

ALBANIA

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MARY CHIAVARINI

**Secretary to the U.S. Political Advisor, U.S. Fleet
Tirana (1945-1946)**

Ms. Chiavarini was born and raised in Massachusetts. After Secretarial training, she worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC before joining the Foreign Service in 1944. During her career with the State Department, Ms. Chiavarini served as secretary to the ambassador and other officers in Naples, Tirana, Manila, Seoul, Prague, Rome, Singapore and Warsaw. After her appointment in 1957 as Consul and Secretary in the Diplomatic Service she served in Palermo, Monrovia and Paris. She also served as special "trouble shooter" in Nicosia, Dublin and Riyadh. Ms. Chiavarini was interviewed by David T. Jones in 2007.

Q: Eventually you got to Albania?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. I don't remember how.

Q: Your bio sketch says that you got to Albania and you were the secretary for the American Ambassador in Albania.

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: What was Albania like at that time?

CHIAVARINI: In looking back, it was terrible. I lived with three other girls in Albania. We had rented a house, and it was really very nice; but it came to us, we were a little bit more sophisticated than the house was. We had an Albanian woman was the housekeeper. She was very nice but not sophisticated woman. We had a nice time.

I remember once we had to light a fire under the hot water heater to heat the water. It got overheated. It was shaking back and forth. We didn't know what to do except to kill the fire, and then it stopped. We were scared to death.

Q: Were these women also working at the U.S. Embassy?

CHIAVARINI: No. I've forgotten. One of them was there only temporarily. She left after a little bit. She was a flamboyant gal and was engaged to a colonel in the army before she was sent over to Albania. She was sent to Albania as a punishment. The other two of us were there on sufferance. But I didn't mind.

I had my first, my only experience, with an earthquake. I remember coming out the front door. You could hear the earthquake making funny noises, but nothing happened. Thank God.

Q: Well, this was your first experience with an embassy?

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: What was it like? Can you give me your appreciation of this kind of life and this kind of work?

CHIAVARINI: It was different, but I enjoyed it anyway. We did the usual work. Two of us did the secretarial work.

Q: Who was the officer in charge that you were working for and what was he like?

CHIAVARINI: I was working for anybody who needed help.

Q: I thought you were working for the officer in charge?

CHIAVARINI: I was.

Q: Who was he?

CHIAVARINI: Joseph E Jacobs.

Q: Was he career foreign service?

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: What was he like?

CHIAVARINI: Well, he was a very... His wife dominated him. (laughter) He was active a little bit sometimes, moseying along instead of being forceful. He was there to decide whether the State Department should recognize Albania. He recommended that they should. But they didn't do it right away. I was there about a year and a half. Mr. Jacobs went to Washington to press his case, and I stayed back and didn't leave until he returned. And then I was transferred to Rome.

Q: What were the Albanians like as people?

CHIAVARINI: Well, it's funny; the other day I read a letter that I had sent to a friend of mine, here. Her daughter had sent the letter to me after she died and that letter told it like it was. So I left Albania and the United States. He came back, I was still there.

Q: Ambassador Jacobs.

CHIAVARINI: Yes. From Albania I was sent to Rome.

Q: Were the communists becoming prominent in Albania when you were there?

CHIAVARINI: Not that we knew it, but they were. Two girls, me and one other girl, were quite outspoken about how we felt about the Albanians. They were very nice to us. One of the

Albanian women, a girl, was very nice to me, in fact, after I left and never went back. She and I would write to each other. The poor thing was sick, and she died not too long after I had left.

Q: You said that you and your friends were quite outspoken. What were you speaking out about?

CHIAVARINI: We thought the Albanian party was no good. (laughter) And we told the ambassador that, and he just laughed.

Q: Were there any other prominent embassy officers that you remember?

CHIAVARINI: Oh yes, the British embassy had a military mission. We were very friendly with them. We saw them a lot socially. One of the girls saw one of the officers in London after she had left; she went back to London and she saw him.

Q: Were there other members of the U.S. embassy that impressed you.

CHIAVARINI: No. There weren't; the ambassador was it.

Q: Was there a prominent DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission)?

CHIAVARINI: No, there wasn't one.

Q: Was it a very small mission?

CHIAVARINI: It was. Our entertainment was on Saturdays when the airplane came in and dropped their mail and went on. The Jacobs always had them for lunch. They would come back and stopped with us for a while. She always had lunch for them.

Q: Was Mrs. Jacobs very prominent in the community then?

CHIAVARINI: No, nobody was prominent in the community. The only one we saw was an Albanian family that I got to know.

Q: Did you travel in the country while you were there?

CHIAVARINI: We did, but we always had to take along a Partisan. He was supposed to protect us I guess; but from what, I'm not sure. One trip we went to Yugoslavia. We went to Dubrovnik. We enjoyed it. But we always hated to have a Partisan along with us. I don't know what he was supposed to do, but he never did anything--and we had to feed him.

Q: How many would go on this trip?

CHIAVARINI: All of us girls, three of us. The girls and Mrs. Jacobs went.

Q: What was the attitude of the Albanians to the United States?

CHIAVARINI: As far as I could tell it was good. They wanted to be recognized. I don't know what else I can tell you about them.

JAMES McCARGAR
Office of Policy Coordination
Washington, DC (1948-1950)

James McCargar was born in California in 1920. He attended Stanford University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1941 and has served in countries including the Soviet Union, the Dominican Republic, Hungary, Italy, and France. Mr. McCargar was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 18, 1995. Today is the 18th of April of 1995. This is an interview with James McCargar

Q: This was basically the stay-behind organizations. If the Soviets were to overrun Italy or something like that, we -- as I gather strictly from newspapers -- built up sort of resistance organizations which the then-Right Wing within the Italian Government used for some of their own purposes. Reportedly there were abundant stockpiles for a stay-behind organization.

McCARGAR: Yes. But that was not part of the political plan for Italy, nor was it specifically Italian. "Stay-behind organizations" were a part of the requirements, and the most urgent, laid on OPC by the Joint Chiefs, whose perspective was of course military. The Italian "stay-behind" operation was only a part of a Europe-wide scheme. For example, Bill Colby, whom I will come to later, when he joined OPC -- he was recruited into OPC by a man named Jerry Miller, who had been Colby's OSS case officer when he was parachuted into France and then into Norway during the war -- Colby's first assignment was Stockholm, where he was establishing the stay-behind networks, providing them with communications equipment, and that kind of thing. That one never blew up as far as I know. When his Swedish assignment ended, Colby went later to the Rome Embassy. For myself, after I wrote the policy paper, I had nothing further to do with Italian affairs.

By this time, end of 1948, beginning of 1949, Wisner was getting his organization into shape. I was made Chief of the Southeastern European Division, which meant Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey -- which was, God knows, enough to fill anybody's plate.

Q: You had a major civil war going on there, and everything else?

McCARGAR: Oh, yes. The first operation undertaken by OPC was related to a number of the countries in my area, to wit, the formation of the National Committee for Free Europe for the reasons I recited above. (I did negotiate the first agreement between the Hungarian National Committee and the NCFE.) Ambassador Joseph Grew was Chairman of the NCFE, and De Witt Poole (who had been U. S. Consul in Irkutsk during the Russian Revolution) was the first President. We used to call him "little Napoleon." He didn't last very long.

The Committee was set up originally without any specific intent to do broadcasting. But Frank Altschul, a New Yorker who was on the Board of Directors of the NCFE, pushed energetically for those broadcasts. They eventually began in 1952 and eventually became, of course, the most important part of the whole operation. I should cite here the old bromide about generals always fighting the previous war. The Radio Free Europe broadcasts were a case in point -- inspired originally by the role of the BBC during the Second World War (though RFE ultimately developed its own approach and techniques in keeping with the changing times and a new situation). But it is a fact that we were all under the influence of the Second World War. It was the largest experience of our lives up to that point, and it had only ended three years before.

There were other things going on in the early years which, in accordance with the usual need to know, I didn't know about. That is to say, the drops into the Soviet Union, the Ukraine chiefly, and Poland -- all of which blew up very, very badly.

The major operation with which I was directly involved concerned Albania. That operation was originally a British idea, pushed forcefully by Julian Amery, who had been in Albania during the war with the SOE, and he and his colleagues had been treated very badly by Hoxha and his nascent Communist Party. After the war Amery had been elected to Parliament (his father, Leopold Amery, also an M.P., had been a member of the British Cabinet during the war.) Julian Amery wrote a very good book, *Sons of the Eagle*, about the British experiences in Albania during the war. It became our bible.

Otherwise, we knew very little about Albania and the Albanians. Nevertheless, we did our research, talked to people who did know, and put together the political picture. The British were very strong for this operation. It was, of course, ultimately discussed by Bevin and Acheson, and agreement reached at that level. On the lower, operative level, we were engaged in joint planning with the British. Their enthusiasm was evident when I went on a mission to London to discuss it with them. Shortly after the war, the Albanians had mined the Strait of Corfu, the passage between Corfu and the Albanian mainland, and two British cruisers had been very badly damaged, Royal Navy personnel injured and killed. The British were extremely annoyed about this, to put it mildly. Their continuing ire was visible in the suggestion of one of the British MI-6 officers, who said, "Why don't we send a couple of cruisers through there again and this time, when they blow us up, then we'll really go in and clean the place out." (He really meant for the British to blow up their own ships.) That was dismissed.

The American understanding of the operation was that it was a probe. That is to say, the idea was to send people in who would come back out, or report by radio, as to whether there was any real possibility of a sufficient resistance movement in the country to combat the Hoxha Government. Now, the British were part of this, it being an Anglo-American operation -- but we had no place to operate from. At that point the Greek fracas had not been cleared up, and was still going on.

Q: You're talking about the Greek civil war?

McCARGAR: Yes, the Greek civil war. We wanted to use Wheelus Air Base in Libya which was a British Trusteeship at that time. Bevin refused, because of some wartime commitment that they had to Idris el-Senussi, who was then King of Libya. Italy, obviously, would have been a

political mistake. So Malta cropped up as the only practical possibility. As Frank Wisner said, "Whenever we're in trouble, the British always have a little piece of territory that's very useful."

Q: Bevin was the Foreign Minister, the British Foreign Minister?

McCARGAR: Right. Actually, if I may interject here, Frank Lindsay, who was my direct boss at OPC, some forty years later wrote a book which included mention of some of this Albanian material. Over in the CIA, a young lady, whose name I've forgotten but wouldn't use even if I remembered it, was in charge of going through manuscripts and saying "You can say this, but you can't say that." She wrote Lindsay a letter in which she said they couldn't forbid him to mention the Albanian thing, so much already having come out about it, but they would prefer that he didn't. Frank He called her on the telephone and asked, "What is all this about?" He explained, "If you read Acheson's Present At The Creation, his discussions with Bevin on the Albanian operation are all perfectly clear there. In Foreign Relations of the United States, those Acheson-Bevin discussions are all there in print." There was a long pause. Then, tentatively, the young lady said, "That would be Christopher Bevin?"

Q: The girl had never heard of Ernest Bevin?

McCARGAR: And this is just a three or four years ago. It's a little disconcerting, as you must agree, to learn that what was an active part of our younger lives, no longer exists in the minds of the current generation.

In any event, the British then sent over H. A. R. Philby, Kim, as he was called, to the British Embassy in Washington, representing the heads of both MI-5 and MI-6. When Philby and I were together, we constituted the command of the operation. We had a room assigned to us in the secure part of the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff area. There we would meet and issue our instructions as they became necessary. The fact of the matter was that as long as I was there, which was the case until May of 1950, we were chiefly concerned, or at least I was chiefly concerned, with organizing the political side of the operation.

We did have three expeditions from Malta by ship. When the first one went, I got a call from Jim Angleton, who was handling counterintelligence for OSO, the secret intelligence branch of the CIA, and the man who later became so famous for counterintelligence in the CIA. Angleton and I had very good relations. He called me to his office, and with great glee he read me -- Angleton, I should add, who had been partly brought up in Italy, and served there in the OSS at the end of the war, had totally penetrated the Italian secret service; he ran it -- he read me a report which obviously he'd gotten from the Italians about our first physical operation in Albania: the name of the ship was "Stormy Seas" (correct), it passed the Strait of Otranto at such-and -such a time, on board were so-and-so, the whole thing. What he didn't tell me, of course, was that the OSO itself was running operations into all these areas, Albania included, which they never told us about. We didn't consult them about our operations, either. But it would have helped a bit if we'd known that the OSO had agents in Albania.

Q: Where were they getting their intelligence? Do you know where they were finding out what you were all up to?

McCARGAR: From the Italians. The largest group of Albanian refugees were in Italy, and they were thoroughly penetrated by the Italians. In fact, many years later, I went down to Rome to reform the Albanian National Committee. This was in a later stage, and the Italians were all over me. They knew exactly what was going on every minute of the time (and the Palazzo Chigi delighted in passing it all along to the Italian press). So this is where Angleton was getting his information from. Notwithstanding what Philby subsequently wrote from Moscow in his memoirs, which I reviewed for The New York Times in 1967, I have always insisted that it was not Philby who gave away the Albanian operation to the Russians and thus to the Albanians. The Albanian community in Italy was so thoroughly penetrated, not only by the Italians but by the Communists, that to me that was where the Russians were getting their information, as were the Albanian Communist authorities. I've emphasized that point whenever the subject has come up -- plus the fact that my successor at OPC, then an Army Colonel, has informed me that he never gave Philby operational information.

I considered that Philby and I were friends. Philby was a man of great charm. He had a pronounced stammer, which somehow didn't affect one's relations with him. When he started to stammer, you just waited and he eventually found the word and went on. As I said to somebody later, we all came out of the Second World War floating on a sea of alcohol. Drinking was not a sin during the Second World War and these habits stayed on. But Philby was the most extraordinary drinker I've ever come across. I'm told that later on in Beirut, before he absconded, he would even drink after-shave lotion. Anything. Many and many a night I saw him very, very drunk. His idea of heaven was a pitcher of martinis that you drank all night.

I did meet Guy Burgess in his house.

Q: Back to the Albanian thing. I'm not quite clear, what were you all planning to do? What was this going to do?

McCARGAR: The geographical-political situation was primary. The Yugoslavs, who had dominated Albania up to the point when they broke with Moscow, then lost their domination of Albania. Hoxha, ever anxious to keep domination as far away as possible (later he broke with the Russians, and sided with the Chinese), declared his allegiance to Stalin and Moscow. For the first time since the post-war Soviet occupation of Central and Eastern Europe, there was an isolated Soviet satellite -- Albania. Cut off from its Soviet sponsor, except by sea, and surrounded by neighbors with various territorial claims on the country.

As I say, it was a probe, an effort to assess the situation in a hostile area. We were sending people in to find out whether there was sufficient possibility of resistance to Hoxha to make it worthwhile to enter into supply arrangements and all the rest, to build up a resistance force. What unfortunately happened was that all these people, practically all them, it was not 100 percent, but most of them, were picked up almost immediately by the Sigurimi, the Albanian secret police.

As the operation went on, Malta was dropped, and the Americans really took the thing over. They would do air drops from Greece using Polish pilots in case the planes were shot down. No Americans or English involved. They dropped these people and, of course, most of them landed to find themselves looking into the guns of the Sigurimi. The Albanians were well taught by the Russians, so the captured agents were then instructed to get in touch with their headquarters by radio. All of them had a signal which meant, "I have been captured and I'm under control," which usually showed up in the first four or five cipher groups that they transmitted by key. All of them had this, and almost all of them used it. But it was never picked up in the headquarters back in Greece, which is pretty shocking. It went on until 1953, when Hoxha had a big trial of the captives in Tirana. Each one told his story in court. At that point the Americans at last gave up. The British had in effect slid off earlier. It had ended up really as an alliance between the Americans and Zog, the former King, who had a half-American wife (she is still alive). In other words, it was thoroughly penetrated and it was a failed operation.

I had left in 1950, long before it got to that stage, because of trouble at OPC with a former Foreign Service Officer named Carmel Offie, who is pertinent to the story. Offie had been a F.S. clerk in, I believe, Colombia, when Ambassador Bullitt opened our Embassy to the Soviet Union in 1934. Bullitt wanted a stenographer. Offie had that ability, so he was assigned to the Moscow. He and Bullitt hit it off right from the start. This was a little bit difficult to believe if you knew Offie as I knew him. He was a remarkably ugly man, physically. He had a brilliant, quick mind. It was not very deep, it was a bit shallow, but it was very lively. Also, as it turned out, he was openly, an avowed homosexual. He and Bullitt became very close and he went with Bullitt when the Ambassador -- who had meanwhile had Offie made a Foreign Service Officer -- was transferred to Paris. In the last days before the fall of the French capital, Offie, on behalf of himself and Bullitt went around buying up properties around Paris (in one of which I stayed later when I went to the Paris Embassy). Bullitt's brother Orville wrote a book about the Ambassador in which Offie is a heroic, splendid, charming figure.

