. One of the joys of being in China was continued growth in staff and resources, something I had not experienced at previous posts. Staffing cuts are more often the norm at other places during my career.

Personnel issues are never far away, however. One involved our campaign for a deputy CG position; it didn't make sense that every embassy, no matter how small, has a DCM, while a consulate with 70 direct hire Americans doesn't. I was grateful that my predecessor had worked out a sort of unofficial deputy position, which I tried to get

formalized. I succeeded in getting an informal recommendation for the position into the 2010 inspection report, but EAP/EX was opposed and nothing changed.

Q: Very interesting.

CAMP: Another position that diverged from the description on the bid list was our Nanjing Presence Post officer. American Presence Posts (APPs) are usually one-officer posts, doing primarily commercial work.

Q: Yes. Totally unclassified.

CAMP: As embassies have gotten larger, more sclerotic, and more fortress-like, the idea of a lean diplomatic presence outside the capital was very attractive. The model was first used in France, which still hosts the bulk of these APPs; given security concerns, however, they haven't proved easy to establish.

At the height of their appeal, the department decided to assign an officer to set up an APP in Nanjing, an important educational and commercial city a few hours drive from Shanghai. (New high speed trains have since reduced the travel time to 67 minutes.) After the position was filled, the Chinese said no to having an officer resident in Nanjing. Unless we established an official post, they wouldn't allow us to put a diplomat there.

Q: And this was simply because they were very officious in general or was it a reciprocity issue?

CAMP: Partly reciprocity. Under a 1981 agreement, both governments were allowed five consulates in the other country. The Chinese had opened their five - New York, Chicago, San Francisco, LA and Houston - while we had only four. Shanghai and Guangzhou were our first, in 1979 and 1980. We opened Shenyang and Chengdu about four years later. A U.S. consulate in Wuhan was to be our fifth but we never moved ahead, covering central China from Beijing instead.

Q: Do you know the reason?

CAMP: Money mainly. And the embassy conducted a survey to show that visa demand in the area was low, and could easily be handled Beijing. This didn't make sense to us in Shanghai, where we were struggling to keep up with visa applications. The department finally took a half-step in 2007, following the APP model by sending retired USIA officer Wendy Lyle to Wuhan. Wendy was famous in China for her English language teaching program on VOA; she reported that taxi drivers recognized her voice from the years of radio broadcasts

Q: Oh so it did open.

CAMP: We officially opened the consulate in November 2008, nearly a year after Wendy arrived. Even once Wuhan had the status of consulate, Wendy worked alone, out of an

apartment. This ad hoc arrangement went on through several officer rotations, with Wuhan authorities regularly hectoring the resident American that their first priority for the consulate was to issue visas. It was several more years before we added staff; as of 2016 the consulate still wasn't processing visas however.

But back to Nanjing, a post there wasn't part of the 1981 five-consulate bargain, plus the Chinese authorities refused to accredit a diplomat to a facility that lacked diplomatic status. The officer assigned, Chris Wurzel, stayed in Shanghai, heading an office of one that we grandly named the Outreach Unit.

Embassy Beijing was emphasizing outreach to other cities – still calling them APPs even though no one resided in the designated cities. We came up with a slightly different approach in Shanghai, where we created a team for each of our three provinces, with the Outreach Unit Chief in overall charge. The team leaders were political or econ officers; we included commercial and consular officers as well, and gave our entry level officers a chance to travel and work with experienced officers in various cones.

When I visited one of the three provincial capitals in our district I would introduce the team leader by noting that if we had a consulate in Anhui (or Nanjing or Hangzhou), this officer would be the Consul General. The provincial officials liked the sound of that, and liked having a designated contact point at Consulate Shanghai. Although this was not the way the Nanjing position was described on the bid list, I was happy with our adaptation. You manage with the personnel system that you get, explaining to bidders that the job isn't necessarily what the HR system puts on paper.

Q: Yes.

CAMP: As for the Expo, we finally got ECA to modify the requirement they'd set to raise the entire amount before we could sign a participation agreement, an impossible task. (The original budget was \$80 million, later revised down to \$60 million.) By mid-2009 the private sector partner had raised \$15 million, allowing us to sign the participation contract in July 2009.

Q: One year away.

CAMP: Less than a year before the opening. We were reported to be the last country to sign out of 185. Although I recall Malta signed after we did, our long procrastination consolidated a reputation for the U.S. being late, a meme that persisted through the next big world's fair in Milan.

Another big, if late, step was Secretary Clinton's appointment of Jose Villarreal as our Commissioner General, an unpaid position that oversees the national effort. Jose initially struck us as a counter-intuitive choice for China – he was a Hispanic lawyer from Texas with no China experience.

We soon realized how lucky we were with this brilliant choice. Jose was closely connected to the Clintons and proved a great fundraiser as well as a great manager – and an all-round mensch. Although a prominent Chinese-American had seemed a more likely choice, it might have put us in the cross fires of the divisions in that community. We did work with the Committee of 100, which includes such figures as I.M Pei and Maya Lin.

Also key to our efforts was Hillary Clinton's new Global Partnerships Initiative (S/GPI) office in Washington, first headed by Elizabeth Bagley and then by Kris Balderston. Kris spent probably 99 percent of his time on the Shanghai Expo.

Q: Absolutely believable with only one year out.

CAMP: Finally some companies started coming in with \$5 million contributions. On July 1, 2009, the day Jose became Commissioner General, Pepsi announced a \$5 million sponsorship at a press conference in Beijing led by Indra Nooyi, the head of Pepsi. We were on our way. What I didn't realize at that point was that Pepsi's money had put us in the middle of the cola wars.

Q: Oh no.

CAMP: Five years later something similar happened in Milan. Coke turned us down at both Expos; they chose to build their own separate Coca-Cola pavilions in both Shanghai and Milan, at much greater cost than a \$5 million donation to the USA Pavilion. In Shanghai I think they spent \$40-\$50 million on their pavilion; they also contributed to the overall Expo, becoming the exclusive supplier of soft drinks at the expo. GM and Cisco built their own corporate pavilions as well, which took them off the board as contributors for us.

When Hillary Clinton accompanied President Obama to Shanghai in November 2009, we arranged a press event with her at the pavilion building site, which was a muddy mess in the rain. In our efforts to make it look colorful, we hung up big Pepsi banners, raising the ire of Coke, which had exclusive rights inside the Expo - except at the USA Pavilion.

Later, during the Expo, a Coke rep complained to us that the USA Pavilion was the only place in the entire Expo where you couldn't buy a Coke. That's really a shame, we agreed, adding to ourselves: you should have thought of that. They could have built their own pavilion AND given us money; instead we were strictly a Pepsi products place.

Q: So just to clarify you were getting good turnout of companies but not necessarily donations for the USA pavilion specifically.

CAMP: Pepsi sponsored our pavilion to the tune of \$5 million. Although the three U.S. corporations that funded their own pavilions did not contribute to us, other major companies did; we ended up with 60 sponsors at different value levels, with several at the \$5 million mark.

Q: That is remarkable in the two-year period, and particularly in the last year, to reach your goal.

CAMP: It was a squeaker; we had to stay optimistic in public – especially in my monthly AmCham remarks – but concerns about meeting the goal were always a dark cloud over our heads. Another complication was TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program); we couldn't take money from any company that was receiving TARP funds after the 2008 economic collapse. I have a vivid memory of the April 2010 press conference when Citi Group pledged \$5 million, immediately after getting out from under TARP. That put us over the top two weeks before the pavilion opened.

We were all cheering. Of course by that time the pavilion was mostly built but the budget also included expenses for running the pavilion during the six-month expo.

Q: Absolutely. And all kinds of unanticipated expenses too.

CAMP: Especially because the later you start the more expensive everything becomes as well.

Q: Of course.

CAMP: Aside from fundraising, we had many other hurdles, sometimes created by folks in the department who were trying to parse the law restricting the use of appropriated funds for world's fairs. Given those restrictions, and the sometimes strict interpretation in Washington, I was ecstatic when the department lawyers approved our proposal to double hat our Public Affairs Officer, Tom Cooney, as Deputy Commissioner General.

Tom was invaluable to the success of our effort, along with another PD officer, Alys Spensley. After finishing her CAO assignment in Shanghai, Alys stayed on a Y tour (one year temporary) to serve as the Consulate Expo Liaison Officer, or CELO, a title we made up. I don't think either Tom or Alys took a day off for the entire six months of the Expo; the work was relentless.

Five years later when I was helping coordinate the Milan Expo, Consulate Milan had to make do with a single person handling what Tom and Alys juggled in Shanghai. They worked their butts off; it was the two of them who really made it happen because they kept on top of everything, including liaison with the Expo bureau, the private sector partner, the Commissioner General, our business supporters, VIP visits, the whole shebang.

One major component of our pavilion, probably the most popular, was the Student Ambassador program. These 160 young Americans fluent in Chinese were following in the footsteps of the former USIA Russian Guides Program, although we were the first to call them student ambassadors. The program was managed by the University of Southern California, which did the selection from Mandarin speaking applicants. Some spoke other

forms of Chinese as well – Cantonese, Shanghainese, Sichuanese – a nice unexpected bonus.

Q: These were all students at USC?

CAMP: No; USC had the contract to select them with the stipulation that the students come from as many different states and universities as possible.

Q: Okay. And these youth ambassadors received a stipend?

CAMP: They got housing and some food money and a stipend. The 160 students were divided into two groups of 80 who served for three months, half of the Expo. Overall they were excellent, although dealing with a large cohort of 20-year-olds takes hands-on management.

Before, during, and even after the Expo we were under a lot of criticism, much of it coming from a man named Bob Jacobson; he represented the BHL group whose proposal ECA had judged non-viable. Jacobson took every opportunity to attack the pavilion, charging that the U.S. was late, the pavilion was ugly, the cost was too high. My personal favorite was a blog in which Tom Cooney was described as my “henchman”; Tom was less amused.

Jacobson’s smack talk was echoed by a freelance journalist in Shanghai, Adam Minter; the two of them would bounce accusations back and forth, citing each other. We felt constantly under siege.

Given this concern, it didn’t help when one of the incoming student ambassadors blogged before arrival that the pre-Expo training arranged by USC was a joke; he called the reading list junior high-level. I insisted on bringing them for a briefing at the consulate in the hope that our historic building, the flag, and the picture of the president, would impress upon these kids their role in representing the United States to an expected 6 million visitors. We set up a panel of embassy officers, which I kicked off by drawing parallels with the Russian guides in USIA exhibition days, many of whom went on to join the foreign service. I emphasized that they were part of a great tradition and they had to take it seriously.

I pointed out that for anyone interested in a Foreign Service career, this was a wonderful gateway and noted that the Russian guide program had produced at least four ambassadors. As it turned out, they were less impressed by the career potential than by the story of former guide Tom Robertson (later ambassador) who met his wife through his guide service. That got their attention – the romantic aspect - although in fact a number of the Shanghai students have already gone on to State Department careers.

I think that helped a bit; overall the experience was great; they were stars at the pavilion. But any time you’re dealing with that many young people in a foreign country you’re bound to have problems.

Q: And they're not U.S. Government employees and they don't know the State Department corporate culture and so on and so on.

CAMP: Five years later some of these same problems cropped up at the Milan Expo. Nevertheless it's a great program, with the students contributing creativity and enthusiasm to our participation. In Shanghai, where we had very long lines to enter the pavilion, the students would walk down the queue and talk to people. Many of the Chinese visitors had never met an American in person before; they were thrilled to make the acquaintance of one speaking fluent Chinese. Hillary Clinton gives a shout-out to the student ambassadors in her book Hard Choices. They were terrific.

Q: That's worth its weight in gold.

CAMP: They played crucial roles in staffing our pavilion. After standing in line for as much as two hours, visitors would rush in through the turnstiles, relieved to be inside at last; our good air conditioning also helped. As they gathered in the intro theater, a student ambassador standing on a soap box would warm up the crowd: "Anybody here from Guangzhou?" It had the feel of an American football game; people would yell back answers. "Anybody here from Sichuan?" Sometimes the students would use Cantonese or Sichuanese as well as Mandarin. They also told corny jokes, puns, such as "*shenme ma bu neng qi?*" – "what horse can't be ridden?" The answer, *Ao ba ma*, was a pun on Obama's name in Chinese, which includes the character for horse.

The pavilion itself was set up as a series of theaters. The first room featured videos with different Americans, including celebrities such as Michelle Kwan and Kobe Bryant as well as ordinary people, trying to say welcome in Chinese. Our critics made fun of this - is this how we introduce America? But the Chinese visitors liked it.

Q: Who made the movie?

CAMP: Our private sector partner contracted with a company called BRC to do the videos; they also created the show for the GM pavilion in Shanghai and, five years later, the EU pavilion in Milan. They're now part of the U.S. team for the Astana Expo in 2017.

The second theater featured feel-good corporate messages mixed in with children saying things such as "if we all help in little ways, it becomes big ways..." That was my least favorite segment; I still cringe at hearing those sappy sentiments so many times.

The high point of that second theater was a video message from President Obama, which generated a lot of people trying to take selfies with the screen. The final, and to my mind best, presentation was a 4D video called "The Garden", about a little girl who mobilizes her community to turn a vacant lot into a garden. The message was subtly subversive in a society where most decisions are made at the top, and the visitors loved the 4D thunder

and rain. Many brought umbrellas that they opened at the right time, Rocky Horror Show-style.

Q: As long as it worked...

CAMP: “The Garden” definitely grabbed viewers; I think it worked well. And overall, Chinese reactions to our pavilion were good – we asked Fudan University to survey visitors – and the Chinese press was very positive. Americans were less enthusiastic. When asked for her reaction, Clinton famously, and unfortunately, responded with a flat “it’s fine”.

The shows were just one aspect of our participation. We had a VIP room for important visitors, including many Chinese and foreign government officials as well as top sponsors. Depending on contribution levels, sponsors had the right to use the upstairs area of the pavilion for events. For example, GE, which featured its healthcare division, had a banquet for hospital directors. Walmart used the space for environmental programs with students.

The Foreign Agricultural Service celebrated American Food Day by passing out California almonds to people waiting in line - that was very popular. FAS also hosted a dinner at the pavilion, where I sat with all the nut people - the pistachios, the almonds.

Q: Does China grow nuts?

CAMP: Not much, which makes it a good market for us. The FAS presence in Shanghai is an Agricultural Trade Office, which promotes U.S. agricultural products in China. There were many commercial aspects to our Expo presence; the Commerce Department was involved as well. In fact, then-Commerce Secretary (later Ambassador to China) Gary Locke presided at our groundbreaking ceremony in 2009.

On the U.S. side, most Americans were totally unaware of the Shanghai Expo, or our official presence. The New York Times correspondent based in Shanghai told me that once the U.S. agreed to participate, the story was no longer of interest to his editors.

The Times considered it newsworthy only if we snubbed the Chinese by staying out. Once we said yes, the story was dead. Most Americans had no idea this world’s fair was going on in Shanghai. And yet, over six months the Expo attracted a record 73 million visitors. Our USA Pavilion drew 7.3 million, 10 percent of all visitors. Despite those staggering figures, most Americans didn’t know about it and most of the State Department didn’t either.

Q: Very true.

