

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

**BEVERLY ZWEIBEN**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ms. Zweiben]

*Q: Today is October 13, 2006. It's Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. This is an interview with Beverly Zweiben. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. How do they call you, Beverly? Bev?*

ZWEIBEN: Depending on whether you're mad at me or not.

*Q: What do people call you?*

ZWEIBEN: Bev.

*Q: Bev, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?*

ZWEIBEN: I was born in New York City on January 16, 1940.

*Q: First, on your father's side. What do you know about your father's side of the family?*

ZWEIBEN: My father came from Poland in the early 1920s. His family came from a small town outside of Warsaw, and after his parents died, he came to New York to join with a brother and a sister who had already emigrated to the United States.

*Q: This was part of the Great Exodus, I guess.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right.

*Q: Was it a Jewish family?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes.

*Q: Do you know what your family in Poland; what sort of things they were engaged in?*

ZWEIBEN: Various kinds of crafts. My father was a dressmaker when he came to New York so, I assume, he had some background and training.

*Q: In New York, your father was into the dressmaking business? One of the Durinski boys. Or was it Dubinsky?*

ZWEIBEN: Dubinsky, that's right.

*Q: Ladies' garment industry.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. I hated them.

[laughter]

*Q: Very powerful union.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes.

*Q: On your mother's side. What was her name, and where did she come from?*

ZWEIBEN: Her name was Billie Richmond, and she also came from Poland although she and my father met in New York.

*Q: She came from Poland?*

ZWEIBEN: She came from Poland when she was, I believe, 13, with her family. Her father—my grandfather—had come to New York I think five years in advance of the family's arrival to save money to bring them over. There were in addition to my mother two brothers, and a sister was born after the family was reunited. They would have arrived earlier except that my grandfather had made the mistake of keeping his savings, his dollars, with his passport; and when Russian troops came through to see what they could see and asked for his passport, there was this money, and they took it. He had to start from scratch, save money, to bring himself to New York and then managed to bring the family over five years later.

*Q: On your mother's side, they were what, business? Farming? What?*

ZWEIBEN: I believe her family were teachers, Rabbinical students.

*Q: Your mother and father came from Poland, right?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes, but different towns.

*Q: Had they either in Poland or in the United States, how much schooling did they have?*

ZWEIBEN: I don't know about my father. I know he had some schooling after he came to the United States to learn English. My mother went to elementary school until her mid-teens, late-teens; then in order to contribute to the family income, my grandfather took her out of school, and she started to work.

*Q: That was very much the pattern.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes.

*Q: What part of New York City?*

ZWEIBEN: They moved around a lot. It was a time when every time you moved into a new apartment, you got a month, two months, three months free rent. Periodically, they would move to a new apartment, but I believe it was primarily in Brooklyn that she lived with her parents and her brothers and sister. And then to the Bronx. I grew up in the Bronx.

*Q: You grew up in the Bronx. What neighborhood in the Bronx?*

ZWEIBEN: What I always say is near the grand Concourse. Just east of the grand Concourse. There was a wonderful park—Claremont Park—right across from where we lived. We lived just off 170<sup>th</sup> Street, just off the Concourse.

*Q: How long did you live in the Bronx?*

ZWEIBEN: All my life until I went to graduate school.

*Q: As a kid, what was it like growing up there? In the first place, was your neighborhood a Jewish neighborhood, mixed, or what?*

ZWEIBEN: I never met a Protestant until I went to graduate school.

*Q: I can't say how many people I've talked to from New York who was either the other way around or something. Everyone was either Irish or Italian or something like that.*

ZWEIBEN: Everyone I knew was either Jewish or Catholic. In my immediate neighborhood it was primarily Jewish. I do remember the tail end of the Second World War hearing about a family of German background living in a row house just down the street from us and somehow they must be dangerous people and to watch out for them because they must be dangerous. Other than that, everyone seemed to be Jewish. We lived in an apartment building—I suppose now you'd call it a tenement—and my grandparents lived in one apartment in the building, and we lived in another. There seemed to be distant cousins removed in various places wherever there seemed to be a vacancy. My grandfather knew somebody who would really like to live there. It became a vertical small town for us.

*Q: How religious—I'm talking observant—was your family?*

ZWEIBEN: My grandmother was observant enough in the kind of small-town Polish way. There was a small neighborhood synagogue, and she would go and give the rabbi

money saved from the grocery budget. Our family kept Kosher, but no one was really observant except for my grandmother. The men in the family would go to Synagogue for the high holidays, and the rest of us would recognize that it was a holiday, but we didn't particularly get involved in the religious aspect of it.

*Q: At the dinner table, was there quite a family gathering, or how did that work?*

ZWEIBEN: No, we ate whenever we showed up.

*Q: This is interesting. I remember a friend of mine was saying you just ate when you were hungry rather than what one thinks everybody gathers together.*

ZWEIBEN: My father would come home from work or I would come home from school, so we would just... I must say one aspect of the cultural transition is that my grandmother only spoke Yiddish. She would speak to me in Yiddish, and my parents would talk to my grandparents in Yiddish. I remember when I was very young, perhaps about five years old, we were away for the summer somewhere, and I was talking with some friends. I remember using a Yiddish word as part of an English sentence. They said, "What is that? What is that word?" I realized that I had done something that I felt was unpardonable, and I vowed never to do that again, and I stopped speaking Yiddish at all.

*Q: Really? How old were you?*

ZWEIBEN: I think five or six.

*Q: Good heavens!*

ZWEIBEN: So I began talking to my grandmother in English. She understood, and she would respond to me in Yiddish, and we had this bilingual conversation going on, but I stopped speaking Yiddish. The only time I picked it up again was when I was in graduate school and taking my German exams, I remembered how much I knew of German because of the Yiddish I had heard while I was growing up.

*Q: How about being a kid? Was there much street life?*

ZWEIBEN: Oh, yes. We'd play stoop ball, go play in the park.

*Q: None of this supervised stuff.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right.

*Q: Go out and play.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. None of the parents spent their lives watching their kids swinging on the swings. A much different kind of life.

*Q: Was there much of an impact of World War II and, prior to that, the persecution of the Jews in Germany. How much reflection of that were you aware of? Did you feel that at all?*

ZWEIBEN: My parents talked about it. It depended. My father had lost a lot of family in Europe, and my mother's family and friends, so they were very much aware of this. They thought that FDR was a saint because of the way that he had dealt with the Depression, they said. I remember that my mother discovered many years later that FDR's policy toward Jews left something to be desired, that she turned against him rather dramatically and would not speak of him.

*Q: This was a reflection of the times. It's hard to judge anybody by the time. I take it that your family was strongly democratic?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. Absolutely.

*Q: How about the union?*

ZWEIBEN: My father belonged to the ILGWU (International Ladies' garment Workers' Union) that you mentioned. My father and I spent a great deal of time talking about current events and labor history and the unions and what it was like working in the garment industry. I had his perspective at a very early age, and I soon grew to feel at least at that point that the labor unions were not doing very much for their membership but simply maintaining their own organization. My own personal feelings became very negative about unions.

*Q: Was there at all the strain of German socialism? That movement was quite strong in the Jewish community in New York. Was your family touched by this at all?*

ZWEIBEN: *The Forward* was their regular newspaper in addition to other New York newspapers: the *Daily News* and the *Daily Mirror* or whatever it is that they read till I started dragging in the *Times*. In addition to that they read *The Forward* rather regularly.

*Q: How about your greater family? Were their strains of different politics or were they all pretty much the same? Did you pick this up or not?*

ZWEIBEN: My father I think was a bit more liberal than the rest of the family, but everyone tended to be down the center democratic party. Voting for anyone but a Democrat would have been impossible to consider.

*Q: La Guardia was a republican.*

ZWEIBEN: I think my father once voted for a libertarian candidate. He told me in secret! [laughter] Don't tell anybody! [laughter]

*Q: How about the Communists? There was always a Communist strain branching off from this German Socialism I would call it. There was a Communist movement in New York...*

ZWEIBEN: The Rosenbergs.

*Q: A considerable element of the Jewish population, or at least influential groups subscribed to some of this.*

ZWEIBEN: I never heard any of that. I remember hearing from some neighbors who had come from Europe and who had some friends in Israel that there were Communist party members as part of the *Knesset* (Parliament) in Israel. I remember being absolutely astonished that this might be possible. You can see how naive I was about that! I never heard of any comments.

*Q: Were you told, "Eat all your food," because of the Depression? Was the Depression a big subject?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. My mother kept enormous amounts of food stored in the pantry: canned this; I think it was a reaction to the Depression and concern about... I would hear stories about what life was like in the Depression.

*Q: The Depression in many ways I think for many Americans weighed heavier than World War II unless they had been in the military. At this time, were you getting much about... You were eight years old when Israel was created... Was Israel an important subject?*

ZWEIBEN: No, nothing.

*Q: At the beginning, one forgets, this is not necessarily a Jewish cause, this was a Zionist cause. These were a particular breed of cat who were really not very religious.*

ZWEIBEN: Periodically we'd hear stories about people who left Europe and went to Israel, but I don't remember that. No.

*Q: As a kid, were you a reader?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes!

*Q: Your eyes lit up! That was a very emphatic "yes!" What did you like to read?*

ZWEIBEN: It started with the fairy tales. It first started with nursery rhymes. My father read them to me and then went on to fairy tales. He would fall asleep, so I would have to learn to read in order to learn what happened at the end. Very quickly went through all the nursery rhymes, through all the fairy tales, and then go to the library and get whatever I could get.

*Q: Did they treat you well at the library?*

ZWEIBEN: Oh, yes! It was a long walk, but I could also, for seven cents, get on the bus and end up at the library. Then I could either walk with my stack of books depending on the day or just get on the bus.

*Q: Splurge.*

ZWEIBEN: Splurge my other seven cents!

*Q: Do you recall some of the books that you particularly look back on in early years with fondness?*

ZWEIBEN: A pivotal book in my life was *Forever Amber*.

[laughter]

*Q: Oh, ho! Kathleen Winsor!*

ZWEIBEN: That so interested me in English history that it steered me when I was a student to learn more about English history. I ended up writing my dissertation on Anglo-American law leading to the American Revolution. I credited all of this to the summer that I read *Forever Amber*.

*Q: For those who are not familiar, a woman named Kathleen Winsor wrote Forever Amber which came out in the '40s. In those days you'd call it a "bodice ripper," a lady who went from one...*

ZWEIBEN: From monarch to monarch.

*Q: It was considered rather risqué. I remember reading it I think in my closet.*

ZWEIBEN: My parents didn't know what I was reading, so I did not hide in the closet.

*Q: The interesting thing was, I think she wrote it based on a dissertation of her first husband or something like that on English restoration or whatever it was.*

*So that put you on your way so you go from dissertation to bodice ripping to dissertation. How did you get your news?*

ZWEIBEN: Newspapers, radio.

*Q: The New York Times, was this the Tribune or what?*

ZWEIBEN: The *New York Times*. Then there were the radio stations in New York that I listened to all the time: the music stations, the news stations.

*Q: Were you a movie buff?*

ZWEIBEN: I started going to movies when I was three years old. We couldn't afford babysitters, and my parents loved the movies, so I saw all the Esther Williams, Betty Grable movies.

*Q: It was a great period.*

ZWEIBEN: It was. Yes. I still love the movies.

*Q: How about your friends? Were there groups of girls in your area that got together?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes, we did. Knock on somebody's door and say, "Can so-and-so come out and play?"

*Q: I take it life was not particularly threatening for small kids in those days.*

ZWEIBEN: No. The New York City subway was safe. Once I was old enough I got on the subway to go into Manhattan, get half-price theater tickets. I think living in New York without much money was so much better than living anywhere else without much money. Go downtown, get the half-price fare tickets. There were movie theaters, walk all over Manhattan, go to museums—all that was free—free concerts. There was so much that was... I spent an enormous part of my young life at the New York Public Library with the lions. There was so much that was available living in New York that you could take advantage of with just some imagination and energy and a subway token.

*Q: Where did you go to school? Let's start with elementary school.*

ZWEIBEN: Elementary school was PS 63. It was one of these brick... Even then it was an old school! It was one of these red brick school houses with kids playing and teachers.

*Q: Your teachers were mostly women.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes.

*Q: Mostly Jewish or not?*

ZWEIBEN: I don't know. I don't have a sense of that. I don't know.

*Q: What subjects did you like, and were there any you didn't like?*

ZWEIBEN: I hated math. I'm still not good at math. I very much liked history classes and English literature classes. I guess you'd call them social sciences these days, but I enjoyed reading about the reformers, the terrible meat industry...

*Q: Upton Sinclair.*

ZWEIBEN: Upton Sinclair.

*Q: The Jungle...*

ZWEIBEN: Yes! I loved that! I thought that was wonderful stuff!

*Q: I gobbled that up! It got very much into the social movement. Did the boys and girls play together or was it pretty separate?*

ZWEIBEN: It was still pretty separate.

*Q: In elementary school, was there much in the way of extracurricular activities or was that pretty much out in the streets?*

ZWEIBEN: You would just go home and meet your friends outside or go for walks.

*Q: Did you have any favorite radio programs?*

ZWEIBEN: I'd listen to all those radio serials: *Stella Dallas* and *The Lone Ranger* and *Grand Central Station*.

*Q: Oh, yes. And Inner Sanctum.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes.

*Q: My mother used to listen to Inner Sanctum. I wasn't supposed to. It was awful having to sit on the floor and have the door slightly open.*

ZWEIBEN: "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men. The Shadow knows."  
[laughter] How are you going to transcribe that I want to know!

*Q: These are catch words that anybody growing up in that era would certainly know! Did the outside world intrude much as far as your knowledge about what was happening: The Cold War...*

ZWEIBEN: I remember the day Stalin died, and I saw the headline.

*Q: I think around '53 or something like that.*

ZWEIBEN: I remember seeing the headline in the *Daily News* as I was walking to school past the newsstand. The headline “Stalin Died,” and there was this picture of the Grim Reaper. I still remember that! The other thing I remember was listening to news report of the Korean War and the DMZ.

*Q: In your family were there many in the military?*

ZWEIBEN: I had one uncle who was in the military, but other than that I am not aware of anyone.

*Q: Was there any connection to Poland at all, I guess the village wither came out or they were all dead.*

ZWEIBEN: They were dead.

*Q: There wasn't really much.*

ZWEIBEN: My mother had a book of pictures of people in her small town when they had died.

*Q: Where did you go to high school?*

ZWEIBEN: It was a neighborhood high school, William Howard Taft High School, an academic high school. I was there. Everyone was heading off to...had plans for college. Later on it became a drug haven. My mother would send me stories about the high school. But when I was there, there were very good teachers.

*Q: You say it was an academic high school. In the New York Public Schools system, what did that mean?*

ZWEIBEN: They had different programs. There were programs for people who had no particular plans to go on with their education after high school, and then there were programs for people who wanted to get business training, accounting or steno or something, and then there were programs set up for people who planned to go on to college. So you specialized in a lot of English lit courses and history courses and writing and social sciences. sociology, language.

*Q: Was there any doubt in your family's mind or your mind about college?*

ZWEIBEN: No. Absolutely not. I think my grandfather suggested that perhaps I might want to just go get a job, I guess the way he treated his daughter; but the rest of my family immediately circled around and said, “She’ll do whatever she wants,” which they knew I would! [laughter] There was no choice!

*Q: Sort of like, “Sun, stand thou still.”*

ZWEIBEN: Right! [laughter] This was before open enrollment in the city schools. So I met the entry requirements and went to Lehman College which was then the Bronx, the uptown branch of Hunter.

*Q: It was part of Columbia at the time?*

ZWEIBEN: No, it was part of CCNY (City College of New York).

