

SLOVENIA

COUNTRY READER TABLE OF CONTENTS

Samuel G. Wise Jr.	1964-1967	Political Officer, Trieste, Italy
Robert Rackmales	1967-1969	Consular Officer, Zagreb, Yugoslavia
Thomas P.H. Dunlop	1969-1972	Consular Officer, Zagreb, Yugoslavia
Warren Zimmerman	1989-1992	Ambassador, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
Robert Rackmales	1989-1993	Deputy Chief of Mission, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
E. Allan Wendt	1992 1993-1995	Chargé d' Affaires, Ljubljana Ambassador, Slovenia
Johnny Young	2001-2004	Ambassador, Slovenia

SAMUEL G. WISE, JR. Political Officer Trieste, Italy (1964-1967)

Samuel G. Wise Jr. was born in Chicago in 1928 and educated at the University of Virginia and Columbia. He entered the Foreign Service in 1955. His career included posts in Palermo, New Caledonia, Moscow, Trieste, Prague and Rome. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

Q: Today is the 22nd of August, 1995. Sam, you were in Trieste from when to when?

WISE: Trieste from the summer of 1964 until the summer of 1967.

Q: What was the situation in Trieste at that time?

WISE: At that time, it was still a standoff situation between Italy and Yugoslavia over the border: the so-called "zones A and B," which represented a temporary solution of border claims after World War II. One of the purposes of the work of the Consulate was to watch the situation because it was considered a potential hotspot, where hostilities could break out if conditions were right. So, this was one of our jobs: to watch the activities of the Slovenians who came into Trieste. Many Slovenian families actually lived there, but there was a lot of cross-the-border activity as well.

Q: How big was the Consulate?

WISE: We had about five Officers, three secretaries, and about seven or eight local employees.

Q: That was quite a good size, wasn't it?

WISE: It was and, as I say, I think it represented the United States' concern that this could be a potential hotspot.

Q: What was your position in the Consulate?

WISE: I was Deputy Principal Officer.

Q: Who was the head of it then?

WISE: I'll have to tell you as it comes to me.

Q: How did you keep an eye on the situation?

WISE: We were in touch with all the political leaders of the area. In addition, tried to get out among the population at large, to find out if there were resentments or concerns building up that might have led in a dangerous direction. We would occasionally go over into Yugoslavia, just to see the situation over there. I guess the nearest Consulate on that side was in Belgrade in those days.

Q: No, Zagreb.

WISE: Excuse me. Of course, Zagreb. There was nothing in Ljubljana. I think there might have been a USIA post: a library or something like that. It was a fairly stable situation. The press would try to fire up some things. On the Italian side, the Messini, the so-called "MSI," the ex-fascist types. And then there were some on the Slovenian side: newspapers that would try to heat up the scene. But, in general, the situation during my time there was fairly quiet. I did have one or two experiences that might be useful to mention. When I first arrived from Moscow (I arrived in the summertime), as is the custom, people were taking leave and transfers. I found myself, I think maybe from the first day or shortly thereafter, as Acting Principal Officer. About the first thing that happened, a month after my arrival, we had this tremendous disaster in our Consular District: a dam disaster, where a couple of thousand people were wiped away in a couple of seconds, or a couple of minutes at most, including a few American citizens, so I got involved in that and had to up and deal with the situation, and keep in touch with the Embassy in Rome. Of course, they were very interested in it. It was quite an experience just to be arriving at post.

Q: Did you have any dealing with the German or Austrian minority in Italy?

WISE: We watched it from the newspapers primarily. We occasionally made it up there and there were the occasional incidents over the years. But I don't recall any major incident. Our attention was focused on the Italian-Slovenian border.

Q: How did the Italians treat the Slovenians who lived in the Trieste area? Schools, housing?

WISE: Not too badly. There were complaints. You wondered how many times these complaints were fostered by outside forces trying to stir up some trouble. But they lived in certain areas and they weren't as wealthy as the Italians. But, on the other hand, there were some that had succeeded quite well in Trieste, in Italian society. There may have been some discrimination, but I don't think it was as bad as it was portrayed sometimes by the Slovenians.

ROBERT RACKMALES
Consular Officer
Zagreb, Yugoslavia (1967-1969)

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: Today is the 22nd of May 1995. What was the responsibility of the consulate general in Zagreb when you were there? We're talking '67 to '69.

RACKMALES: We had the normal responsibilities of any constituent post including protection and welfare of American citizens. Our consular district, which consisted of the two republics of Croatia and Slovenia, and we provided the full range of consular services including visas. We did political and economic reporting. For a constituent post, we were pretty well staffed. We had a consul general, we had two political-economic officers, we had two consular officers, although only one was a real consul. We had an admin officer, and of course a well staffed FSN group as well.

Q: Now it's an embassy.

RACKMALES: The basic staffing has stayed almost the same.

Q: Who was the consul general when you were there?

RACKMALES: Bob Owen. My tour coincided entirely with his. He stayed four years and I think I arrived in his second year and left at the end of his third year.

Q: What was your particular assignment there?

RACKMALES: I was chief of the consular section, so I oversaw all of the range of consular responsibilities that we had.

Q: I know one of the things that gave me great pleasure was the fact that the autos trade, the so-called main highway between Croatia and Serbia when I was consul general in essentially Serbia was that you had two-thirds of the autos trade because a lot of accidents on the highways so you got a disproportionate number of the accidents as your responsibility, which did not give me any great heartache.

RACKMALES: Actually, I have to say that tragically I lost a good friend who had gone through language training, Hanna Woods.

Q: Yes, I knew Hanna. That was a terrible automobile accident, a very dangerous highway. What were the main consular things that you had to deal with?

RACKMALES: We had very active visa issuance. There were a lot of Croatians who traveled to the United States, and the immigrant visa operation was also fairly busy because of the large number of Croatians who had immigrated after the war, so there were a lot of family petitions. And then we had protection cases, a few of them come to mind as having taken a lot of time and effort.

Q: I'd like to get a feel for what this meant.

RACKMALES: I guess the most dramatic one was a man who was a writer, in fact had won the National Book Award in the early '50s, but had suffered from paranoia, and I believe some drug addiction as well. He was living in Rome, and was involved with a "clinic" that was apparently being used as a drug center. The granddaughter of the first post-war president of Italy, Luigi Einaudi, became involved with this individual and in the drug scene. Partly because of her involvement there was an Italian crackdown on this group. The writer got wind of it, and hopped in his car and fled because he knew that if he were picked up in Italy he would be put away for a long time. So he drove across the border into Slovenia. This was at night and since his lights were defective he was picked up by Slovenian police and had his passport taken. He started calling the embassy for assistance, and started trying personally to reach the ambassador, and I think the embassy very quickly recognized that this was not a normal individual and it was going to be very complicated. He wanted to go down to Belgrade but, of course, they said, "No, you're in the Zagreb consular district." He got down to Zagreb, and then we began a period--it seemed like months, perhaps just a month for all of this to play out, but it seemed interminable. He did have money, so he was staying at the Palace Hotel, coming into the consulate every day and spinning fantasies about how the CIA and everybody else was out to get him, and becoming increasingly agitated. I was trying to figure out how to resolve this in a way that would protect his rights as an American citizen, but at the same time get him out of our hair because he was starting to take up two-three or more hours a day. At one point he called me at midnight, woke me up saying, "There are some men here who claim to want to take me to a hospital, but I don't know who they are or what's going on. Will you come down and check it out?" I did, and he was right but shortly after I arrived they left. But There was another man lurking in the background

who came up to me as soon as they left and introduced himself. He was an agent of the Einaudi family, and he said, "I'm sorry that you interfered with this little action of ours because we really do think he needs help." As we talked I could also sense that his real concern was protecting the Einaudi family. Checking with the embassy in Rome, I was told to have nothing to do with the writer who was considered potentially dangerous. The Italians had also put out through Interpol a look-out for him. What I finally did was, and this was skirting a fine line, to share most of what I knew with the Slovenia authorities. They had a foreign ministry because the republics had some nominal foreign policy responsibilities. I gave some of the background on the writer to the head of the office, Dr. Murko, and I said, "This person's passport is being held by your magistrate, and I'm going to accompany him up there and hope you will do the proper thing." I guess my assumption was that with the Interpol watch, and the other indications that the writer could be a risk, they might decide to contact the Italians, or take him into some sort of custody. In fact, when I went up there we went to the magistrate, he said, "Oh, yes, Mr. Rackmales, I've heard from a subordinate." He sat down, asked a few brief questions and then said, "Okay, here's your passport." The writer was quite pleased, and as we walked out we looked at each other, and said, "Okay, now what?" I excused myself because I wanted to try to find out more, if I could, from Dr. Murko, who had clearly decided to decline the hot potato. He said, "We gave him his passport back, aren't you happy?" I replied, "If that's your decision, fine, we'll take it from there."

Shortly afterward the writer did decide voluntarily to go for treatment in a clinic in Switzerland, much to my relief.

Q: There's no real answer because you couldn't use restraints, and they could be dangerous. I mean both to themselves and to others, and yet your tools were essentially persuasion either with the person, which is not very good, or with the local authorities who also don't want to be involved at all, as you know. Get them moving.

RACKMALES: Yes, I suspect that was probably the basic motivation. They also didn't want to have this guy hanging around.

Q: Did you have problems with, particularly with Croats who had left before communist times, or fled during it, who became Americans, who came back and tried to agitate, and overthrow Tito and that type of thing?

RACKMALES: I think it was still considered too dangerous for them to do anything that would make them conspicuous. Around that time we saw the first evident signs of Croatian nationalism, and a slightly freer atmosphere. We did have a few cases of people who had left for political reasons, and who would come back and get picked up on the charge of having avoided the draft. One case in Slovenia involved a young man who had made a couple of broadcasts in the Cleveland area, and he came back and was charged, not with political activities, but with having evaded the draft. Eventually he was able to get out. I do not recall any cases of individuals actually coming back and trying to organize political activities.