CAMP: I was fascinated to see references to the Expo turn up in several of the Clinton emails released in 2015. Her role in helping fundraise became part of the larger criticism of her wooing big corporations. One of the releases showed an email chain that started

with PAO Tom Cooney forwarding a negative blog by freelance journalist Adam Minter to Commissioner General Jose Villarreal, who sent it to Cheryl Mills. Mills sent it to the Secretary, whose comment is redacted. I'd love to know what she responded.

Q: How long was the Expo?

CAMP: Six months. May 1 to October 31, 2010.

It opened with great ceremony and a tremendous fireworks display. That was preceded by a soft opening, during which we received a visit from President Hu Jintao, who took pictures with the student ambassadors. I was pleased when Wang Qishan, who chaired the economic dialogue with the U.S., drew Hu's attention to the display highlighting U.S. corporations who were our sponsors. That was a story worth repeating to our corporate partners.

Hillary Clinton, who gave remarks at the building site in 2009, came back during the Expo. We also hosted three other cabinet level officers, plus members of Congress, top CEOs, mayors, and governors. When Mayor Daley brought a trade delegation, we surrounded him with all the Chicago-area student ambassadors wearing Chicago t-shirts. Governor Schwarzenegger needed no extra hype from us; he was mobbed everywhere. From local officials to mayors to governors, they all took advantage of their Expo visits to promote commercial ties with China.

In advance of Secretary Clinton's visit, which was to include a banquet at the USA Pavilion, her staff asked us to recommend other pavilions for her to visit. Our pavilion was located with other western hemisphere countries, making Mexico or Canada good possibilities. Or why not combine India and Pakistan? Or Turkey and Greece? What a great opportunity to make a diplomatic gesture with a 15-minute visit.

To evaluate these possibilities we sent officers around incognito, like secret shoppers. To check out which pavilions might work best logistically as well as politically. As we did this, other pavilion directors were catching on that something might be up, resulting in calls from their Consuls General asking whether they should alert their Ambassadors to be present.

Q: Wonderful.

CAMP: This exercise became a headache as the visit grew closer with no decision from the Secretary's staff. When her plane landed in Shanghai, we still didn't know what she would do between the morning visits to the USA and China pavilions and the evening banquet. We remained in suspense through lunch, which was hosted by the Mayor of Shanghai. The upshot was no visits; she got in the car and returned to the hotel. We did find out that our various recommendations had been read, however, as staffers who stayed behind asked us to arrange afternoon visits for them.

Q: It seems to be just her modus operandi.

CAMP: Indra Nooyi, other CEOs, and a number of other people came to the banquet. We had to close the pavilion for half a day in order to stage the dinner there.

Leaving aside the Expo, there was lots more going on in Shanghai during my three years. President Obama's 2009 visit, the H1N1 epidemic, trade issues, U.S. universities establishing campuses in Shanghai, the 30th anniversary of the reopening of the consulate, extended outreach to provincial officials, a huge visa load, and double digit annual growth in demand for American citizen services.

President Obama made his first visit to China in November 2009; Shanghai was his first stop in the country, which ended up causing some problems. The Chinese would have preferred he start in Beijing.

Q: I'm sure.

CAMP: They wanted it to echo Reagan's visit in 1984 or Clinton's visit in 1998. Both went to Beijing before coming to Shanghai, where both addressed students at Fudan University.

The Obama White House plan mandated a town hall meeting, the type of event they knew and liked from the campaign. They envisioned a town hall in Shanghai with the President alone on the stage. The Chinese, however, wanted him to speak at Fudan University, and they wanted him to be introduced by the university president.

The concept of a town hall meeting, with the President speaking directly to the people, didn't sit well with the Chinese. We had arguments over every aspect of the White House plan. Where the event would take place. The height of the platform. Who would do the introduction. What podium to use. The guest list. We finally settled on the Museum of Science and Technology.

The White House insisted on a student audience and we at the consulate had a list of specific students we wanted included. However our local Chinese contacts said they couldn't find these people – “You know there are a lot of people named Wang in China.” “But we gave you the email addresses,” we retorted.

It was a fight every step of the way, with the Chinese always insisting “this is the way we did it in 1998”. I don't know whether they actually kept good records or they were bluffing. In any case, it was clear that our side didn't have reliable accounts of past visit procedures. The Chinese were withholding access pins for the hotel where the President would be staying; during a meeting a few days before the POTUS arrival we declared we weren't leaving until they handed over the pins.

Obama landed at Shanghai's Pudong Airport at night in the driving rain. Although the poor visibility deprived us of the sight of Air Force One landing at Shanghai, the money shot was Obama walking down the steps from the plane carrying his own umbrella.

The photo went viral; it was seen as a telling contrast to Chinese officials who usually have someone holding an umbrella for them. Everybody else on the plane must have come down the backstairs because he was all by himself, which made for a stunning image. My own rain-soaked image was less appealing, as I realized when the President reached me in the receiving line. “I should give you my umbrella,” he said, which, although sweet, made me painfully aware I looked like a drowned rat.

After the President’s motorcade drove off, I went back into the terminal to wait for the Secretary’s plane, which arrived close to midnight. She was scheduled to visit the Expo site early the next day, which meant, of course that we had to get out there even earlier. Media had to be in place by 6:00 a.m., at a cold, muddy building site with no shelter available from the rain.

The Secretary went in her own car, accompanied only by her assistant Huma Abedin, giving us no chance to brief her about the Expo. I was in the van with the Commissioner General, Jose Villarreal, who got a phone call telling him that the Secretary would carry her own umbrella. That was our cue to follow suit, aided by a stash of 20 umbrellas we found in the van. It’s times like this that you really appreciate great staff who had thought of such details.

At the site, Clinton gave a rousing speech, proclaiming we would have a great pavilion, even if she had to “build it myself, brick by brick”. As late as it was, only five months before opening day, Clinton’s strong support and enthusiasm were key to our eventual fundraising success.

After the Expo event with the Secretary, we rejoined the President for a meet and greet with consulate staff and an elaborate lunch hosted by the Mayor of Shanghai. In best Chinese banquet style, the food for every dish was shaped into a picture, such as a palm tree or a panda. We each had menus embroidered double sided on small Chinese screens to take home as souvenirs.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: The formal meeting between the President and the Mayor came before the lunch. Ambassador Huntsman was there and the White House staff. Now less than two hours before the town hall meeting, we still hadn’t received Chinese agreement on using the White House podium. So when I received a phone call from the DCM during the presidential meeting, I answered it, despite recognizing this was a huge no-no. Although I limited myself to monosyllabic responses as the DCM explained the podium compromise, the White House staffer taking notes kept glaring at me. I felt my career melting away.

The DCM told me the stand-off was resolved by a Chinese promise to broadcast the President’s speech if we used their podium, rather than the one that came on Air Force

One. The embassy accepted the compromise and we used the Chinese podium. They did not broadcast the speech.

Our partial comeback, later, was to print pamphlets of the speech. With Obama on the cover, these became very popular giveaways, much sought out by students during our university visits.

Q: That's a brilliant alternative.

CAMP: In another compromise, the president of Fudan University gave a short introduction standing beside Obama, then left the stage. Ambassador Huntsman, who speaks Mandarin and had taken the time to learn a bit of Shanghai dialect, whispered in the President's ear and the President greeted everybody in Shanghai dialect.

Q: Holy cow.

CAMP: Huntsman sat down, leaving Obama alone on the platform (the height of which we had also had to negotiate), as per the White House scenario. The student questions following the President's remarks were innocuous, but we'd arranged also to take questions that came in online. That turned out to be very clever.

Huntsman, who was reading the online questions, picked one about China's "great firewall" censorship. This question provided the President the opportunity to talk about the free flow of information and gave the event some substance. Of course the international press picked up the story that the students that we wanted invited were not allowed in. They used words such as "docile" and "handpicked" to describe the audience, but overall the event and the coverage were positive. And then the President flew off to Beijing for the rest of the visit.

Q: Did you ever find out why they decided to go to Shanghai first?

CAMP: Given the way the White House handled it they might have wanted to emphasize people-to-people diplomacy over the more formal kind. Or maybe they wanted him to have a day to adjust before meeting the leaders in Beijing.

Q: It could easily have been simply the route, the timing for the president's sleep, who knows.

CAMP: It probably made sense to get on the ground and have a softer start before Obama met for the first time with Hu Jintao. I don't remember the issue being discussed when I flew to Beijing for the initial embassy prep meeting about the upcoming visit.

When we first heard that President Obama was coming to China, I was acutely aware that my last presidential visit in China was Reagan's in 1984. That 25-year-old experience seemed so ancient that I was reluctant to cite it. My hesitation evaporated when Ambassador Huntsman led off that first planning meeting in Beijing by talking about

being a young staffer on the 1984 Reagan visit, which immediately put me on familiar ground. I never had the nerve to ask Huntsman if he was the neophyte staffer who bragged about putting all his files on his newly acquired laptop computer, which then got fried when plugged into the 220 current in Beijing.

Q: Amazing.

CAMP: Given how many disputes we had with the Chinese, and their interest in precedents from earlier visits, we did a lessons learned cable from the trip. Obama's been back to China since and I have no idea whether our 2009 lessons were put to any use, but journalists seem to have longer memories. When Obama was reportedly snubbed by the Chinese after landing in Hangzhou for the September 2016 G20 meeting, one story noted "it was reminiscent of the rough treatment he received on his first trip to China, in 2009. Then the Chinese refused to broadcast on state television a town-hall-style meeting; packed the hall with Communist Party loyalists; and censored an interview he gave to a Chinese publication. At the time, many viewed the treatment as a metaphor for a rising power flexing its muscles with a young president from a superpower in decline."

Q: Of course the problem with lessons learned is that every president does it differently.

CAMP: But the thing with the Chinese is that they use supposed precedents to push for their desired outcome.

Q: I see what you mean.

CAMP: While some of the details seem like one-time-only arrangements, I can imagine future Chinese officials arguing "in 2009 we used our podium" or "in 2009 we didn't broadcast the President's speech." Will my successor or his successor be able to respond "yes, but you double crossed us on the broadcast"? Is that now in the records at the embassy or the consulate? I'm sure there are people who remember, but you know how the past slips from our consciousness.

Q: yes, yes.

CAMP: And speaking of history, one of our most memorable events involved the return to China of the ashes of John Leighton Stuart, who was the U.S. Ambassador in Nanjing when relations were broken in 1949. Born in China, the son of missionaries, and founder of Yenching University, Stuart was our last Ambassador on the Mainland until 1979, 30 years after his departure.

Stuart's name is well-known in China, thanks to a famous essay by Mao Zedong read by school children titled: "Farewell, Leighton Stuart!", basically saying good riddance to Stuart's departure.

I received an email from Pat Kennedy, Under Secretary for Management, informing me that the ashes were being shipped in the classified pouch from Washington. (This alert

did not spare me a moment of confusion when our communicator informed me later, “I have the Ambassador in the vault.”)

The back story was that Stuart, who died in 1962, had asked that his remains be buried in China alongside his wife’s grave at Yenching University, now the site of Beijing University.

The effort to have Stuart’s remains interred in China was led initially by his long-time assistant, Philip Fugh, followed by Philip’s son John Fugh. John Fugh, the first U.S. general of Asian descent, finally reached a break through after a meeting with Politburo member and later president of China Xi Jinping, who had been party boss in Zhejiang Province 2002-2007. While a Beijing burial was out of the question – and Mrs. Stuart’s grave had long since been obliterated – Gen Fugh obtained permission for burial in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province and Stuart’s birthplace.

Most of this I learned in the van taking me, my husband, General Fugh, and his wife June Fugh to Hangzhou, along with the box containing Ambassador Stuart’s ashes. Along the way we also learned that the very companionable June Fugh, who seemed oddly familiar to us, was the sister of longtime broadcaster Connie Chung, with her own fascinating family tale.

Ambassador Randt flew from Beijing to Hangzhou for the interment, which took place at a new official cemetery outside of the city.

At Stuart’s gravesite we were startled to hear from somewhere behind us “Amazing Grace” followed by the “Star Spangled Banner”; a group of elderly Yenching grads revealed after the ceremony that they had hidden a tape recorder in the bushes, figuring correctly that the Hangzhou *waiban* (Foreign Affairs Office) would not provide any musical accompaniment.

Like Pearl Buck’s home in Zhenjiang, the childhood home of the once-reviled John Leighton Stuart has now been turned into a museum. It is even marked on Hangzhou tourist maps.

As a side note, we noticed nearby the grave of the Chinese fighter pilot, Lt. Cdr. Wang Wei, who died after colliding with an American EP-3 in 2001. The American crew members were forced to make an emergency landing on Hainan; Wang Wei’s body was never found. We had no way of knowing whether the Chinese decision to place Ambassador Stuart near a military officer honored as "Guardian of Territorial Airspace and Waters" was coincidental or not.

Q: And that was during your first year as Consul General.

CAMP: Ambassador Stuart’s ashes, the President’s visit, our Lincoln’s birthday confrontation, and the H1N1 outbreak were all during my first year. The visit and event schedule intensified once the Expo opened in May 2010, giving me the opportunity to

greet not only President Hu Jintao but probably every provincial party secretary in the country. With military relations frozen because of PRC anger over arms sales to Taiwan, our Expo pavilion was one of the few USG sites visited by high ranking Chinese military officials. Although they frequently wouldn't identify themselves – “sorry, I don't have a card” - we would ask them to sign the guestbook and sometimes then we would see who it was.

Among many notable Chinese visitors, the prize was probably Bo Xilai, the Chongqing party secretary who was later jailed for corruption along with his wife. In 2010 he was a hot ticket for the dinners that AmCham Shanghai arranged during the Expo for members to rub shoulders with notable provincial officials or heads of American corporations.

The AmCham dinner card for Bo Xilai filled up quickly; Chongqing was a prime business growth location and Bo Xilai was seen as an up-and-comer in the party hierarchy. We invited the acting Consul General in Chengdu; Chongqing was in his district and he was more than willing to fly to Shanghai for the chance to meet the party secretary.

After agreeing to a pre-dinner small group meeting with Bo, we spotted a conflict on the weekly pavilion visitor list. Bo Xilai, along with his playboy son Bo Guagua, was scheduled to visit the pavilion at the same time as the dinner. AmCham notified us that the Mayor of Chongqing would be at the dinner instead and we discussed how to deploy our forces. We agreed that I would attend the dinner and preceding meeting with the Mayor, while my deputy, Chris Wurzel, would greet Bo at the pavilion.

On the gossip level, Bo's Oxford and Harvard-educated son was also of interest, thanks to his well-earned reputation as a playboy. After joking that he was probably going to the USA Pavilion to pick up girls, we found out, sure enough, he knew one of the student ambassadors. They chatted downstairs while Chris Wurzel talked with his dad upstairs in the VIP room.

Our Expo pavilion also provided the opportunity to greet a lot of American and international VIPs. I spent one Sunday afternoon waiting for Singapore Prime Minister Emeritus Lee Kuan Yew to show up, only to have him bail after visiting the Singapore and China pavilions. We were third on his list and it was too much for a man in his 80s.