*Q: Let's talk about high school first. What was high school like for you?*

ZWEIBEN: I guess it was a period of exploring more who I was and what my interests were. I guess I found my interests in history and became very much engaged in my history classes. I spent a lot of time going to theaters, going to movies with friends, exploring Manhattan. I also started working. I had my first part-time job.

*Q: What were you doing?*

ZWEIBEN: I had several. We had a relative who owned an office furniture store down in Manhattan, and he needed someone to help with the accounting, say "hello" to customers who came in, and so I would do some part-time work up there.

*Q: Were there extra-curricular activities at the high school, or did you have time for that?*

ZWEIBEN: There wasn't very much. I didn't have time for that between working and doing my class work. I was interested in the drama program but didn't get very far with it.

*Q: How about dating? Was there much of kids pairing off?*

ZWEIBEN: Not yet. We led such a sheltered life. I look at young kids these days and think I'm glad I'm not in this time warp machine because I would have no idea how to be 14 again.

*Q: Did the outside world intrude much? You were doing history. Were you looking at developments by the time you were in high school. You know, in Europe, or Asia?*

ZWEIBEN: I read the newspapers.

*Q: Diplomacy or foreign affairs, was this much of...*

ZWEIBEN: What I was thinking of at that time was life in academia. I was thinking of college and masters degree and then teaching in some local school. It wasn't until I had gone to college when some of my professors said, "Don't be silly. You don't want to be teaching in high school. Go get your doctorate."

*Q: What about while you were exploring Manhattan. What about the United Nations? Did you look at it or was this of interest?*

ZWEIBEN: No. Absolutely boring.

*Q: You graduated from high school when?*

ZWEIBEN: 1957.

*Q: Were you a smart kid?*

ZWEIBEN: Yea.

*Q: I think the term is “smarty pants.”*

ZWEIBEN: That’s right. That’s what I was. Probably still am.

*Q: Yours was the first hand to go up in the class.*

ZWEIBEN: I always had these intense questions in school, my teachers tell me. I had to know the answer. I had to know!

*Q: That’s why we’re in the interview now. We were probably some of the more obnoxious people to some of the classes. Did you have the equivalent to academic counselors or someone to help point you to where to go, or was it pretty much that you were going to go to a local college?*

ZWEIBEN: We didn’t have very much money. With my summer savings you could go to one of the city universities. With savings and grades you could go. I always said that people who went to NYU didn’t have the grades to get into the city universities.

*Q: CCNY.*

ZWEIBEN: That’s right. It just seemed that going to the city university... When I went to school it cost me \$50.00 a semester. They were giving us free books, and you returned them at the end, so I didn’t have the cost of buying books; I didn’t have the costs associated with going to school out of town. I confess that it didn’t occur to me, and we weren’t advised about scholarships, so I did the subway thing.

*Q: You went to where? You went to two schools?*

ZWEIBEN: My degree is from Lehman College. At this point it was part of Hunter and subsequently became a separate school, and it’s now Lehman.

*Q: Named after the senator.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes, but at that time it was part of Hunter College, but there was the Bronx campus. Then there was also the campus in Manhattan. I would sometimes take courses down there. At one point, I think in my senior year, I took a graduate course down at Hunter because the professor who was teaching it was so good.

*Q: Was Hunter a women's college at that point?*

ZWEIBEN: The Manhattan campus was a women's college, but the Bronx campus was co-ed.

*Q: So you went to the co-ed.*

ZWEIBEN: I went to co-ed school.

*Q: You were there from '57 to...*

ZWEIBEN: '61.

*Q: '61. Was the campus particularly political, and were you particularly political?*

ZWEIBEN: No. This was an apolitical time. This was the hunkered down generation.

*Q: The silent generation.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. You did your work. I learned as much from my friends as I did from my professors. We would spend a lot of time talking about politics and life and reading books out loud and going to coffee houses.

*Q: Did you wear your hair long and a black beret and all that stuff?*

ZWEIBEN: No, no beret.

*Q: No beret. Was there much of a campus Marxist movement? I would think that would be kind of ripe for it there.*

ZWEIBEN: Not that I was aware of. If there was, they ignored me.

*Q: How did your politics go at that point?*

ZWEIBEN: Oh, I was a Democrat.

*Q: Did you get involved in the Kennedy-Nixon time election?*

ZWEIBEN: I was an ardent Stevenson supporter. I wept when he lost.

*Q: People forget now how he grabbed the emotions of people.*

ZWEIBEN: I was not a Kennedy fan.

*Q: While you were going to college, were you beginning to look at wither Beverly?*

ZWEIBEN: It was at that point that I broadened my horizons and started thinking about leaving New York and getting advanced degrees. I had decided that I thought the life of the mind... So many people around me worked hard but didn't really like what they were doing, and they did it for economic reasons. I wanted to be engaged in the kind of work that was satisfying as well as... I thought, "Oh, if I could only have a job that paid \$10,000 a year!" That was a lot of money then!

*Q: That was a lot of money.*

ZWEIBEN: That was a lot of money! I was looking for a way of achieving both economic advantage but also doing work that was engaging. I thought that if I became a teacher—read my books and teach and be engaged in a campus—that this would be very intriguing.

*Q: You started thinking at the college level.*

ZWEIBEN: Right. That this would be a very satisfying way to live.

*Q: Did you get a chance to talk to teachers about being a teacher?*

ZWEIBEN: Some of the teachers—the professors—I had were encouraging me to do this and helped me channel my application for fellowships and, "I know somebody here," and, "I'll write the letter for you there." They were very supportive of doing this.

*Q: By this time you say that you were with history and.. .*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. I majored in history and minored in English literature.

*Q: Was it English history or was it all over the place?*

ZWEIBEN: It was all over the place. It wasn't until I went to graduate school that I focused on the... Although yes, I did have a wonderful teacher for 17<sup>th</sup> century English history, and she kept talking about punting on the Thames, and I thought, "Oh, how exciting! I wonder what punting is?"

*Q: You can punt maybe way up in the upper reaches! A pretty big river.*

ZWEIBEN: She had all these wonderful tales to tell about 17<sup>th</sup> century England and fascinating books, so I was really hooked at that time.

*Q: At your campus was there a significant Jewish population, or by this time was it getting mixed?*

ZWEIBEN: I never met a Protestant until I went to Indiana.

*Q: Good God! It really shows how... I'm sure that you could go to somebody from school in Indiana who probably never met a Jew.*

ZWEIBEN: I was probably the first Jew that many of these people met!

*Q: It's hard these days. The mixture has gotten so much, but it wasn't segregation. It was just where you lived.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. I had a number of Catholic friends. It wasn't that I was only associating with people who were Jewish. Some of my closest friends were Catholic. The people I met were either Jewish or Catholic.

*Q: What was your family thinking about as you were moving into this History/English literature?*

ZWEIBEN: They had no idea. They just knew I went to school.

*Q: You said you had brothers and sisters?*

ZWEIBEN: One of each.

*Q: What were they up to?*

ZWEIBEN: They're both younger... My sister was in high school, my brother was in elementary school. My sister became a psychologist and my brother became a financial analyst.

*Q: Then you graduated from Hunter in?*

ZWEIBEN: June of 1961.

*Q: Then where did you go?*

ZWEIBEN: I went to Indiana University in Bloomington. They gave me money; they bought me. They awarded me a Woodburn Fellowship in American History. I had several choices. I could have gone to William and Mary. I had somebody there. But they only had Masters degree programs, and I didn't want immediately have to turn around and begin looking for a graduate school for my PhD. Then I was also offered money in the University of Washington, Washington State, Seattle. But I didn't think that the program was as strong as the one in Indiana.

*Q: Indiana at that time was... They had quite a strong literary program, didn't they, and a language program?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. They had a Russian institute, and they developed an African studies program.

*Q: It's an interesting university. I don't know what the genesis of it was, but here was a state university that...*

ZWEIBEN: A lot of money from Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals.

*Q: That got them to get the proper professors.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. They could pay for programs, get the professional staff. There was a New Yorker! A New Yorker was applying!

*Q: How did you feel?*

ZWEIBEN: Very strange.

*Q: The first day: What was it like?*

ZWEIBEN: I had never lived away from home. Suddenly I was in a dormitory and all these people running around. I did have a friend who had come to IU (Indiana University) also, so I did know another human being on campus. There was a campus bus you could take to the library, but it also went a block further to the Stardust bar where Hoagie Carmichael wrote the song that day. It was quite a place!

*Q: You don't have a discernible accent, but did you have a good solid New York accent?*

ZWEIBEN: Absolutely!

*Q People would ask you, "What did you say?" or trying you out as a curiosity?*

ZWEIBEN: My big shock was discovering that the *New York Times* didn't arrive until 3:30 in the afternoon.

*Q: Good God!*

ZWEIBEN: I thought, "How can I survive in this place?" I'd wake up in the morning to the sound of the pig futures. For someone who was fascinated with what the world was like outside of New York, this was all to be absorbed.

*Q: You had roommate/roommates?*

ZWEIBEN: No. I had asked for a single room.

*Q: How did you find the dorm?*

ZWEIBEN: I hated it. I had the thermostat for the floor in my room, and so I had to keep it... The insisted that I keep it at some ungodly high temperature so that all the rooms down the hall would be properly heated. I'd turn it down when no one was looking, and people would come in and turn it up again. I hated dorm life. The second year I moved into an apartment with some friends.

*Q: Did you find that...*

ZWEIBEN: I also found that I had better teachers as an undergraduate. I was really disappointed in graduate school. It wasn't as demanding. I had so many expectations about how demanding graduate school was going to be that when I came there and discovered that it had been far more demanding when I was an undergraduate than this place.

*Q: The New York system and particularly from the hot house or particularly so many Jewish students who wanted to excel, it's the same way in California with Oriental students. It really creates a hothouse competitive atmosphere. If you're part of it, you don't know it, but if you get off somewhere else, all of a sudden...*

ZWEIBEN: When I was growing up there was so much emphasis on education for opening your doors, as your path to a much better life than your parents had that everybody was on this track. It wasn't true in Bloomington.

*Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop now, and I'll put at the end here so we can pick it up easily. We just got you to Bloomington, and you found that the teaching standards were not up to what you were used to at Hunter. We'll talk about your time in Bloomington—at IU—and then we'll go on from there.*

ZWEIBEN: Great. Thank you.

*Q: You arrived in 1961.*

ZWEIBEN: '61.

*Q: OK, today is the 20<sup>th</sup> of October...*

ZWEIBEN: I think I was probably hard on them when I said the stinky teaching standards.

*Q: October 20, 2006. What would you say were the issues of interest at Indiana U? Were they great region issues, were they local, university issues? Was there anything going on there?*

ZWEIBEN: Of course there was the Vietnam War. This was one of the great issues. I confess that most of us, and I'm included, were really so involved in keeping our heads down and doing well in graduate school and getting the next grant, that we really did not spend a lot of time engaged in the war issues. One of the things that struck me about graduate school was the way in which graduate students kept their heads down and had their briefcases and just trudged from class to class. There wasn't the same intellectual stimulation. Maybe it was that more than anything I can say about the teachers who were... Some of them were very, very good, and some in every institution, no. My first year in Bloomington I had a fellowship, so I didn't have to work for my \$1,600 a year. The second year I was named an assistant to one of the professors who was a very right-wing sort of person. Every year he had a party to commemorate Franklin's death.

*Q: Which...*

ZWEIBEN: Franklin Roosevelt.

*Q: Franklin Roosevelt.*

ZWEIBEN: He had a cadre of very conservative students on campus who looked at him as a shining light. Every morning these... To my eyes at that time, nondescript looking persons would come in to discuss the day's events—perhaps civil rights—and they would get the day's message from him. They'd leave, straightened back, straightened shoulders, they felt that they had gotten the word to go forth. This was very difficult for me since I came from an entirely different perspective.

*Q: Were you able to keep your head down?*

ZWEIBEN: No. As a matter of fact, I finished my coursework for my master's degree in that first year I was there when I had straight money and no responsibilities so that I felt comfortable. I had my master's degree come what may, and then I finished my PhD coursework in the next two years. At that point I felt that I needed to leave that environment. I was afraid that I would become a stooped shouldered carrier of briefcases just like everybody else, and the thought was appalling. It was also a time when there were very few women in, I'm not saying the graduate program, but at least in the history department. There may have been other programs that attracted women as a more traditional type of program education; I don't know, maybe psychology or something. There were very few women in the history department, and I think only one or two faculty in the history program. I'm sure all of this has changed.

*Q: I was just talking to somebody in the last week or two who was also a history major. A lot of history majors. I was a history major in the foreign service.*

ZWEIBEN: Oh, you were!

*Q: The early '70s were a terrible time for getting a job; even for a male. This was not a liberal arts time.*

ZWEIBEN: I felt that I didn't want to be a part of that culture. I was tired of not having any money. I wasn't quite sure about the life of a woman in academia. It wasn't something that I was aware of in New York. In Hunter College, of course, there were lots of women, so it never occurred to me that that was going to be an issue, yet here I saw one or two women. One came in as I was well advanced in the program. There was only one in my field although she was not my advisor. My impression at the time was that she was very much an outsider. She was not married, and Bloomington was very much a family kind of place. It seemed to me that come the end of the week that she was an isolated person. People would make comments about her in a way that wouldn't be acceptable today, but it made an enormous impression on me.

*Q: Sort of the lesbian type thing?*

ZWEIBEN: No, no, no. Not lesbian.

*Q: I don't think people even talked about that in those days.*

ZWEIBEN: Not lesbian but that she on Friday afternoons would be knocking on people's doors and wanting to chat. There were comments made about how she was looking for company. Not in any sexual way but just as a person who was stuck on a good campus but on a campus where everybody had their families. I decided that with all my coursework in hand and the dissertation still to write, I didn't feel that I wanted to write it there at that time under those circumstances. I said, "Are there any jobs available for an ABD (All But Dissertation)?" I ended up after three years in Bloomington having finished all the coursework, going to the University of North Dakota which was an interesting experience.

*Q: So you were at the University of North Dakota from when to when?*

ZWEIBEN: I was in Bloomington from '61 to '63, so I went to North Dakota in the fall of '63 to '65. I think that was it.

*Q: '63 to '65.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. I was there for two years.

*Q: Talk about the University of North Dakota because it seems so far, almost off the map.*

ZWEIBEN: It's between Minnesota and south of Canada, north of South Dakota. My greatest shock was that after getting accustomed to the *New York Times* not arriving until 3:00 in the afternoon, I moved to a place where it didn't arrive at all. I had to buy the *Sunday Times* by mail which came on Wednesdays. I'm such a creature of habit that I put it away until the following Sunday so that I could have a *Sunday Times*!

*Q: How would you describe the student body and the faculty of the University of North Dakota at that time?*

ZWEIBEN: Most of the faculty were from the area, North Dakota, who had just stayed or maybe had come from Minnesota. There are very good roads. There was an Air Force base just outside of town where they had the silos...

*Q: Missiles.*

ZWEIBEN: Missiles, yes. Every now and then it occurred to me that I'd moved to a prime target. It wasn't as isolated as you might think because of a good road system. There was very little traffic on the roads, so you could drive 80 miles to see the road company up at the Met—Metropolitan Opera—and drive back because it was wide open and easy. North Dakota was suffering from brain drain. A lot of students were leaving; the small farms had disappeared. You had your large million dollar farms, what I called silo architecture on very flat terrain. The students were bright, they were interested in how they could make their way out of North Dakota. I don't know that there were many students who were going on to Harvard. The perspective was very mid-western. I remember being from New York and teaching the American history survey classes, I remember thinking one day that it really was partly strange for me to be teaching about barbed wire and the opening of the west. [laughter] I thought this was highly unusual. They had some returning veterans in the classes which lent a different level of discussion to the group. It was interesting, but it was awfully cold. There was so much snow. I only stayed two years. I was offered a job based on an interview I had had when I first started looking, and some people I could talk to remembered me when they needed somebody to fill a position in the east.