Q: This, of course, on the record. How did you find dealing with the Croatian and Slovenia authorities? Not necessarily just on the consular side, but anything else.

RACKMALES: In general, in my first year until the summer of '68, the Slovene authorities were warmer and friendlier. The Croats that I dealt with correct, but a bit standoffish. That changed in August of '68 dramatically.

Q: You have to supply gloves and handkerchiefs too. Did you get any feel for Croatian and Slovene immigration to the United States, how successful it was, where the people were going to? Were there any patterns that you noticed?

RACKMALES: The Slovenes in the Cleveland area were numerous, and in Chicago also, and the Croats on the Pacific coast. There were a lot of Dalmatians because of the fishing industry. A lot of our tuna industry is in the hands of Croatians. They also have vineyards in the Napa Valley, the Grgick family, and others. So there are concentrations in some of the large mid-west cities and the Pacific coast. There was a big Croatian community from one of the islands who all went to Hoboken. In fact there were more people from that island living in Hoboken than there were living on the island. I was struck with the success, with the frugality, and the ability of these immigrants in a very short period of time to accumulate savings which far exceeded what most of us are able to save and you wonder how did they do it. But they were obviously very hard working, energetic people, who lived modestly and saved so they could then afford to bring in other members of the family. So I never worried too much about these people becoming a public charge.

THOMAS P. H. DUNLOP
Consular Officer
Zagreb, Yugoslavia (1969-1972)

Thomas Dunlop was born in Washington, DC in 1934 and educated at Yale and the University of Berlin. He entered the Foreign Service in 1960. His career included posts in Belgrade, Saigon, Zagreb and Seoul. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

DUNLOP: Again, I welcome this opportunity which you're giving to me. In the interim between leaving Saigon in June, 1969, and my assignment to Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in July, 1969, I was married. That is not necessarily a key element in these recollections, but I had a happy tour in Zagreb. I was the number two person in a small Consulate. I think that at most we had 10 Americans assigned there. We had consular responsibility for two of the six constituent republics of Yugoslavia: Slovenia and Croatia.

The Yugoslav people could begin to travel abroad and had less difficulty getting passports. They were permitted to form companies and to enter into joint ventures with foreign companies, although the laws on joint ventures were not very permissive. There were a lot of things about that which made that kind of arrangement unattractive to foreign companies. There was no great flood of foreign investment. Nevertheless, there was some, and that marked a big change. The most important single thing that Tito did between 1965 and 1969 was to devolve economic

decision making from the central government and structures which had been in place in Belgrade since World War II to the capitals of the constituent republics. In our case, this meant Zagreb [Croatia] and Ljubljana [Slovenia].

This change was real. Tito had been unhappy with the economic performance of Yugoslavia, as well he should have been. Yugoslavia's so-called "Special Road to Communism" was not producing the "bottom line" results that he thought it should and could have done. So he listened to the advice of people who said, "Look, this top-heavy bureaucracy in Belgrade is not what we need. Let's dismantle that. Let's really give economic decision making authority, in significant measure, to the six Republics out there." And that was done. What I think that Tito did not anticipate, and those around him either didn't tell him or didn't know, either, is that it is very difficult to give away some economic decision making power without putting at risk your political decision making power.

When I got to Zagreb in 1969, this process of devolution of authority was picking up momentum, on the political side as well as on the economic side. The political process of devolution was, it turned out, unacceptable to Tito. But that was not apparent at all at that time. There was a cadre of able, younger people at middle and upper middle levels of the communist parties in the republics who were really ready, willing, and eager to take this authority and to "run with it." In Croatia the names of the two people most associated with that were a man by the name of Mika Tripolo and a woman by the name of Savka Dapcevic Kuchar. In Slovenia there was a group of such people, but the most prominent was a man named Stanic Kuvete. There were people like this down in Belgrade in the Communist Party of Serbia, Latinka(?) Perovic, for example. There were some of them down in Macedonia in the Macedonian Communist Party. They weren't too evident in Bosnia or in Montenegro. However, there was enough going on in Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia to give a distinctly different cast to the political environment in which the country was operating.

What did the people of Croatia want? They wanted identity, they wanted to be thought of as Croatians, not Yugoslavs, they wanted control over their tourism earnings. They had the biggest chunk of the Adriatic Coast of Yugoslavia. They had made all of these Austrian schillings, Swedish kroner, and, above all, German Deutsche Marks, which were pouring in down there from tourist spending. They wanted what they regarded as a "fair cut," which would probably have amounted to most of it. They wanted to be able to decide that, if they needed a new railroad or new highway, they could allocate their own resources and not have to go to Belgrade, hat in hand. We couldn't see anything particularly wrong with those desires. The same thing was happening in Slovenia, and not much less in the Serbian and in the Macedonian Communist Party.

Q: Just to get a feel for this, what did the Consulate staff consist of?

DUNLOP: Well, we had a Consul General. When I was there, I served under two very nice guys, who changed in the middle of my tour. I was the number two guy in the Consulate. I had to do all of the operational political reporting, or, at least, to be responsible for it. I also did a lot of economic and commercial reporting. Any trade delegations which came our way were the responsibility of the Consulate, i. e., me. We had a big trade fair, the Zagreb Trade Fair, each

fall, which, I think, was the biggest one in Yugoslavia. Certainly, it was the oldest one and probably the one with the most Western participation. The U.S. had a pavilion. We had to assist either the Department of Commerce or USIA [United States Information Agency], whichever was the action agency back in Washington, to set up and operate the U.S. Pavilion.

We had a fair number of trade delegations. This idea of "joint ventures" had attracted some attention among American businessmen. They were beginning to poke around in Croatia to see what the possibilities were. So we had the economic, political, and commercial function all wrapped up in me. I had one Junior Officer there, who was assigned to the Political-Economic Section of the Consulate, so to speak. He was my assistant. Then there was the Consular Section, with one assistant. That makes five officers. On the administrative side we had one officer who handled the administrative work. That makes six. USIS [United States Information Service] initially had three officers there. Later on, they added one officer, because we opened a Consulate in Ljubljana, Slovenia. USIS had a secretary, and the Consulate had a secretary. That added up to 10 Americans assigned to the Consulate in Zagreb. USIS opened an office in Ljubljana and got a third person assigned.

Of course, the administrative people were responsible for hiring and paying our Foreign Service National [FSN] employees. I think that we had about 35 FSN's at the Consulate in Zagreb. We had a good staff of FSN employees in Zagreb. As in the case of the Embassy in Belgrade, they were perhaps somewhat older than we would have liked, but they were quite energetic and willing to take some initiative on their own and do some things that were important. I had a good economic and commercial FSN, a man named Georges Njers. He was a Yugoslav of Hungarian origin. We also had a couple of Slovenes in the Consulate in Zagreb. The rest were Croatians, except that our chief driver and general handyman was an Albanian.

Q: Regarding your relations with the Embassy, you know I spent five years in the Embassy in Belgrade. At the time I used to say that the Serbs had spent 500 years under the Turkish yoke. After all of that the Serbian response, if something didn't work, was to blame the Turks. They have somehow come out of that. Did you notice a difference in viewpoint? How were the Consulate's relations with the Ambassador and other senior Embassy officers in Belgrade?

DUNLOP: Yes, that's very worthwhile talking about. I'm glad that you asked me. Like you, I had had a total immersion in "Serbdom." Our language instructors at the Foreign Service Institute were both Serbs, as you recall. I understand that this is no longer the case, and properly so. I had spent my two and a half years in the Embassy in Belgrade [1963-1965] almost exclusively in contact with Serbs. I didn't travel very much in the other parts of the Yugoslav republic, except to Bosnia and, maybe, to Macedonia. However, I certainly had not lived or been in contact with the people of the other republics.

Up in Croatia, I learned of the existence of the historical memory, although not at first hand, thank God. I learned of the atrocities committed by the "Ustashi," the fascist goon squads that the Croatians employed, especially during the early years of World War II. These were horrendous atrocities which took place against the Serbs. So I didn't arrive in Croatia with any pro-Croatian point of view. You know, intellectually we tell ourselves that we are very "objective." It is a very human thing, if you are sensitive to what people are really thinking and feeling, to try to

understand the situation in which you live and to try, as it were, to get inside other people's skins. That's what Foreign Service Officers are supposed to do. There comes a time when you begin to understand why the local people think and act as they do. I suppose that that realization can "color" your objectivity to some degree, although we all try not to do that.

There was a difference between the viewpoints of the Embassy and the Consulate in Zagreb on the political issue between Zagreb and Ljubljana, on the one hand, and the central Communist Party leadership on the other. Here I am not referring to the leadership of the Serbian Communist Party, but to that of the central Communist Party in Belgrade. This issue began to get sharper and sharper over the years that I was in Zagreb. To some extent the Embassy tended to dismiss, or so we thought, the importance of what was happening, politically, in Croatia and in Slovenia. In the Consulate in Zagreb we said that, "These are real people, with goals and objectives which they are working hard at. So we need to pay attention to that." Perhaps, in this connection, I am somewhat gilding the clarity with which we expressed ourselves. However, the Embassy's view tended to be, "Well, that is the view of the 'boondocks,'" that is, of the sticks. That's Croatia, and Croatians always bitch and moan about the Serbs. This is all in the realm of domestic politics. It may be interesting but it's not all that important.

This difference was particularly reflected after Malcolm Toon replaced Bill Leonhart as Ambassador to Yugoslavia. Bill Leonhart was the Ambassador when I arrived in Zagreb. Malcolm Toon replaced him about half way through my tour [about in 1970]. Ambassador Toon was an old Russian hand and had broad experience with the old style, communist governments and ways of doing things. Although I may be doing Ambassador Toon a disservice, I don't think that he had quite understood the diversity of Yugoslavia, at least by the time I left Zagreb. He stayed on beyond the period of my service in Zagreb, and perhaps I'm not doing him justice by saying that. However, I think that we in the Consulate in Zagreb felt that the Embassy tended not to pay enough attention to what we were reporting was going on up in Slovenia and Croatia.