Having served in Thailand, I was particularly excited at the chance to receive Crown Princess Sirindhorn. I wrote to friends in Thailand asking for the correct way to welcome her in the royal language, *Rajasap*, used with Thai royalty. My efforts were in vain. Princess Sirindhorn walked in with her entourage, dressed in her famously informal way in a plaid shirt with a camera around her neck, stuck out her hand, and said in common Thai “*mai dai jer gen ma nan leaw*”, meaning “I haven't seen you in a long time.” I was charmed.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: The pavilion had a VIP entry allowing visitors to not only skip the lines but to join the show at various points, depending on how much time they had. It was very efficient. Princess Sirindhorn wanted the whole experience, so we started in the orientation theater with videos of Americans trying to say welcome in Chinese. The Princess, who studies Chinese, stood beside me repeating in Chinese, “*huanying dao meiguo guan*”, “welcome to the U.S. pavilion.” And I’m thinking how amazing to have the Crown Princess of Thailand welcoming visitors to our pavilion.

Official American visitors, in addition to Hillary Clinton, included three other cabinet level officers – Commerce, EPA, and Transportation.

Q: Now just a very quick question on the other Americans. In organizing them for their visit did they do other things to promote other U.S. Government agenda items or were they just basically there to show the flag?

CAMP: Most of them either came from or went to Beijing, so they had other agendas as well. We took Transportation Secretary LaHood to the GM pavilion, which featured a show with driverless cars; they gave him a ride in one of the prototype cars, which delighted both the Secretary and GM. Secretary Locke, who led our groundbreaking in 2009, has in-laws in Shanghai. He came during the Expo as well, then slipped away to have noodles with his relatives.

Q: My goodness.

CAMP: We also hosted a bunch of mayors and ten governors, including several that ran for president in 2012 such as Mitch Daniels from Indiana, Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, Rick Perry of Texas. Schwarzenegger was a big draw; we were a little worried how to manage a press conference with him at the Expo, among such big crowds. Before assuring everyone “I’ll be back”, he made the bold statement that California would host the next Expo. We all scoffed, knowing we haven’t hosted an Expo in the U.S. since 1984. (The Bay Area did give it a try the following year with no success.)

We also received a lot of business people, such as Indra Nooyi of Pepsi and Jeff Immelt of GE and lots of celebrities, including Robert De Niro, Quincy Jones, and Halle Berry.

Q: The reason that I asked, although you got 7.3 million visitors, it was hard to measure the value. With all of these VIPs, there must have been opportunities to derive extra value.

CAMP: From the Chinese point of view, the Expo and our participation brought all these people to Shanghai who might not have come otherwise. After visiting the Expo, Schwarzenegger rode one of the new high speed trains and talked about building one in California; for the Chinese this was great stuff. Locke, of course, was promoting U.S. business, as was the Transportation Secretary.

EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Administrator Lisa Jackson opened an “Air Now International” exhibit at the Expo, a project that we had been working with the Shanghai EPA for some time to measure pollution levels. Shanghai was the first city to promise to make public their pollution levels; it was an important piece of bilateral cooperation.

Mayor Daley came with a Chicago trade delegation, as did other local government officials. There were also diplomatic benefits; our people come and show respect and the Chinese get to show off what they’re doing. I could cite public diplomacy, commercial diplomacy, government-to-government contacts, business, educational, scientific, cultural, the whole gamut. I’m sure our entry level officers will never forget their experiences as control officers for these VIPs.

Q: Yes, that’s experience you can’t buy. That’s fantastic.

CAMP: We also had a number of congressional delegations, CODELs. I’ll never forget the visit of my Virginia congressman, Jim Moran. I was pleased he accepted my standard invitation to visit the consular section – something not many CODELs did. I had arranged for a young officer to brief on our whole visa operation. In the middle of his description of the process Jim Moran interrupted to say “what I don’t understand is why you’re making all of these great Chinese graduate students go back to China. Why don’t we just keep them in the United States?” We were all stunned. The officer valiantly pointed out that Congress makes the laws, we just carry them out.

Shanghai always attracted a lot of visitors but Expo supercharged the schedule.

Another major event that engulfed us was the spring 2009 H1N1 outbreak. China’s experience with SARS a few years earlier had left it scarred in terms of quarantines and transparency; having been criticized for initially hiding the extent of the SARS epidemic, the government went all out on H1N1. The first appearance of what was also known as swine flu was sourced to a flight from Mexico. China immediately halted all flights to Mexico and started quarantining people. They installed heat detectors at the airport that everybody had to walk through for fever detection.

Monitors boarded airplanes right after landing. People in white hazmat suits walked down the aisles waving temperature monitors at passengers’ heads. Advice circulated to pop a Tylenol an hour before landing, to avoid recording any kind of elevated temperature. If the authorities detected somebody with a fever they would quarantine not only that person but whoever was sitting around him.

Q: Good lord.

CAMP: Arriving passengers with temperatures were taken to ad hoc quarantine locations, many of which were old hotels at the edge of the city. Our American Citizen Services section was extremely busy. I became involved with one case in which a five-year-old girl was quarantined without her mother. When I contacted the authorities to say that this

was a problem, they reassured me that they'd given her a cell phone so it was okay; she could talk to her mother whenever she wanted.

We couldn't tell them not to quarantine people but we pushed for rapid notification of all Americans detained. At one point, the parents of one of our consular officers flew in and were about to get quarantined; as duty officer, their son received the notification and convinced the authorities to sequester them in his apartment.

Q: Wow. That's okay.

CAMP: On another occasion the Mayor of New Orleans was quarantined; we managed to get him out in a couple days on condition that he leave the country immediately. Of course we had to keep this achievement quiet; if we could spring a VIP, why couldn't we get everyone out? It was a difficult time but eventually the epidemic waned.

Q: This really is breathtaking.

CAMP: There always is so much going on in China. I was eager to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the reestablishment of the consulate in 1980, but with the anniversary falling in 2010 just before the Expo opened our resources and time were limited. I settled for collecting stories from former consuls general and others, which is now on the ADST website as "Shanghai Stories". We also created a timeline, a trifold pamphlet, marking different events such as KFC opening in Shanghai along with tracing the increase in visas from 100 in 1980 to 100,000 by 2007, an astonishing growth trend.

Q: How large was your staff to do this or did you contract out for a lot of this?

CAMP: We had 65 direct hire officers when I arrived and 70 when I left three years later. Soon after, the Department started the limited career appointment professional associates program, bringing in people for five year contracts who speak Chinese to help with the ever-growing visa load. At one point we were so backed up we staged a special Saturday work day with all hands on deck; I spent the morning pasting visas into passports.

I was particularly sensitive to student visas from my stint eight years earlier as head of educational advising services in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. As I mentioned earlier, I was impressed when the visa chief came from Beijing to the NAFSA conference, the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors. Knowing that the universities were furious over frequent visa denials or delays for the Chinese students they had accepted, I thought his attendance was both necessary and courageous.

By the time I was assigned to Shanghai, the area covered by our consulate was affluent enough that we were issuing to the majority of visa applicants, a positive story that we worked to get out. But we were still hampered by being able to issue only one-year visas, which was reciprocity for the Chinese refusing to give longer visas. That logjam has finally been broken with a mutual consular agreement on longer visas, which means applicants won't have to keep applying every year and our work load will go down.

Q: Right.

CAMP: Although we had good, creative visa officers who tried everything, our physical space was limited. For a while the only solutions were longer hours or more effectively snaking the line through the visa section. Our consular section was in a shopping mall, with no additional space available. Shanghai has been on the books for a new consulate for a number of years with land acquisition the major problem, a problem that is getting worse as the city grows and land values skyrocket. Although we had bought land in the Hongqiao area in 1992, the department determined it was too small.

I had a number of discussions with the municipal government about this with no resolution, although they strung us along with the possibility that post-Expo development of the fair site would include a new diplomatic enclave afterwards. On Ambassador Huntsman's last visit to Shanghai in 2011 he raised the issue with the party secretary, who promised to look into it.

Q: How long was Huntsman ambassador?

CAMP: Sandy Randt was in the job until the day of Obama's inauguration, January 20, 2009. Obama's nomination several months later of Huntsman, a Republican former governor of Utah, came as a surprise.

Huntsman stayed two years, leaving in April 2011 to run for President. I liked Huntsman, his interest in China and his facility with languages; he was an excellent communicator. In Nanjing I watched in admiration as he told the party secretary that we could make special arrangements to boost commercial relations with Nanjing, because it was such an important city and trade with Jiangsu province was crucial. I could see the party secretary melting in Huntsman's hands, he was so good at this.

In addition, Huntsman had an adopted daughter from China, named Grace. Grace was 10 years old at that point; she'd been adopted from the city of Yangzhou, in Jiangsu province. Huntsman did a wonderful job of using this personal connection to great advantage: "We have strong ties with China, we have strong commercial ties, strong political ties and ties of the heart. My daughter was born in China and it's very important to me". It was fabulous stuff.

After the visit to Nanjing, Ambassador and Mrs. Huntsman wanted to go on to Yangzhou with Grace to visit the orphanage. I called in re-enforcements from our press office as Huntsman's comments sparked increased media interest and I worried about the effect on a 10-year-old girl.

It turned out beautifully. On the bus to Yangzhou, I could hear Mary Kay Huntsman saying to her husband: "Remember, Jon? Remember when we came here 10 years ago?" I was near tears, just eavesdropping. The orphanage put on a big welcome, band and all.

Grace was calm and composed as her father answered most of the questions. It was really a lovely event. He does well.

Q: Just a question about all the events that you're doing that require a fair amount of on the ground management. Even small things that go wrong on the ground can ruin something; was that an issue for you? Were you able to keep things moving smoothly?

CAMP: It helps that the Chinese are very good at this; they're not going to screw up. And our provincial outreach efforts meant that we knew key people in each of the provinces. Not necessarily each of the cities but we did a good job of getting around. I had visited Yangzhou on one of my first trips as Consul General to speak at the 70th anniversary of Pearl Buck receiving the Noble Prize for literature. Buck lived in Yangzhou as a child, a fact the city embraced as she moved from persona non grata to celebrity in the China lexicon.

My speech-prep research included asking my teenage niece, herself adopted from China, whether she had heard of "The Good Earth". I don't think Pearl Buck is widely read in U.S. schools these days.

Q: We read it in eighth grade, in 1973, but I think you're right. At this point it's gone.

CAMP: It's ironic. Pearl Buck was not welcome in China for many years; the PRC denied her a visa soon after Nixon's visit so she never got to return to China. Then thirty-plus years after her death when she was back in favor there, Americans had lost interest.

The academics at the conference craved reassurance that Buck was still important to Americans. Thanks to checking with my niece I could say that "The Good Earth" was on school reading lists, which is what they wanted to hear.

Because of that event I had a basic grounding in Yangzhou, most crucially their local food specialties – Yangzhou is considered one of the culinary centers of China. The city's gardens are also well-known; the new China Garden to be built at the National Arboretum in Washington is based on a Yangzhou model. So when I went with Huntsman I had some previous exposure to draw on.

We had contacts in all the cities and, most of the time, if we were meeting with the party secretary or other high official, the local government took charge of the arrangements. They decide who sits where at meetings and the obligatory banquet, which the city hosts. That's one of the times when knowing the local specialties pays off. We didn't have to worry about any of that stuff.

It gets complicated when we propose something that the Chinese authorities don't want. Towards the end of my time in Shanghai, we and our counterparts throughout the U.S. mission were reporting problems arranging and completing some of our programs, mainly cultural events. We all experienced an increase in "*bu fāngbiàn*"

(“it’s not convenient”) responses from the Chinese side. Beijing Public Affairs had set up a whole dance tour around the country; the night before a scheduled performance we were told it wasn’t convenient for them to perform. Embassy Beijing asked us to keep track of and report every *bu fāngbiàn* incident.

We didn’t know why the Chinese were suddenly discouraging cultural performances, but our collective responses showed just how widespread this was. The embassy used these statistics to discuss the matter with the Ministry of Culture, although I don’t know that they ever figured out what was going on. It seemed odd to be quashing cultural programs when the country was opening a new museum every three days.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: Cultural centers as well. Shanghai is a city of over 25 million people divided into 16 districts; not only was the municipal government opening cultural centers, individual city districts were as well. I was invited to the opening of such a center in Jiading that featured the Moscow State Symphony for the inaugural concert. At intermission I was approached by a Chinese cultural impresario who wanted my help in recruiting performing groups coming. They had all these new halls they needed to fill.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: This situation came to mind five years later when we met a group of Chinese impresarios in Bulgaria who were traveling around Eastern Europe auditioning groups to perform in China. We watched an audition with folk dancers, singers, even comedians. So despite this odd *bu fāngbiàn* period, there was great interest in U.S. and other performing groups.

Q: This is a huge undertaking, always managing large events. And that the Expo worked out for us has to hurt less.

CAMP: Of course the Chinese very much wanted us to take part in the Expo. They pressured us, threatened us, told us that had saved a prime spot for us; the rumor was that if we didn’t participate they’d put a McDonald’s on the site reserved for the U.S. There was a lot of pressure.

Around the beginning of 2011, Huntsman began to be talked about as a presidential candidate for 2012. This created the awkward image of a Republican ambassador to China preparing to run against his boss, the Democratic incumbent. As the story built, Huntsman resigned effective April 2011.

During the Ambassador’s final week in China, he came to Shanghai to deliver the 6th annual Barnett-Oksenbergl lecture sponsored by the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, followed by a dinner at the consulate. But the event that loomed largest for him was a Harley motorcycle ride through Shanghai. He’s a big Harley Davidson fan;

when he left the governorship in Utah he rode away from the governor's mansion on a Harley.

Q: Yes, I vaguely remember that. But is Harley popular in China?

CAMP: Harley Davidson is the only American-made motorcycle. There was a Harley enthusiast group connected to AmCham that arranged this, although special permission was required to ride through the city. Concerned about how this would be received, I called Beijing to ask the Ambassador's staff how important this event was for him on a scale of one to ten. Twelve, I was told.

Ambassador Huntsman spoke at the AmCham Shanghai breakfast, wearing his riding boots with a suit jacket, then changed into his biker jacket and joined the Harley group at the back door of the Waldorf. They took off for a 20-30 minute ride that was due to end at the Portman Ritz Carlton, where our Public Affairs section is located and where both Presidents Bush and Obama stayed.

After seeing off the bikers, the head of AmCham and I went by car directly to the Portman so we'd be in place to greet the Ambassador and his motorcycle gang. Although we thought we had a ten-minute lead, almost immediately we heard the vroom, vroom of Harley engines. The city authorities, whom we had not notified for fear of getting denied, had turned all the stoplights to green, making the ride much faster than expected. Our Regional Security Officer reported that the police remonstrated with him later about not being informed of our plans. Their complaint was so politely delivered that we felt bad, but it was one of those occasions when is it better to do it than to ask permission.

Q: Sounds like the police got word very late.

CAMP: Or maybe got into hot water with their superiors. I don't know at what point they figured out this was going to happen. In fact, some kind of permit was needed for the ride so it wasn't completely unknown. But we at the consulate had not notified the Shanghai police that Ambassador Huntsman was going to participate.

In any case, Huntsman got his motorcycle ride. I was glad I had nixed a proposal that the group ride into the consulate compound; I didn't like the image of the motorcycles pouring through our gates. Some months later our Information Officer went to social media training in Beijing that analyzed Chinese perceptions of the U.S., as seen through various social media channels. A picture of Huntsman on a bicycle drew positive comments while a picture of Huntsman on the motorcycle evoked very negative reaction.

It was a classic public affairs example of what you want to be seen doing and what you don't want to be seen doing.