There is something about Offie I have never understood: he had a vast range of connections with everybody of any consequence in the Foreign Service. Senior people would come to Washington and stay with him. Bullitt had bought him a house on Woodley Road, which was the cause of much inquiry later on by J. Edgar Hoover, Bedell Smith, and others. Bob Murphy, for whom Offie had worked at Caserta and Frankfurt was Offie's close friend and protector; Freddy Reinhardt would stay at Offie's house when visiting Washington; countless others of that level were in and out of the Woodley Road house.

A major drama had taken place before that, in 1944. Bill Bullitt had a visceral loathing for Sumner Welles. He kept going to Franklin Roosevelt, saying, "You've got to get rid of this man," because Welles reputedly had a weakness for black men. But FDR and Welles were schoolmates, and when FDR came to Washington in March 1933 to assume the Presidency, he came four days early and stayed with the Welleses.

In 1944 Welles came down to Washington on the night train from New York. One of the black porters on the train filed a complaint against Welles. At this time the Pennsylvania Railroad had its own police. The Railroad police sent the porter's complaint up to the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, a man named Atterbury, a Philadelphia friend and political ally of Bullitt.

Atterbury passed the charge sheet on to Bullitt, who gave it to Offie with instructions to get it to every Senator and every Congressman on Capitol Hill -- which he did. While Offie was doing this, he was arrested one evening in the men's room of Lafayette Park for homosexual solicitation (of a police undercover agent). In those days this was handled like a traffic violation. You posted bond, which was \$25, and away you went -- which Offie did. That was the end of it. Except that the charge remained on the police blotter.

Bullitt then went to see the President again. As usual, the President said "Oh, Bill, forget it. Don't bother me with this kind of thing." Bullitt said, "I'm sorry, Mr. President, you can't ignore this any longer. Every Senator and every Congressman on the Hill now knows about it." And Welles was out the next day. Selden Chapin told me in Budapest three years later that as far as he knew this was the first time in the history of this Republic that this charge was ever used to get someone out of public office. Bullitt thereafter was ignored by the President. And Offie went off to Murphy's office in Caserta, then Frankfurt.

While Offie was in Frankfurt, Merle Cochran, whom I've mentioned above, was engaged in his inspection of the Paris Embassy. He was determined to get something on Offie. At that time all pouches for Europe went first to Paris, and were distributed from there. Cochran impounded all of the pouches, as he was entitled to do. All over Europe staffs were complaining, "Where's our mail?" Cochran doggedly went through every pouch until he found what he was looking for. He came across an envelope addressed to Offie from Tony Biddle (who had been Ambassador to Warsaw before the war). It contained \$4,000 in cash, which was a violation of the rules. The charge was made that Offie had violated the rules. He was on the potential Foreign Service promotion list that year, and he was removed therefrom. As a result, Offie resigned from the Foreign Service, just like that.

With his connections (Bob Joyce was one, from Caserta), the next thing you know, Offie shows up as Frank Wisner's closest advisor at OPC. His performance was a masterpiece. He would get up early in the morning and call all his friends in Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome, wherever there was some activity, and pick up all the most current information. By the time he got into the office at 8:30, 8:45, in the morning he knew everything that had gone on. At a staff meeting somebody would report on the situation in Paris, and Offie would say, "Oh, no, no. That's old. Let me tell you what the current situation is". Wisner was captivated by all this. Furthermore, when the Wisners came down from New York, Polly led a very active social life –

JOSEPH N. GREENE
Italy Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1949-1952)

Joseph N. Greene was born in New York, New York in 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1941. Mr. Greene joined the Foreign Service in 1942. His career included positions in Canada, Algeria, Italy, Singapore, Germany, Nigeria, India, The United Kingdom (England), and Egypt. Mr. Greene was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

Q: When you left Rome, you returned to the State Department, to be the Italian Desk Officer from 1949-1952. What were the issues you were dealing with?

GREENE: Before I got to the Italian Desk--the seat wasn't vacant yet--I was assigned to the then new office in the budding CIA, called the Office of Policy Coordination that Frank Wisner headed. The reason for that was, I had spent some time as a junior political officer in the embassy in Rome on the problems of Albania. What OPC wanted was to see if there were any avenues to de-stabilize Enver Hoxha. So I spent three to four months consulting with others who were in the business of "dirty tricks." We were interested in cooking up schemes of events which would provoke the demise of the communist region in Albania.

Once I left my interim assignment, and reported to the Italian Desk job, I didn't hear anything more about it until almost 1986 or 1987 when a journalist in Boston who had done a book on a British Operative, Fitzroy McLean, and had come across something about Albania. My name came up and the journalist called me. But I pleaded amnesia or a case of mistaken identity.

Q: Can you talk a little about how one looked at Albania at that time and how we tried to de-stabilize it?

GREENE: I really don't remember the particulars, but it was a political action plan rather than a military action one without anyone getting hurt. Starting with the few Albanians still hanging around Italy and plenty of them in what was then Yugoslavia. But all of that was communist territory. It was long before the Bay of Pigs.

But back to Italy. You asked me what our principal preoccupations were. In the wake of the 1948 elections, in which the communists had been defeated, the thrust of American policy was to sustain both politically and economically the concept of democracy in Italy while completing the Italian Peace Treaty. In that connection, a good deal of my time was spent on making sure the British/American administration of Trieste kept the Italians and Yugoslavs at bay until that almost free territory could run itself. The Yugoslavs made a couple of attempts to move in by force. The Italians never tried to move in by force. They did try to insinuate themselves and their system into the political life. One particular issue crystallized many of the other issues: The jurisdiction of the Italian court of Cassation in Trieste. That is an appeals court in the Italian judicial system and the Italians tried to insinuate themselves into the allied administration of a Free Territory utilizing their control over the course of events in the Court of Cassation. For all the reasons that bespoke bucking up De Gasperi, we wanted to help. But they went too far and got caught at it; we could not let them infiltrate through the judicial system what they couldn't accomplish through the political system directly. And although Tito had split with Moscow, Moscow as a communist signatory of the Peace Treaty, wasn't going to do us any favors, especially as their party, headed by Palmiro Togliatti, was still a force in Italy and they didn't want to do De Gasperi's supporters any favor doing something that would embarrass Togliatti.

I recall being sent out to Rome and Trieste, where we were represented by Leonard Unger, to try to get a modus vivendi, at least de facto, on the Court of Cassation issue. Ellsworth Bunker was then the ambassador. We finally got one acceptable to the British and ourselves.

The other aspect of the Italian Peace Treaty on which I spent some time in both Washington and with the United Nations at Lake Success, was the disposition of the Italian colonies. I spent at least one summer, 1950 probably, negotiating with the British and the Italians a formulation of what to do with Libya and Eritrea. The Italians had a pretty strong delegation in New York that summer and fall headed by Leonardo Vitetti. Libya was finally set up as an independent state with all three provinces in it. Eritrea was set up as a province of Ethiopia to the Eritreans' considerable chagrin. Forty years later, they fought their way out, and they are now independent.

On the Trieste issue as well as the Italian colonies, we worked hand in glove with the British. We had to do everything in complete understanding with them.

NICHOLAS G. ANDREWS
Albania-Bulgaria Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1962-1965)

Nicholas G. Andrews was born in 1924 in Romania and came to live in Massachusetts fifteen years later. He attended Princeton University and served in the Army. He entered the Foreign Service in 1950. His overseas posts include Yugoslavia, Turkey; and he twice served in Poland. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 12, 1990.

Q: One last question about this. When you were there, who was calling the shots? I mean were things pretty well located in Belgrade as far as what was happening there, or because of the ethnic rivalries were the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the communist party leaders?

ANDREWS: I think the leadership of the Bosnia communist party had gained a great deal of respect from Tito, and he let them run things the way they wanted to. There may have been plenty of consultation and discussion back and forth, but I think in the last analysis Putsar could decide how to do things in his own bailiwick. The communist party, of course, had both Croatian and Muslim, and Serbs in the leadership, and they worked reasonably well together. And then in all the district levels you had the same kind of thing, where you didn't have just Serbs here, and just Muslims there. You had some kind of a mix. At the time the Muslims seemed to be least...they appeared on the surface less than others. They were much more reserved, much more under cover. If there were Muslims on the board of something, they seemed to be less evident and didn't meet the public very much. I think that changed over the last 30 years, but that's since my time. At the time I was dealing with them, there were a few Muslims in the party leadership, including the Prime Minister, who were outgoing, and were active. But they were, of course, not church-going. I mean they didn't go to the mosques. Like all the communists, they didn't belong to any church, and didn't go for that. But the Muslims as a whole were those looked down on, both by Croatians and Serbs.

Q: This, of course, we're in 1990 and we're in the middle of a tremendous crisis going on in the Kosovo area because of the Albanian problem.

ANDREWS: In Bosnia-Herzegovina probably the Croats felt that they didn't have as much representation as they thought they ought to. But they were keeping very low also. You just didn't hear expressions of Croatian nationalism in those days. The Muslims have since become quite important, not only in the politics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also in the economics of it, and two or three years ago this huge scandal about money, and corruption centered around a very prominent Muslim political family in Bosnia-Herzegovina. But at the time they were brought into the politics of the Republic, but they were not part of it. They were brought into it because the communists wanted their representation, and thought it was only fair that they should be represented. But they were not naturally leaders in that area.

In Montenegro, it was just Montenegrins. There was no role played by Albanians or anybody else in Montenegro society. What you had though, I think, in both republics, beginning at the time I was there, was a sort of conflict between the older generation and the younger ones. The older generation being those who'd been part of the communist movement before the war, who had no great education, had not acquired much of an education at any time, but were still in charge and didn't understand economic things, didn't understand a lot of other things. In Montenegro you had this clash coming, I think, a little earlier. And I thought when I was there that there were a couple of younger people in the Montenegrin communist leadership who were up and coming, in fact did up and come, and they became leaders in Montenegro and have since been dumped by the new resurgent generation of forty-year olds. But at the time that they were thirty or so in the '50s, they were beginning to come up in Montenegro, and they succeeded. In Bosnia that was a little slower, and you had this rather complicated business of allocating seats according to race and creed, and origin even though people didn't pay attention to creed anymore. Still you paid attention to the origins, social and the racial origins. So young people had a lot of difficulty in coming up in the party, and after all, you couldn't make a career unless you were a party member, and unless you made yourself attractive to people.

Q: You left Yugoslavia in 1961, and then you came back and I have you on the Bulgarian-Albanian desk from '62 to '63, and then you were on the Yugoslav desk, '63 to '65. What was our major interest first with Bulgaria and Albania? In Albania we didn't have anything going.

ANDREWS: No, we didn't have anything going, and about the only thing that we received was some mail from Albanian American organizations in the United States, and maybe a newspaper or so, which I couldn't read but I passed on, if they were not available to INR.

Q: Intelligence and Research.

ANDREWS: ...where Steve Peters, a long-time employee there, was of Albanian extraction and knew the Balkans extraordinarily well, and so he was a great source of information on Albania; what all these Albanian organizations in the United States were doing, and saying.

Q: Might I add parenthetically, on the radio as I came in this morning I heard that AT&T said they have now opened up so people from Albania, for the first time since ever, can call directly to the United States, and next month people from the United States will be able to direct dial to

Albania. We have no relations with the country, but it just shows you that haven't changed much in this period. Was there much interest in Bulgaria?

ANDREWS: No. Bulgaria, unfortunately, plays a minimal role in U.S. thinking about European issues, or even about Eastern European issues. There was a little bit more interest then because, although there were no Soviet troops in Bulgaria, there was general assumption that there were a number of Soviet officers in the Ministry of Defense, and so forth. And that Bulgaria could in a very short period of time become a threat to Greece and Turkey if things got heated up. So there was that kind of an interest as far as Bulgaria was concerned. We generally, I think, took the Yugoslav side in Yugoslav-Bulgarian disputes concerning Macedonian minority, and things of this kind. We generally thought that the Yugoslavs made a better case.

I think during my time on the desk a new Ambassador went out, Eugenie Anderson, who was a political appointee from Minnesota. She had been Ambassador to Denmark earlier, I think. And she, I found, was a very pleasant person to deal with, quite competent in her own abilities

Q: What were your main problems that you had to deal with at that time?

ANDREWS: I'm not sure that "problems" is the way of putting it. The things we were trying to do was to move the relations between the United States, and the Eastern European countries, to a better level throughout in the economic area, and in all the other areas. And each of them was a somewhat different level. Kissinger, while he was at the White House with Sonnenfeldt's support I guess, had established a kind of rank order of which countries were worth dealing with most, and then least, and what we wanted to do in general terms with each of them. And therefore we had to follow this kind of rank order, and pursue our policy within these terms. And we were constantly trying to broaden the terms, or push the speed.

Q: ...in Eastern Europe, what was the rank order that you recall?

ANDREWS: Well, Poland was at the top. Then came Romania, then Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. Yugoslavia was a special case, Albania didn't really count, and we did also have.

THOMAS NILES
Rotational Officer
Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1963-1965)

Ambassador Thomas M. T. Niles was born in Kentucky in 1939. He received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University and master's from the University of Kentucky. Upon entering the Foreign Service in 1962, he was positioned in Belgrade, Garmisch, Moscow and Brussels, and also served as the Ambassador to Canada and later to Greece. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 5, 1998.

NILES: Let me talk a little bit about Albania. The Papandreou government also managed to have problems with Albania. There is a lot of history here. There is a substantial Greek minority community in southern Albania. The population is Greek speaking and Orthodox Christian. From 1912 to about 1919 the Greek-Albanian border was further north and an area which the Greeks call Northern Epiros was part of Greece. Albanians of course call it southern Albanian. CIA Director George Tenet's father was from Northern Epiros. Nicolas Gage, the author, was from Northern Epiros. The Greeks have a reasonable concern about the way in which the population there is treated, but the Albanians see that as a threat to their national sovereignty.

During the chaotic circumstances in Albania in 1993 and 1994, there was a political party in southern Albania among the Greek community called "Omonia." It means "community." Six or seven leaders of "Omonia" were arrested by the Berish government on alleged espionage charges. It turns out that at least one had a claim to American citizenship. The Greeks were outraged and adopted a hostile policy toward the Berish government. Bill Ryerson was our Ambassador at the time and we worked closely together to try to calm people down on both sides of the border. Foreign Minister Papoulias was [from the] town of Yannina, near the border with Albania, which is the major town in that area. He really cared deeply about Greek-Albanian relations. This was the only issue in which he was really engaged. The key was to get these men out of jail. Dick Shifter, our Assistant Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, managed to convince Berish to free the "Omonia 6." Various face saving concessions made. These men were too busy with smuggling and other things to be guilty of treason or espionage. Relations between Albania and Greece moved in a positive direction until the fall of 1996 when law and order in Albania collapsed as a result of the collapse of the so-called "pyramid investment schemes" run by the Berish government. But the improvement in relations was primarily due to the work we did. Dick Shifter was responsible for convincing the President of Albania to let these guys go. The Greeks by and large kept their end of the deal. In all those areas, the US was absolutely crucial in the negotiations. In the case of Turkey, if we had not been involved it is likely that Greece and Turkey would have had a localized war with casualties. This is one of our country's roles in the post-Cold War era. It is often frustrating and time-consuming, but there isn't anybody else out there to carry the load. Unless you want to say I don't care accept some sort of disaster, we are going to have to become involved.

The Greeks also had military training missions in most of the southeastern European countries. They had to withdraw their military training mission from Albania in 1996, as there was no one left to train, although they kept their Consulate in southern Albania.

Q: There were too many people wandering around with guns.

NILES: Everybody in Albania seemed to have an AK 47 and they were using them. Of course, some of those weapons ended up in Greece, in some cases as far away as Samos and Crete. That was a disaster. Greek policy in southeastern Europe, once we got over the embargo on Macedonia and the problems I mentioned between Greece and Albania in the summer and fall of 1995, was farsighted and constructive. They saw their interests served by promoting democracy and economic development and were prepared to put resources behind it. We worked with them

closely. Dick Shifter found that the Greeks were prepared to support his Southeastern Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI).

ROBERT RACKMALES
Albania-Bulgaria Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1970-1972)

Robert Rackmales was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1937. He studied history at Johns Hopkins University and graduated in 1958. He received a Fulbright Scholarship to Germany and this influenced him toward his entry into the Foreign Service in 1963. He had twice served in Nigeria, Yugoslavia and Italy at various rotations. He was interviewed by Professor Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 11, 1995.