That's a comment on the professional side of things. I think that, when you have Consulates and Embassies in a given country, that's not uncommon.

Q: Tell me. Can you talk about getting around in Croatia and Slovenia on your various trips? Can you also discuss your access to various organizations, both private and public in Yugoslavia?

DUNLOP: The difference between Croatia and Slovenia was significant. The difference between these two republics and the rest of Yugoslavia was also significant. In terms of ease of getting around physically, the roads in Croatia and Slovenia were better than elsewhere in Yugoslavia. Trains tended to run on time. There were more hotels that were "bearable," and fewer rest rooms that were not, speaking in comparative terms of the facilities in the southern and eastern parts of Yugoslavia. So travel was easier.

Access was also easier. That may not have been the case before the "reforms" introduced by Tito in 1965. Both Croatia and Slovenia had a reputation for local security services which were very tough on diplomats, until the time that Rankovic was dismissed. I think that there was a logical reason for that. Those were the two parts of the country that the central government in Belgrade

worried most about. It realized that the level of disaffection was probably highest in those areas and wanted to isolate diplomats as much as possible. By the time I got there [in 1969] that was all over, with the exception of one or two incidents, when we could tell that we were subject to surveillance. Every time that Betty and I overnighted in a little resort area, Prizren, and we may have done this three or four times, we were always assigned the same room, whether we gave them advance notice or not. This room must have been electronically monitored [bugged]. It was a nice little area, half way between Zagreb and Split. If you wanted to go down to the coast but couldn't leave Zagreb until after work, you could get to Prizren easily, break your journey there, and all of that.

People in Croatia wanted to talk to Americans. I'm not saying that they wanted to talk to Americans and welcome them in a personal sense much more in Croatia or Slovenia than in Serbia. I think that, given the same opportunity, that was also true in Serbia. However, the Croatians and Slovenes certainly felt less constrained than I remembered from four years before in Serbia. Much of this probably was due to the fact that Croatia and Slovenia had a Western tradition. However, a lot of it, I think, was due to the fact that the police were no longer making it clear that our people were engaged in unwelcome and potentially dangerous activity.

There was also a big difference between Slovenia and Croatia. Slovenia was really a "Westernized" part of Yugoslavia. There were still some very "Balkan" elements about parts of Croatia, although it had also been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and had experienced all of the trials and tribulations of the Reformation, the Counter Reformation, the Enlightenment, and all of that. There were still some areas where Croatia was pretty primitive, and people looked at the world through "Balkan" eyes. However, that was not true in Slovenia. The Slovenes were very sophisticated people. They had one of the highest literacy rates of any country in all of Europe, much less Yugoslavia. They were very proud of their literary and artistic traditions. Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, is a lovely little city which had been maintained more nicely than some. There was a lot of access to Slovenes. In Slovenia people were particularly aggressive in the economic field. They really had carved out a different relationship with the rest of the country, pretty early on. The "Reforms" brought in by Tito in 1965 helped this situation. The political leadership of Stane Kavere helped to implement these reforms, but the Slovenes were going to do that, anyway.

Of course, as you know now, the Slovenes were the first and only republic to break away with relative ease from the old Yugoslavia in 1991 or 1992, I guess. We always liked to go up to Ljubljana because it was a little bit different. The restaurants were a little different, the scenery was different, and it was just fun to go up there. People seemed genuinely happy to see us.

Q: Harry, what was your impression of the leadership qualities of these two figures?

DUNLOP: I was impressed with them. I was particularly impressed with Stane Kavete, but also with Tripolo. Tripolo had a wonderful, popular touch. I guess that some politicians are born with that, and some are not. Tripolo rarely made a misstep in public. He loved student agitation in the universities. This was, after all, about the same time as the 1968 problems with university students up in Paris and, of course, the turmoil in the American universities.

Some of that kind of ferment was also going on all over Yugoslavia. I am sure that there were some young folks who were also active in that way in the universities in Ljubljana [Slovenia], and Zagreb [Croatia]. Those were the two main universities in those cities. These young people would have liked to have created the same degree of turmoil and chaos as existed in Paris. They never quite succeeded but they were able to cause some difficulties. I remember that there was a student strike in Ljubljana which went on for quite a while.

Kavete and Tripolo knew how to walk into the middle of a situation of turmoil and get the student leaders to sit down, reason with them as intelligent equals, and defuse some of the tension. These leaders were people who did not owe their positions of influence in the Communist Party to their activities during World War II. Some of them were old enough to have been active during the war, but as very young folks. They may have been committed "Partizans" and done brave things as children or near children but that wasn't how they earned their "stars," their "stripes," their "spurs," or whatever. Their achievements had come from their own ability and energy, their political acumen, and their ability to see that a change was needed. And they tried to effect that change.

They were an impressive bunch. I didn't personally know leaders like them in Belgrade at all, but there were some down there. I'm not talking now about the overall structure of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia but of the Communist Party of the Serbian Republic. It had Tomsic and Perovic, folks like that in it. I think that they would have been capable of successfully carrying the Communist Party through the death of Tito and the transition process to new leadership that followed it. But they were purged, and no one was there to do that after Tito's death.

The older Communist Party leaders who were given that task obviously failed at it. These other, younger leaders of whom I speak might have done better. In fact, I am quite sure that they would have done better.

Q: What was your impression at this time, 1969 to 1972, of Tito's "grasp" on the direction of events? How did you see this in the Embassy?

DUNLOP: I can tell you what I personally did. I had come away from my assignment to the Embassy in Belgrade [1963-1965], not in opposition to our policy toward Yugoslavia, because I thought that our policy of support for Tito was the correct one. It had proven its worth, and I still think that. However, there tended to be a tendency in the Embassy to blur over Tito's deficiencies. I saw no reason why, among ourselves, we didn't look at those inadequacies a little more objectively. However, I think that this may be an American trait. We tend to deal with some people who may have some unpleasant sides to them. We tend not to think or talk about those faults.

However, when I returned to Yugoslavia for my assignment to the Consulate General in Zagreb [1969-1972], I began to see this situation from another perspective. As I assessed it, Tito was just not paying much attention to the overall situation in any detail but just acted as the "spiritual guide" behind Yugoslav Government policy. However, for the first and only time in my career I became a real "admirer" of Tito, because I mistakenly thought he would permit the younger generation of party reformers to work their will. How wrong I was!

For example, Tito would come up to Zagreb to take a look at the situation as a sort of "stern uncle." He would walk around and inspect the troops. Savka and Mika would trail along in his wake, attentive to his every word and gesture. He would be seen in earnest discussions with them at meetings. He would give little speeches and let little remarks sort of drop off casually, as he was wont to do, in the hearing of the press. These were obviously well planned. They were little "sound bites." It all seemed to me to be very supportive of his general stance.

Once in a while he would say, "Now, we've got to watch this. This is still Yugoslavia. You owe an obligation to help the less fortunate, underdeveloped areas. We can't let you keep all the money that you earn. After all, it's the Yugoslav state which allows you to earn money, and it's the Communist Party, in its benevolence, that is still in charge of things around here." I really felt that he was very supportive, and wisely supportive, of the evolution which was taking place within the party framework but which was definitely a "modernizing" element.

However, on December 12, 1971, to my utter astonishment, Tito convened, initially a secret, and later on a public meeting of the Communist Party Presidium [top leadership], or whatever it was called at the time. The meeting was held at Tito's hunting lodge Karageordevo, in Voivodina. He exploded with wrath at the Communist Party reform leaders. They were not just from Croatia but also from Slovenia and Belgrade. He conducted one of those sessions where people were called on to confess their sins and faults. The "sins and faults" mainly involved nationalism. This was what people were being accused of. That is, of being Croatians first, Yugoslavs second, and Communist Party members last.

In my view there was no reason why they couldn't be all three, and I felt that this was a balancing act which they were successfully performing in Slovenia and Croatia, at least. At some point Tito decided that they were not doing this successfully. The mystery to me, as somebody who was interested in what was going on in Yugoslavia, was why did Tito change his mind. There was no significant series of events that had escalated "national euphoria," the phrase which was then coined to describe this alleged wild-eyed nationalism which would allegedly lead eventually to communal clashes and perhaps even bloodshed.

The conservatives in the Communist Party, both in the central party and the Communist parties of both Croatia and Slovenia, had begun to spread rumors about actual communal clashes. So far as we could find out in the Consulate General in Zagreb, and we made it our business to try very hard to look into these charges, there was no substance to any of the more lurid of these accounts. There were stories about police stations burned down, people assassinated, and so forth. Serbs allegedly had been subjected once again to "Ustashi" [Croatian fascist] terror down in Lika, the area of Croatia where the Serbs were in the majority. We found no evidence of that.

Tito didn't seem to believe that that was happening, either. However, something happened, at least in his mind, to make him "purge" the Croatian and Slovenian Communist Party leadership. It was a brutal purge. He didn't have anybody shot, but the purge went down at least to the second level of the Croatian and Slovenian Communist Parties. By the time this purge was over, at least 2,000 Croatian Communist Party officials in Croatia had been dismissed from their party

positions or responsibilities, as well as any other jobs they may have had. The Director of the Zagreb Fair, a personal acquaintance of mine, was dismissed from this job, for example.

The process of constructive modernization, as I saw it, was brought to a screeching halt. This happened in 1971, just before the Christmas and New Year's holidays period. This was just nine years before Tito's death in 1980. Nothing important happened in the country during these intervening nine years to re-start some fashion of bringing younger people into more senior positions. This was to prove a tragedy for Yugoslavia.

WARREN ZIMMERMANN
Ambassador
Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1989-1992)

Warren Zimmerman was born in 1934 and was educated at Yale and Cambridge. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961. His career included posts in Caracas, Belgrade, Moscow, Paris, Madrid, Geneva and Vienna and was named ambassador to Yugoslavia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1996.