Q: When I started doing social media and we had to count the number of hits we cautioned the ambassador against overexposure. But you can't debase the coinage with

social media; every day is fine. There is no bottom to the desire for the ambassador to do something that's appealing.

CAMP: Yes. Smelling the flowers, kissing the babies, riding a bicycle.

Q: Right. There's no bottom to the hunger for ambassadors doing fun things that anybody might do.

CAMP: Which is why we have all those embassy videos of people eating food or singing holiday songs.

Q: Absolutely.

CAMP: One other Huntsman story that became an incident occurred as part of the Jasmine Spring, Chinese protests in 2011 that drew inspiration from events in Tunisia that led to the Arab Spring. On the heels of the Arab Spring, we got word of silent protests being planned in Shanghai and Beijing. In Shanghai we decided to send a political officer to blend into the crowd and quietly observe.

In Beijing, for whatever reason, Ambassador Huntsman with his son and his bodyguard went to the McDonald's on Wangfujing in the center of the city, where the protest was. He was caught on video, with a bystander (likely the man wasn't simply a bystander) challenging him as to what he was doing there and saying he was interfering. It didn't help that Huntsman was wearing a leather jacket with an American flag on the sleeve. When the Chinese made a big deal of his presence there, Huntsman said he was just out with his family, getting ice cream at McDonald's on a Sunday outing. But that's where the protest was, so there were lots of sensitivities and a fair amount of criticism on social media.

Huntsman left China in April 2011 to run for president. David and I departed that summer.

Q: So you were there from 2008 to 2011. And there was never a possibility to extend?

CAMP: I asked just for the record and was told, no, we don't extend people in these jobs. I'd been told that in Chiang Mai as well.

Q: And what did your husband do while you were in Shanghai?

CAMP: David speaks good Mandarin, better than mine. He's terrific with languages and even learned enough Shanghai slang to cause jaws to drop. Twice a year he went back to the U.S. to manage the bed and breakfast in Idaho he bought after retiring, but most of the time he was with me in Shanghai. At one point he got interested in places named in Chinese Tang dynasty poems.

Q: Oh interesting.

CAMP: The idea started when we visited Suzhou, a classic town on the Grand Canal. A Tang dynasty poet named Zhang Ji wrote a famous poem there called “Night Mooring at Maple Bridge”. The poem evokes the scene: the moon, maple trees, a fisherman’s light, the sound of the temple bell at midnight. You can still visit Maple Bridge and see a monument to the poet.

That experience inspired David to look for other Tang poems about places that still exist, wondering how many of these there might be. As he started to collect more and more, traveling to the sites, he began to imagine a book that was a combination poetry collection, travel guide, and language study book.

Q: Lovely.

CAMP: He put it all together with photos of each place, the poem in Chinese characters and in Pinyin Romanization, a word-by-word translation, his own translation of the poem, and a description about how to get there and what the place was like. He planned to do 50 but ended up with 60 poems. If we’d had another year in Shanghai he probably would have collected 20 more.

Q: A literary travel guide of China!

CAMP: Not only was it fun for David, it was great for me when I could quote bits of these poems in speeches and at banquets. That was always a crowd pleaser; I only wish I’d done a better job on my memorization.

I also benefited by accompanying David on several of his poetry-seeking trips, which was a lot different from traveling as Consul General. Thanks to David we went to the birthplace of a famous poet named Du Fu in Gongyi, to the tomb of Bai Juyi in Longmen, and to Dunhuang, a fabulous historical site along the Silk Road at the edge of the desert.

On our return from Dunhuang, we rode an over-crowded train that reminded us of our first time in China 1983-85, long before the fancy bullet trains of today. Even booking in advance we couldn’t get seats, so we took little folding stools to sit in the aisle. Other passengers, hunched shoulder to shoulder, seized the opportunity to talk to the first foreigners they had ever met. In a typical fashion we were long familiar with, they asked how old we were, how much money we made, that kind of personal question. So going in search of poetry was a rewarding way to travel.

Q: Absolutely.

CAMP: David also traveled on a textile tour organized by a friend of ours, Li Lundin, the Taiwan-born wife of retired Foreign Service officer, John Lundin. Now living in Hawaii, Li led a group from the Honolulu Museum focused on textiles of Southwest China where they visited villages and hill tribes that produced distinctive textiles and other crafts. He took advantage of opportunities to see parts of China that I didn’t.

Q: The textiles, would they be silk or wool or-?

CAMP: Cotton mainly. We're talking folk textiles, not the grand robes of emperors. Having lived in northern Thailand we were familiar with some of the hill tribes in that area, many of whom spread across the borders in Laos, Burma, and southwest China. In fact, the Dai minority of China speak a version of Thai. Yunnan province has a national ethnic minorities park tourists can visit where Thai new year, Songkran, with its marvelous water throwing festival, is celebrated twice a day, every day of the year. Tourists can rent a bowl and clothing for 10 RMB to join in the water throwing. It's tourist-corny fun.

Q: Today is May 5, 2016, and we're continuing our oral history with Bea Camp with her completion of her assignment to Shanghai and moving on to the Smithsonian.

CAMP: For family reasons, I wanted to come back to Washington, DC and was excited to stumble on a detail assignment to the Smithsonian that I hadn't known existed.

I was the third Foreign Service officer to be assigned to the Smithsonian, at least in this iteration. Larry Wohlers had set up the position in 2009. Lea Perez was the second; I followed her and was the first to stay for two years. There was also a detail at the Library of Congress, but it didn't last -- Duncan McInnis was the first and last State detailee there.

From the outset being at the Smithsonian was a garden of delights, but it took a while to figure out what my job was; there were no work requirements or supervision. As I became more familiar with the many parts of the Institution, I focused on informing State colleagues about what the Smithsonian did internationally and helping the department take advantage of the Institution's resources and programs.

The few who knew about the detail saw it as a benefit that State was providing the Smithsonian, as opposed to a two-way street. When I wrote an article for *State Magazine* about the detail, the magazine wanted to title it "State Department Helps Smithsonian Expand Internationally". I argued that was not the case at all, given that the Smithsonian is active in 100 countries.

Nor was this detail position the first State Department collaboration with the Smithsonian; there has been a lot of back and forth over the years. In a second article, this one for *The Foreign Service Journal*, I laid out how the current detail was part of a long history of cooperation over the years. I found out that at one point the Smithsonian even had a liaison officer at the State Department, the flip side of the current situation.

Q: Where was the Smithsonian officer in the State Department placed?

CAMP: Within the State Department it was under the Bureau of Human Resources, HR, which has an office handling details, including Diplomats in Residence. Given the public

diplomacy significance of our relationship with the Smithsonian, it would make more sense for the detail to be managed by R, the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy. I was pleased that R got involved in choosing my successor, although it seemed ironic that they picked a non-PD officer, the only who has served in the detail so far. When Under Secretary Tara Sonenshine left, R lost interest again.

My job title at the Smithsonian was Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary for History, Art and Culture, Richard Kurin. I was located in the international office, which is in the Ripley Center, the underground area that connects African Art and the Sackler Gallery. This proved a convenient location as my China background dovetailed with the Sackler's Asia programs and outreach. I also worked with the Hirshhorn on their Ai Weiwei exhibit and with the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage preparing for China to take center stage at the Folklife Festival on the Mall.

I inherited several projects that my predecessor Lea Perez had launched, including a mobile app on oceans in partnership with the Museum of Natural History and a poster show that the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) developed from a photographic exhibit of the Scurlock Studio. Lea also drafted a Memorandum of Agreement between State and the Smithsonian Institution that I got finalized, with a signing ceremony featuring my Smithsonian boss, Richard Kurin, and Acting U/S Kathy Stephens. This MOA sets the formal basis for our cooperation.

Q: Secretary Kerry is very personally interested in ocean conservation. When I was in IIP we were told to keep that in mind as opportunities arose.

CAMP: Absolutely, although the topic was chosen before he was Secretary; I arrived at the Smithsonian in 2011 and Lea had been working on the project before that. I was told that IIP's concept was to create a multi-use app where the bureau could pour in various types of information. The ocean was a good topic to start with because of all the material available from the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) Ocean Hall. This was to be a pilot program targeted at India, Indonesia, and China, using English, Bahasa, and Mandarin.

We later added Korean, after State decided to participate in the 2012 world's fair in Yeosu, Korea, with the theme "The Living Ocean and Coast"

I enjoyed collaborating with the ocean experts at Natural History, who produced 60 separate pages about marine creatures, but the app was basically a failure. One problem was that NMNH didn't have the personnel to keep updating it with new information, which meant a static presentation, with no updates.

In addition, IIP's plan to create an interactive dialog with the targeted youth audience in the selected countries ran afoul of complex translation problems. For example, a question from an Indonesian student in Bahasa would have to go to IIP for translation. IIP would then send the translated question to Smithsonian experts to answer. The answer would go

back to IIP for translation into Bahasa, all before it could be posted on the app's "Ask Me" page. It was cumbersome and time-consuming.

Plus the technology moved on and so did IIP. The idea that "once we're done with oceans we'll do one on endangered species" or a similar topic never got off the ground.

Q: But there was no other outreach to any other part of the federal government, EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) or NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) or NASA?

CAMP: The Smithsonian has contacts with all of those and works closely with them. But this was an IIP-Smithsonian project, and it proved not feasible.

Another IIP project that I took over from Lea was a paper show. IIP had decided to produce a small poster show, maybe 15 panels, based on an exhibit of photographs taken in the early 20th century by African-American photographer Addison Scurlock. Living and working in Washington, DC, Scurlock captured black culture and celebrities of the time. The 2010 exhibit, titled "The Scurlock Studio: Pictures of Prosperity" was shown at the National Museum of American History (NMAH), coordinated by the staff of the still building-less National Museum of African-American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

Q: And just an interesting side note, the new National Museum of African-American History and Culture is a spinoff of American History across the street.

CAMP: I'll add a side note to your side note: the new NMAAHC is a much appreciated and much needed museum whose success will probably spur talk of a Latino museum and perhaps one about Asian-Americans. This follows on the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in 2004.

One of my Smithsonian colleagues claimed this museum proliferation wouldn't have happened if NMAH had paid more attention to minorities and done a better job of representing them. Whether or not that's true, certainly there was a feeling that NMAH should have been more forward looking in terms of representing all Americans. That's one reason that the recently renovated Arts and Industries Building remains vacant. Congress has tagged the building as a possible location for a Latino museum; the Smithsonian doesn't want to get crosswise with Congress by using the building for something else and perhaps shooting itself in the foot.

Q: Interesting, okay.

CAMP: Back to the poster show: two IIP designers were working on the project to create a small, simple exhibit for posts to use, based on the Scurlock Studio exhibition. They were long-time professionals from USIA; I enjoyed watching the way they collaborated with the Smithsonian curators in a mutual commitment to producing a high quality product.

With this start, I found out that there were other poster shows that the Smithsonian had contributed to through the years – featuring Duke Ellington and some others. And I acquainted myself with IIP’s catalog of poster shows, wondering why IIP didn’t simply recycle some of the old paper shows that posts could buy for under \$100 to display in libraries, embassies, or schools. The answer I got was that IIP was moving in a different direction.

Q: The app and the poster show were both with IIP?

CAMP: Yes, I found out at one point that IIP thought the detail belonged to their bureau, but in fact my activities were much broader. I worked with the Bureau of International Organizations (IO) on the first International Jazz Day, with R on a stakeholders meeting, with WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs) on a reception with the Chilean embassy, and with the Embassy in Kyiv on a Spark Lab project with the Lemelson Center. I also provided a foreign service perspective on issues related to the Folklife Festival, the Hirshhorn’s Ai Weiwei retrospective, the Sackler’s Roads of Arabia exhibit, Cuba, and Haiti.

Cuba came up after the Administration eased some of the regulations about traveling there in early 2012 and “Smithsonian Journeys,” part of the for-profit Smithsonian Enterprises, put out a press release announcing four upcoming trips to Cuba. Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen, a high-profile advocate against closer relations with Cuba, reacted with fury. Under Secretary Richard Kurin sat down with me to puzzle out what was going on, given that the Administration had gotten on board with increased travel. Apparently Ros-Lehtinen was mad that the press release did not refer to Castro as a dictator. I suggested it might help to include a briefing by the embassy in Havana, so I contacted the PAO there.

As someone with China experience, I also enjoyed discussions with the Hirshhorn in the lead-up to the museum’s big Ai Weiwei retrospective “According to What?” The exhibit received lots of attention, not only because of his art but because of his status as a political dissident in China whose passport had been taken away. When the assistant museum director included me among people he thanked during the press preview, a Financial Times reporter apparently decided I was a political commissar assigned by State to this project and started trying to track me down. I ended up the subject of press guidance from both EAP and the Smithsonian denying that I had any role in organizing the exhibit.

Q: Interesting. Now wasn’t the Smithsonian also active in Haiti?

CAMP: Haiti was featured in the 2004 Folklife Festival, with some of those contacts leading to Smithsonian efforts to help preserve Haiti’s cultural heritage after the 2010 earthquake. U/S Richard Kurin, my boss, was central to this effort.

Kurin mobilized curators and others to go to Haiti, overcoming military, USAID and State resistance. He argued that cultural heritage is central to the nation’s recovery,

restoring murals at the cathedral, saving other art works, bringing Haitian art restorers to Yale for training. The Smithsonian published a beautiful book about the project.

I got involved mainly because of visas for the two art restorers. I called the visa chief in Port-au-Prince to ask for appointments for the Haitian art restorers the following Thursday or Friday. I explained that the two applicants couldn't afford to pay the \$160 fee in advance for the Machine Readable Visa, but noted that Under Secretary Richard Kurin was flying down on Wednesday with the money.

The visa chief was very understanding, very accommodating. But as soon as we hung up she must have done what any Foreign Service officer would do -- tell the DCM that an Under Secretary was coming.

Q: Right, right.

CAMP: I often encountered confusion from people at State when I said I worked for the Under Secretary for History, Art and Culture; many reacted with surprise that the Department had such a position (it doesn't). That title of "Under Secretary" is powerful.

Q: Gets attention.

CAMP: Yes, ears prick up. So I assume the visa chief informed the DCM this Under Secretary was coming to Port au Prince, because I started getting messages from him on my phone, and then emails demanding country clearance.

Q: Right.

CAMP: This issue has been a long running dispute. The Smithsonian as a regular practice does not ask for country clearance, which upsets the State Department. The DCM listed all the restrictions involved in official visits: visitors must stay in only designated hotels, they must be picked up at the airport in an armored car, etc. When I relayed this to Richard Kurin he said "yes and that's why I don't want to ask for country clearance." In fact he was being met at the airport by the former foreign minister, who was his buddy.

Q: In fairness to the Foreign Service, should anything have happened to him, even though the Under Secretary felt no need for it, should any untoward thing happen, even just an accident, a traffic accident, it would end up being a State Department problem.

CAMP: Absolutely. But the Smithsonian is 70 percent federal and 30 percent non-federally funded, which causes great confusion with other parts of the government. And in order to work independently around the world, Smithsonian travelers generally don't ask for country clearance. Of course you're right, if something happens. But Richard knew all this and he'd been to Haiti many times. I had similar problems with Smithsonian staff travel to other countries, but Haiti was the most contentious because there were so many restrictions given the dangers.

Q: These differences are fascinating. What other projects were you involved with?