Q: When you left in 1970 where did you go?

RACKMALES: Back to the Department as the desk officer for Albania and Bulgaria.

Q: Could you talk about...this would be '70 to '72, because Albania and Bulgaria hardly ever raised a blip on our radar which in a way was kind of fun because they were yours.

RACKMALES: That's right. I was the government expert on those two places, and none of my superiors had direct experience on either one. So on the few occasions when something came up that got the Secretary's or Under Secretary's attention, you were drawn on more than if you were the German desk officer, because then you've got all kinds of expertise in between. But with those two countries I would get calls from the White House. I remember Senator Weicker had a very strong interest in Albania for reasons that escape me for the moment.

Q: Weicker from Connecticut?

RACKMALES: Connecticut, yes. He was trying to get into Albania, he wanted to go there. So I would go over and brief him on the situation there and suggest ways that he could try to get in. Of course I warned him that we had no relations, in fact there is no protecting power so if you run into a problem there's nothing we can do. But that didn't deter him from trying. During the two years that I was on the desk there was a shift in the mindset about Albania where it went from, hell no, we have no interest in relations, to the Deputy Secretary Rusk saying, we are prepared if the Albanians are interested to look towards the resumption of relations, which I don't think anyone expected because the Albanians in that period were in their most isolationist phase and would have seen it as a real threat to themselves to make any gesture to the United States. But I was in favor of that kind of shift in policy because I thought it was a more realistic approach than the one that simply ignored the existence of this little country.

Q: Were you privy at all to what brought around the changes? Just personalities within the State Department, or what?

RACKMALES: I perhaps played some small role in that. Dick Davies who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary at that point for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was supportive. A part of the attention in those years to Albania was prompted by a request that the Italian government made to us to trade property. We owned the building [in Tirana, the Albanian capital] which the Italians were using as their chancery and residence. They paid us rent, so they were our tenants. I think it was in 1971 they said, "We have some property in Bucharest which we don't need, or we're giving up, and we would be happy to swap that with you." Our embassy in Bucharest was very strongly in favor of it, and were lobbying very hard for us to accept the Italian offer. I was making the case that at some point we would want to go back in, that there are damn few suitable properties--in fact, no suitable property in Tirana, and that we don't want to give this up because at some point we'll need it. In fact, it is still the property, it is now the residence and the chancery, and I'm told the best property in Tirana. Anyway, my arguments carried the day, and it could be that there was a spillover effect because again it was one of the few times when you got some attention from the Seventh Floor.

Q: How did we deal with the Albanian government? Can you describe how we saw it, and any interest the Americans might have in the problems of the Albania situation?

RACKMALES: It was at a time when Stalinism had virtually disappeared from the rest of Eastern Europe. Albania was the last refuge of Stalinism. The human rights situation in Albania was far worse than anywhere else. The only comparison today would be North Korea. There was a feeling that ultimately the Albanians would have to reenter Europe, that their strategy of becoming an entirely isolated outpost supported by China could not last. So it was a question of time. I don't think any of us expected any immediate change there because the control was so tight. The Chinese in those years hadn't yet gotten tired of supporting this tiny little country. So it seemed like a fairly stable situation. We were positioning ourselves for a future role.

Q: What was our judgment at that time. Who is this guy Milosevic? What motivated him as far as we were looking at him at that time?

RACKMALES: We did not feel that his nationalism was necessarily genuine, but that he was simply using this to increase his own personal power. His background had been as a communist apparatchik, and a very able one. Nobody underestimated his political skills. I think we probably viewed him as far and away the smartest of all the political leaders in that area. But he was also viewed as unburdened by any values that we thought were important, human rights, for example, or his fomenting of distrust among various nationalities. His technique was often to stand back and let others do the dirty work. For example, when Serbia announced the economic boycott of Slovenia (this would be equivalent to Texas declaring an economic boycott of New York) Milosevic never said a word. It was done by subordinate organs in Serbia, the Chamber of Commerce, I think was the one that first announced it. Milosevic would often stay in the background. That was his style. Anyway, our attitude towards Milosevic was that he was a negative influence, but a formidable one.

Q: About with the Albanians, if we're still looking at Kosovo, did we have people we could talk to in the Albanian...I'm talking about the Albanian minority. How did we treat them?

RACKMALES: Yes, we met regularly with them. Warren would go down regularly. I went down initially a bit less often because Warren was traveling there on a fairly regular basis, as was the political counselor. But I also went from time to time and met with the leadership, especially Ibrahim Rugova who still today is the acknowledged leader of the Kosovo Albanians. We kept up a regular dialogue with them. Our basic message was that we supported their human rights, that we encouraged them to use all legal means to try to advance those rights, that we were sending the same message to the federal government, and to the Serbian government. But at the same time we were strongly discouraging them from acts of violence which we felt in that context could only cause suffering, and not improve their lives.

Q: Did we feel that the Albanians...Albania now being a different type of country after the communists had left, were they too busy with their own problems, or were they fishing in these waters? Or how did we feel about this?

RACKMALES: There is a complex relationship between the Albanian government and leadership, and the Kosovo leadership. Ethnic affinity is one important element of the dimension that a certain mutual mistrust is also there. As I understand it a lot of the leaders in Albania are somewhat nervous and a little apprehensive of the Kosovo Albanians who because they lived in a more sophisticated country are much more widely traveled, have more political experience. The Kosovo Albanians were in effect self governing at a time when the Albanians were suffering under Hoxha. Despite these differences, the government in Tirana tends to call for strong steps against Serbia, and advocates the rights of the Kosovo Albanians. But I think they would be very nervous about an early amalgamation of the two entities.

Q: At this time, we're talking about '89-'90, were we running around looking for human rights violations?

RACKMALES: Oh, sure. First of all we have to because of the annual human rights report. We were always very careful not to take anybody's allegation at face value. We knew that whether it was the Kosovo Albanians, the Krajina Serbs, or anybody else, that there was a tendency to exaggerate. So we would always look for credible objective collaborating evidence. But there was no question that the Serbian policy in Kosovo, and I would say at a slightly later date, Croatian policy in Krajina, stripped people of rights that they had enjoyed up until that point. In other words there was a real setback in terms of ability to organize politically, right of free speech, employment rights, education rights of the minority in their own language, were stripped away for a time. So the human rights situation was abysmal, no question about it, and that was documented in great detail in the human rights reports.

Q: You were there from '89 until '93, Kosovo never really blew up.

RACKMALES: That's right. There were a couple of tense moments and a few fatalities. Had those happened a few years earlier it would have been more dangerous. As we went from '90, which may have been the point of maximum danger, as we went into '91 and '92 and '93, some might have predicted that as fighting was taking place, violence was happening elsewhere, that Kosovo would have gotten more dangerous. In fact, it got less dangerous. My last visit to

Kosovo, which I think was in April of 1993, there was less police presence, you saw almost no policemen. Whereas the first time I had gone there on every block you had two Serbs with machine guns walking around. And I think that's one of the ironies, one of the paradoxes, of the whole series of crises in that area is that the explosion of violence in Bosnia had the effect, I think, of sobering the Kosovo Albanians. The other factor that I think has dampened tensions is that, while in every formal respect Kosovo is still a colony in terms of the formal power structure, the Serbs have tolerated a parallel Albanian structure, including schools, hospitals. Basically there is a functioning, even though it is illegal, Albanian government there, and the Albanian community goes about most of its business, including a very thriving involvement in smuggling. You see a lot of BMWs driving around, and they're not being driven by Serbs for the most part. So Kosovo which we looked to as the most likely flashpoint in 1989 is now maybe the least likely flashpoint as of today.

GILBERT CALLAWAY
USIS Officer
Zagreb, Yugoslavia (1970-1972)

USIA Officer for Yugoslavia, Bulgaria & Albania
Washington, DC (1972-1974)

Gilbert R. Callaway was born in Tennessee in 1938. He received a B.A. from Rice University, an M.A. from American University, and served in the U.S. Army from 1963 to 1965. His postings abroad included Caracas, Zagreb, Moscow, Bologna, Rome, Managua, and Madrid. He was interviewed in 1999 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: We will talk again about Yugoslavia but what were we doing vis-à-vis Albania and Bulgaria?

CALLAWAY: We had no diplomatic relations whatsoever with Albania at the time, so what we were trying to do was both reach the people of Albania, and in a sense to try to normalize relations with the communist leaders of Albania at the time, working through the Voice of America. We did have Voice of America programs and depending on how relations were going with the rest of the communist world and what was happening in terms of mainly U.S.-Soviet relations, we would try to do broadcasts which would show that our programs and exchanges, information exchange particularly, would not be particularly harmful or threatening to the regime. On the other hand if relations were not good, then we would try to get the truth, the news, accurate information, into the people of Albania. That was basically the relationship with Albania. It would go up and down largely based, in my personal opinion, on our relationship with the Soviet Union, the great mother communist state.

Q: Wasn't it at that time that Albania had been sort of part of that great dual axis with Albania on one side and communist China on the other side? Albania had gone the course of not repudiating Stalin at that time and neither had China.

CALLAWAY: Right.

Q: Let's talk about Yugoslavia from '72 to '74. What was going on? What was doing then at that time?

CALLAWAY: There the effort was to move out into what are today the independent republics. While I was in Zagreb serving in the Croatian republic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the time, we opened a U.S. cultural center in Ljubljana in Slovenia. It was kind of putting our mark into the various republics of Yugoslavia recognizing them to that extent, never thinking in terms of '92 in the Soviet Union or '92 in Yugoslavia, that we were going to be dealing with independent republics. We wanted to establish our presence there, to deal with Slovenia, to recognize Slovenia to that extent.

When I came back to Washington as the Yugoslav desk officer at USIA, we were working to open cultural centers, and did, in Sarajevo in Bosnia, and in Titograd (now Podgorica) in Montenegro. These were very small operations. They were not consular operations because the Yugoslavs were not having any of this. We actually had to negotiate these deals very carefully. The people who went there did not travel on diplomatic passports. They were not accredited to Yugoslavia as diplomats. They were information officers, or librarians, or cultural affairs officers and they went with official passports, which gave them a certain amount of protection.

This was an era when we were negotiating with the Yugoslavs to see how far we could push the envelope to be represented throughout the country of Yugoslavia. We did so successfully, although we wanted our people to be recognized as diplomats. We always wanted more and the Yugoslavs tended to want less, but we did it.

The opening in Ljubljana, which I attended, was a tremendous success. We had a lot of dignitaries show up, as well as a lot of artistic, academic, and intellectual people. I was back in the States at the time when we opened in Sarajevo, but we were very careful on who we would choose. We chose someone, Victor Jackovitch, who subsequently became our first ambassador into Bosnia. He was the first to open up the cultural center in Sarajevo. I can't remember who went to Titograd at this time.

Q: Despite you having to be rather precise in moderating what we were opening in Montenegro, Bosnia, and Slovenia, did you find that cultural wise and all, the Yugoslav government was pretty open to what we could do there?

CALLAWAY: Yes, especially with the hindsight gained after having gone and served in the Soviet Union. It was tremendously open. I don't think we realized how open it was at that time. But even having come to Yugoslavia and having served there, and then serving on the desk, looking back at Venezuela, which was my only previous Foreign Service assignment, we were limited in certain ways. There were student protests about Vietnam in Venezuela, but, as I mentioned to you, I managed to get the political counselor at the embassy to go onto campus and give a talk about Vietnam. That was pretty sensitive and there were a lot of doubts about that. I think Yugoslavia at the time, at least culturally and intellectually, was quite open. Politically, it

was another matter. They simply were not going to recognize us putting diplomats into the various republics beyond where we had an established consulate (i.e., Zagreb).

MARTEN VAN HEUVEN
Romania and Albania Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1973-1974)

Marten Van Heuven was born in the Netherlands in 1932. He received his BA and LLB from Yale University and his MIA from Columbia University. His positions abroad included Berlin, Brussels, The Hague, Bonn and Geneva. Charles Stuart Kennedy interviewed him on January 31, 2003.

Q: Today is March 11, 2003. You were doing Romania and Albania from '73 to when?

VAN HEUVEN: For two years, '73 and '74.

Q: What were relations with Albania and what were our concerns with Albania during this period?

VAN HEUVEN: The answer is very simple. We had no relations with Albania. We hadn't had relations since 1945. Of course, there had been no effective relations even earlier, during World War II. But it was a country that was aligned mostly with communist China. It was an outcast in the European Communist bloc. It was a closed country. There was very little news coming out of it. There were few people going into it, certainly not Americans. There was an Albanian diaspora in the United States in Brooklyn and in Worcester, Mass., and somewhere in the middle west as well, but they didn't constitute any significant presence in domestic political terms. There was nobody on the Hill of Albanian extraction, nor was there any particular interest in Albania in Congress.

Q: All this is terribly important in the American context of things. All you need is one congressperson or chief of staff in an important committee who's got an Albanian connection and you've got a policy.

VAN HEUVEN: We did have the occasional appearance in Washington of the son of King Zog, a gentleman of enormous length and stature named Leka. I think his nationality was Australian. He had some property here in Virginia and from time to time he appeared and sought recognition on the Hill, without much success. I never met him and he was never a factor in our relationship with Albania.

Q: Was there any talk during your time about opening relations with Albania? We hadn't had relations with China and all of a sudden this was a period we were beginning to start to do that.

VAN HEUVEN: It was generally recognized that any opening to Eastern Europe was far off, and that in that process Albania would be at the bottom of the list. The country had no strategic

significance for us, except perhaps as a political outpost for Chinese communism in contradistinction to Soviet communism. In that sense, it was of interest to us, since Albania was a thorn in the Soviet communist side. That is about as far as it went. I did address the issue of relations with Albania in an article I wrote at the time. It got approved for publication. It was a minor thing. It was a speculative piece, making the point that resumption of relations would be a slow process. But there was no basis for believing that this was going to happen anytime soon.

RONALD J. NEITZKE
Consular Officer
Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1975-1978)

Ronald Neitzke was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Sts Thomas College, the University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). Entering the Foreign Service in 1971 he served in Oslo before studying Servo-Croatian, the beginning of his career as specialist in East European Affairs. In Washington, Mr. Neitzke served on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department and was Country Director for Czech and Albanian Affairs. In London he was Deputy Political Counselor, and in Zagreb he served as Deputy Chief of Mission during the conflicts of the split-up of Yugoslavia. He also had several assignments in Washington in the personnel field. Mr. Neitzke was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: We will come back to the inner workings of the embassy a little later, but describe what Yugoslavia was like from the optic of Belgrade when you arrived there in '75?

NEITZKE: It was, as we would later come to view it, Yugoslavia's Zlatna Doba, Golden Age. Internally, the Yugoslav national question, so important and destructive during World War II, was largely subdued, or at least reasonably well hidden below the surface. Everyone was aware, however, of the constant balancing act that Tito had to perform to keep all national elements satisfied that they were getting their fair share of the pie. He had cracked down on both Serb and Croatian nationalists, Rankovic in '68 I think and the Croats in '71. So the issue was not dead; it just wasn't red hot when I was there. If I can digress for a moment, I'd say that what we had in Tito's Yugoslavia at that time was the mother of all group-identity quota systems, in which nearly everything, positions, perks, and so on was apportioned based on national identity. Even senior slots in Yugoslav embassies abroad were filled in this manner. At the federal level, senior offices rotated among representatives of the various republics and autonomous areas.

But the country, however backward it still was in many respects, had a vitality then, a dynamism, that was palpable. Yugoslav guest workers in Western Europe were remitting huge sums to the country. Vikendicas, small weekend get-away cottages, were springing up throughout the countryside. Most Yugoslavs were free to travel abroad, at least comparatively so. The Yugoslavs' vaunted Socialist Self-management system was being taken seriously by West European political theorists. National inter-marriage was on the rise, or so it seemed in Belgrade. The JNA, the army that is, and the LCY, the communist party, seemed increasingly integrated

from a nationality standpoint. Even though Belgrade itself was relatively drab, especially in the winter from the burning of low-grade coal, there was a sense of forward movement in the country. This isn't to suggest we were somehow unaware of Yugoslavia's past and didn't worry; we did, about all kinds of contingencies. But our concerns were generally more hypothetical than acute.

Q: You mentioned intermarriage. You are talking about?