ZIMMERMANN: All right. Croatia was still under communist leadership, and very retrograde communist leadership. It was not a reform communist government in Croatia. Tudjman was at that point in early 1989 a minor nationalist politician who had done jail time for nationalism in the Tito period. So, Croatia was not the nationalist opponent of Serbia, at least not to the extent that it became, that it was a year and a half later. Slovenia was the most interesting of the republics because it had a progressive reform communist leadership under Milan Kucan who is still the president of Slovenia which was prepared to organize Slovenian elections and to leave power if the communist party lost the elections. That is in fact what ultimately happened in 1991, and they did leave power. They were at the time I arrived in Yugoslavia, without any question the most liberal communist regime in the world.

Q: How did you see the various republics by the time you were there after about six months or so and well into your tour? Was Croatia and Tudjman just sort of on a train that was going to end up in one place, independence and Slovenia. I mean is this something you could do anything about?

ZIMMERMANN: It wasn't apparent in 1989. They hadn't had elections yet in the republics in 1989. That was in 1990. You still had communist leaderships in all of the republics. In some republics they were quite good leaderships. For example, Slovenia had a very progressive communist leadership, arguably the most liberal communist government that ever existed. That doesn't make it all that liberal but it probably is the least illiberal that ever existed, and it was run by a then young man named Milan Kucan who was prepared to risk communist rule in a free election. Which he did a year later and lost. He won the presidency but his party lost control. Kucan was not talking about independence in 1989. He was talking about somehow getting Yugoslavia out of the grip of Milosevic. He saw Milosevic very clearly as the enemy of Yugoslavia's ever getting in to the European organization because of Milosevic's attitude toward

Kosovo, because of his dictatorial ways, because of his more retrograde communism. So Kucan was not talking about independence, but he certainly was talking about a kind of an autonomy for Slovenia that would make it independent of Milosevic's influence. In Croatia the party was quite corrupt, the communist party. They didn't like Milosevic but they were not pushing as Slovenia was toward a western style of democracy. In some of the smaller republics like Montenegro and Macedonia, you had some very good people, young people, in charge who were quite interested in democratizing. So it was a very mixed picture, but Milosevic was terrifying everybody in the approach he was taking. I think many of the leaders in the republics realized that Milosevic really wanted to take over Yugoslavia and run it in Serbia's interest. Of course that horrified them.

Q: From your various sources, I am talking about the agency, political attaches, political officers, USIS and all were you seeing increased nationalistic, was that pox getting worse and worse?

ZIMMERMANN: Oh yes, particularly in Serbia and Croatia. In Slovenia, the nationalism was as much a pro-western democratic approach as it was a Slovenia for the Slovenes approach.

Croatian and Serbian nationalism were extremely hostile to each other and extremely hostile to anybody who didn't agree with them. The word traitor appeared all the time. If you were a Serb who wasn't a Serb nationalist, you were a traitor to Serbia. You weren't a true Serb. The Croats went through the same thing. This was propagated very heavily by the intellectual class.

Q: I think of particularly receptions or dinner parties when you had a chance to sit down and talk. Did this become more and more the subject of dinner parties at the embassy and all?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes. We thought our job was to bring people together, so we would have people to dinner and receptions who might disagree with each other. Already the situation was so bad they would never see each other if they disagreed. We had one dinner party for Katharine Graham, the publisher of the Washington Post who came, I think that was in early 1991. She came with her editorial page editor and with one of the columnists, a very high flying Washington Post group of three or four people. We had a small dinner party. We had the president of Slovenia who flew in for it. We had a major Serbian intellectual and a couple of other people, and the Serb and the Slovene started to attack each other in a way that was so embarrassing to me. I just didn't know what to do. A maid who was serving the table was in tears about it. Of course I am not sure how Mrs. Graham took it. It was quite interesting certainly for her. It was illuminating about what the true situation was. But these were two people who both had extensive experience in the West, had been professors in western universities. The nicest people that we knew, and they were going at it hammer and tongs, very insulting to each other.

Q: During the sort of first phase of this, Slovenian independence, I take it this was not considered vital to anything was it or not?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, if Slovenia had declared its independence, and there hadn't been any other declarations of independence, then I think that you could argue that Slovenia could have become a small western European country, and the rest of Yugoslavia might have held together. The problem was that Tudjman very quickly said that if Slovenia declares independence, Croatia will declare independence. I think you can understand why he said that. He said that because with Slovenia gone out of Yugoslavia, Croatia is then exposed to the power of Serbia. Slovenia had no military power, but it had a lot of moral force and political power within Yugoslavia and economic power. With Slovenia gone, Croatia is naked to the sword of Milosevic. So Tudjman in fact gave the Slovenes a blank check. He said if they go, we go too, and that's what happened.

They went within one day of each other.

Q: Like most of our people from the south in our military.

ZIMMERMANN: Exactly. It is an honorable profession to be in the military. That was true in Serbia; it was not true in Slovenia. Slovenes did not consider the army a very honorable profession, although the number three ranking person in the Yugoslav army that attacked Croatia was a Slovene. He was an admiral, stayed on. So, you had this army which was predominately Serbian, but by no means exclusively Serbian. It had high ranking people who were from other republics. For awhile it stayed aloof from the nationalism, but it began to get engaged particularly when the Slovenes and the Croats started talking about breaking away from Yugoslavia, because the army saw that as a bottom line. Their job was to defend the integrity and the borders of Yugoslavia. Here Croatia and Slovenia were threatening to change those borders and to destroy that integrity. Then the army got very nasty. It tried to break up the local national guards that were forming in Croatia and Slovenia. There was a dramatic showdown in the Yugoslav presidency in March, I think was the month, of 1991 in which the defense minister told the presidency that he needed the authority to go in and beat up the Croatian and Slovenia irregular forces that were forming. He couldn't get a majority on the presidency for it because the Bosnian representative happened to be a Serb, but he wouldn't go along with it. He paid a big price for that afterwards from Milosevic and his people. This was only three months before the ultimate breakup of Yugoslavia. The army was moving towards a a pro-Milosevic line. Even in June of July of 1991 when the country broke up, I don't think Milosevic was giving the defense minister orders. I don't think it worked that way, but I think there was a kind of unity of view there. Of course once Croatia and headed toward independence, many of the Croats and Slovenes in the army and particularly in the high officer levels of the army defected and went back to their republics and started to form their own national armies. That is what happened. With the chief of the Yugoslav air force. I had been so impressed with him that when he was on a trip to the United States, we arranged a meeting between him and Scowcroft in Washington. He came back, and three or four weeks after that meeting he defected to Croatia and became the commander in chief of the Croatian army which consisted of nobody at that point. So what you had was a Yugoslav army which in a way become a totally Serbian army because the Slovenes wouldn't send any draftees to the army. Their officers were moving back to their republics. The same was happening with the Croats. The Macedonians were too small to be a major factor. The Montenegrins were mainly Serbs anyway so they were on the Serbian side. You ended up having what you could really call a Serbian army, not because it wanted to be a Serbian army, but because it couldn't get anybody from the other republics.

ROBERT RACKMALES
Deputy Chief of Mission
Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1989-1993)

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: To go back to September of '89, how did we view the problem of ethnic diversity division at that time. What were we seeing?

RACKMALES: Even before '89, there had always been concern over the viability of the system that Tito left behind, whether it could contain centrifugal forces which were obviously strong. There was growing hostility between Slovenia and Croatia on the one hand, and Serbia on the other. Tito's system as it evolved in the years since his death, had given more and more power to the individual republics and less and less to the federal government. To the point where we all knew that the greatest threat to the optimistic scenario I just described was in the unwillingness of the republics to allow the federal government to implement coherent policies. So our efforts in 89-90 was to try to bolster Markovic, whom we saw as the best hope, maybe the last hope, because if he failed the prospects were very gloomy. He seemed at that period, in the summer and early fall, to have the kind of leadership abilities that gave him a fighting chance to overcome the systemic problems of heading a government with very little power, with only the powers that the republics were willing to let him exercise. He went to the United States and made a good impression. As a person he was dynamic and knew how to talk to westerners. The only doubts were would he be allowed to carry out a meaningful reform program in Yugoslavia. And in the succeeding months it became clear that it probably wasn't going to happen.

Q: Something you said, we wanted to support Markovic. How do we support somebody? What does that mean?

RACKMALES: First of all by having him meet with the President. That's one way of showing support to a leader of a...

Q: This would be George Bush at this time.

RACKMALES: That's correct...through the kinds of things that the spokespersons for the administration say about him. In succeeding months as he got more and more embroiled in difficulties there were other attempts. For example, at one point I remember Bush calling him up to express his support for him, and that information was released publicly that the President of the United States had called him. And we did begin in those months preparing an aid package for Yugoslavia. I remember going to Vienna to a regional meeting of all Eastern European DCMs, and AID directors, to discuss what kind of an aid package would be appropriate. The amounts earmarked for Yugoslavia were not very large. I had been, as DCM, in charge of preparing the recommendations for what areas we were going to assist. But even at that point, even in December of '89, I told the chair of the meeting who was Bob Barry, who was in charge of the office that was established to implement AID programs in Eastern Europe, that we should not actually dispense aid yet for Yugoslavia until it became clear that the severe breakdown in relations between the republics and the federal government showed some signs of improving. Because otherwise you were giving money to an entity that was not functioning. And in fact in succeeding months things got worse instead of better so we never really went forward with any concrete aid. That infuriated Markovic because he kept saying, what good is your rhetorical

support if you can't come forward with hard cash. But it's very hard to justify in a situation where the IMF and other international institutions, and our own analyses, were that the federal government was impotent. It reached the point, for example, where Slovenia was not turning over to the federal government the customs duties that it was collecting for goods that were entering Slovenia. They were keeping them.

In late November of '89 the Serbs instituted an economic boycott of Slovenia. This within a country that is nominally united. In my own mind that was the clearest evidence that Yugoslavia was probably on a rapid downward spiral in terms of unity.

Q: On the political reporting, were we in touch with the governments of the various republics, and if so what were we getting from them? What were they talking about?