*Q: Let's still going to North Dakota.*

ZWEIBEN: OK.

*Q: Did you run into college politics? Sometimes these things can get very engaged. The old phrase is, "The feelings are so intense because the stakes are so small."*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. Precisely.

*Q: Did you get involved or observe this?*

ZWEIBEN: I observed it. But at that point I was such small potatoes that I really wasn't personally engaged in the politics, but I could see cliques within the university. Still, some of the people had been there for so long and were so well entrenched and they didn't want more so-called "power" than they had teaching their classes and occasionally going to a meeting. One of the things I guess I stirred things up was when I wanted to go to an annual meeting of the American Historical Association. It seemed like a normal thing for someone to keep up with.

*Q: It's also where you look for jobs.*

ZWEIBEN: It's also where you look for jobs. Right. You can read those articles in the annual journal or something like that. I finally went. There was a comfort level there for the people who had tenure and want to stay there and have their families there and had their roots there.

*Q: Again, we go back to the Vietnam War and the civil rights thing which was an engaging thing of the '60s.*

ZWEIBEN: There were no sit-ins at the University of North Dakota. We read about it, but there were no sit-ins.

*Q: Maybe I'm wrong. but I would think you'd go there and you'd...at least the guys would all be blonde, blue-eyed with crew cuts, and the girls would have flaxen hair. Very Scandinavian.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right.

*Q: Did you feel like a fish out of water? I mean, a Jewish girl from New York!*

ZWEIBEN: There was a small group of us on the faculty who had at one point been east of the Missouri River, and so we developed a togetherness to survive the winter.

*Q: You don't realize that being east of the Missouri was...*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. And going to Minneapolis for the weekend was the height of a treat. There were good, small theaters. There's the Tyrone Guthrie Theater; there's the Walker Art Gallery which was very good. It was such a relief! And some good restaurants, and you could walk around. So going to Minneapolis was...sometimes you'd just take a plane—an hour's trip—and you'd be in Minneapolis. Or go to Winnipeg. They had the ballet and three department stores!

*Q: What about your dissertation. Were you getting on with that?*

ZWEIBEN: It was more difficult to do while I was preparing courses than I had imagined, so I did some of that. What I did during that time was order reams of microfilm. I ordered reams of microfilm from various historical societies, and I would go to the library and use their readers and take notes, but actually making a lot of progress and, certainly, not doing a lot of writing. In the meantime, my mentor in Bloomington left for another university, so there was a period of a year or two when there was nobody actually covering this portfolio. It became more difficult being outside of campus to keep it going.

*Q: What was the subject of your dissertation?*

ZWEIBEN: My subject was 18<sup>th</sup> century legal history—Anglo American legal history—as a basis for the American revolution. As a matter of fact, it’s been published! It’s called *How Blackstone Lost the Colonies: English Law, Colonial Lawyers, and the American Revolution*.

*Q: Sounds great!*

ZWEIBEN: What I was doing was I picked one colony—in this case Pennsylvania—and examined how three Pennsylvania lawyers who were active in the revolution either as Loyalists or Patriots or middle-of-the-road, how they justified their positions and went back to their original roots. They were very good about documenting all their ideas. So I went back to the original sources and examined how they had been used and manipulated by each to defend their political positions. That’s just a plug for my book!

[laughter]

*Q: After two years, this would be '65?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes, that’s right.

*Q: Then what?*

ZWEIBEN: The phone rang one day, and I was asked whether I would like to move?

*Q: Did you say, “Yes,” instead of “Where?”*

ZWEIBEN: That’s right! That’s right! [laughter] I moved to upstate New York, Hobart...

*Q: Ahhh, nice warm stop.*

ZWEIBEN: Further east. And the New York Times came every day in the morning. Hobart and William Smith, in Geneva, New York.

*Q: Was it just Hobart in those days?*

ZWEIBEN: No. It was Hobart and William Smith. The classes were co-ed.

*Q: When did you move? You were there from '65 to when?*

ZWEIBEN: I guess it was '66—my dates must be wrong—to '68. I was filling in for someone who was off on leave.

*Q: How did you find that?*

ZWEIBEN: It was just at a time when... The first year I arrived, the fraternity houses still had their initiations, and people were walking around in their beanies. The second year I

was there, drugs became an issue, and the war, and that was where you had Tommy the Entrapper, and he tried to infiltrate the kids on campus.

*Q: He was basically a former student from somewhere, maybe out of Columbia?*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. He was trying to attract the kids.

*Q: What were you teaching?*

ZWEIBEN: I was teaching basic American history classes and American diplomacy.

*Q: How did you find, both at North Dakota and at Hobart, teaching American history was it one where the kids were well prepared for it from high schools, and what was the attitude toward it, would you say?*

ZWEIBEN: I think at that point the kids were more engaged in their social lives. I don't think they were particularly connected with American history.

*Q: How did you find the faculty there?*

ZWEIBEN: More competitive than at the University of North Dakota and, I guess, the departmental politics were more telling than it had been in a more laid back kind of school.

*Q: Could you say the faculty was radicalized or was it split?*

ZWEIBEN: No. It was a very conservative faculty. I don't know anybody there who was waving the flags.

*Q: Students? Where were they coming from?*

ZWEIBEN: Politically?

*Q: Sort of family. Was Hobart...*

ZWEIBEN: It was an Episcopalian school, and these were upper middle class kids. They were bright. I thought that the girls were particularly bright but concerned about not seeming too bright in the classrooms. This was still a transitional time. After a while, everybody started wearing leather sandals and leather belts and long earrings.

*Q: On the male/female side of campus, were things changing? Did you see the outlook for a woman teacher or a woman professor? Was this changing or not?*

ZWEIBEN: Not yet, and jobs were increasingly difficult to get.

*Q: You were moving up about '68 or so. Then what?*

ZWEIBEN: Then I taught for a year at a neighboring school, a small school, a woman's college. Again, it was to fill in for someone who was going on leave, and so I taught there for awhile. This was Keuka Park College. I was beginning to feel that unless I finished my dissertation, my life was going to be a continuation of these gigs. So I took some time off—and there weren't many jobs anyway—and I finished my dissertation.

*Q: So now you're a genuine doctor!*

ZWEIBEN: Now I'm a genuine doctor.

*Q: So what happened?*

ZWEIBEN: One of my mentors back in Bloomington had said to... I should go back to say that because Bloomington had not had a professor for me for a year or two years, I got an extension of the deadline, on the time limits for finishing a dissertation. They were very gracious to do that. He kept saying to me, "Beverly, finish your dissertation. I'll find you a job." He was very good with the students. This was Professor Robert Ferrell in Bloomington. He was wonderful with his graduate students. If he took you under his wing, you knew that he would help you throughout your career wherever he could. He always had a great string of connections that he always had a graduate student, and he paid a lot of attention in helping you to learn how to write so that you would be publishable. He was very helpful. When I presented my dissertation, I walked into his office because he was not on my panel, and I stuck out my hand, and I said, "Call me Doctor, and where's my job?" [laughter] He said, "Well, would you be interested in working in Washington?" A close friend of his was the then-director of the historical office of the State Department. He'd just gotten a letter from his friend asking him on the quiet if he knew of anybody he wanted to recommend to him. He said, "Would you be interested? I'll give him your name. I'll call him up." I thought, "Well! Why don't I?" At that point it sounded more promising than one of these jobs out in nowhere. We worked out that instead of flying back home, I flew directly to Washington for what was then a series of interviews, and this was just about the time of the Pentagon papers. I personally was totally in favor of the release of the Pentagon papers.

*Q: This is when the New York Times published these things by Daniel Ellsberg.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. I had several interviews because they had never hired a women before, and they had to re-think this several times. I had one interview, and they said, "Well, there are a couple of other people who want to talk to you." We had several interviews, and on one of them somebody said something about the release of the Pentagon papers. I almost—thank God did not—say, "Yes, wasn't that wonderful?" Then I thought, "No, you're with the wrong crowd!" So I kept my mouth shut, and they eventually offered me a job. I came in as part of the Foreign Service reserve. This was at a small window in the Department's history where they were not hiring civil servants, but they hired me with what they called an FSR—Foreign Service Reserve. I was part of the Foreign Service but stationed in Washington. This meant that for the time until it ended, and I forget when

that was—1980?—I was able to move around in not only what is now designated Civil Service jobs but Foreign Service jobs. The world was my oyster.

*Q: For somebody not familiar with this, the Civil Service which is normally where historians would come from, you're fixed in your job, and it's a great deal of trouble to apply for another job, but you don't have the flexibility. Foreign Service officers can be assigned here one day and there the next, so you had that ability. Who was the historian of the...*

ZWEIBEN: I'm trying to remember. I forgot his name.

*Q: Were you hired for a particular...*

ZWEIBEN: I was hired not for the foreign relation series but the side of the office that did the historical studies. The excuse for hiring me, since I didn't have a background in any of the geographic regions, is that we were coming on the... There was going to be some bicentennial work to be done. Since I had a background in 18<sup>th</sup> Century and was the only one in the office that did, that they could hire me just in case they were given some assignments which they never were. But since I had done my dissertation on legal history, they thought I must know something about international law, which I didn't. These assignments were not self-generated except that someone would occasionally come up with an idea and then try and find a market for it. In most cases people in the office would work with various bureaus and say, "Can we help you with this or that?" They received an assignment to do an evaluation of our Law of the Sea policies and to do an analysis of why the two previous Law of the Sea conferences had collapsed in failure. They said, "Well, you must know about international law, so you do this." I wrote two studies on Law of the Sea.

*Q: When were the other Laws of the Seas? Do you remember?*

ZWEIBEN: It's so long ago, I don't remember. There were two previous conferences prior to the third that was coming up in the '70s.

*Q: This is the one with Elliot Richardson, wasn't it?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes.

*Q: This is well publicized, well thought of at the time.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. I went through all the records and talked to people. My conclusion was that there were so many conflicting positions within the U.S. delegation that that was the major reason that we failed to be fully effective at these conferences. Anyway, I was working on the two conferences. Then for the third conference, the office persuaded the secretariat for the third conference that it would be useful for them to have an historian on the delegation. I think it was in Caracas. Would I like to go to Caracas. Sure, I've never been to Caracas. At the very last minute, I guess there was some hesitation within the

delegation about having an historian watching their every move and collecting all their documents. I was at the airport ready to get on my plane when a call came through. I was being paged. My travel was rescinded because they had decided that they didn't want an historian. Today you can't imagine that anyone would try and hide the records of a conference. They did not want the delegation being documented.

*Q: Oh, boy.*

ZWEIBEN: I stayed in the historical office until '75, '76. At that point I decided for a variety of reasons to move out of the office. I talked to some people who were setting up the new Freedom of Information staff in the Bureau of Public Affairs, so I was invited to join that staff first for a couple of months and then permanently. I was part of the initial group that set up the Department's Freedom of Information Program.

*Q: When you started this, because this has become such an important part of the writing of history, what was the attitude? This was mandated by Congress. It's not like bureaucrats covering up. They want people reading what we said. As you sent in as sort of the new girl on the block, what was the attitude toward this?*

ZWEIBEN: It was mixed but mostly... I mean, you hate being given more work to do. You had to look at documentation and the thought of having to release documents to the public and perhaps release things that you didn't want to release but didn't meet the criteria for being withheld. There were appeals when material was being withheld. They were under a lot of pressure for meeting time guidelines. You have to respond in 10 days or 20 days, I forgot what it was now. There was initially a lot of reluctance to have to abide by these regulations, and then new structures were being set up, and you were doing memos to the Secretary and approving appeals boards, and then trying to get the records people department to come up with the documents and not take forever in doing it so that we wouldn't be sued because...

*Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1 with Beverly Zweiben.*

ZWEIBEN: The record retrievers were complaining that they were being given a lot more work and without the resources for hiring new people. The usual things. There are more programs but not the money to implement them and be fair about it. Looking at it from the Department's perspective, there was an odorous responsibility that was being placed on them which they had to meet because you could be sued, and departments didn't have the resources behind them.

*Q: Were you running across things that people before this happened of people writing little nasty notes on the side, "What a bunch of nonsense," or something, or even worse. I think people today have learned to keep it clean: less is better, and nothing is better than less as far as a paper trail.*

ZWEIBEN: Occasionally you would find jottings on the margin.

*Q: I must say I would think you would get a lot of resistance from essentially the desk. I cleared this stuff, and they have more than enough on their plate, and then to go back something 20 years before.*

ZWEIBEN: And insistent in a number... And rightly so because what you were asking them to release what might be 20 years old would still have impact on current diplomacies, and the person involved or a close friend with the power, and would it be an embarrassment to the U.S. If it seemed as if we could not keep things confidential that were thought to be confidential at the time, and so we had to work very hard to change the mentality in the Department. It was a very slow process.

*Q: How long were you doing that?*

ZWEIBEN: I did that a couple of years, and then one day I got a phone call from Frank Wisner who asked me whether I would be interested in going over to the NSC (National Security Council) as director of their Freedom of Information Program dealing with the presidential library and papers at the National Security Council.

*Q: When was this?*

ZWEIBEN: This was '78. it was the last two years of the Carter administration.

*Q: You did this for how long?*

ZWEIBEN: I got some good advice from people who said, "Come back before the election", so I stayed till '80. I came back. Although the department was holding a position for me, I was on detail. I would have to find a job when I came back, and I was still in the Foreign Service Reserve. I got a promotion because of it. So I did come back after the election and before other people at the NSC would be coming back to the department.

*Q: How did you find the NSC?*

ZWEIBEN: It was fascinating. I served under Brzezinski, and he is brilliant. He was able to pull together a construct—a political construct—and operate with that and to be quite persistent and determined as our president said, determined in pursuit of what he considered to be the right course of action. At staff meetings it was interesting to hear the State Department being described from the perspective of the National Security Council. Not always with the highest regard! I don't think that the Department realized that Brzezinski never gave up, that if the decision went against him on one occasion, and since he was there as the president's foreign policy advisor, he would continue to press his perspective. The Department always came out second best. This was just fascinating to watch in the third row: not at the table but around the table.

But I had White House mess privileges. I think this was the only administration that allowed mess privileges to all the members of the NSC, not just the senior members. So

there I was, an FS-3, able to invite people to lunch at the White House mess. This was a great... I began realizing what power was, that you could invite someone over for lunch at the White House mess, and then they could go back and say, "I just had lunch at the White House today at the mess. Dessert was very good!" I also realized something about power. I had no power. I was this young person. I was doing my job, and my greatest clout was my connectivity to people who did have power. Bob Kimmitt was my office mate. I realized that people granted me power. I called the Department.. The fact that I was saying, "This is so-and do from the National Security Council." I had power! As long as I didn't use it or try to use it because I knew how little I had. I had that power in the lines of the people who were granting it to me. This was a fascinating perception that I've carried with me all my life. This was a great revelation. There was one occasion when I was sent over to the Department to tell them that the Department was not living up to its responsibilities under the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act). I met with the executive secretary of the Department, the PDAS (Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary) in my former bureau. No. The senior persons from all the bureaus in the Department, and there I was feeling as if I must have been in the fifth grade. But I sat there, and I explained the roles of a FOIA and how the administration...

*Q: FOIA meaning...*

ZWEIBEN: Freedom of Information Act, and how we were expecting them to live up to their responsibilities, and this is what they were, and we expected them to do that. And I carried it out.