NEITZKE: Serbs and Croats intermarrying, mainly, but also, to a lesser extent, Serbs and Croats marrying Bosnian Muslims, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. But very little involving Albanian Kosovars. Let me just add, regarding potentially resurgent nationalism, that in my three years there and projecting as far as we reasonably could into the future, we and other Western analysts always made allowance for the possibility that Kosovo could be Yugoslavia's Achilles heel. The Albanians were not integrating into the country in the same way that the other nationalities at least then appeared to be doing. The birth rate among the Albanian Kosovars was far higher than among other nationalities, and they were much poorer than any other nationality. The sheer demographics of the situation were pushing Serbs out of their ancient religious heartland of Kosovo. Our analyses always made allowance for the Kosovo factor. But no one, at least no one in Belgrade, was then predicting, or even making allowance for, a possible violent resurgence of Serb-Croat or Serb-Bosnian Muslim cross national strife.

Q: Let us talk a bit more about your experiences with the various republics when you would go there. Did you get any feel for a place like say Montenegro?

NEITZKE: My single most vivid recollection of Montenegro is the doorman at the Hotel Crna Gora in Titograd. He was the spitting image of Charles de Gaulle. Beyond that, I went in with the impression that the average Montenegrin was sort of a super Serb, tall, good looking, macho to the hilt. Some of that came from my having waded through "Black Lamb and Grey Falcon." That's how Rebecca West portrayed them. And there were elements of that. They were tough, hardened, not the kind of people you would easily push around. But they had a different perspective from the Serbs. They were much smaller in number, less exposed to external influences and pressures, and sprang from a terrain so rugged that it had to have played a role in shaping them. We were also told that there was a historic connection between the Russians and the Montenegrins.

Q: Oh, the king's daughter, the king of Montenegro, or prince of Montenegro, his daughters married both an Italian and a Russian duke.

NEITZKE: The intermarriage we'd heard about was between Russian officers and Montenegrin women. And we'd heard that Russian was being taught in Montenegrin schools. I wasn't able to judge how much of this Russian-Montenegrin tie was hype and how much was real. There seemed less to it than the Soviets would have had believe.

Q: What sort of a read did we have on the Albanian Kosovars at that time?

NEITZKE: Kosovo was easily the strangest place to travel in Yugoslavia. You could stand in the field outside Pristina where the Turks defeated the Serbs in 1389 and tour the old, frescoed Serbian Orthodox churches. And you could feel there was some substance to the Serbian claim that this was their national heartland. But you couldn't help but notice that there weren't many Serbs around. We had heard from the Serbian side that they were being pushed out, and we knew, as I mentioned earlier, the Albanian Kosovar demographic trends, by far the highest birthrates in Yugoslavia. Still, compared with the forested hills of Sumadija, in Serbia, Kosovo looked pretty forlorn. It was hard to imagine even then that most Serbs' supposed devotion to this land was much more than symbolic. Pristina was the most tense regional capital I visited. Police everywhere. A sense that you were being followed and everything you did was being recorded. There had been inter-ethnic flare-ups at the University. Everyone we spoke with was uptight.

Another important Kosovo-related issue in those years was supposed Albanian irredentism. Since there was almost no reliable information on Albania's intentions, it was difficult to weigh the validity of Serbian concerns. But those concerns were voiced constantly. As strange as Kosovo was then, it was no match for Albania, even based on what the Albanians themselves were putting out. It was hard then to see how or why the Albanian Kosovars would even want to be part of Hoxha's weird experiment. But within Yugoslavia, in embassy projections of Yugoslavia's long term cohesiveness, Kosovo always stood out as an area that might never be fully integrated.

YALE RICHMOND
USIA, Deputy Assistant Director for Europe
Washington, DC (1978-1980)

Yale Richmond was born in Massachusetts in 1923. He received a bachelor's degree in 1943 from Boston College, thereafter he joined the Army from 1943-1946. He then receives a master's degree from Syracuse. His career included positions in Germany, Austria, Russia, Poland, and Laos. Mr. Richmond was interviewed in June 2003 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: When you say "Eastern Europe," could you explain what that meant at that time?

RICHMOND: Eastern Europe at that time... The Soviet Union was considered separate. But Eastern Europe at that time included the other members of the Warsaw Pact – Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

Q: And East Germany.

RICHMOND: East Germany was a special case. I never worked on East Germany, but it formally was not considered a part of Eastern Europe in the State Department. That would have meant that the West Germans had formally recognized having lost it. The same way Yugoslavia

had a unique position. Yugoslavia was “communist” but was largely open to the West. You could buy all kinds of Western newspapers there. It was communism under Tito, who had his differences with the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia was not a part of the Warsaw Pact, but it was considered Eastern Europe for the State Department, as were the 3 Baltic states because we did not recognize them formally as being a part of the Soviet Union. So, the 3 Baltic states were also in the State Department hierarchy in Eastern Europe, as was Albania, another special case.

Q: [Exchanges during détente] turned out to be a huge program. It had significant repercussions within China.

RICHMOND: It did. You had a lot of Chinese professors who had studied in the United States before the war and already had the contacts with their American colleagues. We didn't have that with Russia. With China you had it and they could recommend students to people they had gone to school with in the United States who were now professors.

Q: We used to have Yale in China and others. There is still a lot.

Did things change within Eastern Europe? How were these exchanges run during this time?

RICHMOND: Things relaxed considerably. Exchanges with Hungary expanded greatly, even with Czechoslovakia, which was still under Party leaders. Bulgaria expanded. They took their cue from Moscow. If the Soviets were having exchanges with the United States, the Eastern Europeans wanted them to. The only country that was never brought in was Albania. That was a class by itself.

Q: Today is June 19, 2003. You were off to Vienna in 1961. How long were you there and what were you doing?

RICHMOND: I was in Vienna for 2 years from '61 to '63 as head of what was called the Special Projects Office, SPO, which was a great misnomer if I ever heard of one. In the Soviet Bloc, “special projects” always meant something to do with secret services.

Q: It sounded to me like you were in charge of assassinations.

RICHMOND: I don't know why they called it that. We called it SPO for short. Its ostensible mission was to provide cultural and informational support to USIA posts in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union which did not have large staffs and didn't have libraries and they couldn't make exhibits, they couldn't run photo shows. So what we did in Vienna, we had a large exhibit section of 15 or so Austrians who could put together an exhibit on anything that our East European posts requested. We also had a large photo lab which was at that time the largest photo lab in Vienna. They could dig up photos of almost anything to use in these exhibits. Then we had a very interesting monitoring operation which paralleled what FBIS was doing. We had on the

staff people who could translate bilingually in Albanian, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Russian, and they would listen to news broadcasts from those countries on their radios at home or in the office and we put out a daily bulletin on what the Eastern Bloc nations were saying about various things of interest to the West. That was distributed to Austrian readers in Vienna but mainly to the foreign press. The western press had a large presence in Vienna because it was first of all too expensive and difficult to maintain a staff in each of the East European countries and there wasn't much they could gather in those days anyway. So, all of the Western press had the correspondents in Vienna who covered Eastern Europe from Vienna and they were recipients of our daily bulletin. They would follow up on stories that we had tipped them off on. That was the stated purpose of SPO.

RONALD J. NEITZKE
Country Director, Czechoslovakia & Albania
Washington, DC (1981-1983)

Ronald Neitzke was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Sts Thomas College, the University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). Entering the Foreign Service in 1971 he served in Oslo before studying Serbo-Croatian, the beginning of his career as specialist in East European Affairs. In Washington, Mr. Neitzke served on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department and was Country Director for Czech and Albanian Affairs. In London he was Deputy Political Counselor, and in Zagreb he served as Deputy Chief of Mission during the conflicts of the split-up of Yugoslavia. He also had several assignments in Washington in the personnel field. Mr. Neitzke was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: So then in '81?

NEITZKE: I reentered the fray. I had wanted to be country officer for Yugoslavia, but it was technically a stretch and there were strong bidders at grade. So, I instead became country officer for Czechoslovakia and Albania. Again, a fluke of timing. It was one of the most intense and interesting jobs I ever had, mainly because of a series of negotiations I got involved in. The most important was on the issue of Czech Claims/Gold.

Q: Well, let us start with that.

NEITZKE: In June, when I returned to the Department, we were at a make or break point in negotiations with the Czechs over our demand for the payment of claims owed to U.S. citizens for property the Czech communist government began confiscating in 1948. The Czechs were demanding the return of their share of the Nazi-looted gold recovered by Allied forces at the war's end. Among older East European hands, Czech Claims/Gold was almost legendary. It was thought by many to be unsolvable, for a number of reasons, some having to do with the hold that a few angry Czech-American claimants had on key Congressmen and Senators. Yet it wouldn't

go away and had bedeviled generations of Czech desk officers, Ambassadors to Prague, and others in East European Affairs.

Q: Why don't you give a little background. Who had this gold?

NEITZKE: The Nazis had looted gold from every nation they conquered and occupied. I'm talking here about gold looted from the treasuries of victim governments, not the gold looted from individual victims of Nazi persecution, although there may have been a small bit of intermingling. At the end of the war the victorious Allied armies rounded up as much of this gold as they could find, inventoried it, and stored it for safekeeping in their national repositories. The Allied governments then set up in Brussels a group called the Tripartite Gold Commission, tripartite because its members were the U.S., Britain, and France. The job of the TGC was to review claims by Nazi victim governments for gold losses, establish which governments were entitled to how much of the recovered gold, and return the bulk of that gold to them, keeping a small amount in reserve until the TGC itself made final apportionments and went out of business. The amount of gold retrieved and placed under TGC control was only about two-thirds of the amount that the various victim governments claimed to have lost.

By 1981, the only victim governments that had not received the bulk of their apportionment of the recovered gold were Czechoslovakia and Albania, and all of the remaining gold was stored in the New York Federal Reserve Bank and the Bank of England in London. Washington and London had blocked TGC gold distributions to both governments until U.S. and British citizens received compensation for property claims. There were other issues to be resolved in any deal with Tirana, but with the Czechs the problem was unresolved claims.

Q: What about reports, if I remember correctly, that Middle Eastern terrorist organizations were being trained by the Czechs?

NEITZKE: I recall such reports, but this wasn't a big issue while I was on the desk. I don't recall that the Czechs at that time were all that big a third area nuisance to us. They were plenty ugly right on the spot, harassing our personnel, calling us Nazis, and so forth.

Q: How about our warm and friendly relations with Albania?

NEITZKE: As you know, we had no relations at all with Albania. The extent of my dealings on Albania at first was to monitor the FBIS, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, output on Albania to keep abreast of the official line on what was happening there. And we'd get a bit of news from Allies who had small missions there. There was also the fate of our Italian-occupied former mission in downtown Tirana and the annual stipend I believe we paid Rome for its upkeep. The Italians kept wanting to buy it from us, cheap, arguing it was terribly run down and all but useless. We didn't yield on that. And we monitored Albania's recurring strong negative reaction to our Navy's determined efforts to exercise our right of unimpeded navigation through waters that the Albanians claimed as their own. Fortunately, the Albanians, who looked to Beijing for support internationally, were at least as hostile to the Soviets as they were to us. Otherwise, if the Soviets, for example, had made progress toward acquiring naval or other base rights in Albania, we'd have had a serious problem to deal with.

I did turn more to Albania in my second year as Czech-Albania country officer, mainly because, after resolving Czech claims/gold, Albania was the only country left to receive its gold apportionment from the TGC. We decided that, since we'd cranked up this moribund institution, and everyone was current on the mechanics of executing a deal, we'd see how far we could get even in the absence of direct ties with Tirana.

Q: And how did that go?

NEITZKE: The Albanian gold problem had some of the same dimensions as the Czech case; there were unresolved claims of Albanian-Americans against the Albanian regime. But there were also different aspects, such as that nearly all of the TGC gold identified for Albania was in the Bank of England rather than the New York Fed. And in addition to unresolved property nationalization claims, the British also had unsettled claims against Tirana arising from the Corfu Channel Case. The first task was to establish a means of communicating with Tirana, and the French were reluctantly persuaded to play that role, in addition to their role as a TGC member. We traveled to Rome to get the Italians' insights on dealing with the Albanians. But it took a long time to get the ball rolling on this. Through the French, the Albanians ultimately agreed to indirect exploratory talks with us and the Brits in Paris, at the Quai d'Orsay. I participated in those talks, in late 1983, I believe, even though I had left the desk some months earlier.

This undertaking was tricky in one additional respect. The Albanians - this was still the Hoxha regime - were categorically against any form of normalization with the U.S. or Britain. Although we were also interested in exploring normalization, we had to assure them through the French that this effort was aimed solely at seeing whether we could come to terms on delivery of their share of the gold. The actual mechanism for the talks was strange; we and the Brits would sit in one room at the Quai, the Albanians in another, with the French shuttling between us and assuring the Albanians that they would not actually have to meet us. The arrangement had elements of farce, as the French seemed to enjoy pointing out.

There were also indications at the time that we might be closer than we'd earlier thought to a post-Hoxha transition in Albania. There were recurring waves of purges in the country, yet they opened up a direct ferry link with Italy as I recall. Again, our most immediate concern was that any such changes not afford the Soviets an opening. Moreover, we didn't want to see anything feed already potent Yugoslav fears of Albanian irredentism regarding Kosovo.

Q: Well, the Straits of Corfu, there had been a nasty little battle there.

NEITZKE: A battle? Perhaps. My recollection is that the Corfu Channel Case, which I had studied in college, involved mines laid in Albanian territorial waters that blew up a British warship exercising its right of innocent passage. The Albanians said they didn't put the mines there, and the International Court of Justice I think concluded that they had or at least that they were responsible for it. The ICJ issued a monetary judgment in favor of Britain, which the Albanians refused to pay. So the need to deal with that old issue complicated Britain's participation in the claims/gold talks. While the amount of gold was not massive, it was sufficient, given the highly inflated price of gold, to make a deal potentially worthwhile, in

strictly financial terms, to a cash-starved Tirana. In the end we didn't do this deal on my watch, but it was done later along the lines of the framework that we had laid out.

Q: This would have been from...

NEITZKE: 1983 to 1986.

Q: Well, what sort of issues did you get into?

NEITZKE: Many dealt with Eastern Europe. I mentioned that I continued working on the Albanian claims/gold exploratory talks after leaving the Czechoslovak-Albanian desk. There was a turnover of personnel in EEY and I was the repository of expertise on this arcane issue. So I made several trips to Europe to help out on that. But eventually we took that about as far as we could and long hiatuses would develop in which we wouldn't hear anything at all from the Albanians except the nastiness they'd hurl at us through their official spokesmen.

RUTH E. HANSEN
Political Officer
Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1986-1990)

Ruth E. Hansen was born on February 18, 1946 in Illinois. She received her BA from Wheaton College in 1968 and her MSFS from Georgetown University in 1970. Her career has included positions in the Dominican Republic, Poland, Panama, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. Ms. Hansen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 21, 2004.

Q: What was your job, and what piece of the action did you have?

HANSEN: I was one of four or five officers in the Political Section, headed first by Richard Miles, who later went on to serve as ambassador to several different countries, and then by Louis Sell, who later wrote a biography of the notorious Slobodan Milosevic.

I was the political reporting officer for Serbia, including the ethnic-Albanian province of Kosovo, and the human rights officer.

When we arrived, Slobodan Milosevic had not yet come fully to the fore, but I believe he was already at a senior level of the Serbian communist party. One of the other key figures was Ivan Stambolic, a rival of Milosevic's who was assassinated some years later. There were two major issues that probably could be considered the crux of Serbian politics at the time, the status of the Province of Kosovo and the economic, political, and human rights conditions there and, more broadly, Serbia's standing within the Yugoslav federation.

Upon arriving at post, I was introduced to and began getting acquainted with human rights activists and emerging political opposition figures. After we'd been there about six months, the Serbian Academy of Sciences came out with a major paper about the future of Yugoslavia and its major issues and problems. The first part of it was a fairly straightforward pro-reform paper, in good part dealing with needed economic and democratic reforms. Then it launched into essentially a tirade on Kosovo and the threat they felt that Kosovo, with its about 90% ethnic Albanian population, posed for Yugoslavia and for Serbs in particular. With this document, the Academy helped to popularize the theme that Serbs in Kosovo were suffering at the hands of the ethnic Albanian majority there and were being "forced" out of Kosovo. Kosovo is an area that Serbs considered integral to Serbia as a nation. It carried tremendous emotional and historic appeal for Serbs as the cradle of Serbian civilization, the site of the historic Battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389, and home to the ancient Serbian Orthodox patriarchate. So the tensions that ultimately tore Yugoslavia apart were beginning to come out into the open. They had been present for a long time in other fashions over the years, and at various times they had been held in check by the repressive measures of the Tito regime. Certainly the situation was beginning to deteriorate in the first couple of years that we were in Belgrade.