RACKMALES: There were three groups of republics. On the one hand there was Slovenia and Croatia who at that point were starting to head hell-bent towards independence at the earliest possible date. There were the first free and open elections took place in Slovenia and Croatia in the spring of '90, and both brought into power groups that were clearly headed in the direction of independence. Even before those elections it was clear that that's the way things were trending, but the elections intensified that process.

Anyway, you had those two northern republics. You had Serbia which basically would have liked to have been rid of the northern republics, felt strong enough to dominate the remainder, and so was not about to pay a price to keep the country together.

And then you had the other republics who basically were terrified of what a breakup would mean, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Montenegro was too much in Serbia's shadow to really do much more than wring its hands. But the two leaders who worked the hardest to try to keep a form of Yugoslavia together were Izetbegovic in Bosnia who was elected in November of '90, and Gligorov who became the leader of Macedonia in '91. Unity became more difficult to maintain with the demise of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia which formally broke up in February of '90. Its power crumbled very rapidly, but the underlying interests of the republics at that period were more or less as I've described it, namely two who only wanted to leave. One which was somewhat happy to have them leave provided in the case of Croatia that they didn't try to take Serbs with them. The Yugoslav constitution provided for secession but not secession of republics. Secession of ethnic groups, of nations as they called it, narodi. The Serbian argument was if Slovenes as a nation wished to leave Yugoslavia it's in the constitution that they have that right. If Croats want to leave, essentially as Croats, that's fine. But, and this becomes now one of the root causes of the wars that sprung up, that they do not have a right to take Serbs with them. The Serbs have the same right of self determination as anyone else. That in a nutshell was the Serbian position.

Q: Let's turn to sort of the west. I'll let you tackle it however you want.

RACKMALES: Okay. Let me organize it by using as a focal point the visit of Jim Baker, Secretary of State, in June of 1991 because that was the critical period from May-June '91 through probably the fall of '91, the key decisions were taken by everybody that led to the

explosion of violence, first in Slovenia-Croatia, and then later in Bosnia. First of all, he came not just as the Secretary of State of the United States. This was a period in mid-1991, and we as an embassy had been working towards this, and it reflected, I think, the high degree of cooperation that existed among the missions. Everybody was beginning even as late as I would say mid-'90, in some cases towards the end of '90, some major embassies were still pooh-poohing the idea that a breakup was imminent, or that if it happened, that it couldn't be handled in a fairly peaceful way. I think we were the least complacent of the embassies, but our views were pretty closely shared by the major west European embassies. So when Baker scheduled his first trip to Yugoslavia, it was one of the last times that we and the Europeans were on the same wavelength. And the policy was to send the following signals: was first of all to the Slovenes and the Croats who had announced that they were about to declare their independence unilaterally, and damn the consequences of that. The message was, that we would not support unilateral steps to break up Yugoslavia. That they needed to try to come up with a political solution, and preserve some form of Yugoslavia. If that was not viable, then they had to still continue to talk until an agreed dissolution could be achieved. That was the first part of the message, and that was aimed primarily at the Slovenes and the Croats.

The other message was addressed to the army and to the Serbs, was; you must not use force to keep Yugoslavia together. I think in those two messages, there was a contradiction that has bedeviled us all along and the contradiction is the following:

That it was not fully appreciated that except for Slovenia, all of the successor states to Yugoslavia were also multi-ethnic states. Bosnia was in the worst position because there was not even a majority ethnic group. So if you are let's say a Serbian senior military officer what you're hearing from the west is that we don't think that a multi-ethnic state should use force against a minority that wants to break away and form its own state. What would go through his mind is fine, if Croats want to leave Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavia constitution gives them the right as Croats. What it does not do is give them the right to take Serbs with them against their will. The Serbs have the same right not to be part of Croatia as the Croats not to be part of Yugoslavia. The underlying question, when is it justified for the international community to provide arms or other support to a multi-ethnic state facing a minority insurgency, is one of the most vexed of our times. But the foundations of our policy as it emerged vis-a-vis Croatia and Bosnia were shakier than we liked to admit. It helps explain why so many statesmen have been struggling with this. There are other aspects of it obviously but it's one that has never been resolved, and that may only be resolved when finally sadly, tragically, as a result of the war populations are moved so that new boundaries can be drawn and everyone throws up their hands and says okay.

Q: How was Baker received when he came there?

RACKMALES: He was very unhappy with the whole experience. I was on the bus with some senior NSC staffers and their attitude, and I believe that this reflected his as well, is that, first of all, the Yugoslav crisis was horribly complicated. One of them called it worse than the Middle East. Secondly, there were no good guys. Baker was not happy with any of his interlocutors, he thought they were all to a greater or lesser extent, mostly greater, lying to him, dissembling. He also felt that he had gotten some assurances from the Slovenes that the Slovenes later said was just a misunderstanding on his part. So when the Slovenes a few days later went ahead and

announced their independence, he felt personally betrayed. At that point he was probably more angry with the Slovenes than any others. But his basic judgment (which I remember thinking at that time, and still do think was correct), was that, boy, if the Europeans want to take this one on, let them. He saw nothing good to be gained by the United States trying to play the lead role in finding a way out of that maze. And the Europeans at that point were trying to forge a common foreign policy. This was a period of some optimism that a more united Europe could be...

Q: How about in Slovenia? Slovenia has sort of passed over our radar so much that one doesn't think about it anymore. How did we see that situation?

RACKMALES: The Slovenes were always the easiest to talk to. We, of course, knew that they did not have the kinds of internal problems because they were a homogeneous society. We tried to encourage them with very limited success to stay involved. We also supported Baker's message that a unilateral declaration of independence would set off the Croats but the Slovenes basically didn't give a damn about the Croats or anything else. They wanted out, they didn't care particularly what the consequences would be, and they wanted to simply go their own way, and the less they heard about the subject of Yugoslavia the better. So basically they would listen politely, and then shrug.

**E. ALLAN WENDT
Chargé d'Affaires
Ljubljana (1992-1993)**

**Ambassador
Slovenia (1993-1995)**

E. Allen Wendt was born November 8, 1935 in Chicago, Illinois. He graduated from Yale University in 1957 with a degree in History and minor in Political Science. He continued his studies at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, France. In 1959, Wendt entered the Foreign Service. He held various positions within the State Department which included being sent to post in Dusseldorf, Germany as a consular officer as his first foreign post in 1961. In 1967, Wendt was sent to Saigon, Vietnam during which he experienced the Tet Offensive. From there he bounced between posts abroad and the United States including posts in Brussels, Belgium, Cairo, Egypt, and Ljubljana, Slovenia, before becoming the first U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia in 1992. He retired at the end of his Ambassadorship in 1995. E. Allen Wendt was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May, 1996.

WENDT:In April of 1992, the US recognized the independence of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina following the breakup of Yugoslavia. I had already been tapped to be the first American ambassador to Slovenia. So, I started reading into that new activity. I actually was able to hang on to a little office up in my old seventh floor T/ST suite -- not the main office

because, by that time, I had been replaced by Ambassador Paul Cleveland, who had been ambassador to New Zealand and Malaysia. I started taking Slovene language lessons. I had not been confirmed in the new position -- in fact, I don't think my nomination had even been announced, but I'm not sure. I don't quite recall the sequence of events. But the main problem was that, although we had recognized the independence of Slovenia, we had not established diplomatic relations with the new country. Remember, we were holding back on recognizing the breakup of Yugoslavia, thinking the time was not right. The Europeans moved sooner than we did.

Q: The Germans, I think, jumped the gun on everybody. They recognized Croatia before -

WENDT: Yes, they were the first ones to take the plunge and they brought everybody else along with them -- December of 1991, I think, is when they moved. The rest of the European Community followed shortly thereafter and then we followed in April of 1992. But we held back in establishing formal diplomatic relations. Recognition didn't come until four months later in August of 1992, following the highly publicized atrocities in Bosnia -- you remember the photographs of people in stockades, the emaciated men behind barbed wire. So, the publicizing of war atrocities in Bosnia finally led us to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with independent Bosnia. Of course, in doing that, we also established diplomatic relations with Croatia and Slovenia at the same time. All this was happening under the George H. W. Bush administration. I was then sent rushing out to the capital, Ljubljana, on very short notice to open the new embassy in August of 1992.

Q: How did this appointment come about?

WENDT: Well, I think there was a sentiment among the powers that be in the Department that I had done a good job handling a very tricky and complicated set of issues both technically and bureaucratically -- namely, the whole gambit of export control issues, which had always been considered a can of worms if not a tangle of thorns. I was fortunate to have the solid support of my very able boss, Reginald Bartholomew, who was then Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs. I think the powers that be thought I had paid my dues, so to speak -- particularly in my previous five year long assignment dealing with a tough set of issues -- and before that five years as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, and so they finally gave me the nod for an overseas Ambassadorial post.

Q: In a way, with a place like Slovenia, I would have thought there would have been some Slovene origin businessman who had been contributing to the Republican cause or something like that and who would have been thirsting to get in there.

WENDT: Well, that's a good question. That could easily have happened, as it did in many other instances. But I think maybe in this instance I was helped by the fact that the Slovene community in the United States -- there is a substantial Slovene diaspora, and a large number in the Cleveland area -- for whatever reason, just didn't lay claim to the position. Yet in the case of Croatia, they did. The Croatian community actually had a candidate who was approved by the Bush administration. I believe her name was Mara Letica or something close to that. She was of Croatian origin. Not only that, her father was an activist and, as I understood it at the time, was

an advisor to Franjo Tudjman, the president of Croatia. She was the Bush Administration's nominee for Ambassador to Croatia.

By that time, by the summer of 1992, the nominations were announced. I can't quite recall when, but I was announced along with Mara Letica and a number of others. This was in the waning months of the Bush administration. In the meantime, I was sent out to Ljubljana as Chargé d'Affaires to open the new embassy. I was out there a little more than a week in late August and then I returned to Washington around Labor Day, September, 1992, and waited for the nomination to run its course. Unfortunately, the nomination got bogged down. It had nothing to do with me, and it had nothing to do with Slovenia. There were about 12 or 13 nominations that got bogged down because of infighting within the Senate, which was not unusual.