*Q: I've never been involved with the Freedom of Information, but I've heard people saying, "Well, it's not our problem. It's the damned National Security Council. They never get around to clearing things." How did you feel about that? Was that a problem?*

ZWEIBEN: Nobody said that to me, and I was always there! Then, of course, getting to see the president close up, having staff meetings in the Roosevelt room. I remember one time sitting there. Brzezinski was holding a staff meeting, and suddenly there's silence, and everybody stands up so I quickly stand up, too, and I realized Jimmy Carter had just come in with his shirt sleeves rolled up. This was a really nice person sitting right there, as far away as you are. It was the President of the United States. You walk into the West Wing. I also noticed—and I was very much aware—that people tend to, when you're over there and you have the power that people grant you, that you begin to identify with the columns, that you think you are the White House. I was very conscious of that. I frequently had to step back and say, "Wait a minute, Beverly. You're going back to the State Department. You're not carrying these columns with you." But I noticed that this was something. It frequently happened that people became more than they were. Not individually, but became identified with the institution that... You're in someone's office, and you look out at the great vista of Washington, and you begin to think you *are* Washington. You *are* it. It's really important to keep perspective.

*Q: You carried out your job getting papers cleared. In the first place, one hears when administrations leave, you clean out their files and the White House, and the next*

*administration comes in, and there's a bunch of empty file cabinets. How did you find some of the file business?*

ZWEIBEN: I left before the election. I followed the sage advice of the senior person, and so I started looking for a job...

*Q: As a Freedom of Information person, you're looking back a long ways. Did you find much in the NSC? Did it have anything that went beyond the...*

ZWEIBEN: No. But then you'd go to the presidential library, libraries of the presidents that had preceded...

*Q: And you didn't do that.*

ZWEIBEN: I personally didn't do that, but I would ask, and if I needed something, I would go to the library.

*Q: What sort of things were you dealing with?*

ZWEIBEN: We developed an inter-agency group that wrote a new Freedom of Information Act, redid the criteria. It was designed to work with the libraries and to make sure that they provided proper access.

*Q: Did you get a feeling as you sat in the meeting with sharp elbows, people juggling... It might have been power, but there's power in power, and when you're in a power center, everybody's trying to grab a piece of it.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. Very much so, particularly amongst the various offices in charge of this, that, and the other. Madeleine Albright was on Brzezinski's staff at that time. She was in charge of Congressional Relations.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the Iranian hostage crises and also the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan? They hit toward the end of the Carter regime and almost got off dead center.*

ZWEIBEN: No documents were being declassified on those issues. Anything we would declassify would have to be approved by the people who ran those programs. We weren't releasing documents about China, either.

*Q: Here is a fast moving office, a lot of stuff coming in. I would think most of it just wouldn't be suitable to let anybody look at for quite a while for obvious reasons.*

ZWEIBEN: For good reasons, right.

*Q: What were you doing?*

ZWEIBEN: I set up procedures for handling the incoming requests, for doing the reviewing, for sending out materials to people who... If it wasn't clear cut, if you look at something and say, "No way on God's earth will we be letting that out," no issue. If there was some question or if we didn't know, then we would send things out to the people on the staff. And then, of course, have to bug them because they were busy with other things to get responses and some things they seemed too dogmatic in my eyes try to get some perspective, and worked closely with Bob Kimmitt.

*Q: Bob Kimmitt was what? He was the executive officer for the NSC?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. He was not the executive secretary, but he was our lawyer and very skillful.

*Q: Did you feel the hand of Congress? Congress created this while you were doing this. Were people on the staff getting complaints? Mostly these were newspaper and academics.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. We would have regular requests from newspaper people or from people who were engaged in getting large blocks of documents released, so we would be tugging with them. I suppose that's still going on.

*Q: Coming off that in 1980, how did you feel about the plan, the law in the National Security Council. How did you feel about the operation? Did you feel that things were getting done there and that people were on the right course in your own impression?*

ZWEIBEN: I think it was a very effective operation, very smart people, very focused national security advisor. My feeling is that the NSCs that have come after have not had the same verve and brilliance and effectiveness that Brzezinski's NSC had.

*Q: You had really two administrations: You had Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, both of whom had great concepts. They had policies rather than... Since then we've had some rather dismal people doing this. Starting with the Reagan administration, we've gotten into real trouble. Then more or less apparatchiks, including Condoleezza Rice, who don't seem to have a policy, just one of her thinking that it's easier for the president to get along rather than have somebody whisper in the president's ear, "Here's a good policy, and why don't we try this?" or pushing a particular thing.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. My feeling's that it's all been a downhill float. I became a special assistant to the new refugee coordinator.

*Q: When were you doing this?*

ZWEIBEN: At the very end of the Carter administration.

*Q: Who was that?*

ZWEIBEN: It was Victor Palmieri. He had as his deputy in charge of what has become the Refugee Bureau, Frank Loy.

*Q: How long did you do that?*

ZWEIBEN: I stayed through the beginnings of the next administration. Julia Taft came in as Palmieri's successor, but she was in an acting role for about six months. As I understand it, the word came down that the more conservative Republicans in the Senate would not agree to her confirmation, and so she moved on.

*Q: Let's take this early period under Frank Loy and the early attack. What were the refugee issues, and what were you doing?*

ZWEIBEN: I don't know if you remember the Mariel Cuban refugee crisis?

*Q: Yes. This was when... Why don't you explain what that was.*

ZWEIBEN: When Jimmy Carter opened his arms and said, "Ya'll come," and suddenly there were these boatloads of Cubans coming to the United States, and he had said, "Come, we'll take you." This was, let's say, a presidential initiative. Whenever there are presidential initiatives, everybody in the department rushes to that spotlight. We're like lemmings: rush to that issue. So everybody in the refugee program was rushing to deal with the Cubans, the *marielitos*. That left the rest of the world, Vietnam, whatever other refugee crises, and so I thought there's no point in elbowing my way into the *marielitos* when everybody in the Department is rushing around about *marielitos*. I became involved with Palmieri's staff, refugee division, in trying to meet our obligations and policies, and meetings, and such, dealing with the other refugees in the world.

*Q: At this time it was a continuing hemorrhaging. There was Haiti and there was the boat people and people... It wasn't just Vietnam but Cambodia and Laos. Indochina. Those were two major issues, and I'm not sure...*

ZWEIBEN: The Hmong (from Southeast Asia).

*Q: What were you doing?*

ZWEIBEN: I basically would try to coordinate with the relevant bureaus of the departments because this was an unusual program to have a refugee coordinator for the entire government. It wasn't just for the department, and trying to get the various geographic bureaus that tend to be powers unto themselves to work with this person who was a political appointee, had no international experience. His background was as someone who turned around failing corporations. Maybe this was a failing corporation. I don't know! That was his background.

*Q: That would be Frank Loy.*

ZWEIBEN: No, this was Victor Palmieri. It was difficult to without the rapid perspective knowing how the Department works, it was difficult both to try to explain how it works, but also how to pull the strings on his behalf. Of course, the day after Carter... On the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, 1981, his desk was out in the hallway. Until that time, it was still very difficult to... Palmieri came in thinking this was like a corporation. Turn around, make government-wide refugee programs work effectively, turn it into a profitable organization. The government, you know, is not a corporation. It was very difficult, but we had inter-agency meetings, and I went to conferences of the United Nations high commissioner for refugees.

*Q: The Asia Bureau must have been quite concerned, wasn't it? This was not a minor matter. Did you find much cooperation there with them or not?*

ZWEIBEN: They were subtly polite. Looking back on it, I don't recall that there was any enmity. There were far more bureaucratic problems when I moved to human rights than in dealing with the refugee program because everyone was aware that this was a problem that we had to deal with.

*Q: It was an action office. It wasn't a... You've got a bunch of people sitting on an island. Where do you put them?*

ZWEIBEN: What can we do to help? How can we work this out? I must say that looking back there were a lot of people in the Refugee Division which has for many years now been a bureau, and the refugee coordinator having been eliminated, who were really committed, who had maybe served in Vietnam or had other kinds of experiences, or had married Vietnamese or some other person, and who really felt the commitment to trying to make this program work. That dedication was something quite remarkable. Then there were other people who were just looking for interesting jobs.

*Q: You weren't dealing with the Cuba thing. Did you find trying to square our program... I mean, we had this program where any Cuban who wanted to come to the United States, because of the political clout in Florida, would almost walk across and come in whereas Haiti, no. It's obviously there was a racial motivation, discrimination policy, and the whole thing. was that an issue that concerned the bureau?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes, but there really wasn't anything you could do about it.

*Q: It just was there.*

ZWEIBEN: It was there. It wanted to be out of there.

*Q: Did you get any feel for the communities within the United States?*

ZWEIBEN: The NGOs, the various refugee resettlement programs?

*Q: Did you get out and see these?*

ZWEIBEN: I did not. That was being done in the refugee division, the actual hands-on resettlement. There was a major resettlement office that had done it all. I do remember being in Rome for a meeting, and I decided that—o, I'd been to Geneva for a conference—I decided while I was in the neighborhood to go to Rome which was a major point of resettlement. A lot of the work was being done. Russian Jews were coming to Rome, and they had temporary resettlement programs. I remember going into the office where a lot of the paperwork was being done, and I walked in, and there were people sitting there waiting for their interviews. You had to be able to know what was the right thing to say to whom, but you couldn't go back home. There were people sitting there in what we call casual clothes. There were women in a house dress and men dressed informally. You walk in and they look at you, and you look like a U.S. government official. You can't help it. They just look at you as if you have their lives in your hand. I remember this one impression.

*Q: It's hard. I was a refugee relief visa officer, my first post in Frankfurt back in 1955. It was a different time, different place, same people. Did you run across any of the... We had this peculiar program where you had this pushing the Soviets hard to release Soviet Jews to go to Israel who didn't want to go to Israel but wanted to come to the United States. So we had the Israelis kind of mad at us because we were... It wasn't our fault, but we weren't forcing them to go to Israel.*

ZWEIBEN: They also had false expectations of life in the U.S. They expected jobs and cars and where was their TV set. Go back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century: gold in the streets of Jamestown. There was the same expectation of come to the States, and you have nice jobs, nice apartments, things, and there were a lot of disappointments when people discovered that that wasn't the case.

*Q: For many of the Soviet Jews, they'd come from a society where they were taken care of.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right.

*Q: The ones that went to Israel got some more of that because they were still at Socialist mentality and structure. But in the United States, no.*

ZWEIBEN: You have to make decisions for yourself, and you have to look for a job. It wasn't, "Here's your job. Show up Monday morning at 9:00."

*Q: I know. The American immigrant experience. All of our families have gone through it pretty much, but thank God we didn't. It's a real trauma. Julia Taft. What was her problem with Congress?*

ZWEIBEN: I don't remember what the issues were, but I do know that she was considered to be liberal, a liberal Republican.

*Q: Came out of the Taft family. She's still around.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. I heard she was given an award the other day, last week, by one of the NGOs. She's a force of nature.

*Q: A fine person, but that doesn't cut ice with certain...*

ZWEIBEN: Word came down that—I don't know who it was—was going to put a hold on her.

*Q: North Carolina.*

ZWEIBEN: Helms.

*Q: Helms. Jesse Helms. Usually he's one part of the...*

ZWEIBEN: Right. He was the one.

*Q: How long were you doing this?*

ZWEIBEN: I came in '80, and I probably stayed through the end of '81. It wasn't quite clear what was going to happen to the coordinator, whether someone was actually going to come in. They had another acting person. The oomph had gone out of the program. It had just kind of... I called someone who had been at the NSC when I was there and who was a PDAS and an IO (Information Officer) and said that I was looking around. I thought this was the kind of thing Foreign Service Officers did all the time. By this time I had—I'm trying to decide when the FSR program—I was tenured by this point. I'm trying to remember when the program changed. At some point in there.

*Q: The Foreign Service Act came in around '81, '82.*

ZWEIBEN: I was an IO when that happened. I asked him whether there were any jobs that he thought where I could make a contribution. He said, "Yes, I have an office." There was an office dealing with multilateral human rights issues that needed a deputy. No, I was later promoted to deputy. There was a slot in that office, and he said, it needs some revving up, would you be interested?" Elliott Abrams was then assistant secretary for the IO (International Organizations) Bureau for a short time, and then he moved up. I was also looking at a job in PM—Political Military Affairs—the two opposite ends of the spectrum. I ended up interviewing with both of them, and I remember meeting with Elliott, and we were talking about the office and human life. To interview for a job when you're not sure you want the job is probably the best way to do it. This is at a time when human rights was primarily focused on the Soviet Union, and our primary focus at the beginning was to get changes in the Soviet Union and to shine the spotlight on the Soviet Union. He was saying this is what the office is doing. He said the program is on the ground floor. I said, "Yes. You offer the door, go down to the basement." He thought I

really wasn't interested in the job, but I was being skeptical about it. Then I decided that if I was going to get some satisfaction for what I was doing, that doing licenses for weaponry wasn't really to be what I really wanted to do. I ended up accepting the IO job to Elliott's great surprise because he kept saying, "I thought you didn't want it."

*Q: You did this from when to when?*

ZWEIBEN: Which?

*Q: IO job.*

ZWEIBEN: IO? I was in IO doing varieties of reorganizations from early '80s—I think the beginning of '82—to 2002. I was there forever.

*Q: This probably is a good place to stop, and we'll pick this up next time. We're talking about 1982 when you're into IO, and we'll talk about what you were doing, and you were hired by Elliott Abrams, and how...*

ZWEIBEN: He quickly left.

*Q: I'd like to get your impression of him because he's a controversial person who's in and out of government, and to get a feel for that and what you were doing, what the issues were becoming. Great!*

*Q: Today is the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, 2006. Beverly, Elliott Abrams. I realize you were only together a really short time when he was in the IO Bureau.*

ZWEIBEN: Three weeks.

*Q: OK, but did you get any feel for him or even maybe afterwards and being in an office being run by him.*

ZWEIBEN: He ran the Bureau. He was assistant secretary for IO, and then he went to the Human Rights Bureau, and after that the Latin America Bureau, and after that to the White House.

*Q: Were people talking about how he ran things? I'm just wondering whether he...*

ZWEIBEN: I don't have a real sense of how he ran the IO Bureau. I had just arrived and had very little basis for comparison, but over the years when he had come into contact, I thought he was very smart. He had a savvy sense of the bureaucracy and how to move within the bureaucracy. I was particularly aware of this on my last assignment on the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) desk as I was going directly over at the White House and working more closely with him than I had in the intervening years. My sense was of someone who was closely tied to the leadership and had a sense of how to connect the policy issues with the goals of the

administration, and while he didn't say very much in meetings that I attended, I could tell that he was absorbing a lot of what was going on and that he would take steps to do whatever he thought needed to be done. A very sophisticated foreign policy operative, I thought.

*Q: You were in IO for how long?*

ZWEIBEN: About 20 years.

*Q: That can give us a basis to start. When you got there in '82, what piece of the action did you have?*

ZWEIBEN: This was still when I was in the Foreign Service Reserve and could move around not only civil service jobs but foreign service jobs. There was no wall that separated me from foreign service positions. I was offered a position in the human rights office in IO which was then in the foreign service a political officer position in IO.

*Q: I can't remember if I asked you last time: Were you tempted to parlay your foreign service thing into an overseas assignment.*

ZWEIBEN: I was. When they were doing away with the Foreign Service Reserve category, they offered people the option either of moving into the civil service or becoming part of the regular Foreign Service. I took that part of the exam that was required to make this move. Passed it. Then there were personal issues that made it difficult for me make the move. I don't want to get into the personal stuff, but there were some health issues—not mine—but there were health issues, and that made it difficult to make the move. Furthermore, I was a little bit distressed that the Foreign Service would totally ignore all the years of experience that I had had already in the department, at the NSC, as a political officer in the department, and good ratings, and all this stuff and expect me to start as if I had just come in and start punching all my tickets all over again. I thought it really didn't make sense for me to do that, and if I did not join the regular Foreign Service, but I could take my foreign service job with me into the civil service and keep on doing the interesting work that I had been doing. I'd also have the choice of keeping my Foreign Service pension or taking a civil service pension. I made my decisions accordingly. I don't regret it because I don't know how receptive the Foreign Service would have been, and I certainly didn't feel that I would be welcome as a political officer, to take my skills into the Foreign Service, to start at the beginning doing visas.