Q: Did you get down to Kosovo much?

HANSEN: I did. In my first visit, I had the opportunity to accompany the Political Counselor, Dick Miles, and a visiting human rights officer from the State Department Human Rights Bureau.

There were a number of individual human rights cases that were of concern to Washington at the time, but the major issue was the treatment of the ethnic Albanian population, particularly in Kosovo and in Macedonia. There, there was a fairly high rate of arrests on what we tended to consider political grounds, for expression of political opinion, usually having to do with the status of Kosovo. At the time, advocacy of a change from province to republic status was understood as codeword for advocacy of independence for Kosovo and ultimately for creation of a "greater Albania" comprised of Albania, Kosovo, and portions of Macedonia and Montenegro. The Serbian authorities, and by extension Yugoslav authorities, interpreted any discussion of a Republic of Kosovo as subversive and as intended to stir up ethnic conflict. In their minds, the Kosovo and Macedonian Albanians wanted the province to attain republic status, equal to that of the other republics of Yugoslavia, which under the then-constitution theoretically would give Kosovo the right to break away from the federation, which would contribute to the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Q: What did a visit to Kosovo entail?

HANSEN: During most of the time we were in Yugoslavia, diplomatic travel around the country could only be arranged via the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry. It wasn't that you couldn't travel otherwise, but your chances of getting appointments with anyone were practically nonexistent without going through the Foreign Ministry and the protocol structures in the various republics and provinces. In keeping with this practice, we flew or drove down to Kosovo and were met by a local protocol officer who accompanied us to all the appointments that his office had arranged at the Foreign Ministry's request – for example, with the editor of the newspaper, an Albanian-

language publication; with Kosovo government and communist party officials, and so forth. On this particular visit, we were taken to visit a large hog-raising farm and meat-packing plant, one of the provinces self-management enterprises. For the most part, our interlocutors were ethnic tandems of Serbs and ethnic Albanians. They seemed to work in parallel structures. It gave the impression that the ethnic Albanians had more autonomy than they probably actually did, especially as Serbia began to try to alter the equation. We were free to raise any questions we liked but the responses were seldom very enlightening. Our interlocutors were always very articulate and always had a good line of gab to feed to foreign visitors. It was sometimes hard to understand what they were really saying, even with an interpreter, because the lingo of the Yugoslav communist system was a language unto itself. It was by no means straightforward.

Kosovo was a basket case economically. The unemployment rate and poverty levels were high. Factories were operating at far from full capacity. In the capital of Kosovo, Pristina, the shops were poorly stocked, streets were trash-strewn, sidewalks and roads were in bad repair, streets were crowded with overflow pedestrians. There were tremendous numbers of young people, mostly unemployed or under-employed. In decent weather, the evening “korzo” brought crowds off people out to walk the main street through town. The main economic activities were agriculture, a lot of it very marginal, and mining. The famous Kosovo Plain was quite fertile and was lovely in the spring. Kosovars would brag that it had the potential to be comparable to California in food production, quite an exaggeration.

Kosovo was the least developed part of Yugoslavia and was largely supported by outside budgetary supports from the rest of the federation, which was a very big sore point in Croatia and Slovenia, the wealthier republics that ended up supporting this disaster in Kosovo. While the Serbs remaining in Kosovo were largely an aging and declining population, there was a high birth rate among the ethnic Albanians and, unfortunately, a very high infant mortality rates. I think it was the highest in Europe at the time. In response to earlier unrest in the province, the Albanians in Kosovo had been to some degree bought off by investments in the province financed from the rest of the federation. For example, there was a university in Pristina where students could study in Albanian, but for what? There were no jobs to go to.

It was a very unhappy situation. The Serbs felt Kosovo was an integral part of their homeland yet they didn't feel safe there. You would hear outrageous stories about Serbian women being raped, nuns attacked. A lot of the stories were probably exaggerations and distortions, but there probably was an element of truth as well. One of the Serbian themes at the time was that Serbs were being “forced” out of Kosovo by population pressures from the growing ethnic Albanian population and were “forced” to sell their property to the ethnic Albanians because the Albanians offered prices they couldn't refuse. Their phrase was migration “under pressure.”

So there were a lot of ethnic tensions. Another example was simply the way Serbs spoke about Albanians. They often used the Albanian language term for Albanians, which was acceptable to use when speaking Albanian, but when spoken in Serbian it was considered a derogatory term. Serbs used it freely. Generally, they considered Albanians the lowest of the low, perhaps on a par with gypsies, the Roma who were also on the bottom rung in Yugoslav society. It was sometimes difficult to speak with Serbs about these ethnic issues. They were very emotional, very close-

minded. They couldn't understand why we weren't more sympathetic to what they perceived as the dangers posed by the ethnic Albanians in their midst.

Q: What was the attitude of the embassy about the Kosovo issue?

HANSEN: Especially in the first couple of years we were there, I would say it was seen as something of a longer term issue. Over time and with Milosevic's rise, it took on more immediacy. We often tried to make the case to our interlocutors that, by treating Kosovo Albanians with suspicion and imposing ever more repressive measures in the province, they were creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. If they were concerned about Kosovars seeking to break away from Yugoslavia, Serbia's handling of the Kosovo issue and treatment of ethnic Albanians only made this more likely. No one was persuaded.

In the embassy, I think there was a sense that, yes, at some point it could reach a flashpoint. There had been violence in the province in the past and there could be again in the future, but I don't think it was seen as an immediate threat to stability in the region. And in the event, of course, it was elsewhere in Yugoslavia that the break-up occurred and violent conflict erupted initially. But Kosovo was certainly something we understood as a serious matter. Ambassador Zimmerman took on the issue aggressively and tried to convince Serbia to deal more appropriately with the ethnic Albanians, to respect freedom of expression and so on. Prominent Americans visiting Yugoslavia at that time conveyed similar kinds of messages. It was a sensitive thing. Larry may mention in his transcript that the famous writer Joseph Brodsky visited Belgrade, and Larry managed his program. Brodsky met with Serbian writers and other intellectuals and made the case that they had to come to terms with the Kosovo issue with respect for human rights, to no avail. Joan Baez gave a concert in Belgrade, which was attended by a huge crowd. The audience obviously knew her music and loved her, but she made a comment about the Kosovo issue and the temperature in the concert hall plummeted.

Q: Wasn't there any sort of human rights group within the Serbian body politic that was concerned about Kosovo?

HANSEN: There was a semi-official human rights structure and independent human rights groups were emerging. There were human rights activists in Serbia, but they were mostly interested in the rights of Serbs. They were looking after their rights.

A semi-official Yugoslav human rights structure was taking shape in about 1989, under the leadership of a prominent law professor, Vojin Dimitrijevic. He told me once that, of the committee's 40 members, he was satisfied with most of them but about four were problematic. At one point early in the committee's existence, Rep. Steny Hoyer led a CODEL to Yugoslavia and we arranged a luncheon where he met some of the human rights committee members. As one of his conversations developed, I could sense that one of his interlocutors, a member of the human rights committee, probably held some typically unenlightened Serbian views. I was able to steer the conversation in a direction that revealed them, and in fact he made some derogatory comments about gypsies, for example, and questioned the right of the U.S. or other countries to look into the human rights situation in Yugoslavia. The Congressman was understandably nonplused, and even asked the gentleman for confirmation that he was indeed a proponent of

human rights. The Congressman later asked me about the gentleman, and I commented that we seemed to have found out one of the four problematic members of the committee, and now just needed to find the other three. The Congressman got a good chuckle out of that.

There was a lot of Congressional interest in Kosovo at the time. I had another very memorable experience when Rep. Tom Lantos and his wife asked for a tour of Kosovo in about August of 1989. Congressman Lantos was very interested in human rights issues generally, very active on human rights issues in Eastern Europe, and particularly interested in the dilemma in Kosovo. That summer, he was spending some time in Bulgaria, where an anti-Turkish campaign was underway, and took advantage of his proximity to Yugoslavia to be driven into Serbia for a visit to Kosovo, and I was his control officer. With an embassy driver, I picked them up at the border with Bulgaria and we drove down into Kosovo for about three days. This was a wonderful experience for me as a political officer. Lantos is a very impressive individual. He and his wife are quite a pair and we had a wonderful several days traveling around Kosovo. Both he and his wife asked a lot of good questions and were genuinely interested in understanding the situation from all points of view. They came with their sympathies for the ethnic Albanians, the underdogs, already pretty much in mind and they certainly didn't change their minds, but they seemed really to want to understand the situation in Kosovo and the relationship between the ethnic Albanians and the Serbs. We just talked and talked that whole long weekend. It was one of those moments in the Foreign Service where everything comes together, and I had the chance to bring to bear just about everything that I'd come to understand about the situation and talk about it to someone in a position of responsibility in Washington in Congress. It was a terrific experience.

Congressman Lantos was especially interested in meeting Ibrahim Rugova, who then was emerging as a leader among the Albanians in Kosovo. We were able to set that up, and they had a long talk over lunch or dinner at the Grand Hotel in Pristina. Lantos had asked me beforehand what I thought of Rugova, and I said that I thought he was in over his head. After their discussion, Lantos said he agreed with me. As years went on, Rugova continued to play a lead role in Kosovo and was president of Kosovo for a long time. So obviously he grew into the job.

We also had to arrange for Congressman Lantos to meet with at least someone in the official Kosovo structure, and we did have a meeting with a top ethnic Albanian official, whose wife was Montenegrin. She joined the meeting as well. This official could be assumed to be hostile to Lantos because Lantos was so critical of the regime he represented, but they had a pretty good conversation. I had to serve as interpreter, which was quite a challenge. At one point, the Kosovar official made the comment that human rights are fully respected in Kosovo. Lantos replied, "Would that that were so," and raised his eyebrow at me as if wondering whether I could manage that phrase. Luckily, thanks to the Serbian teacher at the embassy, I had the exact Serbian translation at hand ("Kamo sreche") and tossed it right off. As I mentioned, this official's wife joined the meeting, and their ten-year-old daughter showed up as well. Quite strikingly, this multi-ethnic family was making a graphic point about ethnic integration. As the wife said directly, "How could we live here if we thought our own children's rights would not be respected?" Congressman Lantos, I'm sure, was not taken in by any of this, but he responded in a very avuncular fashion. He had the little girl on his lap in no time, and his wife was showing her

pictures of their grandchildren. They had something like ten or 12 grandchildren, arrayed in a photograph in veritable “Sound of Music” fashion, complete with the white suits and dresses.

Q: Did you find that some of the Serb officials were their own worst enemies? Did they come across as very crude, tough guys?

HANSEN: They could, certainly, and they had a hard spot in their hearts when it came to the Kosovo issue, or to relations with Croats and Slovenes, for that matter. On the other hand, they could be charming and lovely. Sometimes I kind of enjoy telling people, when they come down on Serbs generally, that I found them to be a warm and friendly people. They certainly were towards us on a personal basis. Obviously they subsequently earned a very bad reputation for themselves. But we had a great tour in Belgrade, in the old Yugoslavia.

Q: What was it that was keeping Yugoslavia together, as internal pressures were building up and change was coming to Eastern Europe?

HANSEN: Yugoslavia was created originally out of the turmoil of the Balkan wars, the break-up of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, and World War I. There used to be a sense that Yugoslavia’s independence and territorial integrity were threatened from the outside by potential territorial demands from surrounding countries. The joke reflecting this was that Yugoslavia was surrounded by “brigama”, meaning it was surrounded by worry. “Briga” means “worry” or “concern” in Serbo-Croatian and, when declined as “brigama,” the word was spelled with the first letter of the names of the countries surrounding Yugoslavia: “b” for Bulgaria, “r” for Romania, “i” for Italy, and so forth. The “m” referred to the Hungarian name for Hungary. The Soviet Union was also seen as posing a potential threat to Yugoslavia’s independence and sovereignty. So for a long time, the country held together to resist these perceived outside pressures. During the communist period, Tito and his heirs resorted to repression to keep potential dissident elements under control and to stifle nationalist sentiments that might have threatened Yugoslavia’s cohesion.

By the late 1980s, with Tito gone and with nationalist leaders coming to the fore in the Yugoslav republics, we came to see that the threat to Yugoslavia came less from outside forces and more from internal conditions. There was in fact less and less holding it together. People did not see that they had shared economic interests in the Yugoslav state. They certainly didn’t value the country’s ethnic diversity, which was so intriguing and charming to outsiders. With the decentralization in place, there were few federal institutions. At the federal level, there was a weak collective presidency, a rotating presidency; the federal legislature was weak and was under particular attack by the Serbs because their greater numbers in the general population were not reflected proportionally in the Parliament. There was a National Bank, which was also weak and was a focus of hot political debate as to its powers. The communist party still had a federal structure but it was falling apart under nationalist pressures. With the Catholic-Orthodox divide, there was certainly no religious institution to contribute to unity, quite the opposite. The Yugoslav military was about the only institution truly of a federal character, and it was probably dominated by Serbian officers at senior levels. Then, serious economic dislocations occurred due to hyper-inflation. So, there was not much at all holding the country together. I think the system

proved very resilient. It was able to absorb an awful lot of tension, and the demise dragged out for some time, longer than might have been expected.

Q: When was Milosevic's famous visit to Kosovo?

HANSEN: The visit that purportedly spurred him to take on and use Kosovo as an issue in his political maneuvers was in the spring of 1987. That was when he visited, I believe it was Kosovo Polje, a town near the provincial capital Pristina. There was an incident outside the building where he was speaking, police clashing with demonstrators. He looked out on the scene and made a pledge to Kosovo Serbs, along the lines, "You will never be beaten again." Then, later on, after he had consolidated his power within Serbia and drained the provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, he visited Kosovo Polje again for the 500th anniversary of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo Polje, in June 1989.

By then, his repressive policies towards Kosovo were taking hold. A curfew was imposed, and there was a ban on group meetings, for example. Larry may mention in his transcript a visit to Kosovo arranged about this time by USIA, for an American art history expert, the spouse of an embassy officer, to speak in Pristina. She drew a huge crowd. No disrespect to her, but I'm sure it was not only interest in art history that created such a large audience. Rather, it was an authorized event that allowed people to come together when they couldn't otherwise. When I visited Kosovo one time myself during that period, we drove through a town out in the countryside and stopped briefly in the town center. Just looking around, we saw four or five different cases in which police had stopped young Kosovar men and were searching them and/or their cars. The police presence became very strong and noticeable.

Q: What about Serb-Croat relations, or Serbian relations otherwise in the federation? Did the U.S. Consulate in Zagreb see things differently from the Embassy in Belgrade?

HANSEN: As I've mentioned, there was a general sense among many people in Yugoslavia that their interests, their national interests were not helped by being part of this Yugoslav federation, but in fact were harmed by it. They didn't get out of the federation as much as they put into it supposedly. I think these were distorted views and played on politically. They weren't necessarily correct views from an objective viewpoint, but that was the way a lot of people felt. Particularly in Slovenia and Croatia, there was a lot of distrust of and antagonism towards Serbia. They could easily point to Serbia's treatment of Kosovo and criticize it on the grounds that it was anti-democratic and violated human rights. But Slovenia and Croatia were not necessarily on the side of the angels, except by comparison. Leaders there were also highly nationalistic. The Croat-Serb issue was especially sensitive because of the large ethnic Serb population in Croatia and the raw deal they thought they were getting from the Croats. When the break-up came, the Serb-Croat conflict was a huge element. Just before the eruption of conflict, I had the impression that the Bosnians were almost frantically trying to avoid a break-up, sensing, I think, that they would be caught up in it and suffer at the hands of both sides.

Q: Were you covering just Serbia?

HANSEN: For the first three years, I was basically covering Serbia, especially Kosovo, plus Vojvodina, as well as human rights issues. In my last year, a new political officer arrived and took over the Serbia and Kosovo portfolio, which was something of a relief to me, frankly. Instead I picked up on Bosnia and on general foreign policy matters. Yugoslavia at the time was a leader in the so-called Non-Aligned Movement, so foreign policy issues were quite important in the relationship.

Q: What was your impression of the Kosovo Albanians? Did they seem at all accommodating?

HANSEN: They were of course unable at that time to speak out in any kind of a very frank way. They basically restrained themselves for a long period, for a good number of years until 1999 when the lid did finally come off. In the spring of 1999, the U.S. gave the ultimatum to Milosevic and the air strikes ensued. During all those years, I think the Kosovo Albanians were incredibly restrained, extremely patient with their situation. The situation simmered for a long time, even as the conflict went on elsewhere in the old Yugoslavia and as the country was torn apart.