CAMP: I saw my main task as informing colleagues, first in ECA and IIP, then the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES), the Bureau of International Organizations (IO), and some of the regional bureaus as well. Eventually I was sending biweekly emails about various opportunities to about 100 people.

I started coming to the weekly ECA and IIP meetings, one on Tuesday, one on Wednesday, so that I would know what they were doing and could insert ideas based on Smithsonian activities. One example was a special exhibition of the Cyrus Cylinder, which was of great interest to State's Iran desk. I arranged a meeting for them with the curator and a VOA (Voice of America) interview as well.

Another opportunity for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs came when the Sackler hosted a major exhibit titled "Roads of Arabia", the first comprehensive international exhibition of Saudi Arabia's historical artifacts. The U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia came for the opening.

Q: I think I saw it in Kansas City at the Nelson; it was a very beautiful exhibit.

CAMP: It was stunning, featuring artifacts from the pre-Islamic past, the cultures that developed along the trade routes, and later the pilgrimage routes. Particularly fascinating was the Greek influence, showing how the ancient world was connected.

I also worked with the Lemelson Center for Innovation and Invention, part of the National Museum of American History (NMAH). The Center was already embarked on a project in Kyiv to create a temporary Spark!Lab, a traveling version of the one in DC where kids can explore science and invention. The money for the project came from the U.S. embassy through a grant to a Ukrainian organization, an art center.

By the time I got involved, the Lemelson staff were frustrated because the Ukrainian organization wasn't responding to their questions; there were a lot of communication issues. I encouraged the embassy to get more engaged and urged hiring Ukrainian students as guides -- kind of a variation on the Student Ambassadors we mobilized for the Shanghai Expo. It was a successful project but definitely needed some hands-on attention from the embassy, which I was able to help stimulate. The Smithsonian also donated the materials when it was over.

Q: It's nice that the Smithsonian could leave the materials there; a lot of times if you're dealing with U.S. Government grants, non-perishable materials can't simply be donated.

CAMP: The donation was part of the original grant, which was around \$50,000. Having the Smithsonian do this kind of thing provides flexibility beyond what an embassy can do.

Q: Precisely. Now was this project connected at all to the Smithsonian's work with IIP on American Spaces?

CAMP: Not directly, although Kyiv was already considering how to set up a new, large American Center and consulted the Lemelson Center staff.

As you know, IIP's American Spaces project was an attempt to better coordinate all the various programming and information locations that posts had developed to compensate for the loss of USIA's once-celebrated libraries and American Centers. The Smithsonian's involvement started after IIP spent \$5 million to build a flagship American Space in Jakarta at an upscale mall.

I learned of the Jakarta effort in 2010, when our Ambassador in Indonesia flew to Shanghai to look at our Expo pavilion as a possible prototype, thinking they might be able to just pick it up and move it to Jakarta. Although we explained that wouldn't work -- the pavilion equipment included 4D film projectors and a special theater, for starters -- the Ambassador was very insistent on coming to see it before he left post.

A year later, back in Washington, I learned more about the background and development of @America, the center in Jakarta, which Under Secretary Judith McHale opened in December 2010. According to reports, she was very disappointed in what she saw.

Q: That's the same story that I heard.

CAMP: Reportedly, she came back after the opening and told IIP Coordinator Dawn McCall to fix it. Dawn knew a designer at the Smithsonian Natural History museum, who agreed to go to Jakarta to offer design advice. IIP reimbursed his travel and per diem, but it was basically a low cost effort. I later worked with the designer, Mike Lawrence, a great guy and very talented.

Q: No question.

CAMP: From a presentation that Mike gave, I understand one of the problems was that the security to get in made it feel like a prison.

While the security measures couldn't be changed, the designer was able to soften the entry corridor with glass cases, vases, the right lighting, etc., as well as making some adjustments inside. IIP was very happy, and it didn't cost them much. That success led Dawn to approach the Smithsonian to create designs for American Spaces.

Q: These would be a variety of designs that would be uniform so that it would give a uniform feel to American Spaces.

CAMP: It reminded me of the websites that I had dealt with 10 years earlier, a Washington mandate to create a "common look and feel" overseas. Some spaces had

decorated with local fabrics and other touches they didn't want to give up, but most welcomed the design assistance options to make the spaces more attractive.

IIP signed a \$1 million contract with the Smithsonian, selecting one post in each region for makeover help. Although I wasn't directly involved in the selection, I attended meetings and discussed plans with the information resource officers, a number of whom I knew from working together in IIP's Europe office nine years earlier. That helped get me some of the back story of what was going on.

Teams from IIP and the Smithsonian visited each selected post, later followed by a conference at the Smithsonian that brought representatives from the centers to go over the design proposals. IIP signed a second contract with the Smithsonian for another \$1.5 million; I think at least one other contract followed.

The Smithsonian not only got paid for the American Spaces design project but also gained additional exposure in key places and travel funding for staff that benefited their other overseas programs. They were quite happy, as was IIP. In the OIG (Office of the Inspector General) report on the bureau, however, Dawn McCall was dinged for expensive travel, including one of these trips.

Q: Yes, she went to Mexico City for sure.

CAMP: There was also the question of how much money IIP should put into these spaces that we didn't own – the old issue of gifting computer equipment, furniture, etc. to a non-USG organization. IIP ended up budgeting \$13 million annually for the American Spaces effort, with regional bureaus and posts adding to that. For example, the original Jakarta American Space was built at a cost of \$5 million, with annual operating costs another \$3 million.

Nevertheless, the project was a success, even getting a positive mention in the otherwise pretty negative OIG inspection report.

Less successful was IIP's 2012 Kindle Project, a \$16.5 million contract with Amazon to buy 2,500 e-readers for use at posts. That works out to \$6,600 per Kindle. When challenged on this price, IIP argued that it included content and support services, but a list of content showed mostly non-copyrighted material – lots of Mark Twain books. I became involved when IIP reached out to me for a support statement from then-Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough.

Q: I was in Costa Rica. Basically posts were receiving a very small number of Kindles, 10 or 12 perhaps, and expected to loan them out or use them in your American corners in some way. We couldn't find a way to satisfy the instructions with the small number and the amount of information that was preloaded.

CAMP: The idea was that every post would get pre-loaded Kindles for use in American Spaces; Secretary Clinton and Amazon head Jeff Bezos were scheduled for a joint press

conference to mark this partnership. When details started to leak about the actual cost of the contract and other issues, the press conference was cancelled. Secretary Clinton's travel schedule was cited as the reason.

A few days before that, IIP had asked me to get a quote from Secretary Clough praising this initiative. Although skeptical, I forwarded the request on to the Smithsonian's Office of Communications. That drew me a swift rebuke from the head of the office, Evelyn Lieberman. I was acquainted with Evelyn from her days as the first Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy following the USIA-State merger; she was best known from her time in the Clinton White House when she gave instructions to remove intern Monica Lewinsky from the president's orbit. Being lambasted by Evelyn is memorable.

Q: I was in IIP for that, my last year in Foreign Service. There was a great deal of change, uncertainty, efforts to become cutting edge in the information that we use. Many ideas did come up; some were pursued, some not. And even the procedure for proposing new ideas took a very long time to become adopted.

The problem is you have a government trying to keep up with what the private sector does in information, management use, and then of course social media. And because of the rapid change in all of those areas, it's very hard for government with all of its regulations and clearances to move as quickly.

CAMP: It seemed to me that they would often pursue exciting new ideas at the expense of tried-and-true ones, such as making use of some of the poster shows that the Smithsonian created for school audiences in the U.S. There were several that could have been adapted for small traveling exhibits abroad. I did succeed in getting links on Infocentral, IIP's internal bulletin board, to some of the potential Smithsonian material.

Q: What about ECA (the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs)? Did you have any projects with that bureau?

CAMP: For ECA, I dealt mainly with the cultural heritage office, which already had a partnership with the Smithsonian and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to train customs agents to identify stolen cultural artifacts. The three-day training was very interesting; it included a visit to the Freer's restoration facility where they were taught to identify and handle objects that might turn out to be antiquities.

ICE agents tend to be gun-carrying tough guys, not necessarily comfortable in the art world, so the training helped nudge them to an understanding of culture heritage issues. One told a vivid account of leading a raid in Los Angeles based on a tip about purloined cultural artifacts. His crew didn't think they had to wear bulletproof vests, because, well, how dangerous could this stuff be. He told them no, this is serious. When they busted into the warehouse, in addition to cultural artifacts they found guns and drugs. The people who smuggle these things are criminals, not genteel artistic types who only deal in old Buddha heads.

Q: They don't discriminate.

CAMP: Whatever sells. And the fact that the smuggled Buddha heads or purloined art help fund the drug trade or the international arms trade demonstrates how it's all tied together. The agent was an accomplished story teller with a good tale to tell.

And ambassadors love it when they get to participate in repatriating cultural property; those ceremonies also draw wonderfully positive attention overseas.

Q: It sounds like with the freedom you had at Smithsonian made it possible to get into a lot of different areas. Looking back, as a result of your two years was consciousness raised at the State Department? Did more connections or programs result?

CAMP: Yes, although with so much turnover at the State Department the consciousness raising effort never ends.

One new collaboration that stuck was International Jazz Day. The Smithsonian, through the National Museum of American History (NMAH), created Jazz Appreciation Month in 2002; they even send posters every year to embassies and consulates. Then in 2011, UNESCO declared April 30 International Jazz Day; Susan Rice, our UN Ambassador signed on. Because this originated in the UN, responsibility landed with the Bureau of International Organizations (IO), not the usual site for arts programming in the department.

I worked with IO to draft a cable for posts and talked with the Smithsonian about including jazz CDs posts could order. I learned that some years earlier USIA had paid Smithsonian Folkways to create a music CD specifically for USIS posts; it was a popular gift item. Unfortunately, a new version or even a remake wasn't possible because of rights issues, as well as costs. However, in 2011, Folkways had released a fabulous jazz set, which they offered to sell to posts at a 10 percent discount. The cable offered that as well as other jazz ideas and options.

Thanks to personnel changes in IO, next year we had to start all over again, but by now I think it's become routine. One year Istanbul was the jazz capitol, then Paris and recently Washington, DC

Q: I can assure you that in Romania, Hungary and Costa Rica we looked forward to it and did stuff with it.

CAMP: I also tried, without much success, to see if we could make better use of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (SJMO).

Q: I never knew that there was a particular Smithsonian jazz orchestra.

CAMP: In 2011 the SJMO performed in Ethiopia, a single-country trip. Given the costs of taking the orchestra across the ocean, they would love to arrange multi-country programs but have no system to do so. Posts and Washington offices I talked to agreed it would be a good idea to help them bundle programs the way we used to with speakers and musical groups, but there was nobody in the State Department who could coordinate. ECA has a specific way of programming musical groups now that doesn't fit this need.

Q: Yes, correct.

CAMP: Science is another important component of the Smithsonian that is, or should be, of great interest to our overseas programs. One important project is the Smithsonian role in the construction of a new super telescope in Chile, where the Institution has had a presence since 1918.

Chile is one of the best places for viewing the heavens, but modern telescopes are expensive and the Smithsonian has to raise most of the money. The groundbreaking for the new Giant Magellan Telescope – they actually blasted off the top of a mountain to create a platform for the telescope – was also a fundraising opportunity. When Smithsonian Under Secretary for Science Eva Pell consulted me on her trip to Chile for the groundbreaking, I suggested we ask the embassy to arrange a meeting with AmCham, along the lines of our partnership for the Shanghai Expo. She also agreed to talk with students at Embassy Santiago's Science Space. She loved it and so did the students.

Q: Those programs are always wonderful.

CAMP: State has always eyed the Smithsonian as a source of speakers, and periodically comes up with ultimately unwieldy schemes to regularize cooperation. Although there are a lot of opportunities, someone has to be alert for them because the Smithsonian travelers make their own travel arrangements and don't ask for country clearance.

Q: And they may not even know what the embassy can do.

CAMP: Under Secretary Eva Pell certainly did not know. Nor did a scientist who accidentally wandered into my office looking for a visa to go to a conference Israel; he ended up doing programs for students on the West Bank and came back later to tell me "I want more!" Similarly, a zookeeper who was going to a conference in Shanghai was more than willing to do a program for the consulate there as soon as I suggested it.

The National Zoo, of course, has many international connections, with the pandas the most prominent. Less well known is that the Zoo collects feathers shed by the kiwis in order to send them to New Zealand for Maori ceremonies, which require a lot of kiwi feathers. When the head of the Zoo was going to Auckland for a presentation I contacted the embassy about the Ambassador's attendance.

My favorite zoo project involved elephants. With only one male and two female elephants, one quite old, building up the herd at the Zoo was a priority. Because elephants

are matriarchal and a single female becomes depressed, the American Zoo Association requires a zoo to have at least two females; the National Zoo was afraid that the older female would die and they would not be in compliance.

The search for new elephants who could produce a large, genetically diverse herd pointed to Thailand -- where I'd spent ten years of my life -- as a likely source country. Zoo officials had talked with Thailand a number of times and come close, but political instability and changes of government kept getting in the way.

I was aware that then-Ambassador to Thailand Kristie Kenney was interested in conservation issues and that she was coming to DC for a Chief of Mission conference. All of this dovetailed with my experience in Chiang Mai celebrating National Thai Elephant Day every March 20. I proposed that we invite Kristie Kenney and the Thai Ambassador to celebrate Thai Elephant Day at the Zoo, hoping it might give a push to elephant acquisition efforts.

Our preparatory advance visit, which included a tour of the new elephant barn and community center, was my favorite site visit ever. At the new facility, staff can weigh the elephants, treat them, confine them for injections, prepare different diets for each -- the elderly female, the middle aged female, and the young stud. It was fascinating.

On the day of the program the staff prepared a decorative cart of food to present to the elephants, including a watermelon with little ears and a tail, made to look like an elephant. It was charming, and exactly the way Thais would do this kind of thing. We generated lots of photos and tweets for the Embassy Bangkok website, the Thai embassy in Washington, and the Smithsonian.

In the end the Zoo acquired elephants from Calgary and New Orleans instead of Thailand, but it was a wonderful introduction to the new elephant center. The place is lovely, with sand over a heated floor, a pond where the elephants stomp on a pedal to release a shower of water, and a large outdoor elephant trail. The only thing lacking was the pitter patter of little elephant feet. Once they have that, I think the pandas can step aside.

Q: Ringling Brothers Circus has decided to no longer use elephants in their circus performances. Did the Zoo consider taking elephants being retired from the circus?

CAMP: I think one of them might have come from a circus. The Smithsonian is looking for the right genetic makeup as well in order to build a healthy, sustainable herd.

Q: I see, okay.

CAMP: I loved working with the Zoo as well as another science component, the Panama-based Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. STRI has had a base in Panama for over 100 years, when they received land as part of the canal construction.

During my time at the Smithsonian we had the initial discussions about a conference on oceans, an issue dear to Secretary Kerry's heart. I was consulted on the idea of hosting a reception at the Natural History Museum, which the organizers thought they could do for around \$8,000. From experience with other receptions at Smithsonian museums I knew that that wouldn't even pay for security. I had moved on by the time the conference took place but it did include a dinner at Natural History. I don't know what it cost.

Q: It's interesting because the Natural History Museum was also undergoing renovation as I recall at the time.