*Q: When you went in, had the human rights side of international organizations, what did this mean? What sort of things were you active in?*

ZWEIBEN: My portfolio covered all human rights activities throughout the United Nations system. So that meant in particular it meant the UN Human Rights Commission which was then a more viable institution than it is these days.

*Q: You were saying you had the Human Rights Commission?*

ZWEIBEN: This was an annual six-week meeting, which was the crown of the UN (United Nations) human rights mechanism, in which there were 53 members representing all the regions of the world and the agenda covered all human rights problems worldwide. And in particular there were resolutions that dealt with particularly human rights situations. And the UN has very little by way of enforcement mechanisms. It's most effective form of action is public spotlight. And if you focus a lot of attention on human rights problems, you may or may not succeed depending on the politics of the situation. But the countries that are the object of this focus become very easy.

And you'll find that there's lobbying throughout the year to capture enough votes to prevent a country from being put on the docket. So in some instances it involved the highest levels of U.S. Government for lobbying and to try to achieve the outcomes that we sought.

Then there were the other parts of the UN system. The Economic and Social Council, which was never a very significant organization, and of course the UN General Assembly. We rarely got involved in the Security Council because China would regularly threaten to veto any human rights motions that were brought before the council, so that was generally outside of our responsibility. But the rest of the UN system -- what we were seeking to do was to provide a uniformity, a continuity throughout all the UN bodies that dealt with human rights so that our positions were consistent and that we pursued the same policies throughout the UN organizations, including the Budget Committee, where sometimes we felt they were taking steps in funding certain programs that had nothing to do with anything else that was going on in the UN system; that was just my opinion.

And so we would work with people in New York, Geneva, and all the offices in IO (International Organization) that had any connection with human rights. Then we would also work with all the bureaus in the department where there were countries with human rights issues. We worked with the secretary for political affairs, sometimes with the secretary of -- also with the NSC (National Security Council). And there were times when we were also involved -- asked for participation by the president or the vice president in pursuing particular issues that were very important to the respective administrations.

*Q: Firstly, what sort of things -- were you sort of a back-stopper for the delegation up in the north, here in Washington or not?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. Oh, I'm sorry, go ahead, finish your question.

*Q: Because I'm trying to --*

ZWEIBEN: What did we do?

*Q: Were we working on the embassies within the Washington area too?*

ZWEIBEN: We were, but I found along the way that the embassies of the various countries felt a closer relationship, an ongoing relationship with the geographic bureaus. You know if you ask the IO assistant secretary or PDAS (Program Development Areas) to call in the ambassador from Kham. But he didn't really think that, next month, IO was going to be very important to him. And it was far more effective to ask the regional assistant secretaries to become involved. Because there were ties to other issues, other programs that were done regionally. And so one of the issues -- one of the problems that I had along the way, and I spent a lot of time doing this, was to try to make the bureaus -- particularly the desk officers -- aware that something that was going on in the UN might affect their bilateral interests. So it was to their advantage -- not as a favor to IO -- but it was to their advantage to be working with us to achieve certain goals in the UN because it would overlap with their bilateral concerns. So I spent a lot of time working with the desk trying to make this clear.

And sometimes we would invite someone from the regional bureaus to be on the delegation to the Human Rights Commission for a period of time, covering their country so that they could become more aware of what the issues were and become more involved, and then take that awareness back home with them.

*Q: Well, starting early on in '82 into the early '80s, what were some of the major human rights problems that you found yourself dealing with?*

ZWEIBEN: When I first came into IO, the major focus was on human rights issues in communist countries. This was the reason we got into it. And I suspect the administration thought it was going to stay that way. So, obviously, the Soviet Union and Cuba, and wherever there were communist ties we were very much engaged. Not particularly engaged or supportive in other issues. Sometimes I felt we were on the wrong side. But it was like a tap, a water tap, and once you open the spigot to focus on human rights in communist countries, it was very difficult to turn it off. As a matter of fact it became impossible to turn it off.

And other human rights situations, in Latin America for example, were brought up at the commission by other countries, the Scandinavian countries were very active in raising human rights situations in Latin America. You could argue it was so far away from them that they could -- that it was easy for them to do this. On the other hand, there were also domestic issues. There were groups in the Scandinavian countries and the European countries that felt very strongly about human rights problems in Latin America. And so pressed their countries just as NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) were pressing us to take on human rights issues throughout the world. So, one of the interesting aspects of the evolving human rights program in the United States is the increasing role of NGOs because they became very effective in pressing government.

*Q: Did you find, as you were doing this, that you and other members of the bureau were getting more and more talking to the NGOs?*

ZWEIBEN: The NGOs have become increasingly a third arm of government. One issue that I was particularly pleased about in terms of our contribution was the role that the U.S. Government played in helping the Baha'i in Iran. The U.S. Baha'i are very well organized and very effective.

*Q: Headquarters up in Evanston, Illinois?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes, yes, and they have -- there's a Washington office and there's the Evanston office -- and one of the first NGOs that came in to see us after I joined IO was the Washington Baha'i office. And they were distressed -- distraught could be more the word -- over the way the Iranian Government was treating Baha'i in Iran. Hundreds had been arrested; there were programs to prevent the culture from evolving. Some had been executed and there were threats that more would be executed. And so they came in to see us and asked whether we would support and press for particular reference of the Baha'i in the annual Human Rights Commission resolutions on Iran. Not only the commission, but also at the UN General Assembly. There were a lot of consultations about this.

One of the things that we were concerned about: they wanted a statement by President Reagan about the plight of the Baha'i, and we were concerned that if we recommended such a statement that the Iranians would respond with more executions. And I said, "Well, you know, we believe that it's worth the effort. That if the president has made a statement, there may be another execution or two, but far fewer than if the United States does not say anything at all. There's no public spotlight." So the president did make a statement on Iran. And it worked. They stopped executing the Baha'i. They continued imprisoning large numbers for a number of years, but gradually, that dissipated.

And, it's one of the things that I was particularly proud of, we had a very good working relationship with the Baha'i. As you know that there are Baha'is throughout the world. And there were times when in negotiating I could see that other delegations perhaps had been approached by the Iranians and for economic or other reasons were backing off in pressing for the kind of strong resolutions we were looking for. And I would say to the local NGO, you know it's time for the armies of the Lord to do their thing. And so they would contact their international office, and contact other Baha'i groups who would then contact their foreign ministries, and the next time we had a meeting it seemed as if their negotiating instructions had ended -- had changed. And so, I felt that this was a very effective way.

*Q: My understanding is the Iranian Ayatollahs, the Shia fundamentalists, considered, while they're quite willing to accept Jews and Christians as being children of the book, Baha'i's are apostate.*

ZWEIBEN: They are not considered to be a religion. One of the things that we had to include in these resolutions was not only reference to Baha'i, but reference to the Baha'i under the religious category. So to say, freedom of religion for all groups, including the Baha'i, so that it was clear that we were not just talking about a friendly group of people

in the country, but we were talking about a group that was considered internationally to be a religion.

*Q: I would imagine that during the whole time, with all of changes from the Soviet Union to Russia and all, but China as, you know, a horrendous human rights violations, yet it sort of stands center stage in all sorts of other political things. Was China a big problem for you all?*

ZWEIBEN: Oh, yes. Every year there was a decision that had to be made about whether to introduce a resolution of the human rights situation in China and who was going to do it. Was it going to be the U.S., was it going to be the EU (European Union), was it going to be everybody holding hands, no-name EU countries holding hands and introducing the resolution? And every year the Chinese spent an inordinate amount of time lobbying -- building roads, hospitals, in many countries of the world -- in exchange for friendship during this annual six-week meeting. Sometimes I felt that the greatest contribution we made to the world economy was to introduce this resolution on China because they then proceeded to fund all kinds of things.

*Q: How effective was the funding? I mean, what happened with it?*

ZWEIBEN: Oh, we never won. There was one year we came close. I think we were one vote short of winning. But we have never won the resolution on China.

*Q: Well how serious do you think we were taking it? I mean, did you have the sense that we were introducing it but at the same time not trying to go too far?*

ZWEIBEN: There were some years where we worked very hard, and there were others when, as you say, we would introduce the resolution, and then nobody would speak to the victim. And I sat there with quite astonishment, and it finally dawned on me: this is a Potemkin resolution. No one is taking you seriously. We're doing it because we have to. And there was a lot of pressure: Human Rights Watch, the NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and Amnesty International -- there was an enormous amount of pressure for the U.S. or the western countries to take on China. And so rather than have to write more op-ed pieces, we did. But then, winked. Again, that's how I saw it.

*Q: Were there -- you know, as you were following this, as the Soviet Union began to dissolve into Russia by the -- what was it, '91 or '92 -- were you seeing changes there at all or was -- did you have the feeling that human rights are not a major factor?*

ZWEIBEN: Well, one of the issues that we could see disappearing was the use of psychiatric hospitals as a way of imprisoning people who didn't agree with the Soviet Union. And that we could see was dissipating. It was no longer an issue. And then there was the issue of allowing the Soviet Jews to leave Russia. And I know that the then assistant secretary for human rights with the Human Rights Bureau, Dick Shifter, was working very closely with his Russian counterparts to work out ways in which the Jews would be allowed to leave. So, gradually these things were becoming less of an issue.

What I found very startling in the early years after the fall of the Soviet Union was the change in the way the Russian delegations operated in the UN system. They had been tough, and very demanding, insistent upon -- that we follow certain rules of procedure, they were very good about exerting pressure in other delegations, particularly on the Soviet Bloc but outside -- I mean, they were, you knew who your enemy was, you know. And that disappeared. And the Russian delegations looked as if they didn't really know what they were supposed to be doing. They were very quiet. They hardly participated. They began working with us on different resolutions.

And the whole structure of the UN began to change. Everyone was quite confused. You didn't quite know what your bearings were. I remember there was one session when the question of translation into different languages was getting late, and we were running out of time, and someone introduced the motion that would limit the translations into English, French, and Spanish, I think it was. I know it was definitely English, and French, and a third country, not Russian, and I expected the Russians to pound the table and to protest, and they didn't say a word. It was something that would never have occurred in the Soviet Union days. And there were several years before the Russians seemed to find their foothold in the UN again. And the first couple of years it was very difficult to get your bearings. Who are your friends? To have the Russians join you in supporting a resolution was quite astonishing, and yet that was happening.

*Q: How close was your cooperation with the Human Rights Bureau? Or was that a problem?*

ZWEIBEN: That became a problem. But remind me, I also want to talk about Cuba.

*Q: Okay, well let's talk about Cuba first.*

ZWEIBEN: The question of human rights violations in Cuba was something near and dear to the heart of the Reagan Administration. And it went so far as to arrange for a former Cuban political prisoner, who had spent many years in jail, to become an American citizen overnight by an act of Congress. So that he could then become head of the U.S. delegation to the Human Rights Commission. And everyone assumed quite rightly that Cuba was the most important issue on our human rights agenda. And he knew English, but he preferred not to speak it because he did not feel particularly comfortable. He was a writer, and so he felt that speaking in English would not allow him to express his views as well as he might. And so he spoke in Spanish, we had a translator on the delegation, and we would start the morning staff meeting saying "Buenos dias."

And this, it created difficulty for us in the Human Rights Commission because the Europeans felt that we were particularly focused on Cuba and that we were ignoring human rights problems elsewhere in the world which they felt were even more distressing than the situations in Cuba at that time. And, created a feeling that we were not really committed to human rights on an international basis no matter what we were saying, but had our own particular political agenda, and in this case the situation was in Cuba.

But here was -- the result of our pressing -- and the Cubans by the way are very effective actors in the UN system, unlike the United States where there's rotation every couple years and people come in. Learning how to use the UN takes an enormous amount of experience and knowledge about the rules of procedure, and how to use them, and how blocks work in the various regional groups, and personalities on the various delegations, and how to make contacts with the secretariat. It's really totally unlike the majority of what the department does which is bilateral work.

And in the UN system you have 70 different balls in the air at the same time. And you have overlapping issues, and regional groups, and people, and intersecting forces. You really need to know how to do this, and how to play tough when you need to and how to be smooth when you need to. Bringing in someone who has done bilateral work, and throwing them in for two years, maybe you have three, is not, in my view, the most effective way of running this program. You come in, you spend your first year learning how things work. The second year, you get to be pretty good, but you're also looking for your next job. And so you have a regular rotation of people coming in and out, in the U.S. missions, whereas the Cubans keep people there for 30 years. They know everybody. They know where all the skeletons are. They know -- they have friends in the secretariat, there are people in the secretariat, there are people -- you know, they have contacts in the missions, and they know how to run rules of procedure and how to get their own way.

So, for the U.S. to come in and take this on was very difficult. So we brought in this Cuban American. And it created a sense that the United States was not really focused on human rights but on this island 90 miles off our shores and that this was our particular focus. The Cubans, in order to prevent U.S. resolutions from winning, and occasionally we did, would again invest in various countries, but also clean up -- there was a UN group coming to Cuba to check on prisons. Well, the prisons got painted, cleaned up, and so again, I thought that our contribution to human rights in Cuba was the threat of these resolutions because they then spiffed up, and for a while let human rights activists out of jail and under house arrest, but still, people were let out of jail, and things improved a little bit, so you could see some of the impact of what we were doing.

Under another head of delegation, we brought in about a dozen former political prisoners who had been in Cuba. You know one man, who was partially blind, another who had partially lost his leg. They all had the evidence of life in Cuban prisons. And it was fascinating to see the impact of bringing in -- you know, as -- that weren't part of our delegation. They were credited in some way. And you had a room full of people who had been spending years talking about human rights violations in different places without actually having seen them, and seen any of the victims. And how uncomfortable they were, in actually having to confront this man and that one, all who could say, I was in jail for 20 years, 15 years, and this is what has happened to me and has destroyed my life. And forcing them to meet with them -- we had receptions, and asking, you know, for them to shake hands with these people. They really didn't know what to do with it. It was really quite astonishing. In terms of theatre, it was very effective.

*Q: Another one, which is always tricky for us, in that period, in dealing with Israel, because, you know, I mean the treatment of the people, in those days, on the West Bank and all, I mean this is, politically, very volatile. And human rights issues were certainly involved.*

ZWEIBEN: Well, it was particularly complicated because there are three committees of the UN that are in existence for the entire year whose role it is to provide propaganda and support of the Palestinian cause. So you have conferences, material being distributed, and this is going on all year so that it became -- the UN is a very anti-Israel body. And there was -- the most we were able to get, we were able to accomplish, was to press for balanced resolutions, rather than resolutions which blamed Israel for every problem that the Palestinians had.

And yes, there were human rights issues for the Palestinian people, but there were also issues that the Israelis quite properly could complain about, in terms of steps taken by the Palestinians. And so it became extraordinarily -- it became almost routine that there would be six, seven, eight resolutions about Israel and the Golan Heights, or Israel and the Palestinian rights, and it was always so totally imbalanced that had the Palestinians pressed for resolutions that were balanced, that there's this side and there's this side of the question, I think they would have had -- it would have been much more difficult to get and votes in support of the Israelis.

The one, and we can talk about this another time, but one of the things I am most proud of in the work I did at UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was that in the first year of our return, I was able to negotiate for the U.S. and achieve two resolutions that were adopted by consensus -- by all parties -- by the Israelis, the Palestinian representatives, the Egyptians, the Pakistanis, African countries -- everyone. We all sat down and worked very hard and we were able to get total agreement by all sides to two resolutions and that was the first time that has happened in the UN system.