I should mention the story of one Kosovo Albanian communist party leader who was prominent during the time we were in Belgrade, Azem Vlasi. We used to meet with him regularly when we visited Kosovo. He seemed for a long time to try to hold things together in the province and to try to avoid the Serbian machinations aimed at undoing Kosovo's autonomy. He made numerous pleas at communist party gatherings. The major meetings were actually broadcast on television, so we could watch what was going on, although there was no doubt even more happening behind the scenes. He finally had to just walk out of the party, as did others from Croatia and Slovenia at different times. His departure was certainly part of the falling apart of the communist party at the federal level. At one point, there was a major strike that went on for months at one of the major mining complexes in Kosovo, with the miners holed up and camping out right in the mines. In "solidarity", Vlasi went and joined them. He was ultimately arrested at Milosevic's behest and was held in preventive detention for over a year before being put on trial and convicted on some charge. For a long time, I held on to a newspaper clipping with a photograph of Vlasi being brought into court, flanked by two very stern-looking but probably ethnic Albanian police guards. It seemed to me a very ironic photograph. Vlasi passed as a kind of leader in Kosovo, though many ethnic Albanians no doubt would have accused him of being a collaborator for most of his political career, since he went along with the system for so long.

The key ethnic Albanian leader who emerged was Ibrahim Rugova, who I mentioned earlier and who is even now (summer 2004) president of Kosovo. As far as I know, I was the first embassy officer to establish contact with him. He seemed quite weak at the very beginning. If I recall correctly, he was the president of the Kosovo Writers' Society. It must have been about 1988 that you started to hear his name among the "intellectuals" of Kosovo. I know that Ambassador Scanlan was still at post. I said at one point that the embassy needed to start meeting some of these emerging leaders, but it was not easy to establish contact with them. Then we had a congressional staffer visit. I took him down to Kosovo and we managed to meet Rugova. We must have requested this meeting through official channels, though I'm not sure about that. It was a rather stiff, formal meeting. At the end of the conversation, I told Rugova that the Ambassador would be coming down to Kosovo the following week and asked if we could

arrange a meeting. He demurred at first, claiming he would be out of town, but then he called me later in the week to say that he would be available after all to meet with the ambassador. I don't have a clue what went on behind the scenes in Kosovo as that meeting was set up, but I expect there was quite a bit of nervousness about it.

In those initial meetings and subsequently, Rugova seemed always to have to be extremely careful about what he said to foreign visitors. He would keep the radio playing while we spoke, for example, presumably on the assumption that the meeting was being monitored. Of course he never spoke openly about an independent Kosovo. He had to talk around the issue.

Q: What was the situation in Kosovo as far as the schools. Did they have classes in Albanian, or were the Albanians forced into the Serbian mold?

HANSEN: I expect there was something of a mix depending on the different communities in province. But there was schooling in Albanian. There was the university in Pristina essentially for the ethnic Albanian community. Some people spoke both languages, though it was more often Albanians speaking Serbian than vice versa. But I did meet several Serbs there who said they were raised in Kosovo and went to Albanian-language schools. I also was aware of Albanians who spoke no Serbian whatsoever.

Q: When we talk about the Balkans, we are really talking about Yugoslavia in a way. What about Croatia, particularly because it was the other big entity in this federation. What were you getting about Croatia when you first arrived, although it wasn't your particular beat?

HANSEN: Of course the political reporting on Croatia as such was done by our consulate in Zagreb. There was something of an artificial divide as a result; obviously the embassy's political reporting needed to be integrated. I don't have particularly insights as to how this was handled by the Ambassador and DCM. At my own level, I don't feel the coordination was particularly strong. I don't think that I had a good sense of the political situation in Croatia, and expect the reverse was also true. It was naturally very easy to be critical of Serbia and Serbs for their behavior regarding Kosovo and relations in the federation generally. But there were things going on in Croatia also that deserved a critical eye.

I remember when Ambassador Zimmermann first came to post. One of his early meetings was with a Serbian individual who asked for an appointment and came in to talk about what he reported as the maltreatment of Serbs in Croatia. We heard these kinds of rumors and allegations in Belgrade quite often, and it was the kind of thing you would take as part of the litany of Serbian complaints about their victim-hood. But apparently there was at least some substance to the complaints, or at least they reflected to a degree how the substantial Serbian minority in Croatia perceived themselves as being treated. And perception is reality, in a way. In any event, I'm not sure what reporting had come out of Zagreb about the status of Serbs in Croatia, but it was something the ambassador picked up on, in part I think to provide some balance for his exhortations regarding the deteriorating situation in Kosovo.

The subsequent conflict in Yugoslavia centered in good part around the issues of Serbs in Croatia and Croats in Serbia. I certainly have no sympathy for the way Milosevic and other Serbs

pursued things in the years after I left Yugoslavia. But I've always thought that the Serbs did have some legitimate complaints and some legitimate concerns. I don't think that they were very well understood and certainly were not addressed by the international community. The Serbs had no excuse for doing what they ended up doing, but they did have concerns that as a matter of fairness should have been understood and addressed. The fact that they weren't may have contributed to what happened after. Although, as I say, there's no excuse for what the Serbs did.

Q: How did we see Milosevic? Was he sort of a rising star when you arrived at post, or was he already seen for what he was?

HANSEN: He'd been in banking, actually, just before or just around the time that I arrived in Yugoslavia. I think he was initially seen as relatively progressive, but that image didn't last long. He was prominent in Serbian politics, and the other prominent figure was Ivan Stambolic, who I think was viewed more favorably than Milosevic. As I mentioned earlier, there came to be sharp rivalry between them later on. Stambolic was killed several years later. I believe his body was missing for a number of years until fairly recently the Serbian authorities made some progress in establishing what happened to him. I think that Milosevic was seen as responsible for Stambolic's death ultimately but I don't have a good sense of the details on that issue. In any event, Milosevic's demagogic character emerged pretty clearly over the next few years. I never met him personally since embassy contact with him was at a higher level. For a time there were differences of opinion as to where Milosevic was headed, but his true course was pretty clear well before I left the country. He spoke English very well and was very glib. He was certainly one of those political figures in Yugoslavia who knew what outside observers wanted to hear. They could all spout the right words and could be quite duplicitous. But despite his rhetoric, Milosevic did come to be seen very much as the culprit. One of the disturbing things, of course, was that he did enjoy a degree of seemingly genuine popularity among his Serbian constituents.

Q: Then you turned from Serbia to follow events in Bosnia-Herzegovina? What were you seeing there?

HANSEN: During the last year in Belgrade, I worked on Bosnia-Herzegovina. We were seeing Bosnia-Herzegovina as the real crisis point. It was a focal point of the standard analysis we used to give official visitors, visiting journalists, etc. Everybody would ask what would happen if Yugoslavia broke up, because after Tito's death everyone expected that it would. It was in a way amazing that it held together as long as it did. The standard analysis was that, if Yugoslavia were to begin to fall apart, probably Slovenia could break away without too much difficulty. If Croatia tried to follow suit, there would certainly be some violence associated with that kind of move. I confess that I personally never envisioned the extent and severity of the violence, but that was our standard analysis. If Bosnia tried to become independent or break away in some fashion, we always said there would be serious violence. There would be a blood bath because the territory couldn't be divided up in a rational way among the competing ethnic groups. As the divisions among them sharpened, people were being pressured to identify themselves with one group or another, even if they were from mixed families or had not personal inclination to take sides. In the embassy, I think we sensed that Bosnia was a crucial piece of territory. As that last year went on, there were more and more localized conflicts, political conflicts, not necessarily violent conflicts, but political conflicts across Bosnia, particularly in the Herzegovina region.

The leadership in Bosnia-Herzegovina seemed to me a little on the amorphous side, and perhaps that left room for nationalist leaders to assert themselves. There was a formal set of leadership structures because Bosnia did have its representation in the federal presidency and the federal parliament, and there were corresponding structures at the republic level. Some of the officials in these formal structures seemed to be trying hard to hold the place together, indeed to hold Yugoslavia together. It seemed to me that they knew that, if things started falling apart, there would be serious problems and Bosnia would bear the brunt of it. For a time, of all the republics, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia seemed to be trying the hardest to hold Yugoslavia together in the waning days of the federation. Certainly, the Bosnians had a lot at stake, as subsequent events showed so tragically.

Just before the end of my tour, I made two trips to Bosnia in about March and then in the spring of 1990, the second trip accompanying the DCM. We got a sense of real tension even then. Many of the officials we met with emphasized that “we just really have to keep Bosnia together, and keep Yugoslavia together for Bosnia’s sake.”

It’s hard to say to what extent Yugoslavs generally had a sense of impending doom at that point. I recall one conversation with some Foreign Ministry officials. One young officer asked about the United States’ experience. What would the United States do in these types of circumstances? Well, that was an easy answer, though seemingly not one that he expected. I reminded him that the United States had faced the secession of southern states, and that, as a result, we fought our civil war, the bloodiest war in our history. He became very quiet.

Looking at the overall picture of Yugoslavia at that time, I wanted to mention one particularly interesting and important visitor to the embassy in probably early 1990. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger came to Belgrade for a short visit. He knew Yugoslavia very well, having served there very early in his career. Partly because of the events of 1989, with the fall of communism elsewhere in Eastern Europe, people were agonizing all the more about what Yugoslavia’s fate would be. Well, Eagleburger came and wanted to get a sense of what was happening in Yugoslavia. One of the events we arranged for him was to bring in political and human rights figures from all of the republics, and from Kosovo, I’m sure, to have a sort of a round table discussion with him. It was quite a phenomenal evening. They all came to the ambassador’s residence and sat in a huge circle around Eagleburger. They each essentially seemed to be giving their rationale as to why their republic or province should be treated in a particular way, and asserting their complaints about their status in the federation. The upshot was that Eagleburger commented as he left, not to the participants, as I recall, but to embassy officers and his accompanying staff, that he just didn’t see how they could hold Yugoslavia together. A number of the participants had made in plain that they didn’t want to. The Slovenes and Croats were clear at that point. It was sort of like the cards were on the table and you could see how the hand was going to be played out. There was a sense that the situation was grim and would go from bad to worse. It may be that there was so little intent or interest, among the people of Yugoslavia themselves, in holding the country together in a positive way that their only way to do it would have been by repression.

Q: Other recollections from 1989?

HANSEN: Between the U.S. invasion of Panama, where we had served, in December 1989 to seize Noriega and all that was going on in Eastern Europe, we hardly knew where to look. December 1989 was particularly dramatic because there was a lot of television coverage of Panama, and we were trying to follow that closely.

Then, just before Christmas, I happened to take Anya and Alison by return overnight train to Zagreb to see the Christmas decorations and do a little shopping. With Orthodox Christmas coming later and being a less prominent religious holiday anyway, there wasn't much of a feel for Christmas in Belgrade in December, so I thought we'd try Zagreb, which had a little more to offer. Well, the day we were in Zagreb was just the day that demonstrators and anti-Ceausescu forces seized power in Bucharest and the Ceausescus fled the city. Throughout the day the kids and I went back to the hotel room we'd taken for the day so I could see what was happening in Bucharest. Many of the events and developments of that day were being caught on television and televised live around the world. Yugoslav television had interpreters on duty all day to interpret live broadcasts of events from Bucharest, where the protestors had taken over TV.

It was just a phenomenal thing to watch. I really don't know what the Yugoslavs made of all this. Of course, they always saw themselves as separate and distinct from the other countries of Eastern Europe, but they must have seen some parallels. For Serbs in particular it must have been interesting. There had historically been a close relationship between Serbia and Romania. I later heard the expression that Romania, for its part, considered its only true friends to be "Serbia and the Black Sea."

Q: Where did you go at the end of your Belgrade tour in the summer of 1990?

HANSEN: Before finishing up on our Belgrade tour, I did want to talk a little bit about how our children fared there, to give them their full due. Anya and Alison were young children when we were in Belgrade, aged six and four when we arrived for the four-year tour. I'm sure there were some initial shocks to their systems, and each had a little difficulty initially in settling in to these very different circumstances. But overall it seemed to have been a wonderful time for them.

They attended the small international school there, the International School of Belgrade (ISB), which kept its doors open during the entire conflict in Yugoslavia and I think is still operating today. They had a wonderful time at that school. It was a very protective environment, they had a lot of good friends, and they thrived. They did very well in classes academically, and the teachers were great. Anya had some chances to do some acting and singing and became very interested in both, the beginnings of her career in theater. She graduated from Northwestern in Drama and is now a stage manager in Chicago by profession. Alison was also into music, singing and piano, and went on to study theater at New York University and now works with an independent producer in Manhattan. In Belgrade, both Alison and Anya took piano lessons from a lovely, elderly local woman, a Mrs. Bach, who taught many of the children in the international community.

We traveled around the country a lot with the kids. They saw a lot of Yugoslavia. In particular they fell in love with Dubrovnik, which we visited several times. We had a particularly

memorable time about halfway through our tour in Yugoslavia. My parents and Larry's mother and aunt all come for a visit at the same time. The whole group, all eight of us, headed out in our two cars for a trip to Sarajevo and Mostar, and then out to the Adriatic Coast to Dubrovnik, then into Montenegro across the Gulf of Kotor, through Budva, and to Sveti Stefan. Then we took the car train from Bar back through all those mountains and mountain tunnels to Belgrade. It was a wonderful trip and gave all of us a good feel for those parts of the country. We still talk about it.

Q: We had three kids and they loved it there. Then we came back to Washington and it was a very miserable time for the children.

HANSEN: We had a similar experience. The transition back to Washington was difficult.

There was a very sad turn, though. Living in Yugoslavia, we always felt that our kids were safe. Generally, unlike in the United States, you didn't have to worry if somebody spoke to them on the street or offered them candy, for example. Yugoslavs were just very loving towards children. So it was very shocking, later on, to see that children were so frequently the victims, or even the targets, of the violence that erupted in Yugoslavia. It seemed totally out of the Yugoslav character, as we had experienced it. I have never understood it.

Q: How were relations with Turkey at the time?

HANSEN: There was a set of issues. The Bulgarians had some serious work to do with the Turks on cooperation in law enforcement, especially on the problem of drug trafficking, and we did see some things accomplished in this area.

Regionally, with the Yugoslav sanctions in effect, we were concerned about the impact of the sanctions and of the Yugoslav wars on the trade patterns in the area. One of the issues concerned goods that would normally transit from the Balkans to Western Europe through Yugoslavia via the famous "Brotherhood and Unity" highway across Yugoslavia. That had been a pretty efficient route for the heavy truck traffic from Greece, Turkey, and the Middle East. The Balkan conflict cut off that route. So issues arose concerning alternate routes, managing truck traffic at multiple border crossing points, and so forth. There were serious problems with long backups at the border crossing points.

At this stage, Ambassador Richard Schifter came up with his notion of the Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative. This is kind of a long story, and I don't really want to dwell on it, but the idea was that there needed to be uniform ways of handling customs matters and transit of trucks and other traffic across the borders throughout Southeast Europe. This was needed in order to let the goods flow smoothly and to diminish the negative economic impact of the Yugoslav sanctions from disruptions of normal trade patterns. It was very hard to get this initiative off the ground, in no small part because the U.S. did not have funds to put behind it, though Ambassador Schifter did eventually attract very modest U.S. and other international funding. There were several attempts to get at these issues. The Southeast Europe Cooperative Initiative

was one, and it has endured over time. It has now been merged partially with the Stability Pact for South East Europe.

The South Balkan Development Initiative was another attempt to encourage cooperation among, specifically, Albania, Bulgaria, and Macedonia on transportation and communication links. Our main involvement there was through the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA) and the Commerce Department. Again, we didn't have really have serious resources to put against it, other than through TDA feasibility studies. It was largely a matter of trying to get the countries to cooperate among themselves to let traffic flow and build infrastructure to support new transit patterns. If the individual country didn't see a benefit for itself, especially an immediate or short-term benefit, it wasn't going to put a lot of resources into it. So the cooperation was thin and progress minimal. There were a lot of efforts to try to get at this set of issues. It was very hard to do for lack of resources and lack of political will among the countries to cooperate very effectively.

Q: How did you happen to return to EUR?

In managing U.S. assistance to Eastern Europe, we coordinated closely with the regional EUR offices for the countries involved, to ensure that the assistance supported policy appropriately, to further democratic and market reform. We managed the allocation of assistance funds to a dozen or so assistance implementers, primarily USAID, which administered about 70% of the funding. Other major implementers were State/INL in support of U.S. participation in international police missions and in police training functions, Commerce, TDA, and Justice. The major recipients were Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Macedonia, and then smaller programs for Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia. Montenegro benefited from a generous congressional earmark and so also had a sizeable program, despite its very small size. With a population of only about 650,000, Montenegro was no doubt the largest per capita recipient of assistance in the region.