CAMP: The Ocean Hall and Ocean Portal website were great sources of information and programs. In addition to the conference and the IIP app on oceans, another example involved coral research in the Caribbean. I arranged a briefing on this for the Chief of Mission-designate to Curacao.

Researchers at the Natural History Museum have developed little boxes they can insert into a reef to mimic the nooks and crannies of real coral reefs. Known as Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures (ARMS), the boxes attract crabs, shrimps, worms, urchins, sponges, and other kinds of marine invertebrates. After leaving these temporary plastic "apartment houses" underwater for about a year, the researchers can retrieve them to investigate the contents without disturbing the reef. We had an engrossing briefing and backstage tour, which served the new COM well when the Smithsonian's Under Secretary for Science visited Curacao for a look at the project.

Q: Interesting.

CAMP: The two years were a wonderful journey of discovery for me and, I hope, grew the cooperation between the Smithsonian and the State Department. To increase awareness at State I published articles in both State Magazine and The Foreign Service Journal.

I'm pleased the detail has continued, although interest has waxed and waned at State. The Memorandum of Agreement signed in 2012 by Smithsonian Under Secretary Richard Kurin and Acting Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Kathy Stephens mandates an annual stakeholders meeting. While we managed to meet that requirement in 2013 with then U/S Tara Sonenshine and the two Smithsonian Under Secretaries, I'm not sure that kind of high-level discussion has continued.

Q: Oh okay.

CAMP: The lack of support from R, the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, was my biggest disappointment. While I enjoyed a lot of leeway in my work, I was on my own in creating the contacts with ECA and IIP, with OES and IO and regional bureaus needed to entice the Department into some exceptionally useful cooperation.

Q: You're right. Without those connections you're not going to maximize the value.

CAMP: I enjoyed it very much and felt that I accomplished a lot, although you always think about how much better it could be.

Q: Right. And after two years at the Smithsonian, where did you go next?

CAMP: I followed up on my long-time interest in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Friends working there were very enthusiastic and I liked the idea of fixing wrongs and going to places where I had never been. OIG seemed like a door to a broad set of new diplomatic experiences.

I said goodbye to the Smithsonian and joined OIG in August 2013 as a Senior Inspector focused on public diplomacy (PD). I was initially assigned to the inspection for Hungary and Bulgaria.

Q: Wasn't that a problem because of your earlier assignment in Hungary?

CAMP: Hungary would have been okay under OIG rules – it had been 14 years since I had served there. But my long-time friendship with our Ambassador in Bulgaria, dating back to college, was a clear conflict of interest. I was switched to the inspection team for Bahrain and UAE.

In the end I spent only nine months with OIG, so I don't feel qualified to provide much insight. It was also a time of transition for the office, which had been headed by an Acting Inspector General for five years. Although Acting IG Harry Geisel was popular in the organization, there had been a lot of criticism of the Administration for not appointing a more independent inspector. The new Inspector General, Steve Linick, started several weeks after I did and immediately began focusing on things like conflict of interest.

Q: Did he get Senate approval?

CAMP: He did, although it took a while and soon after he was confirmed we had the government shutdown in October 2013. Those of us overseas on inspections kept going while the Washington staff was furloughed, which created difficulties. We continued our work overseas with sharply curtailed home office support.

Suddenly I was going to a part of the world that I knew zero about, which was exciting. In hindsight Bahrain and the UAE made for an interesting introduction to the Gulf and to Shia-Sunni political tension, but fun it was not. After work in Manama there was no place to go except the souk, where I could identify most everything for sale as made in China. I recognized products of the town of Yiwu in Zhejiang, source of most of the world's socks, Christmas lights, and tourist baubles.

Our team included several long-time inspectors experienced in finding the best restaurants wherever they are, but even their skills couldn't turn up much in Manama, where the choice was limited. Not that there was much else to do in the evenings for

those three weeks, after spending our days poring over documents and conducting interviews at the embassy. I was inspecting the Public Diplomacy operation.

Q: How large was it?

CAMP: The Public Affairs Office in Manama consisted of three Americans, including a Regional English Language Officer, and about 12 local staff. During the pre-inspection process in Washington, we had read through all the survey responses submitted by embassy employees, so we had some idea of where there were issues. And of course grants management is always an area that bears a close look. Meanwhile, my fellow inspectors were looking at other aspects of the embassy and identifying problems – the final report had a lot of recommendations.

Q: Sure, always.

CAMP: This OIG report had 57 recommendations and was pretty critical; the Ambassador was not happy.

After Bahrain our team went on to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), first Abu Dhabi and then to Dubai. Even though this was a bigger operation than Bahrain, with a consulate, we spent about three weeks there as well. The final report listed 62 recommendations and produced another unhappy Ambassador.

Coincidentally, Dubai was one of the four cities in the final running to host the 2020 world's fair, which caught my attention because of my experience with the 2010 expo in Shanghai. A month later the Bureau of International Expositions, the international organization in charge of world's fairs, chose Dubai as the site for 2020, after the 2015 Milan Expo. I had no idea at that point that I would become involved with Milan or consult with Consulate Dubai about their role in this effort.

My first impression of Abu Dhabi was surprise at how green it looked. I was likewise unprepared to meet beach-bound British tourists at our hotel, which was on the water. It wasn't the best sand or water in the world but still a treat in October.

Another Abu Dhabi attraction is the huge, modern, gleaming Sheikh Zayed Mosque, which I toured with several of my colleagues. They're well prepared for tourists, providing cloaks for the women and scheduling well-organized tours. Our guide, a volunteer at the mosque, was an engineer who was very good at explaining Islam while also fielding the inevitable touristy questions about the biggest chandeliers in the world, the size of the carpet, etc.

We happened to visit on the day that Rihanna was being photographed with the mosque in the background, stirring up controversy with her provocative dress and poses.

A number of us went to Dubai to inspect the consulate. The PD office consisted of a single inexperienced first tour officer. But my inspection responsibilities also included

the office handling our contacts with Iran, which was conducting a number of public diplomacy programs. I had no idea we were bringing Iranian citizens on International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLP) or working with Iranian filmmakers. There was a lot going on.

Q: I have never heard of it either. That's interesting.

CAMP: Presumably those officers will be the ones opening our embassy in Tehran when that day comes.

Q: One day, yes.

CAMP: After inspecting the overseas post, the team returns to Washington to write, discuss, re-write, discuss some more. We met with Under Secretary for Management Pat Kennedy, with the Director General, and presented our findings to the NEA bureau. By the time the reports were public, we were all on to our next inspections.

Q: Just to reemphasize -- before the inspectors arrive embassy staff fill out surveys about how well things are going; posts also complete a lengthy pre-inspection questionnaire that asks all of the basic questions about how well things are running. This is kind of a grace period, a short window before the inspectors come to try to tidy things up so that when they finally arrive at least the easy things to fix are done.

CAMP: A lot of changes are made before the inspection starts because the post is forced to focus on issues and fix them. That's a good outcome even before the inspectors arrive. Which is not to say the inspectors don't notice that the first meeting the DCM ever had with entry level officers (ELOs) occurred two weeks before the inspection. But that still counts as a positive result – he/she did schedule a session with the entry level officers even though he should have done it earlier.

Inspection teams always meet with the ELOs and get their reactions on morale, management, mentoring – anything they want to discuss. We also look for the good things being done, anything that might serve as a model.

Q: Absolutely, sure.

CAMP: Next I was assigned to the compliance follow-up review on the 2011 inspection of IIP. These follow-up reviews look at whether agreed-upon corrective actions for recommendations issued in previous reports were fully implemented.

The 2011 OIG inspection of IIP was led by former Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Maura Harty; I had read the report while at the Smithsonian and thought it did a terrific job of getting at the many issues at the bureau, including leadership and morale problems, so I was eager to work on the compliance review.

However, under the new IG, the conflict of interest time period had been extended to 10 years. Having worked at IIP a decade earlier, I was disqualified from covering that bureau. Instead, I learned that I was going to Kabul.

Our Afghanistan inspection team spent several weeks interviewing people in Washington followed by six weeks in Kabul. The on-site work took place in February, which is cold, muddy, and polluted. We lived and worked on the embassy compound, barely leaving; it was a very constricted existence where everyone, including our inspection team, worked six days a week. That said, the mere act of flying into Kabul, across Iran, was exciting. Despite the gray winter haze hovering over Kabul, the mountains around the city looked magnificent.

Most of the inspection team never left the embassy compound. I was fortunate that my public affairs brief took me to Kabul University, the National Museum, and the office of Voice of America's (VOA) Afghanistan Language Service and Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty-Radio Free Afghanistan.

On my first venture outside the embassy I accompanied the Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO) to the Journalism Center at the University of Kabul, the recipient of lots of U.S.-funded equipment used to teach young Afghans broadcasting skills. Unfortunately, my visit was during a university break and all the equipment was under covers, which didn't do much to provide evidence of effective use of USG money.

My favorite excursion was to the museum, which had received sizable funding from the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation as well as \$5 million for a new museum building. I was familiar with this project because of discussions at the Smithsonian about efforts to preserve Mes Aynak, an ancient Buddhist site about 25 miles from Kabul that is featured in an exhibit at the museum. A Chinese company had recently received the rights to mine copper there, raising concern about preservation; the Smithsonian organized a conference call with the U.S. military and the State Department that included discussions about the feasibility of air lifting an entire stupa from Mes Aynak to Kabul with a U.S. military helicopter.

My final site visit was to the VOA office.

Q: Where was VOA located?

CAMP: A few blocks from the embassy compound – it would have been a short walk in any other city. In Kabul, no one goes anywhere outside the embassy grounds on foot; I was sent out with a driver in an armored vehicle. Despite all the focus on security, however, my driver managed to take me to the wrong address, where we encountered a locked gate and armed guard. Neither the driver nor the guard spoke English and it occurred to me that this would be a classic kidnap scenario – I didn't know where I was and neither did anyone else. Unlike my two other trips, no one from the embassy was accompanying me. After the driver made a phone call, we set off again, ending up at the

office where VOA and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty had moved two years before, not far from the embassy.

Only a few other members of our team ever left the embassy, although a small group traveled to inspect the consulates in Herat and Mazar-e Sharif as well as Kandahar and Bagram air bases. Consulate Herat had been attacked five months earlier; eight members of the Afghan guard force were killed and the staff was relocated to ISAF's Camp Arena or to Embassy Kabul.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: Afghanistan was obviously a very difficult environment, with everyone trying to carry on as normally as possible. The Mazar-e Sharif consulate was located in the northern region. Because it was considered a safer environment, the U.S. had earlier bought and renovated a hotel to use as our consulate. After spending \$80 million, we never moved in because the building didn't meet set back and other security requirements. We ended up leasing the building to the Germans for a nominal fee.

Although this had occurred several years earlier and was therefore not in the purview of our inspection, the building snafu caught the attention of new Inspector General Steve Linick, whose first trip to the field was to Afghanistan.

Q: Good lord. What a way to start.

CAMP: OIG inspections focus on embassy operations and management. But of course the new Inspector General, who came from a different background, wanted to know who approved the waiver of State Department building regulations back in 2009. Who determined we would overlook security requirements in Mazar? My colleagues and I all assumed it was Richard Holbrooke, who was famous for breaking bureaucratic crockery to get things done. With Holbrooke dead and the money already spent, these were not questions for our inspection.

Q: Sure

CAMP: Based on my surveys, interviews, and site visits, I was impressed with the Kabul Public Affairs section, which ran one of the largest International Visitor Leadership Programs in the world, funded a network of 18 Lincoln Learning Centers, and managed extensive English language and computer learning programs. The problem, of course, was in the monitoring and evaluation; given restrictions on embassy travel, the embassy relied on reports from grantees and a variety of virtual methods to monitor and evaluate programming.

I nominated, unsuccessfully, the section's grant system as a model because of their close cooperation with the SCA bureau and extensive grants training program. With much of the work in Kabul conducted through grants, doing it right was immensely important.

The section oversaw 110 open grants with a total value of \$100.9 million. Staff described the large grant portfolios they managed as “crushing”.

Fortunately, retired grants expert Georgia Hubert was also on our inspection team. She was looking at grants throughout the embassy while I was specifically looking at public diplomacy money.

Q: Oh wow, the grande dame of grants. Georgia Hubert saved me so many times with grants. I think she must be one of the most beloved figures among PD officers.

CAMP: Georgia was on the team as a reemployed Civil Service annuitant on the management side; her expertise was enormously helpful in reviewing grants, which was how so much of our work was conducted in Afghanistan.

Morale was obviously a big concern, given the difficulties of working in Kabul, and an area of focus for the inspection team. Security concerns, cramped housing, family issues, long work hours were all issues.

We met with about 30 Eligible Family Members (EFMs) who detailed the difficulties of securing EFM jobs. Without such a job, spouses could not come to Kabul. The irony was that the embassy depended on EFMs to fill a lot of positions, and surveys showed that couples were happier than singles in Kabul, yet the bureaucracy put obstacles in the way.

One of the biggest problems was the constant turnover, because assignments were for one year, with three R&R (rest and recreation) trips per tour. In addition, Locally Employed (LE) staff members were eligible to apply for a special immigrant visa (SIV) after one year of U.S. Government service, so there was huge turnover with the Afghan staff as well.

During a normal one-year tour, R&Rs meant officers usually spent about 65 days away from the mission. So the department had to assign three people to cover what would normally be two full-time positions.

Q: How do you distinguish between what the OIG does and what the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) does?

CAMP: That’s a good question. The basic answer is that SIGAR focused on programs aimed at Afghan reconstruction, much of which is USAID, while OIG looked at embassy operations in terms of effectiveness, coordination, efficiency, management controls, security, etc.

SIGAR had a fairly large staff working in Kabul and was getting a lot of press attention. One newspaper story called Special IG John Sopko the Donald Trump of inspectors general. People complained that he operated by press release; when he found something – for example “ghost soldiers” on the Afghan army payroll with U.S. funds - he regularly called journalists first.

USAID, in particular, felt its operations were under constant scrutiny. To quote from our 2013 OIG report, “Mission Afghanistan has approximately 70 audit, investigation, and inspection staff members from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Government Accountability Office. They are frequently joined by temporary duty (TDY) personnel from Washington and other missions. More than 80 audits and inspections covering Department operations and programs have occurred since 2010. A number of audits, investigations, and inspections were ongoing during this inspection.”

Our team, to avoid duplication, did not conduct an in-depth assessment of the department’s assistance programs, although we did review the embassy’s overall coordination of such programs as well as contracting and grant procedures. SIGAR went after the big ticket assistance items, of which there were plenty, while we focused on the embassy and how the embassy works.

Q: The amount of money was obviously much more on the assistance and reconstruction side.

CAMP: The management people on our team were looking at issues such as housing that was not “hardened” to withstand a rocket attack, one of which had struck on the previous Christmas. The inspectors also looked at the new embassy that was under construction, where materials were stored, the warehouse procedures; the whole place was a construction site and there were a lot of inefficiencies. It was cold, it was muddy. It snowed while we were there, slippery, muddy, and wet.

We worked six days a week. On Saturday, our day off, we’d walk over to the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) base, which housed a coffee shop, a pizza place run by the Italians, and a big field where local vendors offered rugs, jewelry, baskets, textiles, etc. We all bought a rug or two; it was our off-day entertainment.

Q: In a restricted environment you do what you can. And you were there six weeks?