*Q: Well, we'll come back to that, but while you were in IO dealing with human rights, did you get any feel about how the White House, about how the Reagan Administration other than -- pushing for Cuba, which is almost dictated by Miami community -- did you get any feel for its commitment on other issues?*

ZWEIBEN: Well, to stay with the Israeli question, one of the major achievements, and this wasn't in the Human Rights Commission, it was in the General Assembly, was our success in getting the General Assembly to repeal a 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism. And John Bolton, who was currently our representative to the UN in New York, was the architect of the plan that succeeded in getting the General Assembly to repeal that resolution.

*Q: What was the plan, I mean, outside of saying let's not support this?*

ZWEIBEN: There are 190 countries in the UN, it's far more difficult than getting the majority of, you know, 53 countries, and you get a majority, and the resolution is adopted. This body that was almost automatically, knee-jerk reaction, supporting anti-Israeli resolutions, to get this body to support a resolution that repealed this resolution, the United States, we had had a policy of not supporting -- either voting against or not participating in any votes that would draw on the Zionism is racism resolution as one of the things it was endorsing. You include that, and the United States was out of the picture. And so, Bolton choreographed a lobbying campaign, which was very effective internationally and in New York, and the resolution was finally repealed.

*Q: How did you feel -- what was the role of, well, it's now the European Union, but whatever it was, you know I mean it has changed its configuration, but basically the Western European powers -- how did they use -- in your particular area, what sort of role did they play?*

ZWEIBEN: Well they became increasingly cohesive. There was the European Union, there was also the WEOG (Western European and Others Group). And we were one of the others, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and as a WEOG, we would work together to develop cohesive policies. But the European Union, particularly as it became larger, would meet on its own and develop its own policies.

And one of the problems was that, since they operate by consensus, unless they reach a decision to not impose consensus on the bodies, then they essentially operated on the basis of the lowest common denominator. So, whatever position they took had to be acceptable to the broadest range of their membership. And so, we increasingly found that the WEOG and the EU (European Union) were at odds, and particularly if the EU had its meetings before -- and they would try to meet before the WEOG would meet, and so they would have their positions ingrained before they met with the larger group and so it was not the same kind of open discussion and arrival at a position but coming in with two thirds of your membership already having decided what to do.

And at one point -- we led -- a third group developed, the JUSCANZ (Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), so that we would break out our own so that we could try to influence the policies. And so there'd be this -- the politics within the groups of people that you thought might take positions that are consistent with our own, occasionally would -- frequently would have these other forces pulling on them.

*Q: Did you find the end of the '80s with the release of the Soviet Bloc and all that, did that make a difference in what you all were doing? Talking about Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, and Hungary, and Romania, and was that -- was this a different game then?*

ZWEIBEN: Well, it was a different game, and I said we -- the enemy was no longer there.

*Q: But what about the countries that were coming out? Were they sort of full of piss and vinegar? Were they ready to try things?*

ZWEIBEN: Yeah, and I remember talking to a Czech delegate about a reception, and we're looking for cosponsors of -- I think this was a resolution on Cuba -- and talking to them about what the issues were and trying to create parallels between what they had lived through under the Soviet regime and the kinds of issues we were talking about in other countries. And letting them see how they could participate in supporting resolutions that would defend countries that had gone through situations like their own. So the Czechs and Poles and the other countries increasingly became interested in working with the western countries and supporting of the resolutions.

And I have a recollection of someone who was on the Soviet delegation before the Soviet Bloc fell, later became a human rights NGO (non-governmental organization). So, it was fascinating to see how the breakdown opened up all kinds of possibilities. And I think that the Human Rights Bureau was very effective in making that seem more and more a possibility and reaching out to those countries.

*Q: Well, you mention NGOs, and we talked about it before, but did you find that the sort of NGOs, and NGOs because basically anybody can set up an NGO. Actually, I'm talking as an -- as someone, you know, an NGO, but I'm talking about in the field of foreign affairs, you know, people sort of are out to prove the Armenian massacres or issues that really aren't overly relevant but they're out there. Did you sort of have to sort between NGOs and NGOs?*

ZWEIBEN: Most of that was done by the Human Rights Bureau. And our work was primarily with the major NGOs. But I would like to say that one of the more effective NGOs in recent years, from my perspective, was the UN Foundation (United Nations Foundation). And the Better World Campaign, which was a subsidiary of the UN Foundation. They're very well funded, they have some very good people who know how the UN works, and well connected politically, and know how to use public relations and reach out, and they -- the Better World Campaign -- frequently served as an umbrella group to pull together a lot of these smaller NGOs in meetings and we would come talk to them, and so they were able to pull together a lot of these small groups that by themselves might not be all that effective, but together able to share information and make a contribution to the issues. But when you had a Better World Campaign logo or UN Foundation logo, you knew that you were dealing with a substantial organization.

I have served in the State Department. If I think about it, where you have umbrella organizations, then you have a more effective effort. There was a group of NGOs that banded together in support of several human rights conventions and wanting to get the U.S. to sign on to different conventions. In and of themselves they did not have as loud and clear a voice as when they banded together at the Washington Coalition for whatever, and then you could meet with the under secretary for political affairs or even with the secretary because they pulled together strength in different areas. Also when someone in the Department met with them, it was one meeting with one group of people rather than

ten meetings with ten people, none of whom had any particular strength. This was a more effective use of everybody's time, and I think that as the NGOs realized that, they pulled together, they became more effective. There were a number of issues where I really felt that -- particularly in the Clinton years -- that the NGOs were as much a part of government as any of the actual branches of the government, and people came in and out of government. People came from NGOs to fill administration positions, and you knew that they were going to go back to the NGOs, and they knew that, too. That creates a symbiosis that's necessary in these things.

*Q: During the early years, we were very much involved in how Central America, particularly El Salvador and Nicaragua. Some of the Socialist countries in Western Europe, Sweden and Norway and others, I guess also Germany and France. Did they give you a lot of trouble, basically taking sides?*

ZWEIBEN: Absolutely. That's why I mentioned the Scandinavian countries. The Central American countries were so far away. They had domestic groups that felt very strongly and part of those have been criticism of the U.S. in that only that they cared about El Salvador or Guatemala or Nicaragua, but also because they opposed U.S. policies in the region. It was a way of poking us in the eye which is not to say that there were not human rights problems. I remember, for example, being asked to go to a meeting in Guatemala to watch the Cubans. There was a meeting run by the first lady of Guatemala. While we were there, they took us on a bus ride out to one of the cities -- Antigua -- to see the roses, see the culture, and so forth. A number of people who were on the trip with us were friends of the administration, and I happened to sit next to a woman. I mentioned that I was primarily working on human rights issues meeting with someone outside my normal area of economic issues. I wondered what she thought of the resolution that the human rights commission...we supported resolutions on Guatemala on the human rights situation. I asked her whether it had made any difference and whether this was something that we should be pursuing. She was a friend of the first lady, and she said, "Yes, and it's very important," she said. "There are still too many bodies showing up in the rivers. The rivers run red." That made such an impression on me. I worked very hard to make sure that we continued what we were doing. I was so taken by this very honest woman. There are some obviously we missed and some that were not very effective. I still remember this woman talking about how we should keep it up, how important it had been. I think about how we have helped the Baha'i in Iran and elsewhere as their advocates. It made it very important to continue that.

*Q: Looking at this overall using the UN, did you feel that without the United States that you wouldn't have a driving force with mistakes, but at the same time, taking the United States out of that, many of these things would have flown by the wayside.*

ZWEIBEN: Frequently the European, the WEA, the whole WEA, would support resolutions that everybody knew that were really impossible because they said, "Oh, it doesn't matter. It's only a resolution," expecting that the U.S. would say, "What do you mean? We can't vote yes on a resolution that says," whatever it says. We could call for a vote, and they would be very angry with us because we would insist that they vote aye or

may. But they relied on us to do that, and if for some reason we didn't, they were all a fluster. What are we going to do? Every now and then they would go with their own spine and step in and call for a vote themselves. We were playing the role. We were playing the role of the country that would insist on being outrageous if necessary to play a role to allow them to not have to do it or to hide. It's interesting to watch the successor to the Human Rights Commission, the new Human Rights Council where the U.S. is not a member. We chose not to run for election because we did not know if we could be elected it was a secret ballot. The EU (European Union) gradually is beginning to step in on some of these Israeli resolutions for example. The Human Rights Council's first three or four sessions, they did nothing but pass resolutions against Israel. Nothing else was going on in the world. Nothing except more resolutions against Israel. And the EU finally stepped in and said, "These resolutions are so unfair and unbalanced that we can't support them." It's taken the U.S. not being there for them to finally say, "Well, unless this is going to be a sham conference, we can't allow these resolutions to be adopted by consensus by everybody." So yes, the United States has played a very important role and does this throughout the UN system. I know when I went to meetings with UNESCO when the U.S. returned, head of the delegation that went to the UNESCO executive board meeting at a time when it wasn't quite clear whether the U.S. was going to return to UNESCO. People of other delegations and some of the secretariat came over and said, "We really do hope that the U.S. will return and still comes fine in this organization so that we follow the rules and operate like a world body." I think that the U.S. has had that role and sometimes we don't use it as well as we might, but the expectation is there. Even if we sound crazy that we won't abide by principles and if we don't support certain concepts in a resolution that we're not going to just go ahead and say, "Yes, what difference does it make?"

*Q: While you were doing this, George Bush, Sr. became president in '88, and he'd been a U.S. perm rep at the UN. Did that make a difference, and also what about when Clinton came in? Did you find changes with administrations or not?*

ZWEIBEN: It was easier to go to Bush, Sr. and ask that the White House make phone calls or become engaged in lobbying for certain important resolutions. Not the whole set, but even two, three? And you say, "Would you call your counterparts in these particular countries?" He understood it. He understood how it operated, he valued it, and so it was easier to work with the White House to get their involvement because this was the language that he understood. He was quite willing to facilitate it.

*Q: Did you sense when Bush, Sr. took over... I mean, Ronald Reagan came in from the wing of the Republican party that had a certain amount of disdain for the United Nations even though he had a very strong person doing it, Jeane Kirkpatrick, for a while. Did you sense a change in emphasis or not between Reagan and Bush Sr. as far as unison in the UN?*

ZWEIBEN: Bush, Sr. had also been ambassador to China.

*Q: Yes.*

ZWEIBEN: My recollection was that any decisions that we made about dealing with China and the UN also had to have White House approval. Bush, Sr. was also the desk officer for China.

*Q: How about when Clinton came in? Madeleine Albright was his perm rep to begin with. Did you sense a change in our use of the UN, or was it pretty much business as usual?*

ZWEIBEN: I don't have a recollection of a major change unless there's something that...

*Q: I mean, you could probably give me an answer because you were there, and if there had been a feeling... Sometimes when there's a change in administration, I think Bush and Clinton were pretty much reading off the same hymn book as far as the United Nations was concerned.*

ZWEIBEN: Right.

*Q: I don't think Clinton came in with any great feeling for foreign affairs, but he wasn't coming in to upset the apple cart. Bush, Sr. had set up a pretty good apparatus.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. Bush, Sr. knew how the UN operated, so I can see that there was... But we didn't, I don't think we read this frequently to the White House for engagement in UN issues but ...

*Q: Was there much of a shake-up in the IO bureau when Clinton came in?*

ZWEIBEN: In the front office?

*Q: Yes.*

ZWEIBEN: There's always a change.

*Q: Does it make much difference?*

ZWEIBEN: No, not particularly.

*Q: John Bolton is now our perm rep but under dispute in Congress and became a very controversial figure. He still hasn't been confirmed. He's done this for a year. How did you find him during your time being with the United Nations?*

ZWEIBEN: I thought he was a very effective assistant secretary. I know there's been a lot of criticism, but I never found him to be anything but totally supportive, very effective, very smart. I thought he was one of the best assistant secretaries I have seen in the bureau. He's able to, and I'm speaking back in the IO days, I'm not speaking to current events.

*Q: We're talking about the time you were dealing with him.*

ZWEIBEN: He was able to absorb everything that the bureau was doing, and the bureau engages in activities all over the world and in all kinds of programs. He was able to absorb and to create his own synthesis of what the UN was doing, and his own policies to try to make our role in the UN more consistent. For example, when one of the banes of existence of the desk officers is having to write briefing papers for your chief, and for everybody else. You'd have long sections of background, and then you'd finally get to the issue, and then you'd get to talking points. You never had to do that with him. If you sent him anything like that, it would come back to you and say, "Just give me two sentences on what's happened since the last time you'd done a paper for me." Incredible! I would also say that human rights issues were among the nastiest political issues you could handle. I always thought the human rights groupies were a nasty bunch of folks. You always knew that when the U.S. took a position, the phone was going to ring and all sorts of people were going to complain about whatever you were doing. John Bolton was able to incorporate all of that into his thinking so that when he gave you instructions, say I was going up to the general assembly to negotiate something, and I got my instructions. I knew that whatever phone calls he was going to get, people saying, "Why are we taking this policy or that policy," he had already incorporated that into his thinking, and he wasn't going to pull the rug out from under you. Things may change in New York or you may have to call back and say, "We're not getting support here," or that there's a problem there, and he'd modify the instructions. But it wasn't because he'd been pressured by outside people. I found him to be extraordinarily supportive when I was working for him, and I have nothing but good to say about him during those days.

*Q: You mentioned some of the NGO's to be nasty, and I think human rights. These are people who care a lot about something. Sometimes people who care a lot about something think at a distance can be a pain in the ass.*

ZWEIBEN: Many of them don't really know how government operates, and so they provide a very important counter pressure to the way we do operate. Sometimes you listen to the guy coming to see you, and you say, "What planet are they on?" It's just not the real world. You try to incorporate their views to the extent that you can in the context in which you are operating. I think it's helpful if people who are involved in NGO's have some government experience. It makes them more effective if they can think in terms of the real world, if you want to say the government is the real world, but I'm not sure it is.

*Q: It's the only thing we have to deal with. This is the way it goes. I'm looking at the time. This is probably a good place to stop now. Beverly, the next time we'll pick this up, we've covered a lot of things.*

ZWEIBEN: We still need to talk about the human rights bureau.

*Q: OK. We want to talk about the human rights bureau and your dealings with that, about the situation in Rwanda. There's nothing really to talk about there. We'll talk*

*about the human rights bureau and then you're going off to... I'd also like to get your impression of the UN bureaucracy and how that works. It's very controversial and obviously there's a lot of patronage in it including our own contribution to that and how you felt it dealt with things. The we'll go... You were an observer or what, to UNESCO or what?*

ZWEIBEN: I was an observer at UNESCO, and then I was working with the desk when we went back into UNESCO.

*Q: OK, so we'll talk about that, too. Great.*

*OK. Today is the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2006. Beverly, we'll do the usual catching up. We'll talk about women in the Department you arrived.*

ZWEIBEN: I arrived in the State Department in 1971 just after the really tough stuff had ended. It was a time when women could not be married to other foreign service officers and retain their positions. One of them had to resign, and it was clear that it was always the women. Women couldn't wear pantsuits in the department. There were all kinds of restrictions including the obvious glass ceiling, and there was a class lawsuit against the department by women. I was not a part of that, but I knew a number of people who were. When I was in the Freedom of Information Office, we frequently handled requests from participants in the lawsuit seeking information to do research. I was on a group called the Women's Action Organization—WAO—and there were branches in State and in AID and USIA. For a brief period of time I was president of the State Department arm. It was very interesting because the most obvious and egregious problems for women had been done away with. You could marry, and women who had been forced to resign were given the chance to come back and catch up, and a number of very successful women did just that. The clothing issue was... No one was paying particular attention to it, but there were the glass ceiling aspect of discrimination in the department.

*Q: You might explain in today's terminology what a glass ceiling is.*

ZWEIBEN: A glass ceiling means that although you are very talented and skillful and work very hard, you reach a point where in the promotion system it is unlikely you will go as high in the bureaucracy as if you were a white male.