WARREN ZIMMERMAN

Ambassador

Yugoslavia (1990-1993)

Robert W. Zimmermann was born in Chicago, Illinois and was raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He received a degree in economics and political science from the University of Minnesota. He graduated from Harvard Business School in 1942. In 1947, after Serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, Mr. Zimmermann entered the Foreign Service. He served in Washington, DC, Peru, Thailand, The United Kingdom (England), and Spain. Mr. Zimmermann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1992.

Q: What was the reading you were getting in your embassy including both from your political officers, USIA, CIA, and others as far as what was going on. What had been going on in Kosovo vis a vis the Kosovars versus the Serbs there?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, during the 1980s we believed that successive Kosovo governments which were mainly run by Albanians were not very friendly to the Serbian population there. To that degree the Serbs had a grievance against the Albanians in Kosovo. Of course, it was that grievance that Milosevic heard in 1987 when he went down there and used as the road to power. After he took over, by 1989 when he had more or less replaced the Albanian governments that he didn't like in Kosovo, he launched a major crackdown which effectively destroyed the Albanian majorities in the government, in the parliament, and even in cultural institutions like the University of Pristina, which was a major Albanian language university. It was a kind of coup d'état in which he simply divested the Albanians, who were 90% of the population, of their political rights. That is what we were seeing, and it happened quite fast in the early part of 1989. What had been for him a bone in his throat, a real problem not only because of their normal votes against him in the Yugoslav presidency but also because the Serbian Jerusalem as they called Kosovo was in the hands of infidels who were not respectful of Serbs. He turned that around and by the spring of 1989, Kosovo was effectively a colony. I visited it the first time in June or July; I think it might have been July. I didn't want to go right away because I did not want to look non objective in this, so I visited the other republics first before I went to Kosovo. But when I went there, I was very scrupulous to spend half my time with the Serbian administration and the other half with Albanian dissidents. It was clear that the Albanians had been totally cowed by Serbian power. I recall my first cable on my trip to Kosovo was based on a movie which was popular at that time in the United States called Mississippi Burning. It was about race.

Q: FBI and the Ku Klux Klan or something.

ZIMMERMANN: It was race discrimination in the '60s I think, or in the '50s in the South. I titled this cable "Kosovo Burning" because I believed that the prospects that Kosovo would blow up were both great and imminent.

Q: What were you getting from both sides of the, both the Albanians and the Serbs there?

ZIMMERMANN: Actually the prime minister of Kosovo was an Albanian. He was the sort of person the Serbs referred to as an honest Albanian, that meant Albanian Quislings, people who supported Serbs. He had a Serbian wife. My meeting with him was horrifying in one sense. He was very nervous, and there were a lot of people around him. He did not meet me alone with one or two aides. There quite a lot of people in the room. They seemed to be watching very carefully what he said. He went through the line which was everybody's got their rights in Kosovo; it is absolutely wrong that the Albanians have been deprived of anything. I said, "It doesn't seem to be the view of too many observers." Did he have any idea what the future would be and what should be done in the future. "Yes," he said, "all political prisoners should be released." At that point I looked around and saw some of these hard act characters who were watching him and did not look very happy. I noticed that this was a proposal that was never again repeated. You would talk to Serbs who were high up in the administration or important in cultural affairs or in the parliament, and they would be very arrogant about the Albanians. The Albanians on the other

hand, seemed very cowed, I thought. I met Rugova for the first time who was the formal head of the Albanian movement, a cultural figure. He was a poet. I met him in the union of writers building in Pristina, and they didn't seem to have an idea of what to do. It was pretty clear they did not feel that they had any power base to speak of except the people themselves in Kosovo. Ultimately they worked out a strategy which was to pull out Albanians from every institution including hospitals and schools that they weren't already expelled from, in other words try to take the trend the Serbs had started to keep the Albanians out, take it even to a higher degree by pulling themselves out thereby creating a situation in which you had two cultures in Kosovo which did not rub up against each other very much. This was very different from Bosnia where there was always, even during the war, a lot of interchange among the different ethnic groups.

Q: How bad had the Albanian rule been? I mean were prisoners, killings, beatings, looting whatever?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, on a scale of 10, we could say what the Serbs were doing to the Albanians was about nine, but what the Albanians had been doing to the Serbs was about three. There was no deprivation of political rights or very little. There were individual instances of abuse that were probably not followed up, prosecuted. But Serbs had scrapbooks full of all kinds of alleged atrocities, and very few of them stood up to the objective scrutiny of various NGOs, the non-governmental organizations, that would go down there and investigate them.

Q: Did you find, as we are doing this interview right now, we are in the midst of a bombing campaign of bombing Belgrade and Kosovo, and we are essentially at war with Serbia. One of the things that has struck me, I mean it hasn't surprised me is on the interviews of sort of plain Belgrade Serbian citizens how they dismiss the Albanians I mean almost as though they are not real people. How did you find, did the plight of the Kosovars raise any sympathy at all with your Serbian friends or acquaintances?

ZIMMERMANN: Outside of the few human rights activists I would say that there was zero concern among the Serbs I knew for Kosovars, even among people who should have known better.

Q: Intellectuals, university types,

ZIMMERMANN: Exactly. I remember sitting at dinner next to a very nice looking well dressed Serbian woman in her 40s who was an art historian, spent many years in New York, knew the west very well, knew the United States very well. We were talking about the Kosovo problem. She said, "The way to solve the Kosovo problem is to line the Albanians up against a wall and shoot them all." Now there may have been a bit of facetiousness in that remark, but even if she didn't mean it literally, it showed a kind of unconcern for other human beings that was pretty appalling.

WILLIAM E. RYERSON
Ambassador

Albania (1991-1992)

Ambassador William E. Ryerson was born in New Jersey in 1936. He graduated from Cornell University in 1960 and entered the Foreign Service in 1961. His Foreign Service career included positions in Germany, Albania, Barbados, and Yugoslavia. Ambassador Ryerson was interviewed by William D. Morgan on June 26, 1992.

Q: Bill, it must be something to start off in Berlin and talk about tailgates and 1961, and be in 1992, in Albania, of all places, looking back. We all are so amazed, especially those who have served in that part of the world--the Soviet Union, or wherever--to think of what's happened. It's unbelievable. You must be, maybe one of the top folk in the world to be shocked by what's happened. Any views on that? You have lots of them.

RYERSON: How many days do I have to talk? Actually there's a curious parallel with Berlin. And as far as I know, I'm the only person who would have seen both the visit of John F. Kennedy to Berlin and James Baker, to Tirana. The reception was different, obviously; Berlin and Tirana are vastly different cities. And Albanians lived in isolation and self-isolation for half a century, basically. But, an enormous outpouring of people, this huge emotional gushing forth that happened when Kennedy went to Berlin and happened again when Secretary Baker came to Tirana in June of '91. They are very similar kinds of experiences. They're kind of like exclamation marks on both ends of my career, as it were.

Q: Yes. So Baker had a comparable Berlin experience? Did he have something to say?

RYERSON: He had something to say, he turned his three and a half hour visit into about a six hour visit. When he heard from my deputy and from me, a couple days before hand, that there had been rallies leading up to...

Q: You were in Tirana at the time?

RYERSON: I was in Tirana as sort of the door stop. They needed somebody in Tirana. I spoke a little Albanian, which I'd learned on my own in Belgrade. And I was there just holding a place until we could get an ambassador named. Got word, with six days notice, that the Secretary of State was coming. Honk! And please be at the airport tomorrow to pick up three, no make that five people from the advance team that are coming in.

Basically trying to see what was necessary to set up a new post. Well we knew what we were going to do to set it up. Because we owned property. We owned, it's about five acres, and a house that was built for us.

Q: This was back in the 19--?

RYERSON: In the 1929-30's. It was built by the American School of Tirana. Founded by the American Junior Red Cross. You want trivia about Albania, I can give you trivia about Albania.

Q: These days, I don't think there's any trivia about Albania. (laugh) They're all unique stories.

RYERSON: They're a...yes. Anyway, when the Secretary heard that there was this great response, because Chris Hill and I had gone first to Kavaja.

Q: Hill?

RYERSON: Hill. He's now my deputy. I picked him as DCM, based in large part on the experience of this one week in Tirana. We got mobbed. Have you ever been cheered at by a crowd of about 7,000 people?

Q: No, not even by one! I don't think, but.

RYERSON: And had babies thrust at you to be kissed, actually people holding up children and pushing them toward us to be kissed!

Q: Rather than an autograph, they wanted you to kiss their child?

RYERSON: Kiss their child, and we got in touch with the Secretary's party and said, you know, tighten your wigs, because when you get here there's going to be quite a do. The Secretary heard about this, and decided that if that many people were coming out to greet him, he ought to say a few words to them. And that was the origin of him speaking to roughly ten percent of the population of Albania, which turned out in Tirana to meet him. And the most sort of touching thing of it all, was one sign in the crowd, in English, "Mr. Baker, we've waited 50 years for your visit!"

Q: Wow! He had to be moved. Some of us look at Mr. Baker as semi-cold fish, but that must have been a very emotional...

RYERSON: I've had other people tell me that he's, not often stirred; he was stirred. Almost shaken. The crowd mobbed the motorcade, kissing the windshield of his car. They were kissing the windshield of the car I was riding in, and I was four cars back! It was...it was, I had heard said that (and I this, perhaps can get published after a few years, and not right away). The wife of a senior official, a member of the communist party, said that when he was on the platform with Mr. Baker in the square, that that was the first time in his life he felt he could speak freely about what he thought.

Q: It was truly a captive nation, wasn't it!

RYERSON: It was a captive nation, and that visit was a catharsis. It was just pouring out!

Q: We know that we can't spend this whole interview on Albania. We have to bring you up to date from your Berlin days. But nevertheless, tell us, since you have gone there as ambassador, what you have noticed in terms of their reaction to being free, or freer? How has it manifest?

RYERSON: Fear is no longer there. It was manifested in a great vote to throw the rascals out in March 22, of this year, when they elected the first democratic government since 1924, in Albania.

Q: When did we leave, when were our relations ended, last?

RYERSON: Well, they were ended by the Italian invasion of 1939. We sent a mission in 1945-46, and the mission was withdrawn in November of '46, 'cause we couldn't get anywhere or do anything because the regime was just being awful in all senses of the term. But that wasn't just to us, it was to the world. They were being awful to the world! They were ideologically very pure communists. Broke vigorously with Tito in 1948, when Tito was expelled from the Comintern. They broke with the Soviets in 1961, actually broke diplomatic relations, because of this rightist deviation by Khrushchev. And the Albanians were correct.

Q: He indeed was, a deviationist! (laugh)

RYERSON: And they essentially, although they didn't break diplomatic relations, they broke off with China, which was playing footsie with Richard Nixon.

Q: There wasn't anybody left but the Albanians to be the pure Marxist.

RYERSON: Hey, if you're pure, what do you care! But the result was...

Q: Destruction of the nation!

RYERSON: Awful, awful spiritual destruction, no investment of the country, basically since the break with China in '78, and they'd been living off capital ever since.

Q: What kind of capital did they have? Did they have resources of any sorts?

RYERSON: They have resources. They have the potential for tourism, which is potential still. Very little infrastructure to support it, but gorgeous unspoiled beaches, and rocky cliffs. Copper, chrome, third largest chrome producer in the world, after the Soviet Union and South Africa...some ferro-nickel, and oil.

Q: So a lot of your work now as the ambassador is to get U.S. interests interested, and arrangements between the countries going to exploit this, in the good sense of the word.

RYERSON: Yes. Exploit it, encourage investment, encourage American business interest. There's a natural, sort of, connection with the U.S., and that expression that Baker received, was unique to the United States. There had been a visit...a week and a half before of the Italian foreign minister and of the German foreign minister...

Q: The most logical, close countries.

RYERSON: Yes. Di Michelis and Genscher were both there! And within a week of Genscher's trip, there was Baker, and you know, a couple thousand people turned out to see Genscher. I know, I was there, I saw it. But...it was just nothing like the reception for Baker. The Albanian love affair with the United States started with Woodrow Wilson, who prevented the country from being wiped off the map in Europe!

Q: *While we were dividing up Europe?*

RYERSON: Well, yes. The peace conference in Paris, and Serbia, Greece, Italy and France...

Q: *Were going to divide it.*

RYERSON: Were going to just say, that's it. Umm...he said, "nothing of the sort", and it stuck. And the love affair continued when in June of '24, the founder of the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Bishop Fan Noli who founded the church in Boston, please note it, became Prime Minister. He was chased out by Ahmet Zogu, the then Interior Minister, later King Zog, better known as. Yes, but there is this American connection.

Q: *You forewarned me Bill, before we started this interview, about pushing your Albanian button. But it's a very obvious button to push since you've only been there what, six, eight months, and now are back tomorrow or the next day. But I feel compelled to push the button just a little bit more, but at the same time turn our interview in the consular direction. Tell us something about the consular issues you see there, especially the migration of people, these people who were in such misery and in a sense, captivity. Are more free to emigrate freely?*

RYERSON: For decades, Albania shot people who tried to leave, now people leave, they don't get shot at, many of them don't bother to stop and get a passport, they just sort of hop on a passing boat, or hijack one, and we've seen exoduses.

Q: *To Italy?*

RYERSON: To Italy, there were exoduses across the land border to Greece. Nobody in his right mind goes to...Yugoslavia does not exist. And it should be recognized that it doesn't. Serbia and Montenegro, and Kosovo. Albania is a peculiar country. Everywhere on it's borders, outside it's borders, there are Albanians. Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, even to a certain extent in Greece, although a number were expelled from Greece.

Q: *But now that Albanians could leave, if they wanted, they still couldn't just flow across the border into one of these neighboring Albanian areas?*

RYERSON: Well, there were only two borders to flow in, well three now. Montenegro, sort of going around from the sea, Montenegro, Serbia, more probably the Kosovo area of Serbia, Macedonia, which is independent, not yet recognized...

Q: *Having troubles with the spelling of Macedonia!*

RYERSON: Right, they should consult the Vice President! (laughs) But an "e" on the end, and maybe it would work. I don't know. ..no it is said by some to be simply an excuse for other things in Greek policy. And the other land port is Greece.

Q: And they're all have Albanians across on the Greece side.

RYERSON: Some. The largest population of Albanians outside of Albania, is perhaps in Turkey. They were a loyal province of the empire. The next largest population is in the United States. But then, maybe, oh, you hear from two to 500,000, but certainly a great number. And there is great interest in ties with the U.S. A great interest in coming to see relatives they've not see in 20, 30, 40, 50 years.

Q: What kind of visa business do you have in Albania? Have you been, have you set up an arrangement to issue non-immigrant and immigration visas?

RYERSON: Are obscenities allowed on this tape? (laughs)

Q: We could erase them! They're allowed in the first instance!

RYERSON: Well, no we haven't. We're not issuing visas. We don't have the facilities to do it in. We're trying to get the Foreign Buildings Office to do the necessary.

Q: You want to, I take it?

RYERSON: Do brown bears live in the woods? I mean, yes!...we want to, and very many people want us to, and we spend a hell of a lot energy, quite frankly, telling people why we can't issue visas. And then, in those cases where you just have to do something, then arranging to get a letter of introduction to the consulate general in Athens, and a letter of introduction to the Greek embassy in Tirana, so that people can get a transit visa to go to Athens to apply for a United States visa. And, of course, you can't guarantee that it will be issued.

Q: They get travel documents from their government, all right?

RYERSON: Oh, yes. That's no problem, no.

Q: So at least if they can find a consular section in a U.S. embassy or a consulate somewhere...

RYERSON: Yes, well there are stories that to get a visa to get out of Albania, a foreign visa, you have to bribe someone. We know this will be a problem when we start. And absolutely will not tolerate a hint of bribery, and anybody who tries to...

Q: But you're not going to get away with it.

RYERSON: No. But anybody who tries to bribe, is going to find themselves waiting a hell of a long time to get a visa to the United States.

Q: *We have a quota, obviously the same as always.*

RYERSON: You're talking about immigration.

Q: *Yes, well I'm talking about both.*

RYERSON: Visitors and immigration, we will probably have plenty. I was there last Spring for three and a half months. And during that time, living in a hotel and sort of operating out of a hotel room. Lots of people approached me. "I was born in the United States." Oh, o.k. You would be entitled a passport, but you'd have to go to Athens or Rome or Vienna or Tokyo or some place to get it. My guess what that we have forty or fifty cases like this. The Italian ambassador had told me that they had turned up something like 170 Italian citizens, that sort of started coming out of the woodwork when it was no longer dangerous to do so. I ended up with over a thousand American citizens.