CAMP: Just under six weeks.

Q: How large roughly is the Kabul embassy in terms of just direct hire U.S. personnel?

CAMP: The number of Americans had peaked a year or so earlier at 1,340. Transition downsizing had already begun, with the aim of reducing the American presence by summer 2014 to 646 direct-hire staff in Kabul and 120 more at four other locations. At the time of the inspection there were 811 U.S. direct-hire personnel under Chief of Mission authority. The number of field posts had gone down to four from 105 earlier. The public affairs section had about 20 U.S. direct hires, with reductions planned in the coming year.

Contractors formed a large group of embassy employees as well.

Security was obviously a big concern. For the drive in from the airport we were given bulletproof vests. The embassy had regular duck and cover drills; you grabbed the bulletproof vest and helmet from under your desk and reported to an assembly point.

Again from the inspection report: “Embassy Kabul faces serious challenges in advancing U.S. interests in Afghanistan, including a difficult security environment that severely limits movements outside the compound, the annual turnover of most of its staff, and the limited capacity in the host country. The inspection team was favorably impressed with how embassy personnel are carrying out their responsibilities in the face of these challenges. “

Q: Wow. Because rockets still get in periodically apparently. After six weeks in Kabul, did you come back to Washington?

CAMP: Yes. But meanwhile I’d been contacted by the European Bureau about serving as Coordinator on the Milan Expo. Although I initially declined, a second approach piqued my interest and I decided to curtail from OIG.

When the recruitment call came from EUR I had been slated for a spring inspection in West Africa, but once again conflict of interest concerns led to my being reassigned, to a domestic inspection on disciplinary practices. The perceived conflict was based on my acquaintance with the Abidjan DCM from a Bangkok posting 25 years earlier; this time it seemed rather ridiculous, especially when OIG leadership asked whether we exchanged Christmas cards. (No.) I realized OIG is the only bureau in the State Department where it doesn’t pay to be networked.

Q: Right, exactly. So then the Milan Expo?

CAMP: A year earlier the EUR/PD (European bureau public diplomacy) office director had contacted me for advice about participating in Milan Expo based on my Shanghai experience. Our conversation left me with the impression that we probably wouldn’t move ahead in Milan, so it was a revelation to learn that the department had issued a Request for Proposal (RFP). This time, however, there was a twist. ECA, always reluctant to take on world’s fairs in the post-USIA world, figured out they could just hand it over to the eager regional bureau, EUR. EUR was happy to go it alone, not realizing that ECA, despite its foot dragging, handled important aspects of our Expo involvement. This became increasingly obvious later.

I took over from Barry Levin, a re-employed annuitant who had handled the RFP and selection of a private sector partner. I was encouraged that the RFP had attracted five bidders, a good sign after the “last man standing” acrimony that had plagued us throughout the Shanghai process.

Q: And the theme for Milan?

CAMP: The theme set by host country Italy was food: “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life”. The winning bidder for our pavilion chose as its theme “American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet.”

The winning consortium represented the James Beard Foundation and the International Culinary Center, both with great food credentials. But our goal was to get beyond good eating, even though promoting American food in Europe has many commercial purposes. We wanted to make sure to focus on global food security, innovation, trade. GMOs (genetically modified organisms) were a hot button topic we would need to deal with.

I took over May 1 as Coordinator for the Milan Expo, based in EUR/PD. I was surprised and pleased to inherit 14 binders of documents from the Shanghai Expo that ECA had compiled — these became my reference library, supplemented by my own memory and former colleagues I consulted.

Aware of Shanghai’s problems but not its successes, the private sector partners were more focused on NOT following the earlier model than learning from it. Nevertheless, the historic information in the files proved extremely useful, especially in the absence of any assistance from ECA. Using the files I was able to provide background on the Commissioner General status, position descriptions for some pavilion staff, lists of sponsor donations, precedents for assigning an FSO as Deputy Commissioner General, etc.

In Milan, the incoming Consul General was Phil Reeker -- like me, a PD officer heading a consulate during a major world’s fair. I think having a PD officer in charge is very helpful. Milan, however, is not a large consulate. While in Shanghai we were able to double-hat our Public Affairs Officer as Deputy Commissioner General and create a separate Consulate Expo Liaison Officer position, Milan combined the two jobs. The extremely capable Elia Tello was assigned to this two-year position. She and I were the only officers working full time on the Expo, Elia in Milan and me in Washington.

Q: And the deadline was how far away? How long until the Expo will take place?

CAMP: I started on May 1, 2014; the Expo opened exactly one year later.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: The effort had started in 2013 with the RFP, and then the selection of the private sector partner -- the James Beard Foundation, the International Culinary Center, and AmCham Italy, the American Chamber of Commerce based in Milan.

Initially I thought the impressive Milan team was ahead of the Shanghai effort five years earlier. The RFP result was undisputed, unlike Shanghai. President Obama had publicly endorsed our participation in Milan, which didn’t happen for Shanghai. The U.S. signed the Participation Agreement with the Milan Expo authority four months earlier than in

Shanghai. The private sector partners had lots of experience in the Expo theme of food and the architect was American – a major source of criticism in Shanghai.

Still hanging fire was the appointment of a Commissioner General, a troubling element as I knew how crucial Jose Villarreal had been in this role in Shanghai. Lots of names were floated, many of them well-known Italian-Americans. This important leadership position went unfilled until December 2014, a mere five months before the opening of the Expo and our pavilion.

Of course Shanghai was not the only point of comparison; I was in regular touch with Jim Ogul, a retired ECA employee who had worked on Expos at USIA and Commerce for 30 years. I also read the 1999 USIA inspection report about the Lisbon Expo. Among the recommendations was that a Commissioner General be appointed at least three years in advance.

Q: Oh yes, of course.

CAMP: Although I saw no point in re-litigating Shanghai, I had to push back on a puzzling but wide-spread belief that we were late in opening our pavilion there. I first learned about this false article of faith from a Milan cable. CG Phil Reeker and Deputy Commissioner General Elia Tello reported their meeting with the head of Expo, who cautioned them that he was keeping a close eye on the U.S. effort “because you were late to open in Shanghai and we don’t want that to happen here.”

After reading the cable I emailed Milan a correction. If anything was needed to disprove the Expo official’s claim to have witnessed the late opening personally, I had photographs of our May 1, 2010 ribbon cutting with Ambassador Huntsman, as well as an April 30 speech by Hillary Clinton saying the pavilion was opening the next day. Although Milan sent a corrected cable, this strange falsehood persisted.

When I met with Ambassador Phillips in Rome a few months later, he too remarked “we can’t be late like we were in Shanghai”. “Mr. Ambassador,” I said, “we weren’t late”. “Well that’s what they told me”, he insisted. Although I didn’t set out to be the Shanghai truth squad, this misconception was not helpful as we tried to raise confidence in our project and money for our pavilion. In response to similarly negative comments from our private sector partners, I pointed out that it was only because Shanghai was a success that the U.S. was participating in Milan.

In fact, I suspect it was the Shanghai success in raising \$60 million that encouraged the Friends of the USA Pavilion to up the \$45 million budget in its bidding proposal to \$60 million in the final Participation Agreement. No one ever explained who in the State Department approved this increase, which occurred before I took over as Coordinator. In hindsight, after the pavilion ended up with a \$26 million debt, the increase loomed large.

Although EUR had authority to manage our participation in Milan and Assistant Secretary Toria Nuland signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Friends

of the USA Pavilion, the bureau did not put its shoulder into the effort. De facto authority defaulted to Ambassador David Thorne, who had been in Italy and was Secretary Kerry's best buddy from Yale days. He was serving as Special Representative, a close advisor to Kerry.

As Ambassador in Rome 2009-2013, Thorne heard a lot about the Expo from Italian proponents as well as interested U.S. businesses who were urging the U.S. to participate. With Assistant Secretary Nuland showing little interest, most people in EUR assumed Thorne "owned" the expo. In actuality, after ECA bowed out, Secretary Kerry had signed a delegation of authority to EUR, making that bureau responsible for the U.S. presence at the Milan Expo.

Q: Well if the assistant secretary isn't going to pay attention...

CAMP: She never visited the Expo and rarely referred to it in speeches or meetings. So it fell on Ambassador Thorne's shoulders.

Q: And did he understand that?

CAMP: He grumbled about it but understood that he had to take the lead if this was going to happen.

Time was getting short -- the building was going up, the exhibits were being created, staff was being hired -- but money was trickling in at best. While most of the fundraising for Shanghai was done by the Global Partnership Initiatives office established by Hillary Clinton, in the intervening years that S/GPI office had taken on other projects and Milan was not a priority. So they weren't particularly helpful either.

Shanghai was plagued by the required \$15 million threshold that caused the late signing of the Participation Agreement and the lingering reputation of our being "late", but Milan swung too far in the other direction, with only \$5 million required before we signed up.

On the bright side, I was very happy that the Friends group selected New Yorker Jim Biber to design the pavilion, considering the barrage of criticism we faced in Shanghai for using a non-American architect. Jim Biber not only conceived a very open pavilion that avoided the problem of long lines, he was also a good publicist, with friends at "Architectural Magazine" and other publications.

Q: Oh it makes such a difference.

CAMP: His design was basically a big open barn, or, in Biber's words, "American vernacular architecture". The main feature was the largest vertical farm in the world along one side. The floor boards came from the boardwalk salvaged from Coney Island after Hurricane Sandy. There were some lovely features and the openness was immensely helpful as crowds increased.

The Friends hired another NY firm – Thinc, which designed the New York 9/11 museum -- to create the exhibits. Here again, the State Department’s lack of a permanent world’s fair office or professional staff created confusion. Under the MOA, the department had to approve all the exhibits, but it wasn’t clear who at State had that responsibility. Who was qualified to speak to the topics, which included farming, nutrition, chefs, policy, and business?

Concerns ranged from the very controversial issue of genetically modified foods to Feed the Future programs. I organized review meetings with Commerce, Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USAID, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Public Affairs, IIP, the Office of Global Food Security and anyone else I could think of to evaluate the material.

While the different agencies didn’t always see eye to eye on some of the issues, this collaborative process worked pretty well. For example, early on someone pointed out that the U.S. does not recognize a “right to food”, a concept that had been included in the original script for President Obama’s video. ECA declined any role in the review process; U/S Stengel’s office sent a rep to a few meetings but was more interested in the communications angle than the exhibit content.

A few months before the opening, with most of the hi-tech video material nearly in the can, I was taken aback when EUR DAS Mark Toner asked who would approve the exhibits? Should it be Toria Nuland? Rick Stengel?

Q: The Assistant Secretary for the European Bureau and the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs?

CAMP: Right, neither of whom had shown any interest. At that late date, if they raised objections to any detail, we were screwed. It was too late to re-film, re-edit the hi-tech video materials. Plus, every time I’d broached it in EUR I was told “we don’t know anything about these issues.”

I explained that the content had been reviewed and approved by experts from the Ag Department, their nutrition office, EPA, USAID, FDA, Commerce. In addition, I had solicited policy articles from all of these agencies for the pavilion website, which planned to include online versions of all the exhibits. I felt comfortable with the kind of expertise we had been able to take advantage of, but the Deputy Assistant Secretary was nervous over the lack of the hierarchical in-house clearance that the State Department runs on.

But the real problem was money, or its absence. The private sector group had fired an initial set of fundraisers and hired a second group before I started as Coordinator. What none of us knew until later was that the CEO had promised these new fundraisers 10% of anything they raised – reportedly more than they’d asked for.

Q: Wow.

CAMP: Secretary Kerry hosted a reception in honor of the groundbreaking in July, filmed a video of support, and organized two business round tables with potential donors, but the fundraisers kept pushing for more involvement from the Secretary. In the end they blamed Kerry for their inability to raise the \$60 million the Friends budgeted, an assertion I thought was unfair.

The Expo and our pavilion opened on May 1. The building was done even though the money hadn't been raised. We were able to do that because the Swiss construction firm carried the debt.

Q: That's remarkable.

CAMP: We were eager to get Secretary Kerry out to the Expo as soon as possible, similar to Secretary Clinton's visit to Shanghai in May 2010. The first opportunity was the end of May, then pushed to June 12 or 13. Unfortunately, Kerry's bike accident in Geneva canceled his Milan trip. He didn't visit until the end of October when the Expo was almost over, along with our ability to take advantage of the kind of publicity that brings in donations.

Despite all that, the USA Pavilion opened, on time, with good reviews. In addition to the pavilion and the online material, we had a food truck area promoting regional specialties – Maine lobster rolls, Florida key lime cupcakes. And of course Pepsi, which was a sponsor. The food truck nation was not as grand as the original proposal, which involved the best food trucks in selected cities caravanning across the United States and Europe to Milan. Although everybody loved this idea, it wasn't practical. On top of everything else, Expo environmental rules prohibited gasoline engines. Instead, Fiat Chrysler, another sponsor, provided truck bodies that we outfitted to serve as food trucks.

The fourth element of our participation was the James Beard American Restaurant, located not on the Expo grounds but in downtown Milan at the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. The location was stunning and the cooking was done by rotating chefs recruited by the James Beard Foundation.

Q: It's remarkable that you were able to do so much without having paid for everything before it started. I don't know of another event in the 30 years I was in the Foreign Service where that happened.

CAMP: Remarkable, and hard to explain to State Department colleagues. When I described the situation to the deputy in EUR/PD, he took the morally upright stance of "I would rather we pay our debt and not open at all." Of course that was not the way it works -- not opening wouldn't pay our debt. We had to open to have any hope of raising additional money. The success was that we stayed open for the entire six months of the expo, May 1-October 31.

Q: And when you opened you were \$20 million in debt.

CAMP: More like 25. The accounting sheets that came from our partner's CEO were always a little fuzzy.

Q: And the debt was owed by the fundraiser?

CAMP: By the private sector partners.

Q: Yes. Okay. Wow.

CAMP: A year later it was still not resolved. Beyond fundraising from businesses, we also tried to get other government agencies to pony up, especially Commerce and Agriculture. Commerce Secretary Pritzker got a little involved in fundraising, but the Ag Department insisted that Secretary Vilsack couldn't do anything because Ag is a regulatory agency. Every agency's legal department interprets the rules its own way.

Money aside, the best cooperation came from NASA. The pavilion hosted five programs with NASA scientists, including one with Administrator Bolden. These were part of 100 "Terrace Talks" that our pavilion offered during the six-month Expo, taking advantage of the building's wonderful rooftop. The student ambassadors often did the interpreting, and also blogged about the programs on the pavilion website.

Q: Brilliant.

CAMP: The student ambassadors sometimes produced their own events, including a fabulous flash mob set to Beyoncé's "Move Your Body".

The website created by the private sector team was terrific; I was especially pleased that people could see the exhibits online and disappointed that IIP didn't make good use of all the material about Feed the Future, climate change, innovations in American agriculture, etc. Although my IIP contacts had been eager to get this material in advance of the Expo, I soon learned that the bureau had no good method to disseminate the information beyond short Share America blurbs. Long articles and eJournals were a thing of the past by then.

The pavilion itself was very active on social media. I was able to use the pavilion's tweets to keep track of and report developments to the department leadership, such as the one million visitor mark and then each successive visitor milestone all the way up to six million. Working with State's Public Affairs Bureau, we generated tweets for Secretary Kerry on the amazing number of visitors. Although I had thought the original prediction of three to five million visitors for the six months was far too optimistic, by August we were taking in a million a month. I was stunned that we approached the USA Pavilion Shanghai total of 7.3 million visitors, given that that 2010 Expo set a new world's fair record of 73 million visits.