*Q: The way up is to the outsider is perceived as completely open, but actually there is this glass ceiling which means it isn't open.*

ZWEIBEN: You don't perceive it until your head actually hits it because it's clear: It's not apparent to you that the ceiling is there until the promotions don't come and the "old boy" network doesn't choose you for the positions which will get you to the ambassadorship, reaching the target of most foreign service officers. It became increasingly difficult to get women to become actively engaged in confronting the department administration. Many more women began to feel that if you keep your head down and work hard that a lot of these restrictions will go away and nothing more will

come and the obstacles will have disappeared. Gradually in the '80s the support for the Women's Action Organization disappeared or dissipated. There was this feeling that the major problems were no longer there where instead they were far less visible. You could have meetings with the under secretary and good promises and respectful conversations, but there were still many years in which these problems were far more elusive but nevertheless still there in the department. I just wanted to leave that on the record.

*Q: What period were we talking about when we left off last time?*

ZWEIBEN: I was still in IO doing human rights through 2002, and I believe you want to talk about the UN and the IO relationship with the human rights bureau. When I first came to the IO human rights office, the human rights bureau was engaged in two main things: engaged in trying to gain respect and a hearing in the department because many of the geographic bureaus considered the human rights bureau an impediment or an annoyance at best. The senior management in the human rights bureau had to struggle to be able to get hearing time with the secretary -- morning meeting, and so forth. As far as I was concerned the multi-lateral side of the IO bureau had the lead in any human rights issue in the UN. The human rights bureau had a staff at the beginning of perhaps one person who spent half time clearing the position papers or the cables that we sent them. The department inspectors, when they did studies of the human rights bureau, recommended that they put their resources in bilateral work and their other programs and not get engaged in the UN issues. Nevertheless, the multilateral affairs office in the human rights bureau was gradually extended, so they ended up with six people rather than just one person half time. When I was there, with 20 years of experience in multi-lateral UN issues, the IO bureau tended to be the source of background and knowledge about human rights work in multi-lateral situations. In the human rights bureau most of the people were there for two-year terms. The depth of background in the arcane aspect of multi-lateral work generally wasn't there. My understanding is that in recent years that the human rights bureau has become a more activist part of the multi-lateral work. There tends to be a pulling and tugging between the IO bureau and the human rights bureau on who will have the lead in different aspects of the work. I remember when I was in the IO bureau that the HA assistant secretary tried to send a memo up to the secretary without our clearance suggesting that all the work on the UN human rights commission be moved to his bureau. We ended up doing all kinds of talking points about how you needed a uniform policy and the way in which the human rights commission was interlinked with the work that was being done in the general assembly and other parts of the UN system. Eventually, IO won when the secretary decided that the status quo was perfectly acceptable and there was no reason to be pulling a chunk of IO work and giving it to another bureau. If that had happened, you could then say that the work being done by IO and economic issues really belonged in EB, and the scientific issues belonged in OES, and you'd end up dismantling the bureau, and the decision was made not to do that. There was regular in-house tension, and I'm not sure it was always for the better, between the two bureaus. We spent a lot of time sitting around conference tables trying to work out who was going to do what so that we wouldn't discover that there was some fire on the seventh floor because the HA bureau was unhappy with the smaller slice of the pie. I don't see this as being a contribution to U.S. foreign policy that the two bureaus did this.

*Q: But it's a way of life.*

ZWEIBEN: It's a way of life.

*Q: What was your impression of... Talking about turn of the century and so, the 21<sup>st</sup>, of the bureaucracy of the United Nations, how it operated, what motivated it.*

ZWEIBEN: I think the same kind of things that motivates any bureaucracy: influence. I don't know that I can speak for the entire UN bureaucracy.

*Q: Speak about that part that you interfaced with.*

ZWEIBEN: I interfaced primarily with the secretariat of the office of the high commissioner for human rights and also with the UN General Assembly. The office of the high commissioner for human rights had as one of its...not only to be effective in addressing human rights violations but also the political task of balancing the respective interests of the different regional groups. It was a time when the United States had enormous influence -- the 800 lb. gorilla in the room -- and also times when there were many who felt that the United States was high-handed and political in the way it addressed certain human rights issues and didn't address others or was willing to turn a blind eye to certain issues because it involved so-called "friends" on other fronts. This juggling act of keeping the United States happy but also being able to address the political concerns of the other regional groups all of whom numerically had enormous influence, so it was primarily a balancing act and, of course, the usual interest in advancement and promotion, and the perks of office not particularly by the high commissioner but by others who would like to rise in the bureaucracy. I would say that the primary burden on the high commissioner was one to be effective and to be the point person for UN human rights policies and be able to influence the way the spotlight was shown on different human rights issues, but also to balance the political stress between the United States and the Europeans and the Africans and the Asians. The political stress that we see today was very much present in the '80s and the '90s.

*Q: Who was the high commissioner for human rights?*

ZWEIBEN: There were several: Mary Robinson.

*Q: From Ireland?*

ZWEIBEN: ...from Ireland who was perceived in this country as being anti-American and anti-Israeli, and so she was perceived as someone who we had to keep an eye on.

*Q: Did you find in all our dealings the Israeli card kept getting turned up in one way or another?*

ZWEIBEN: All the time. If you look at all of the resolutions that were passed by the UN on Middle East issues and weigh them against issues in other parts of the world, one resolution on Burma, but half a dozen on Israel. It's the same kind of balance or imbalance, however you want to put it, that exists today, but you would have today half a dozen resolutions against Israel with never any resolution that pointed to any issues on the part of the Palestinians. It's perfectly clear.

*Q: Did you find that the human rights commissioner's office was an effective one, or was it ridden with patronage? Just dealing with it was difficult. All this aside, how did you find it?*

ZWEIBEN: I'm sorry, could you...

*Q: In other words, your branch of the United Nations, Human Rights. Because there's so much patronage of the United Nations, I was wondering. Sometimes you have an area of an organization that's the patronage has taken over, so a lot of essentially incompetent people get involved. how did you find it?*

ZWEIBEN: I didn't find that. Obviously there were people with different skills, different areas, and someone thought not as skillful as others, but that was a reflection not so much as patronage as the fact that all the countries insisted on equitable geographic representation. They rejected the idea that the only way to have effective secretariat would be to have everybody coming from the United States or Western Europe. There was an insistence on an opportunity for people from all the regions to...

*Q: Who did you have at these kinds of meetings?*

ZWEIBEN: Sometimes someone had a brother-in-law or a cousin or something that he knew would be perfect for the job, but that was all part of the equitable geographic presentation. I don't think there was any more of less of that than anyplace else. Human rights issues tend to be a magnet for all kinds of strongly felt concerns, so it was not only civil and political rights but the economic, social, and cultural life, and people would become so engaged in trying to codify these rights and to gain international approval and recognition for them. I remember walking into the wrong meeting room one day, an economic committee, and everybody was sitting there, and it was so very quiet, dull. I said, "This can't be my committee!" The human rights commission meeting was the third meeting of the General Assembly. You went in and there was an enormous hubbub of people collaring other people and trying to work deals and trying to get words into resolutions and semi-colons instead of periods. It was passionate. Strongly held views. You might also have strongly held views of making sure you got your promotion in the system, and it always helped if you took somebody out for dinner and bought some drinks and a good meal. You could get a vote. But that happens all over. There was such passionate engagement trying to make sure that whatever your particular point of view was about the importance of a particular issue that you won and that you got votes either in the General Assembly or in the Human Rights Commission. I think people believe that it meant something.

*Q: Well, this is very sustaining in a way that involved something like this where you're not worrying about getting a better deal for the asparagus growers, or something like that.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. You do a calculation, and you get a percentage, and you go from there. This was people in prison and people dying and people starving to death.

*Q: You left IO when?*

ZWEIBEN: 2002. January 2002.

*Q: Where did you go?*

ZWEIBEN: I went to the UNESCO desk in IO. My predecessor had suddenly decided to retire, and I got a phone call from my deputy assistant secretary asking me whether I would, after all those years of human rights, be interested in doing something else and doing UNESCO. I thought about it for about 30 seconds and decided to accept the offer. It had always been an interesting portfolio.

*Q: What is the UNESCO portfolio, and what part did you have in it?*

ZWEIBEN: I was it. UNESCO is the UN Economic Scientific and Cultural Organization. Its mandate is a mile wide and an eighth of an inch deep. After thousands of years of being a specialist in human rights issues, I was suddenly a master of all trades. It was really fascinating. I discovered issues and portfolios and really passionate interests in a whole range of issues that I had just not focused on in all the years I had been really focused on human rights. It was really very interesting. One of the things that I discovered is that when you have a room full of poets and playwrights, the idea of Roberts Rules of Order and running a UN meeting the way UN meetings should be run, there is a big gap there between UNESCO off in Paris and being very existential and the rest of the UN system. It was really quite engaging for me to become involved in what UNESCO was doing and to learn the issues. Like my predecessor, I was the one person in the department in charge of UNESCO issues. So, unlike working in human rights issues in the UN and dealing with the human rights bureau and other bureaus and trying to develop an enormous consensus in the building on just one resolution, nobody knew anything about UNESCO. I'd call and introduce myself and say that I was the person handling UNESCO. People thought I was doing UNICEF and starting asking me about Christmas cards and calendars! [laughter] But they learned better!

*Q: Tell me, when you say economic, scientific, social... Economic, I mean this is a bunch of bakers.*

ZWEIBEN: I'm sorry if I said economic. It's educational.

*Q: Oh, educational.*

ZWEIBEN: I'm sorry.

*Q: I'm sorry because I was wondering...*

ZWEIBEN: No.

*Q: ...because that's such a different fish. I take it that one person dealing with this showed exactly where the importance of the United States...*

ZWEIBEN: It was so important that the United States withdrew from UNESCO. We were out for almost 20 years. All these poets... A lot of poetry is very dangerous. Just the whole concept of the issues that UNESCO dealt with was somehow alien and suspicious. But also, UNESCO management in the '70s and '80s was quite corrupt.

*Q: It was quite tribal, wasn't it?*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. There was no perception of how you hired people. The idea that you need to fill a position rather than just, "Oh, you want a job? Great! Come up to my office on Monday, and we'll make you a major general." The UNESCO budget was the sole responsibility of the head of the organization, and he could hire...

*Q: Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow was an African wasn't he?*

ZWEIBEN: There were several, but it was M'Bow who was the big one.

*Q: He turned the Americans off.*

ZWEIBEN: What I'm saying is hearsay because I wasn't there, but there were stories of the Russians getting control of the organization and having their spies in the organization. It's not quite clear what they'd be spying about but that spies were there. Then other people tell me that the U.S. had its spies there. You look at some of the annexes to the UNESCO building, and it looks like a 1950's Soviet building, kind of grim. There were efforts to put a lid on freedom of the press and freedom of expression as well as the corruption. So there were good reasons for the U.S. deciding not to throw good money after bad. So in the early '80s -- I think 1984 -- the United States officially withdrew.

*Q: This was under Reagan.*

ZWEIBEN: Yes. Officially withdrew from UNESCO. At that point UNESCO became, even if it resided in Paris, very much of a back order. We withdrew 25 percent of the UNESCO budget when we left. The other countries made contributions. A couple of years -- two years -- after we left, the UK left as well, and Singapore left. The UK returned before we did feeling that there had been enough improvement with the management of the organization to make it worthwhile for them to return. They felt that if UNESCO didn't exist that it would have to be invented, that it was useful to have this

organization, and that if they were to return, it would help make the organization better. The management of UNESCO had improved. Federico Mayor had become the director general, and then he was succeeded by Koïchiro Matsuura of Japan who was committed to trying to get the U.S. to come back. He was committed to a transparency in the organization and a transparency in the hiring process. He stood fast when people objected to his attempt to turn the management around. Just a very strong person who was able to balance the regional group pressures, and very much committed to creating the type of organization that would bring the U.S. back to UNESCO. It was really his goal to make it the kind of organization that would bring us back. The UK also wanted the U.S. back, and I would go to the UNESCO executive board meeting as an observer. Throughout we maintained a mission in Paris with an official observer and a secretary and one staffer so we knew what was going on and could try to the extent possible to influence. The United States always had influence, and so even just having an observer present in Paris made us a player. I remember when I went to the executive board meeting sitting as an observer. You'd have to sit in the back of the room where they had these chairs with a little arm rest and a chair that whenever you got up, it flipped up, so you had to sit in the back of the room feeling like a school child with your arm rest and your papers and trying to keep the chair from flipping up every time you stood up to talk to somebody. You could only speak after everyone else had spoken, but we had enormous influence in spite of all of that. I remember people coming to see me in Washington or at the UNESCO meetings and talking about the importance of having the U.S. back in UNESCO to inject some rigor into the organization, to inject some spine. In terms of the scientists at UNESCO, they very much wanted the U.S. to return because the U.S. was at the cutting edge on so many issues that having the U.S. engaged in the work of UNESCO would give it a vitality and a purpose that they didn't feel that it had. The UK sent its ambassador to UNESCO to the U.S. to talk to people in the administration. It was extraordinarily effective in that he did not turn a blind eye to all the weaknesses that still remained and that he went to see the people... We set up appointments for him. He went to see not just the people who supported return to UNESCO. He went to see the opponents and talked about the weaknesses that still remained, the importance of an organization that was more effective, the importance of having the U.S. back to help make it more effective, but not that it was without any of the flaws that everybody knew were still there. Once the people realized that he was not giving them a lot of bull, they really had a serious conversation. One of the things that he pointed out was that if the administration wanted to come back in—and obviously we would be paying 22 percent of the budget—we would want to be part of the executive board that controlled how the money was used and how the budget was created and not sitting in the back on this little chair. He said, "If you want to come back and you want to be on the executive board when you do, then you have to make a decision this summer because the general conference that made the decision about membership on the executive board would be meeting in the fall and would not be meeting again for another two years." So it was this summer and run for election or wait another two years or rejoin the following year and not be a member of the executive board which would not be very appealing to congress. You could see everyone's eyes widen at this concept that here was a reason for making a decision that every politician in the room could understand. If you're going to be paying \$60 million to an organization, it would be hard to explain to congress why you wanted this money when you weren't in a position to have any control

over its direction. This was a very effective approach, but it wasn't until the very last minute that we knew which way the administration was going. I had heard informally that the Clinton administration had been thinking of a return to UNESCO but decided against it for financial reasons. I also heard informally -- I don't know if it's the case -- that the Bush administration had been considering, seriously considering, the return to UNESCO in 2001. After September 11, all of that was brushed aside. In September of 2002 the question was which way was the administration going because there was pressure by the UK, there was a lot of domestic pressure, people who felt that our interests would be served if we were part of this organization. It still wasn't clear how the administration would go... Let me backtrack. This was when the question of a war in Iraq was very much in the forefront, and charges that the administration was unilateralist versus multilateralist. It wasn't clear which multilateral carrot would the administration use to dangle in front of the UN community. There were others that were being considered as I understand. It wasn't until half an hour before the president spoke at the UN General Assembly that we were told that he was going to recommend that the U.S. rejoin UNESCO. Suddenly, from the sleepy back water with all these interesting issues, my office turned to me and said, "Well, you got what you wanted. Now what?" From that day in September in 2002 until I left the department in January 2005, my life was totally absorbed by this return to UNESCO, all the developing of an interagency process. The fact that it was a presidential initiative, of course, made it very appealing to lots of people in the department and throughout the administration, all the relevant agencies, anybody interested in education, science, culture, had to become an active player in the re-entry because the White House was involved. It became as all absorbing as anything I had done in the human rights community before I took the UNESCO portfolio. I remember being grateful that I had had six months to get to know this organization before the president made his announcement because it became a highly politicized and very delicate process.

*Q: One of the big sticking points with the UNESCO before was this move to declare that newspaper people—the media—had to cow tow to their own central government. The idea was to cut out criticism.*

ZWEIBEN: Right.