Q: *And yet you can't refuse an American citizen a passport, can you?*

RYERSON: Well, of course not! You don't refuse a citizen a passport, he has a right to that. He has as much right to an American passport as you do!

Q: *So you tell him he has to get an Albanian passport in order to get out of the country to go somewhere to...*

RYERSON: No. No. He can get an Albanian passport. That's trivial...

Q: *That won't jeopardize his nationality...*

RYERSON: The problem, no, the greater problem is that he has to pay \$65.00 for his U.S. passport. That represents three months' wages, or four month's wages. And there are a couple of tragic cases, one instance that I know of, that I checked out last Spring. Three siblings, papa was an American, became a citizen in 192X...whatever it was. Went back to Albania, married in the old tradition, got a bride from home. And after the marriage there were born three children. One in 1930, one in '34 and one in '36. Girl, boy, girl. Papa acted as an interpreter for UNRAA right after the war. As was done with many other persons who had that kind of American connection. He was arrested by the Hoxha regime, tortured, executed. And because of that, anybody with that kind of a political taint, was in greatest danger. But the family tucked away papa's certification of naturalization under a rafter somewhere. And there is stayed all these years until last year, they got it out. And I had a look at it, and at the birth records, I knew when papa had become a citizen. Fine, they were citizens at birth. For the latter two, there was a retention requirement, but there wasn't for the first. The department ultimately waived the retention requirement, but just think about...

Q: *A little hard to comply with, under those circumstances.*

RYERSON: Fine. yes, that's no problem. That's the trivial part. But these people had been living since 1946 with a fantasy that somehow, if relations ever got restored with the United States,

their lives would become better. And they asked whether they would be entitled to a pension in the United States? And the answer is no. They've never been in the U.S. They've never worked here.

Q: No social security ties at all. (Laugh)

RYERSON: Would maybe be entitled to an apartment? No. Yes, to you it's funny. To them it's deadly serious. (Laughs) I'm laughing not in humor. And these people's lives have been distorted. I used to fear running into those people on the streets of Tirana. And I walked around a lot, and I established a kind of persona, walking around and saving Government money. Tirana is small, you know. But I have to try to explain to them in not very good Albanian, that, no they didn't have an apartment, and no, they didn't have a pension, and no Air Force One wasn't going to come and fetch them and make their world better. Distorted lives. And it's happened to a number of persons.

Q: Even today, that is an issue: the protection of Americans. Obviously there are more Americans now coming to Albania, I presume; business people, and others. But protection of Americans despite the changes is still pretty hairy?

RYERSON: Well, we have a travel advisory. Sort of warning people medical care is not up to western standards.

Q: There's no prohibition on travel?

RYERSON: Correct.

Q: You can get a visa from an Albanian...

RYERSON: Outside of the United States. They're not issuing visas yet, here. And I hope to persuade them to drop the visa requirement and have been talking with the foreign minister, I've been talking with the President. I've talked with the prime minister. The level of access is unbelievable. In part, it stems from what the Communist Party called my interference in the internal affairs of Albania during the election campaign.

Q: Well, did you get messed up in internal affairs?

RYERSON: So I was accused. I spoke up in favor of democracy, and the Communists chose to interpret that as being favoring the Democratic Party. I got myself really, got mouse trapped by...

Q: You were already there as ambassador by then?

RYERSON: Yes. This was in the Spring of '92. But in February, early February, I was in Korca. And the day before I called at their invitation on the Communist Party leader, Socialist Party, as it calls itself. And there appeared on that evening's television, a rather partial view of my discussion. In the first, place I hadn't expected TV and all the fuss with that. And then, I popped off the next day in Korca, which is in the Southeast, in a public meeting...

Q: *A good Albanian...you were understood, in other words.*

RYERSON: No, I wasn't understood, I was using an interpreter. And I was asked why I had done this, and this and that, and I said, well I knew I would be receiving Albanian hospitality, and I thought I was dealing with an Albanian and obviously I was wrong. As it turned out, he was not operating in the Albanian tradition. And I added "...as for the Communists, I wish them a long life, good health", and you could see jaws dropping in the audience...

Q: *Somewhere else! (laugh)*

RYERSON: "And unemployment after the March elections." (laugh)

Q: *Oh, beautiful! (laughs)*

RYERSON: This got the party very angry, they issued a declaration saying they were sure this was Ryerson's personal view.

Q: *And ask Mr. Yeltsin, he has similar views!*

RYERSON: Well, they are really stupid; they planted this declaration and my quote on the front page of the party rag, so it went all over the country! And, at my next public meeting I thanked them for printing it publicly. That didn't get reported, as you can imagine.

Q: *They're learning! (laughs) And you shared this I'm sure with others, perhaps with our ambassador to Kuwait, who is accused of the same thing! Of speaking out in favor of democracy (laughs) in a country we just made more democratic, supposedly.*

RYERSON: Yes, well.

Q: *The thing is, this was appreciated I'm sure, ultimately. It was understood.*

RYERSON: I'm sure it was, yes. And working as we did to promote political pluralism there, has also given us an impressive degree of access to the current leadership. It's an access which we take care not to abuse. But is a very friendly open access. I'm back here, as you know, because the Albanian president came to see President Bush, and I wanted to go along!

Q: *Did you have dinner?*

RYERSON: No. No.

Q: *No dinner at the White House, yet?*

RYERSON: No. No. This was an informal visit by President Berish...

Q: *It went well, I hope.*

RYERSON: It did go well. The meeting with President Bush, was particularly good. Anyway...

Q: Let's return to the protection of Americans in Albania, then we'll go back thirty years into your career. This access for Americans, it is now open, and Americans are beginning to enter Albania. What kind of protection issues do you have?

RYERSON: Most of the Americans that are coming are ethnic Albanians. They're going to visit family. They left with bullets flying over their heads, or it would have been bullets, if the Secret Police had known that they'd left by stealth decades ago, and they're going back to see folks. There are some Americans, a few, fortunately only a few, who have come in a great rush to adopt Albanian children.

Q: Oh, yes! Like in Romania?

RYERSON: Oh, yes. Yes, right. That kind of worry. Since just before the elections, the Albanian Government put a stop to foreign adoptions. Full stop. Nobody. But there have been troublesome cases of fraud, as is usually the case. The Americans involved are operating in good faith. They've gotten a hold of a local attorney; they're aren't very many of those because that really wasn't kind of allowed during the regime. The attorney has produced what appeared to be the proper court documents, and as it turned out in a couple of the cases the person from the orphanage authorized to...said, you know, this child had been turned over to an orphanage, therefore was abandoned, was a person not authorized to act on behalf of the orphanage. So the whole thing is based on fraud.

Q: But this probably can get on to a proper sequence eventually, so that adoptions can...

RYERSON: Yes, fortunately there are very few cases that are involved in the, if you will, in the pipeline of, sort of at some stage of things. I met with a member of Congress, along with somebody from CA, just last week, to discuss one case, just explained what it is. And frankly, we don't know, in that case, where the birth parents of the child are! And the child may have been abandoned, the child, in theory, could have been kidnapped! We don't know. Just stolen from somebody. And then...

Q: But a reasonable investigation is made of it, and ...

RYERSON: Yes, but in the meantime, of course, the American parents have bonded to that child, like super glue to your eyelid! I mean, whop! Understandably, because they were acting in good faith.

Q: Sure, sure. Which is, as you said in the beginning, most of the cases are that! They are all acting in good faith!

RYERSON: Yes, and then there is this, oh my god, there's this lovely child. And I want to get him out of here because there is not adequate nutrition available in the country. And this is going to stunt his growth! And it will! And this will cause malnutrition, and it will...and they could do

much better for him! And we could! And I'm sure that these are not people who are trying to get a person for nefarious purpose! It's genuine! It's troublesome because...

Q: It's human!

RYERSON: It's very human!

Q: And with children involved, it's even more human. The one last, not that it won't come up again, but the one formally last question on your Albanian consular experience. What is your prognosis... when the embassy becomes "normal" in the way of immigration visas. What kind of migration out of Albania to the United States do you think there will be?

RYERSON: Duck! The demand for visas is going to be very large. Now these thousand Americans who have gotten their passports, or will have gotten them, probably won't travel to the United States themselves. These are persons of our age. But for their children, they can try petitions.

Q: Sure, sure!

RYERSON: Their children are going to have problems meeting the public charge requirement, but the Albanian community here can probably find them some entry level jobs, and it will start. But there will be, now what does a thousand produce in the way of immigrant visa cases? Not 20,000 a year.

Q: Not in the first instance.

RYERSON: No, no. Not 20,000 a year, but...hundreds of them a year.

Q: A lot of them will have jobs, because they will be younger people who need jobs, there'll be people with contacts of some sort.

RYERSON: Yes, well the need for jobs. Unemployment in Albania is now 70% - seven zero - 70%. And...

Q: Oh, dear! And we have a lot of young people?

RYERSON: The median age is 26.

Q: You've answered the question. That is...

RYERSON: Yes, there will be...certainly for a while, an uncontrollable demand, or nearly uncontrollable demand for non-immigrant visas. I suppose after some time, there may be a tendency to say, well I fall in such and such a category. It's worthless to even bother, therefore, seek to go through Mexico, or something like that.

Q: Because you sense a lot of refusals, for the obvious reasons that people cannot get an immigrant visa. And they're going to use the non-immigrant visa for the way in.

RYERSON: That's right. They intent to come, work, return to Albania. And, you know, someone said, "how do you said bracero in Albania?" There is a need, and the Albanian government, has expressed official interest, in exporting temporary workers. That was raised by the President. With the President.

Q: It was that important?

RYERSON: Yes, it is! It is that important!

Q: Too bad they're not shepherder, or something like that, we could have a special program for Albanian shepherders!

RYERSON: Oh, my god, they are! I mean, there are lots of shepherders!

Q: Oops! Don't hear this in California!

RYERSON: Well, Mr. McCarran, are you still alive? (laughs)

Q: He is in spirit.

RYERSON: One of Albania's tragedies is that it started its reform much later than anybody else. And this whole business in the 50's and 60's and 70's of southern Europeans, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, going to work in France, and Germany and Belgium, isn't now particularly open to Albanians.

Q: It's not open to many people. It's the opposite direction. The pen direction, we want to keep them out of our country. Including the United States!

RYERSON: Exactly! Not in my back yard! Indeed.

Q: That's right. So you don't see any special program for these extraordinary suffering people in the United States?

RYERSON: As you know, it would take a change in legislation.

Q: Oh, that's easy. We do that every year. You know that Bill. We'll get into that in a moment.

RYERSON: Great. Then whistle up some for this year for Albania!

Q: But, but seriously do you sense that any, sort of, political emotional thing. Or are there no PACs [Political Action Committees], if you will, here pushing the Albanians?

RYERSON: No. The Albanian community here is very divided. It's divided by, as Albanian is by religions, Albanian don't take that very seriously. But as....

Q: Is it Christian versus...

RYERSON: Seventy percent Moslem, twenty percent orthodox, Albanian orthodox, ten percent Roman Catholics. But, also divided because part of the community is ex-Kosovo, part is ex-Macedonia, ex-Montenegro, and...

Q: We don't have the Yugoslav, sort of thing coming do we? Where they're going to be at each other's throats?

RYERSON: No, no. No, no, no! The Albanians are peaceful.

Q: Let me just ask, linguistically speaking, an Albanian speaker, from Montenegro, or Kosovo, applying in Belgrade for a visa, would speak what language to use the interviewing officer or to the local staff?

RYERSON: Usually, he or she would have some kind of Serbo-Croatian, but not always. Sometimes, it was Albanian, only. They would bring an interpreter with them. And one of the reasons that I wanted to have someone, is precisely so that we could, sort of, control the interview. Then after I hired him, I thought, hmmm...suppose he says to the visa applicant, "recite the seven times table, and I'll tell this jerk whatever I think he needs to know, so that you can get your visa. And then you meet me in the alley and I'll..."

Q: And it will be 5,000 hookadukes! (laughs)

RYERSON: Right...so I asked him to teach me, so I also felt that this would be a way that he would come to feel part of the Embassy. Albanians in Yugoslavia, at the time, and even more so now, look for some of the racism that was emerged in Serbia.

Q: Re-emerged.

RYERSON: Re-emerged. Were looked down upon. You could take a statement made by some Serbs about Albanians, substitute the word, excuse me, substitute the word 'nigger' and hear 1952 in Mississippi. It was that kind of thing. Now the Serbian legation, in Tirana, Albania, in 1928, sent a dispatch to the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade, which began with the words, "because these are not of human kind." And that mentality hangs on.

Q: This isn't just for the Albanians, though from what we're seeing on television. They, the Serbs feel this about some of their other neighbors, too!

RYERSON: The Albanians are at the bottom.

Q: Again, I'm taking you from your, the linguistically...

RYERSON: Albanian, our readers should know, is not a Slavic language. It is an Indo-European language, as is Greek.

Q: *Illyrian?*

RYERSON: Yes, it's thought to be descended from the ancient Illyrian... Greek...Urdu.

Q: *You went off and hid in Albania! (laughs)*

RYERSON: I went off and hid in Albania, right. Albania is one of the countries which benefits from...there's 34 countries that were, and 21 Albanians made it in this current lottery. Which, I understand the Post Office in Merrifield, Virginia has vowed never to allow it to be repeated! 'Cause it's one of these, envelopes arrive, it's not a true lottery, it's more...I think it's described by Mr. Scully as a crap shoot!

Q: *You might find it amusing, but I was asked very recently, like two months ago, to go out into the field and see If I could define, do an analysis of, a program to teach consular officers how to use computers: visa computers, consular computers. We still do not have an orderly method to teach people. But, in any event, your own experience is: yes, it is necessary. Is it well used in the field?*

RYERSON: My experience is that people are scrambling for them, and could use more, and it's sort of, give it to us now, don't wait for...

Q: *Is it a human resource replacement? It is your experience that you can save positions?*

RYERSON: No, you can save position increases--you can't; because the workload has been growing. This visa waiver program, which I'm sure has been discussed elsewhere, was also a great workload preventer, and it did indeed drop the overall visa workload. But that won't work for countries like Albania, or Mexico, or some other places where a visa waiver program could lead to wholesale migration to the U.S., to take employment.

Q: *I really was getting into what some call the liberalization of the entry process; the inadmissibility of foreigners, given the decline or disappearance of many of the causes of inadmissibility. Do you think the law will become even more liberal? Will our frontiers be even more open, particularly to the non-immigrant?*

RYERSON: Well, I think the big thing that's happened on the non-immigrant side, is the visa waiver for countries whose citizens certainly are not, have not historically been problems.

Q: Of course, they could have come any way!

RYERSON: They could have come anyway, but it was a pain to go get a visa. Now, we knew that the young single unemployed German, was a darn good bet for a visa. Because he could earn more on the dole in Germany than he could by casual labor here in the United States. He'd be coming back to Germany and likely wouldn't be working while he was here. So, those weren't problems. Now the issue will be, and I think it will continue to be, is this person coming to work, and if so, that's a no-no for a visitor.

Q: Not political. In other words, economic in the sense of, are they deceiving the real purpose of their trip to the U.S.?

RYERSON: Yes, right, Are they really coming to work? If so, then please get the proper kind of visa, thank you very much. Now, a visitor visa. Yes, we know you'll only be here for six months, but if it's your intent to work, then you need a different kind of visa.

Q: But, unfortunately the world still has great segments, great numbers of countries where economic privation exists, and therefore, they want to come to the land of...the magnet country.

RYERSON: Yes.

Q: And that would be the basic non-immigrant visa adjudication.

RYERSON: Right, is the person coming back or is the person truly coming as a visitor, or is he an intending worker. And calls will not be easy. And what we're going to face very shortly in Albania, when we start doing visas there. A young, underemployed population.

Q: Well, with this being less and less of a political consideration, which we often think is part of our diplomatic training, it seems more of an economic one. Maybe we should transfer the visa function to some other agency that can focus on economic issues. Or put differently, and less perhaps sarcastically, do you think we should continue and maintain the visa function in the State Department?

RYERSON: I think so. I think it's a good training ground for diplomats. It certainly indisputably a good language training ground for diplomats. And languages are important. And you can deal through an interpreter, as I have done a fair amount in Albania, and now I understand more and can manage a meeting with a cabinet minister usually without an interpreter. But, where are people going to learn these languages? Reading the local press, and writing a report on, you know, not as well, not as many people...

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End of reader