Q: And in the end, who became the Commissioner General?

CAMP: The long delay in appointing a Commissioner General was one of the unexplained fumbles of this whole project. Both Ambassador Thorne in DC and Ambassador Phillips in Rome kept pushing the White House for an appointment, as we all got increasingly concerned and frustrated. The eventual choice was Doug Hickey, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and Obama fundraiser. His appointment was announced on December 1, 2014, just five months before the Expo and our pavilion were due to open.

There was a lot of administrative work involved in establishing this position, a task formerly handled by ECA and entirely unknown to EUR. We had to rely on the Shanghai files for a position description, trying to figure out who to put as his supervisor and whether or not he was a Special Government Employee. We had to lead Doug through the financial disclosure process, which is especially confusing if you are far from Washington, DC. He needed a State Department medical clearance, wanted to move his whole family to Milan, negotiated medical insurance, etc.

I have to say that the more I worked with Doug the more I appreciated our Commissioner General in Shanghai, Jose Villarreal. Doug was a nice guy, but very dismissive of bureaucracy as well as some of the pavilion leadership. One of his main interests was acquiring for himself the title of Ambassador, which is usually conferred only for the six-month duration of the Expo. We managed to move it up ten days so that he could use the title during Sec Kerry's April 22 culinary diplomacy reception in DC, but that meant the title evaporated before the actual end of the Expo. The Presidential Appointments office sent a letter on Oct 22, 2015 informing Doug he could no longer use the title, which he ignored.

In the end he wasn't the successful fundraiser we expected and desperately needed. However, by living in Milan, he was able to spend a lot of time at the pavilion, which was helpful, meeting with VIP guests.

Q: Oh of course.

CAMP: One of my responsibilities was vetting all donors, a lengthy process that clashed with the fundraising team's need to move quickly. Using information provided by the fundraisers for each donor, I prepared a memo to the Global Partnerships office (S/GPI) asking for vetting. Some time later – generally 2-6 weeks - S/GPI sent me a large file on the company that I then synthesized in a memo for M, the Under Secretary for Management. These memos needed about 20 clearances throughout the department, a slow process that frustrated all of us and angered some of the donors who were ready to push out press releases announcing their support as soon as the decision was made.

Although I fielded questions about several of the companies – including the Legal office asking me to prove that Walmart was a socially and environmentally responsible company – the only one not approved by M was a chocolate company. The insurmountable problem was the supply chain, used not only by this company but by all the big names in the chocolate world that reaches back to plantations where child and slave labor is used. We had to vet every company through this whole process.

Q: Every step.

CAMP: Yes, and the fundraising languished. But it did not stop us from running a very successful pavilion that drew six million visitors. We even had two presidential delegations. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack led the one for our National Day on July 4, and we got a bonus delegation led by First Lady Michelle Obama focusing on nutrition and her “Let’s Move” campaign. Her delegation included Mario Batali and Carla Hall, the founder of Sweetgreen, and NBA star Alonzo Mourning.

Although the First Lady’s visit was a huge hit in Italy, it didn’t help the pavilion much in terms of the publicity we needed to boost our fundraising campaign. *The Washington Post* reported that she was going to Milan for a “world’s fair-type event”, weird wording that seemed not to recognize Milan as an actual world’s fair. That was the last mention in the *Post*.

In contrast, Vilsack’s and Kerry’s appearances were more focused on the pavilion and our themes of food security and innovation. Kerry’s trip at the end of October was terrific; he gave a wonderful speech on climate change, toured the pavilion, hosted a reception. But by that time we were two weeks from the end on October 31.

Q: Kerry is a remarkable public speaker.

CAMP: I enjoyed working with the speech writer and seeing the drafts develop. We all agreed the speech should focus on climate change, not only because Kerry was passionate on the issue but also because it tied the Milan Expo into the upcoming COP 21 UN conference on climate change in Paris the following month.

Kerry talked about food security, water resources, how we will feed 9 billion people in the year 2050, all the issues that we were focusing on in the pavilion. I was proud that our pavilion addressed serious themes. Although I don’t think we managed to change any minds about GMOs (genetically modified organisms), we did have several talks on this controversial topic at a time when most posts in Europe were not touching it. TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) was another important issue; Kerry mentioned that in his speech as well.

Q: That’s still being discussed with Europe.

CAMP: Some of the trade issues were manifest in our pavilion effort. We relied on assistance from the Foreign Agricultural Service in Rome to clear through customs the Coney Island boardwalk wood and certain foods. The Italians have lots of restrictions on agricultural imports and are highly invested in Geographical Indications (GI), which identify products as originating from a particular location. For example, you can’t call a sparkling wine “champagne” unless it comes from that region; you can’t call a cheese “parmesan” unless it’s from Parma. The Italians were riding those issues hard during the Expo.

Q: It's May 11 and we are continuing the interview with Bea Camp with some concluding thoughts on Milan Expo and other reflections.

CAMP: My experience with two world's fairs made me one of the few foreign service officers with any expertise in this area. One of the few Americans, for that matter, since most don't even know these still exist; the last Expo in the U.S. was the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition.

The department has proved wary of getting involved ever since Congress prohibited the use of appropriated funds for our participation in international expos. We keep doing it, nevertheless, with pressure from the hosting country a strong motivating factor.

Under mandatory age limits for the foreign service, I should have retired when I turned 65 in September, 2015. It took an age waiver from the Director General to keep me on the job through the end of December, time needed to see the Expo through the October 31 closing date and put the records in good order. Since I had relied heavily on the 14 Shanghai binders, I felt an obligation to leave comprehensive files on the Milan Expo for the next person to find herself flying by the seat of her pants to coordinate our participation in a world's fair. I ended up with 12 binders on Milan.

Although the Shanghai files had been housed at ECA, that bureau made it clear they didn't want them back. When I walked out the door on December 31, 2015, I transferred them to Kelsey Bacon in Ambassador Thorne's office, who was tasked with trying to reestablish a permanent Expo office at the State Department.

Q: And the files covered what?

CAMP: The delegation of authority to EUR. The RFP. The Memorandum of Agreement and Participation Agreement. Press materials. Notes from my weekly conference calls with the private sector partners, Consulate Milan and Embassy Rome. All the vetting for the companies that contributed. The hiring process for the Commissioner General. Position descriptions for some private sector pavilion staff, such as the protocol manager.

Earlier I had shared the files with the Bureaus of South and Central Asia (SCA) and Near East Affairs (NEA), which were already under pressure from Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates for upcoming fairs. Both copied documents, such as the action memo to the Secretary and the Delegation of Authority, that they needed to start the long and arduous process.

I also ended up in discussions about Minnesota's bid to host a domestic Expo in 2023; the organizers were pressuring the department to get us back into the Bureau of International Expositions. While domestic Expos fall under the Commerce Department, Commerce is even more out of the loop on the subject than the State Department after so many years of not dealing with world's fairs.

Despite the fact that my job focused solely on Milan, I became the go-to person on world's fair questions by default, both for Embassy Astana and Consulate Dubai. Our ambassador in Abu Dhabi ended up taking a delegation of American businesspeople to Milan, and I'm pretty certain we will end up participating in Dubai's 2020 expo. But I'm also sure we'll wait until the last minute as we did with Shanghai and Milan. We just can't learn that lesson.

Q: And of course, yes.

CAMP: Done right, we could take advantage of these expos to promote policy positions. The benefits of world's fairs are broad, including opportunities to connect governments and people, a relaxed setting for diplomacy, support for American companies abroad, promotion of innovation on global issues, engagement by multi-lingual student hosts at US pavilions, showcases for architecture and design, and strong private sector involvement in funding, creating, and managing the US presence. With its food theme, Milan offered a global platform for talking about food security, U.S. products, climate, innovation, trade agreements, geographical indicators, GMOs... Some of these are controversial; a world's fair is a soft power tool to tackle tough issues.

Q: What is the theme in the UAE?

CAMP: The theme for Dubai 2020 is "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future"; it's focused on collaboration to generate sustainable solutions to global problems. The smaller Astana 2017 Expo is about future energy, obviously a subject of great importance to us.

Q: Very interesting topics, ones that the U.S. and certainly U.S. businesses are interested in.

CAMP: Even if we go ahead with both expos, as looks likely, we don't have a mechanism to pull everything together in the most effective, efficient way. Instead we rely on half-hearted, last minute planning, minimal oversight, and insufficient resources. After I retired I wrote an article for the *Foreign Service Journal* about this titled "Neglecting World's Fairs Doesn't Make Them Go Away, So Let's Do It Right".

Q: Interesting.

CAMP: President Obama went to the Hannover Trade Fair in March 2016 after skipping the Milan Expo in 2015. We promote trade and American culture in many ways but the idea of doing it through a world's fair has lost traction; we don't have a true gauge of how effective our presence could be if done right. The Brits have figured this out; they won the design award both in Shanghai and Milan for their creative pavilions. And at a lower cost.

Q: How do you find cost savings?

CAMP: First of all, the sooner you start the less it costs. You also need a professional office within the State Department to oversee the effort. Each time we select a new private sector partner, we find ourselves working with people who have to learn the world's fair world from the beginning. The Friends of the USA Pavilion in Milan were knowledgeable about the food world, but not about expos. I'm sure they could have found cost savings if they had more experience or more professional guidance.

Q: So you saw the Milan Expo to its end and then retired after a 32-year career, evenly divided between USIA and State. Do you have any concluding thoughts?

CAMP: In 1999 I heard Secretary Albright promise USIA staff we would have a full role as a major part of the State Department. Despite that assurance, I think that Public Diplomacy has been diluted in the decades since the merger.

Recently I attended a program on Burma that focused on how the embassy and AID worked so well together there over the last four years. I heard not a word about public diplomacy. There was no mention of the American Center in Rangoon, known for its effectiveness under the earlier repressive regime. Now reconstituted at a cost of \$23 million, the Rangoon center is deeply engaged with civil society, democracy building, and all the programs the panel was talking about. Yet it got no credit in this discussion for playing a crucial role in our democracy building efforts in Burma.

Even before the merger, USIA was sidelined by a decision in the 1990s that USAID would manage the democracy and governance portfolio, a change from that agency's earlier focus on building wells and improving agricultural practices in underdeveloped countries. Congressional funding for programs such as Support for East European Democracy (SEED) in Hungary went to USAID, which in turn passed the money to us to develop democracy and civil society grants.

Q: Correct, I can support that. From 2002 to 2005 in Romania I was the cultural officer and our democracy grant program was funded by AID. But the majority of the grants went to groups that had been vetted by Public Diplomacy.

CAMP: We worked with local groups while AID generally dealt in large grants to American NGOs.

Q: We had done so well with successful small grants to a whole variety of democracy grant recipients that we were given another million dollars by AID to do more.

CAMP: And then these are described as AID programs not as public diplomacy programs.

Q: That's correct.

CAMP: That could have gone another way in the '90s pre-merger period; I wonder if it helped save USAID, which we all thought was the agency in Senator Helms' cross hairs.

Looking back at the consequences of the merger, I have to start with the recognition that I personally benefited; it's not likely that I would have had the opportunity to head consulates in Chiang Mai and Shanghai without the move into State. I found it interesting that so many people commented on my being the first woman to lead a U.S. consulate in China while few noticed that I was the first public diplomacy officer in such a position, a breakthrough in its own right. Of course the merger also resulted in the downgrade of some of the most sought-after jobs of USIA, making them less attractive.

I'm grateful to have served as Consul General in Chiang Mai and Shanghai, where I found my public diplomacy experience was excellent background for outreach to university students and similar non-official audiences. When I look at the State Department today, I see people mired in paperwork, with much less interaction or ability to create programs. I recognize there are many reasons for that beyond the demise of USIA, of course.

Just to mention one other difference, I think USIA's practice of four-year tours, which was identified as a best practice after the merger, should be adopted by State. Every time I've suggested this on various surveys about improving government I was told "we tried that and it didn't work." It would save a lot of money and increase expertise; by the time people learn their job and get comfortable in the language they're moving on to a new assignment. I see that as a major flaw that the State Department should be looking at.

Q: Yes. I have no objection.

CAMP: Looking at the future, I've been impressed at the great people entering the foreign service. As I told our entry level officers in Shanghai, they're fortunate to have a China tour early in their careers because our relationship will continue to grow. One of the reasons my China assignments were so satisfying was that they were the only posts in my entire career where we were growing instead of being cut back.

When I was in Bangkok we went through reductions in staff. In Stockholm we were cut from three USIS officers to two to accommodate posts we were opening in the former Soviet Union with no additional budget. I arrived in Budapest at the tail end of the buildup that began in the waning days of communism; by the time I got there in 1996 the flush years were over. The ACAO position was abolished, followed by the AIO position. In Chiang Mai the entry level position was cut during my tenure.

In contrast to all this downsizing, Shanghai kept gaining staff and programs. China is a growth industry, a good place for new officers to start and get the language training that puts them in line for future assignments there. I'm happy about that and about the success of many of the first and second tour officers I worked with in Shanghai.

Q: Any final thoughts?

CAMP: These interviews have been a great opportunity to look back. During my first assignment in Beijing, we programmed a speaker who had been a speechwriter for Nixon and worked in the White House. He was an expert on the presidency, bolstered by an entertaining shtick in which he impersonated presidential voices. He relayed an encounter with former President Truman: “President Truman,” he said, “I’m a Republican but I’ve always admired you; what advice would you give for a young man just starting out?” In Truman’s voice he gave the response, “young man, study history and tell the truth.” Words to live by.

I think it’s very helpful for people to gain an understanding of the past. The way the State Department works and bestows credit is by touting every initiative as newly invented, e.g. “Look at the fabulous English teaching programs we’ve created!” It’s difficult to decide whether to laugh or just be thankful for the return of tried and true programs; maybe they have to be somebody’s bright idea with new energy injected to get traction.

Still, we have to recognize what we lose when an effective office is killed and then two years, five years, 10 years later somebody says, oh we need a world’s fair office, we need to strengthen our English teaching, we need to do more with educational advising, we need American spaces...

Q: I can only agree. So what advice would you give to up and coming diplomats or people who would be working in the international offices of their respective agencies?

CAMP: Study history. Learn as much as you can, take advantage of all the training. Area studies at FSI has been reduced to two-week courses, but before going to post do all the reading you can, talk to people who have been there. I know time is limited; people are busy and thrown into their new posts as soon as they get there but try to learn as much as you can.

Get out of the office. The last three feet still counts; nothing replaces meeting face to face. We can’t abandon that kind of outreach, getting out from our offices even while we focus on social media and sit behind ever higher walls. We always have to resist that.

Push back. If a rule doesn’t make sense, question it. Diplomatic security wants to keep us safe but we can’t let ourselves be paralyzed in the interest of security. Social media and processes such as pre-publication review are other areas where caution often overrides common sense or even a correct reading of the rules.

Don’t micromanage. The great majority of our embassy and Washington colleagues are smart, creative, and hard working. Let them shine

Q: Bea Camp, thank you very much. This has been a fascinating interview for me hearing about how Public Diplomacy has grown, changed and where it’s going in the future from your point of view.

CAMP: Thank you.

End of interview