*Q: Had that ceased to be an issue?*

ZWEIBEN: Very much so, and UNESCO is now one of the major defenders of press freedom. World Press Freedom Day every year was a UNESCO initiative. Every time a government is responsible for imprisoning or, worse, murdering a newsperson, the director general of UNESCO within a day makes a public statement and tries to exert public pressure to protect newsmen who are increasingly on the front lines.

*Q: During the opening tour of UNESCO, a major player for a long time in a way right-wing was John Bolton. Did he get involved in this at all?*

ZWEIBEN: No, he wasn't. All he did was laugh when I told him what I was doing. He was not engaged in it.

*Q: We join up. What did you do? What were the issues? Who were the people?*

ZWEIBEN: We had to establish an ambassador. In Paris we just had this little mission, a couple of offices in the American embassy. There had been a house for the UNESCO ambassador. That had been taken over by the embassy with the understanding that if we ever rejoined UNESCO that we'd get it back. But they thought, "Ahhh, but this will never happen!" We had to get it back.

*Q: Oh, that's easy!*

ZWEIBEN: Right!

[laughter]

*Q: I assume that you had to call upon the Pentagon to send a SWAT team or something.*

ZWEIBEN: Fortunately, the people who were living in that house, their tour was ending that summer, so it wasn't that we had to get the movers to back up to the house, but we had to take it back. We had to develop a budget proposal and try to get congressional approval for \$60 million to support a budget. The White House named an ambassador.

*Q: Who was that?*

ZWEIBEN: Louise Oliver who's still there. [2004-2009]

*Q: What's her background?*

ZWEIBEN: She was involved in education but also closely involved with the White House and the Republican party. My own personal view was that she is an extraordinarily effective person. She has a fantastic ability to talk to everyone and anyone and to make them feel heard and that their views are important, and she can then use that as a basis for reflecting U.S. views. She worked very hard: She studied, she talked to almost everyone in Washington before she went out to Paris, her view being that you only get one chance to make a first impression. She has been an extraordinarily effective spokesperson for the U.S. Her roots are with Heritage Foundation people, people who have been very critical of UNESCO. The fact that she was there and she was in a position to say that she was representing the U.S. made the work we were doing back here in Washington much easier because she was so well connected with everyone in Washington, all over the United States, and so liked. Really liked by the other ambassadors at UNESCO. While at the outset I wondered who was this person that the administration is sending to Paris, in retrospect I can't think of anybody better for the job than the first ambassador.

*Q: During the time up to the time you retired, what were the issues? Go through the administrative process which I'm sure took a great deal of your time.*

ZWEIBEN: The political process within the United States Government is as complex as anything else you will find. Once the White House is engaged, it's not just pulling together a budget and sending it up and making recommendations. It is everyone. Everyone in Washington suddenly has an interest in UNESCO, and the politics and the interagency meetings and the memos to the seventh floor took an enormous amount of time.

*Q: What sort of things would the political process be other than to get a trip to Paris?*

ZWEIBEN: If you have a new embassy in Paris... For one thing, a trip to Paris. One of my superiors said, "You know, if this embassy were in Lagos, we wouldn't be having half as much interest in participate. No, not only a trip to Paris but being stationed in Paris. The question was how to set up this new embassy. Not only you had the ambassador's house which we reclaimed from its exile for 20 years, but then there was the question of where were you going to have the embassy. There wasn't enough space in the bilateral embassy to house this new embassy that would be dealing with UNESCO. A lot of time was spent on where was this new embassy going to be, space, who was going to be in it, how were the agencies who were engaged in the issues that UNESCO handled, how would these agencies -- Washington agencies -- be represented in Paris at the embassy, how many slots, who would pay for them, and so on and so forth. There was the whole issue of setting up a brand new embassy. There was the ambassador and accoutrements of having an ambassador. Then there was the support back home. One person was not going to be able to support the entire embassy. Also, one of the provisions of the UNESCO constitution was that each country have a national commission of its own choosing to deal with the domestic outreach and input into the UNESCO organization, of the expertise in all these issues in American universities, NGO's, and so forth. We had to set up the bureaucracy of a national commission in Washington which we did with a dozen people. So all this as well as negotiations on the substance that UNESCO was dealing with. The United States returned to UNESCO on October 1 of 2003, and so we were represented by a full delegation fully briefed. For the 2003 executive board and then the 2003 general conference the first lady was there, and she raised the U.S. flag in the ceremonies. That was very moving. You had everything that is involved in having a presidential visit to an organization. Then there were negotiations on the major issues. As you mentioned, the Middle East. At that general conference, the first general conference in which the U.S. was a member, I had the privilege of representing the U.S. on the drafting committee dealing with two major Middle East issues: one on Jerusalem and the other on education and the occupied Arab territories. Until that general conference, Israel was not a member of the executive board and, of course, the United States was not a member of the executive board. There was nobody there who could call for a vote on any of these resolutions. The Israelis always claimed that they were never consulted and these anti-Israeli resolutions were adopted and they hadn't seen them until they were finally adopted. They felt that there was no point in spending any time with this organization because it was just so unbalanced. With the United States back in UNESCO, we were suddenly in a position to call for votes and to vote and to offer amendments. The director general felt that one of his important goals was to try to get some exchange, some dialogue, between all the parties, and he had hoped that it might be

possible to have a drafting session in which all parties would be participating. He proposed a drafting session on this resolution on education in the occupied Arab territories. The resolution that had been adopted by the executive board before the U.S. returned was so egregiously imbalanced that even the Europeans couldn't support it. It was quite clear that the Palestinians did not have the Europeans on their side, but there was also now the issue on whether the U.S. would be taking a role. We sat down and started looking at the text, and it became clear to the supporters of the Palestinians, the usual actors, that there had to be some discussion of the text because otherwise the United States would call for a vote, and it wasn't clear that they would have European support. Obviously, there was not going to be a consensus. The EU chaired by Italy ran the drafting group. Let's say I represented the U.S. I also spent a lot of time with the new Israeli ambassador and spent a lot of time with all the players to try to develop an agreement on language. But at the end of the day after working well past midnight many nights, we were able to get all the parties including capitals to agree on the text which was then adopted by the general conference. There were hugs and cheers. It was the first time in the UN system that a consensus resolution had been adopted...

*Q: ...on the Palestinian issue.*

ZWEIBEN: That's right. With that success in our pocket, we then turned to the issue of Jerusalem and protection of the manuscripts and, using the same techniques that we had developed on the first resolution, we were equally successful on the second resolution as well. The director general Matsuura has said several times in the United States as well as in Paris that these consensus resolutions began a process which has been repeated. Ambassador Oliver has been very conscientious about making sure that every year there are new precedents for reinforcing these resolutions that were adopted in 2003 so that there has been a process of technical cooperation and working together among all the participants that grew out of this really quite astonishing success in 2003.

*Q: Did the Iraq war cause problems? I'm thinking of the museums and things like that.*

ZWEIBEN: We were very much concerned that it would, but I believe that the director general exerted his influence so that this would not become a major problem for us as we were returning to UNESCO.

*Q: The Bush administration was very confrontational on a lot of things in the international field. There was quite a different tone than with the Clinton administration. With this moving back into UNESCO which would seem to be almost counter to what the Bush II administration was doing. Did you sense or get a feeling in the UN, "Well, here's a place we can work," or something like that, or trying make something work because other than that, because other than work, ...*

ZWEIBEN: The White House seemed to feel that UNESCO, in attempting to fulfill its responsibilities to create dialogue among civilizations, this was an important aspect in the fight against terrorism.

*Q: You did this how long?*

ZWEIBEN: From January 2002 to January 2005.

*Q: You must have had a real feeling of accomplishment, didn't you?*

ZWEIBEN: Absolutely.

*Q: You were right there at the beginning left on your own and putting this thing together.*

ZWEIBEN: Absolutely. Sometimes overwhelmed!

*Q: Did you find doors began to open around in the department? People wanted pieces of the action?*

ZWEIBEN: Absolutely. As I say, because it was a presidential initiative.

*Q: What does that mean? Why would that be different?*

ZWEIBEN: The decision that the US return to UNESCO was a decision that the president made. A lot of people wanted to be part of the picture and to be engaged in making this work. You certainly didn't want it to fail. The president had proposed that the U.S. return so that everything that was involved in the process became important. There were many players who wanted to be a part of... And no one wanted to be seen as dropping the ball. No agency wanted to be seen as ignoring it or not being engaged, so there was as much work because you had to keep everybody engaged and informed.

*Q: Did this attract much attention from the seventh floor?*

ZWEIBEN: Absolutely. We were always writing memos, and there were meetings, seventh floor principals, interagency meetings. The NSC convened meetings periodically on how the process was going and whether it was being successful.

*Q: Did you sense the feeling of welcome within UNESCO, of its members? You were saying it had been kind of dormant after we pulled out and UK pulled out, and I would think that with the UK in and the United States coming in that there would be a feeling of, "Whew! Maybe we can get something done now!" Was there vitality or were they worried about their perks?*

ZWEIBEN: We always felt that the French weren't particularly happy that we were returning. This had been there.

*Q: And the culture.*

ZWEIBEN: Well, this was their organization, it was Paris, and now the U.S. were returning. There was nothing overt, but you could sense it.

*Q: Did you find a little entrenched dukedoms within the organization?*

ZWEIBEN: With a little mixed feelings. Expectations that when the U.S. came back that there would be a revitalization, but then there was also a feeling of concern that the U.S. would come in with sharp elbows -- we're here, make way -- and not pay attention to the culture or the work that was being done and the way it was being done, that we would come in and expect to take over. One of the issues was getting Americans on the staff of UNESCO. We had to be very careful to work within the process of transparency that the director general had established since that was a process that had given UNESCO a respectability that made it possible for the U.S. to return. We couldn't walk into the organization and say, "We're back. We're really pleased by the way you've made the transparency for hiring people an example for the entire UN system, but now that we're back we want you to forget about it and just hire the people that we want you to put in the system. We had to be very careful about how we provided candidates. We developed the whole process for tracking openings in UNESCO and making sure that we provided several candidates for each position that we valued, and the director general would not accept any semblance of, "Here's the U.S. candidate, hire him (or her,)" that we had to go through the process of providing alternative candidates and letting the UNESCO system review and committees and the director general making final decisions. We had to learn to go through that process. One of the important positions that we wanted was the assistant director general for education since the White House is very interested in education.

*Q: This is Tape 4, Side 1 with Beverly Zweiben.*

ZWEIBEN: The theme of education is always something that both the administration and UNESCO shared. Given the first lady's interest in education it became clear that having a U.S. person as the assistant director general of education was something that we very much valued. We spent a lot of time searching for candidates. There were several major issues that we discovered. For one thing, the UN had an age 62 retirement policy across the board except for very rare exceptions. We needed to find people who were young enough that they could serve a five year term without hitting that age 62 ceiling. You also needed somebody who could speak fluent French. If you can't eavesdrop in the elevator, there's no way you're going to protect your back in that organization. You needed somebody who was young enough, who could speak fluent French. As appealing as a trip to Paris may be, you have the issue of uprooting families to move to Paris for a period of years. We discovered that there weren't all that many candidates for these positions. While we initially said, "Oh, we've got to put Americans in senior positions and midlevel positions and junior positions to get them seeded into the UNESCO bureaucracy," we had an awful time finding these people. I assume things are getting better, but I did discover how difficult it is to get people to overcome these obstacles. One of the first things that we had to do, they had a program for bringing in young people under age 30 for a tour of duty in various aspects of UNESCO. After that they can identify people who are really promising and offer them positions. We participated in that, and we thought we'd get a hundred candidates. We ended up with over 400 candidates, and it became my

responsibility for handling this process. I ended up establishing criteria for reading the packages and getting people in the department to volunteer and getting two readers for each person. We had somebody enter all of this into the computer. It was fascinating because I was so impressed that there was so many really talented young people who were idealistic, who obviously want to live in Paris and had done so many interesting things in their young lives. You think, "Oh well, a lot of them have parents who can send them off to this program and that program," but that wasn't true for all of them. These were young people who had engaged in work projects in all different parts of the world and had studied, were fluent in French, and were really imaginative: really very impressive people. To think that they were all so engaged in this return to UNESCO, that they provided us with these extensive applications and so clearly wanted to become engaged. It was very impressive. I was very taken by how many smart and savvy and committed young people there were out there in the U.S.

*Q: During this initial time, up to the time you left, were any particularly contentious issues other than the Israeli/Palestinian war? Did you get involved in stem cell research, birth control...*

ZWEIBEN: There were bio-ethics but no birth control issues. This isn't anything that UNESCO does.

*Q: I was just wondering with science. I didn't know.*

ZWEIBEN: UNESCO does a lot of work in monitoring for earthquakes and tsunami issues and develop -- there's a fresh water institute that's very much engaged -- standards for fresh water, things like that.

*Q: Did anything there clash between the Christian world and the Islamic, the Christian/Jewish world and Islamic world? Did that play itself out in the cultural field?*

ZWEIBEN: The whole issue of the Iraq war and the cultural artifacts and trying to prevent looting and things of that sort.

*Q: Were there anything else? Islam is becoming more relevant in the U.S., the betrayal of the prophets is not around. Did that sort of thing get into the halls of UNESCO?*

ZWEIBEN: No, not that I recall.

*Q: How about bioethics? Things are changing so rapidly in medical research. You get a tremendous movement particularly in Europe about food, genetic manipulation of grain and other things. Was that strictly inter-cultural, or did that move into the UNESCO scientific approach?*

ZWEIBEN: The only way that UNESCO would get involved in any of those things is through standard setting. One area on which the U.S. and UNESCO didn't quite see eye-to-eye was on the degree to which standard setting was of value. The U.S. was not

particularly supportive of efforts to create new standards of... There was a convention on intangible cultural heritage which was adopted by UNESCO which the United States did not support. In general, the approach by UNESCO that wherever you had cutting edge kinds of issues that it was important for UNESCO to step in and for the member states -- the experts -- to develop conventions which would provide international standards for these issues. This was something that the United States did not particularly support.

*Q: When you left there in the end of 2005...*

ZWEIBEN: It was the beginning of 2005.

*Q: ...beginning of 2005. In your point of view, how did you feel about this, wither UNESCO and the U.S.?*

ZWEIBEN: I think it will be a long honeymoon period...a short honeymoon period and a long period of trying to work out the relationship of the United States. Now that the United States is established, there is less of the fanfare and much more day-to-day kind of work: the relationship of the national commission to the U.S. embassy, the relationship of the head of the national commission and the U.S. ambassador to UNESCO, the relationship of the NGO's and the academic community in the United States. That relationship with UNESCO and how the relationship of the U.S. government fits into that. To what extent will the administration seek to control the degree of communication between the academic and private sectors in the United States and UNESCO. All of these issues will need to be worked out, and I suspect that it's not until the next administration and you have another ambassador, and the whole process is established, and tours of duty, and relationship of the various agencies to Washington. It's a very complex process, and I think that the Bush administration has established the groundwork. But I think that until we have a new administration and the groundwork has been built upon with new staff, new ambassador, new national commission, of leadership. Until then it will be very difficult to see how this process evolves.

*Q: I'm just curious. While you were there when you're saying it wasn't until the last minute you didn't know where the president was going to come down on this. Was there a rumor or something? Where did the impetus come to join? This is un-Bushian, the basic, almost contempt of the UN at least I think. It's like Laura Bush, the president's wife, might have been in there, or not?*

ZWEIBEN: If she was engaged... I know that her office was very interested. I'm sure that there were a number of people in academia and elsewhere that they have made contact with her. I don't know. I do know her office was very much engaged. Of course, she was there for the U.S. reentry, raised the U.S. flag.

*Q: Well, Beverly, I think this is a good place to stop.*

ZWEIBEN: Thank you very much!

*Q: It's been a lot of fun.*

ZWEIBEN: Thank you.

*Q: Thank you!*

*End of interview*