As I recall, the Bush administration wanted to send a new ambassador to Saudi Arabia. With an election coming up in November, the Senate, or some members of the Senate, thought that to send a new ambassador to a country like Saudi Arabia at that late stage in the Administration's mandate was uncalled for. So, Democrats in the Senate blocked that nomination. Then, Republican members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee retaliated by blocking other nominations, including mine. Well, in the end, to make a long story short, almost all the nominations died in the Senate. They were not acted upon by the time the Senate adjourned. They were simply sent back to the White House, which meant that they were null and void. It wasn't a question of just resurrecting them later. They were simply down the tubes. So, I was then in limbo. I just hung around the Department of State working on my Slovene language lessons and doing odd jobs until, in December, Larry Eagleburger, as you know a career Foreign Service Officer, was named interim Secretary of State. I shouldn't say "interim." He was simply named Secretary of State, but it was what they called a "recess appointment" because the Congress was not in session, which meant there could be no Senate confirmation of the appointment.

In any event the State Department decided to send me back out to Slovenia as Chargé d'Affaires. So, in December of 1992, I went back to Ljubljana. I was living in a hotel.

Q: The Toslan?

WENDT: No, the Holiday Inn.

Q: That's a different era.

WENDT: No great shakes, but not too bad. I stayed out there until the Christmas holidays and then came back again for a couple of weeks on personal leave and consultations. I then went back out in January as Chargé d'Affaires again. The crucial question for me was, would I be renominated in the new Clinton administration after they took office in January, 1993? There was no guarantee that I would be. First of all, the new State Department leadership had to decide that I would remain their candidate for the job -- and, fortunately for me, they did make that decision. Then the White House had to approve. Again, fortunately, I was among the very first Ambassadorial candidates that State sent over to the White House. Another was Pamela Harriman to be Ambassador to France. So, I was in good company, and, fortunately, I was

approved. I even rode up to the Hill for my Senate confirmation hearings with Mrs. Harriman.

I mention all this because I heard later that subsequent to the list I was on, a number of very deserving career Foreign Service Ambassadorial candidates did not make it -- and that the White House sent back at least one list with the notation "too many white males."

Q: You were ambassador to Slovenia from when to when? You were Chargé during '92 and the early part of '93.

WENDT: I was actually sworn in as ambassador and presented my credentials in May of 1993. So, up until that time, beginning in August, 1992, I was Chargé d'Affaires.

Q: Then, when did you leave there?

WENDT: I left Slovenia in September of 1995. You could say that I held the position from August of 1992 to September of 1995, although for the first several months, I was Chargé rather than Ambassador.

Q: For my purposes, the main thing is to talk about your time there rather than the actual title.

WENDT: Right.

Q: When you started in Slovenia, what were you getting from Washington about the situation there and what were going to be your concerns?

WENDT: Interestingly, what I was getting from Washington was kind of a lukewarm response to the whole business, not aimed at me personally, but rather to the whole notion of our recognizing Slovenia and having an ambassador there. The reason for that is that the Department of State, I think, from Secretary Baker on down, had hoped that Yugoslavia would not collapse. You remember the famous meeting that Baker had in Belgrade with the leaders of the different parts of Yugoslavia -- I believe it was in June of 1991 -- trying to hold it together and failing. As you noted, in December of that year Germany recognized Croatia and Slovenia -- the parts that had broken away. Later, you remember, there was a brief war in Slovenia in June of 1991.

Q: Over the customs posts and the seizing of the garrisons and that sort of thing.

WENDT: Yes. The Slovenes found that they were not able to sell their goods in Serbia. There were internal customs controls that Belgrade had imposed on them. The Slovenes in turn established national customs controls at their borders with outside countries like Austria. It's probably beyond the scope of our discussion here to go into all the background, which I'm sure you're covering with some of the other people you're interviewing. But at any rate, the State Department really didn't want to see Yugoslavia breakup, just as initially we didn't want the Soviet Union to break up. We had become accustomed to, I suppose, the stability we thought these regimes represented, even though we didn't like the communist regimes as such. But it was the devil we knew. Well, we had the same attitude towards Yugoslavia. There was a school of thought according to which it was the Slovenes who had precipitated the country's collapse.

They were the first to strike out boldly to get out of the Yugoslav Federation.

Q: If you read Warren Zimmerman's book -- he was the last US ambassador to Yugoslavia -- "Origins of the Catastrophe," he ascribes part of the problem to what he calls the selfishness of the Slovenes going their own way. He doesn't come down heavily on them, but it's there.

WENDT: Yes, he also made that same point in an article in the magazine "Foreign Affairs", which I think was basically his book in embryonic form. He definitely invokes what he saw as the selfishness of the Slovenes. I don't consider it my role here to defend the Slovenes, but I had one advantage, I thought, when I was appointed to this position. At least, I thought it was an advantage then and I still do. And that is that I was not an old Yugoslav hand. I had never served in Yugoslavia. I considered that the lukewarm response I got in Washington when I was going out there was by and large from people who looked at the whole issue through the prism of Belgrade or maybe Zagreb, and never did have a very favorable view of Slovenia.

Q: Slovenia was kind of out there. Speaking now as one who served five years in Belgrade, I can say that Slovenia was a rather pleasant rest stop on your way to Trieste.

WENDT: Right. Slovenia was not even in the Balkans historically or culturally, even though Yugoslavia was considered part of the Balkans. That fault line is drawn somewhere through Croatia. Slovenia was always more alpine and more subject to Austrian influence. In the heyday of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the predominant influence in Slovenia was Austrian.

Q: Yes.

WENDT: In Croatia, it was rather the Hungarians who played the major role. Slovenia was an alpine country where people had a work ethic. Even though they were Slavs, I think the Slovenes identified with Northern Central Europe as much as they did with their Slavic brethren to the south. At any rate, just to elaborate on why I thought my lack of exposure to Yugoslavia was actually an advantage -- to me, Slovenia was Slovenia. I viewed it as an independent entity and not as an ex-Yugoslav country. Okay, one might say that's fine for historical analysis, but that is in fact the real history. I was dealing with a new, independent country. I tried to assess it and draw conclusions about it on its merits. But, as I say, the State Department and most of the individuals dealing with this area -- and I emphasize again I didn't take it personally -- they considered that I was going to a country that had precipitated the breakup of their beloved Yugoslavia. My attitude was, don't shoot the messenger. I sensed there was limited interest in talking to me. I did not find it easy to see people. There was no question of making calls on anybody at a high level. Nobody was interested.

Now, just a little bit on substance. The more I learned about what happened in Yugoslavia after the death of Tito -- and I think Zimmerman acknowledges this in his book -- the more I saw a naked attempt by Serbia to establish hegemony, which upset the balance that Tito had so carefully nurtured since the Second World War. I was struck by the consequences of the breakup and the impact that it had on Slovenia, particularly economically, which no one ever seemed to want to talk about. Maybe that's covered in Zimmerman's book.

Q: No, he doesn't go into it.

WENDT: It was not in his article in "Foreign Affairs" magazine. There was no mention of the economy. Yet there was runaway inflation in Slovenia. Here is a country which, by dint of hard work and diligence, and a genuine work ethic, with only eight percent of the population of Yugoslavia, accounted for 20 per cent of the GDP, and over 30 per cent of Yugoslavia's foreign exchange earnings. Yet the country was being reduced to an economically difficult if not impossible situation. The foreign exchange the Slovenes were earning was being siphoned off to the south, to Belgrade.

Q: The Serbs had stolen the national treasury.

WENDT: They had stolen the national treasury. So, this is why the Slovenes eventually reacted by saying, "We're going to hang on to the foreign exchange we've earned. We've deposited it in some foreign bank." The situation is much better today, of course, because of a variety of crash programs, but when I got to Slovenia, there was no road network to speak of. There were two lane highways, but the expressways had all been built in the south. There wasn't even a limited access motorway between Ljubljana and Zagreb. All the money had been spent in the south under the Yugoslav regime. The Slovenes really were shortchanged. Their economy was deteriorating rapidly. You mention the accusation that they're selfish. What does that mean when you're talking about a state? Since when is a state not selfish? Isn't it the responsibility of the leaders of a state to safeguard and promote the welfare and well being of their people?

Q: I'm repeating what was said. A normal question that I ask of everyone, of an ambassador when he goes out is, what were America's interests? Self-interest is selfishness, I suppose.

WENDT: Yes. How do you define selfishness at the nation-state level? What country is not selfish in that respect? Remember, any number of efforts had been made among the leaders of the constituent parts of Yugoslavia to compose their differences. The Slovenes had made proposals to reestablish some degree of autonomy, which the Serbs had taken away from Montenegro, had taken away from Kosovo, and, in effect, from Croatia and Slovenia as well. Efforts were made to put it all back together. All of those efforts floundered on the reluctance of the Serbs and, in particular, Milosevic, to accept any kind of compromise that would have enabled Yugoslavia to survive. So, let's put the blame where it should be. The Slovenes may have taken the first step, which they viewed as essential to safeguard their interests. Somebody is always going to take the first step. But I think it's a singularly narrow perspective that many people in the US government still have to imply that, if somehow the Slovenes hadn't been so selfish and the Croatians hadn't decided that they would follow the Slovenes and go their own way, Yugoslavia could have been kept together. This is nonsense. Yet that's the implication when one hears such loaded words as selfishness.

Q: So, you had sort of great disinterest, an almost dog in the manger attitude, I would say. In the European Bureau, were you sort of lumped together with the rest of Yugoslavia as far as the desk, the country desk, was concerned?

WENDT: Yes, initially I was. That's the way the European Bureau was organized. I'm going to

leap ahead here now for a minute. While I was in Ljubljana, when Dick Holbrooke became Assistant Secretary for European Affairs -- actually before that -- I got a cable from him. He was then ambassador to Germany. He asked me what I thought about a reorganization of the European Bureau that would put Slovenia together with the Czech Republic, Hungary, and North Central Europe. I replied that I thought that was an excellent idea that reflected reality. So, Slovenia was broken off when Holbrooke became Assistant Secretary, and that change in the bureaucratic makeup got publicity in the local press in Slovenia. And I actually allowed myself to think it represented a new attitude on the part of Washington.

Q: How about Austria? Did that include Austria?

WENDT: Yes, Austria was part of it, too.

Q: I would imagine it would almost have to be. Could you describe what you found when you went out there as Chargé initially? You were supposed to set up an embassy. How do you set up an embassy?

WENDT: Initially, we actually opened the embassy on a street corner. We didn't have an embassy. But we did have a cultural center. We had a USIS library there directed by a career USIA officer.

Q: Who was that?

WENDT: Eugene Santoro, Gene Santoro. He knew the local scene well, and helped us in every way to get off the ground. We rigged a podium on a street corner out in front of the USIS library. We had the great seal of the United States and a flag. I made a speech. There was a representative from the Foreign Ministry. We even had a band. I unveiled the official seal in front of the podium and declared the embassy open. Then, later, we rented temporary quarters in a not very attractive but well located office building in downtown Ljubljana. I continued to live in a hotel, the Holiday Inn. This was a period of diminishing resources and strained budgets at home. So, we didn't have a lot of room to maneuver, but we were able to acquire decent office space within our limited budget. We looked for an official residence. Unfortunately, we didn't find anything suitable during my tour of duty.

Altogether, I was in the Holiday Inn for 11 months. We found several houses that we could have rented, but it was not easy to find one that would make a suitable embassy residence, even for a small embassy. One of the legacies of socialism was a very inadequate housing stock. The kind of property that would meet even minimum requirements for an embassy residence -- like a reception and dining area, bedrooms and baths, powder rooms, a properly equipped kitchen and what not. It was very hard to find. Also, there were constant problems of ownership -- the legacy of socialism. Frequently, if we did find a place, it would turn out that the ownership was in question and we would get bogged down in endless legal wrangling over titles, ownership etc.

During the Yugoslav period there was something called "social ownership." It wasn't even state ownership. That system, in a way, served the Slovenes well during the communist period because companies, for example, were socially owned, but they had a great deal of independence

in terms of how they operated. They were not just run by government bureaucrats. But that system became a disadvantage when it came to privatization in the post-communist era, because nobody was really sure what social ownership meant and who the actual owners were. So, if we found a property that might be suitable, it often turned out that it just wasn't available. In one case the government promised us a property and then later reneged when the former owners, going back I don't know how long, filed a claim to recover the property. So, that prospect fell down the drain.

We did identify and actually purchase a very attractive and well-located property for a new chancery. But by the time I left Slovenia at the end of my tour, FBO, the federal buildings organization at State, hadn't even finished the design stage. We had owned the property for well over a year and we had hardly even begun the design work. These things moved very, very slowly. But we do have, I think, an attractive, well located and highly suitable property for the chancery. I'm not sure where the matter of an Ambassadorial residence stands.

In any event, I thought that Slovenia was a country that deserved somewhat more of Washington's attention than it got. It was strategically located -- right in the heart of Europe. It covered an area that Churchill once referred to as the "Ljubljana Gap," the soft underbelly of Europe. If you look at a map, you can see that the channel from Southeast and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus to Western Europe gets funneled right through that strategic piece of real estate that is now Slovenia. It has a coastline on the Adriatic, though only about 30 miles. It borders Italy to the west, Austria to the north, Hungary to the east and Croatia to the south. Geographically, it was a strategic piece of real estate. It was also a country that had never been in the Warsaw Pact, which meant that it didn't have to undo that particular aspect of the legacy of communism. It was a country whose economy had made remarkable progress since the galloping inflation and collapse of Yugoslavia.

The Slovenes reoriented their foreign trade away from the constituent parts of Yugoslavia -- they really had no choice -- and towards Western Europe, to the point where, today, over two-thirds of their foreign trade is with the European Union, and something over 75 per cent is with OECD countries. They have a substantial amount of foreign exchange for a country with slightly more than two million people, over \$3.5 billion dollars. They also have the highest per capita income by far of any ex-communist country, and higher than the countries you always hear are the front runners -- Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland. The Slovenes have a real work ethic. They're serious. They want to enter NATO. They want to enter the European Union. They're a solid candidate in both cases if NATO is enlarged. They are also the one ex-communist country the Russians have expressed no concern about whatsoever. The Russians would be delighted if we would enlarge NATO just by admitting Slovenia. It's not a country that Russia has any historic interest in. It's small, and it's not a threat to anybody.

The Slovenes are serious. They're professional. They're easily absorbed into Western institutions. If Hungary comes into NATO, with Italy, of course, already a member, Slovenia is a logical link between those two countries. It makes absolute sense geographically and strategically to bring them in.

(UPDATE in 2014: Slovenia is a full-fledged member of NATO, the OECD, and the EU.)

Economically, the Slovenes have done quite well. They still suffer from very high costs in some sectors. And they face the burden of pensions, social security and social overhead costs that are extremely high, and wages are relatively high for an ex-communist country. They're still lower than in Western Europe but rising fast and threatening Slovenia's ability to compete unless they find new competitive sectors for exports. Lastly, they still face serious problems in restructuring their banking system. Those are the weak points, but what they have going for them is a well-educated, skilled, hard-working labor force, and a long tradition of trade with the West and the East. They are basically an entrepôt country.

Q: Can you describe your reception there when we were establishing relations and your impression of the government there?

WENDT: I was very well received at all levels. The Slovenes were delighted to have an American embassy there, and delighted to have an American ambassador. I felt I was granted every courtesy. The only thing I might have wished is that they had done a little more to help us find a proper Ambassadorial residence. In any case, I wanted that for my successor because it was clear that that was not going to fall into place while I was there. Anyway, this was a secondary issue.

I dealt with two different foreign ministers during my time there, and happily I got along well with both of them. I also got along quite well with the president of the Republic, Milan Kučan and the prime minister, Janez Drnovšek. I don't want to take any special credit here. All the senior figures in the Slovene government were favorably disposed toward the US. In that respect my job was easy.

All in all, for me it was a very rewarding experience. The Slovenes wanted a close relationship with the United States. They believed it provided balance, given that they were a small country in a rather rough neighborhood, with a war that was still going on to the south. They are heavily dependent on Germany for their foreign trade. To the extent there is foreign investment in Slovenia, much of it comes from Germany. Slovenia, like other countries in Europe, occasionally presents certain signs of nervousness about Germany, not because they believe Germany has any political agenda -- I never met any Slovenes who believed that -- but just because Germany is big and it's close. Its sheer size and its economic weight and its unfortunate history make it something that people might just think twice about, even though there was nothing concrete that underlay this concern.

Then, at the same time, I should add that Slovenia was having a lot of problems with Italy. I got very much involved in that issue. It's rather complicated and has a rather tortured history. Between World War I and World War II, the western quarter of Slovenia was part of Italy, Italy's reward for having switched sides in time in the First World War.

Q: It didn't switch sides; it just hung around and waited until 1916 or something like that.

WENDT: Yes. They came in on the side of the Allies and as a reward recovered certain areas in the west. Of course, the entire area had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Trieste, until 1918. I don't know whether you want to go into that. It's an interesting bilateral

issue. We might if we have another session.

Q: I'm just wondering, maybe this might be a good time to cut this off. I would like to talk -- I think it's important -- about the whole Italian-Slovenian relationship and our role in it. Also, we want to talk about, during the time you were there, which is '92 to '95, the view from Slovenia of the whole Croatian-Serbian-Bosnian business. We've already alluded to the first part, how, when you went out there, there was a sort of reluctance on the part of the State Department to give any credit to Slovenia, and a certain unhappiness about what happened with the breakup of Yugoslavia. Did this change at all? Did Slovenia play any role in greater Yugoslav affairs?

WENDT: I can talk about all those issues. I want to add here for the record that I would like to say a little more about the Department of State's attitude toward Slovenia and certain symbolic actions or lack of actions on the part of the Department that could be attributed either to the Department's nostalgia for Yugoslavia and, possibly, to what I would characterize generally as a lack of interest on the part of the powers that be -- including notably then Secretary of State Warren Christopher -- in the ambassadorial function.

Q: I would like to talk a bit more about that. Just yesterday, Bill Clinton was inaugurated for a second term. But I have the feeling that the Clinton administration, particularly when it came in, was very weak on the international side. We did not have a very strong Secretary of State at that time. We'll stop at this point. -- -

Q: Today is the 2nd of February 1997. Why don't we talk about your feeling about the Department of State and its attitude towards Slovenia and your feeling about the Secretary's interest in ambassadors and symbolic actions and that sort of thing?

WENDT: Fine. When I first started establishing contact with the people in the Department who were responsible for the new country of Slovenia, I detected a certain standoffish attitude, not aimed at me personally, but a certain feeling that they had been almost dragged along against their better judgment to having to deal with an independent Slovenia that was once part of the Yugoslav Federation. At times I gained the impression that they almost judged Slovenia to be guilty of having precipitated the breakup of Yugoslavia, which was their principal focus. Many or most of them had served in Belgrade or Zagreb. They really had, at best, a lukewarm attitude toward Slovenia. I have to be a bit careful about generalizing because what I'm saying would not apply to everybody I dealt with, but it was a significant number. There were some exceptions who I thought genuinely looked at the situation objectively. But it was palpable, this attitude. It seemed to me that most of the people I dealt with were viewing all of these events through the prism of Belgrade.

Slovenia was seen as an interloper, indeed a troublesome interloper, who had almost destroyed something that all of these people held dear, namely Yugoslavia -- not that they were uncritical of Yugoslavia. I'm not suggesting that at all. But as I was sort of the messenger, you might say, their attitude towards me struck me at times as a bit aloof. "Well, this guy's here. We've got to deal with him. We'll give him the time of day, but not a great deal more." I was a bit surprised by this because we all pride ourselves on our objectivity. To me, Slovenia was a reality that we should judge on its merits. In a new situation like that, I think you have to try to look beyond

your past experience and associations, and that applies as much to people in the Foreign Service as to people in every profession or walk of life. So, I had to cope with this situation as best I could. I tried not to press too hard. I don't think I did, but I suppose some people may have thought that I expected too much in the way of support.

I was a bit stunned when I found out that the staffing pattern that had been agreed upon for Slovenia was so threadbare that I was not even going to have a secretary, and notably an American secretary. When I expressed puzzlement over this, the reaction was, "In a small post, you don't really need a secretary." Well, first of all, even at a small post, you can be very busy -- often even busier than at a large post with a big staff.

Q: Yes. The size of the post has nothing to do with what you're actually doing.

WENDT: Exactly. This was a new country close to a war zone. Even though it was small, it was strategically located. You could not measure the workload by the size of the country or the population. Actually, Slovenia, even with only two million people, is larger than a number of other countries. It's bigger, for example, than Estonia, where we had a much larger embassy. I suppose that difference reflects our longstanding interest in the Baltic states and the fact that we have never recognized their forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union in the early 1940s -- and maybe also their greater ethnic presence in the United States was a factor. In any event, I couldn't imagine an ambassador, even at a small country, not having an American secretary. An office is an office and we were, in fact, quite busy. Also, sometimes, the smaller the staff, of course, the greater the workload because you have fewer people doing a finite amount of work.

Anyway, I was finally able to get permission to employ a Foreign Service spouse as my secretary in a PIT position - part time intermittent and temporary, an acronym used to describe positions that we fill with spouses of American citizen employees. This was not a satisfactory arrangement because it meant, in this instance, that my secretary was the wife of the administrative officer, which I consider an unhealthy and unprofessional arrangement. One's relationship with one's secretary is based on trust and confidentiality and when your secretary is the spouse of one of your immediate subordinates, all of these professional relationships break down. But there was nothing I could do. I made it clear in the beginning that I considered it essential to get a position established that would provide for an American secretary. Well, we finally did get one but not until a year and a half later. In the meantime, I simply had to cope with the situation as best I could.

Q: You mentioned Secretary Christopher's attitude towards the ambassadorial function as you perceived it.

WENDT: I thought, and it was confirmed by others, that Secretary Christopher was so caught up in the responsibilities of his job and the various portfolios he was dealing with personally, like the Middle East, that he really didn't devote much time to the ambassadorial function. I was told he very rarely met with ambassadors and when he did, they were only from the most important posts or they were well connected political appointees rather than career Foreign Service Officers. I never met Secretary Christopher, not once, even though I was an ambassador -- again, admittedly, to a small post, but still an ambassador. An ambassador is the personal representative

of the President, and can be appointed only with the advice and consent of the Senate. It's not a trivial function. It carries a great deal of responsibility, even at a small post. In my case there wasn't even a five minute photo opportunity with the Secretary, which I would have welcomed.

Q: Yes.

WENDT: I think it would have been a useful touch to have had in my office a photograph of me shaking hands with the Secretary of State. I mean, it would have taken, what, five minutes, or even less, of his time? I can't help but contrast that with President Reagan, for example. In my previous job dealing with strategic trade and technology, I had the full rank of ambassador, even though I was based in Washington. As I said before, to get this rank I had to be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Imagine that I was called over to the White House for a photo session with President Reagan. It actually lasted more than the usual five minutes. He knew from the brief biographic information he was given that I had grown up in Illinois, as he had. So, we talked briefly about Illinois politics. As a result, I have a wonderful collection of photographs taken of me with President Reagan. That was the President and here in this instance I never even once met the Secretary of State. To me, that conveys a lack of interest in the ambassadorial function, not to mention the ceremonial aspect of the job, which in diplomacy can be important.

Anyway, a four or five minute photo session with outgoing chiefs of mission is not a waste of the Secretary of State's time, in my view.

Q: I think this was one of the problems at that time, which has now passed. Now, we don't know how it will be with the new Secretary, Madeleine Albright. Well, let's turn to the Italian-Slovenian relationship during that time. Italy had a hunk of Slovenia at one point.

WENDT: Yes. Immediately upon my assumption of my post in Ljubljana, first as Chargé d'Affaires and then later as ambassador, I had to come to grips with the lingering dispute between Italy and Slovenia, which really goes back to the first world war. It concerns the area of Istria and Trieste, the western part of what is today Slovenia. It also includes the coastal area along the Adriatic. The entire area had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire up until 1918, including the Port of Trieste, which was Vienna's outlet on the sea. But in the First World War, this area, which was peopled by both Italians and Slavs, the Italians being mainly in the coastal cities and towns, and the Slavic peoples in the hinterland, this area reverted to Italy after the First World War, Italy having been on the winning side and Austria on the losing side. As you know, the Italians hesitated quite a long time before they finally entered the war on the side of the allies.

Q: They didn't come in until about 1916.

WENDT: That's right. During the period between 1920 and the outbreak of the Second World War, under Mussolini Italy set about Italianizing the whole area from 1920 on. It was a very difficult period for the Slavic peoples and, in this particular case, for the Slovenes, as Mussolini set about trying to make the area Italian. Of course, it got worse after the outbreak of the Second World War, when the southern part of Slovenia was occupied by Italy and the northern part just

north of the capital city of Ljubljana by Germany. In fact, it was not just occupied by Germany. It was annexed outright by the Third Reich. Hitler visited the eastern Slovene city of Maribor. I think that was in April of 1941. It was just after the successful German invasion of Yugoslavia. He declared the whole area to be German. He made a statement that every Slovene either remembers if they were old enough at the time or has since learned: "Machen Sie mir dieses Land wieder Deutsch" ("Make this area part of Germany again"). So, this area was just annexed outright to the Reich.

The southern part of Slovenia, including the capital city of Ljubljana, was taken over by the Italians. They set about Italianizing the area with even more vigor than before. It was a rough time for the Slovenes. Some Slovenes even claimed that the Italians were tougher on them than the Germans in various ways. Note that under the Italians, it was a civilian police occupation rather than a purely military occupation.

In any event, as you know, after 1945 and the agreement signed in London in 1947, this area reverted back to Yugoslavia, except for an enclave around Trieste. The allies did not want a communist country presiding over a major port in the Adriatic -- a communist country, moreover, that, at that point, had not yet broken with Stalin.

Q: Yugoslavs were shooting down our planes at that point. It was a very hostile relationship, more than with the other Eastern European countries at that time.

WENDT: That's right. So, the allies insisted on hanging onto Trieste, and they did. The rest of the area reverted back to Yugoslavia. Italians who had been living in the area --and there were several hundred thousand in Croatia and Slovenia combined -- either fled or were forcibly expelled. They had the option of staying if they had wanted to assume Yugoslav citizenship. How realistic an option that was, I don't know -- probably for most of them not very realistic, and so they left. The Italians say they were expelled. The Yugoslavs say it was a voluntary departure because they could have stayed.

Be that as it may, in 1975, Yugoslavia and Italy finally signed an agreement in November -- November 10, I believe it was -- the Osimo Accord, which settled the boundary definitively between Yugoslavia and Italy and also called for a final settlement to be negotiated on claims of Italians who had forfeited their properties on leaving Yugoslavia after the war. Such a settlement was finally negotiated -- I believe in 1984. It was called the Rome Accord and it provided for material compensation for Italians whose properties had been forfeited when the boundary was definitively established. The sum was \$110 million and payments were to begin in 1990. Actually, two payments were made by Yugoslavia in 1990 and 1991.

Then, of course, came the breakup of Yugoslavia. Slovenia assumed its obligations as a successor state of the former Yugoslavia and the Italians accepted this arrangement. There was a whole series of minor agreements that were worked out between the two countries. Italy recognized Slovenia as a successor state, with all attendant rights and obligations.

Q: When they did that, were there any problems with this agreement within the Italian body politic?

WENDT: I suppose there were, even though the agreement was negotiated by the Italian Foreign Ministry. The Italians later claimed that the agreement did not constitute formal recognition of Slovenia as a successor state. They asserted some legal technicality, which our own Legal Advisor's Office later looked into and said really didn't hold up. But the Italians, at least at the time, didn't like to be reminded of their having actually accepted Slovenia formally as a successor state that had taken over its share of all the agreements that had been reached between Italy and Yugoslavia. In fact Slovenia did then start trying to make payments pursuant to the Rome Accord of 1984. Of the original sum, I believe the Slovenes owed about 40 per cent and Croatia 60 per cent. Well, imagine that the Italians refused to accept these payments. They wouldn't even provide the number of a bank account to which the payments were to be sent. They insisted on compensation in kind. In the meantime, a vociferous minority in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, the northeastern part of Italy, was agitating to recover what it claimed were its properties. Their cause was taken up to a large extent by the then Berlusconi government, which had come to power in Rome.

Q: Which was sort of a more nationalistic right-wing type, rather peculiar government.

WENDT: Yes, and it was supported by Gianfranco Fini's National Alliance. So, you had a right-wing government in which there were several influential politicians playing prominent roles, including a secretary of state for foreign affairs in the Italian Foreign Ministry by the name of Lizio Caputo. Though he was a senator in the Berlusconi government, Caputo actually had an official function in the Foreign Ministry. Matters became quite difficult between Slovenia and Italy. The Slovenes took the position that the claims of these people had already been recognized and that the issue had been finally adjudicated and settled in the Rome Accord of 1984, and there was thus no legal basis whatsoever for reopening the issue. But the entire matter got caught up in Italian internal politics. Here you had a vociferous minority with some influence in the government of Italy that was beating the drum to have its interests safeguarded.

To be fair, I think the Slovenes also made some mistakes. A lot of effort was made to reach an accommodation without the Slovenes at any time giving up the idea that the issue had been legally settled, first by the Osimo Agreement of 1975 and then the Rome Accord of 1984. At one point, the then Slovene foreign minister had a meeting at which he reached a compromise agreement with his Italian counterpart. He came back to Ljubljana, and then the agreement he had negotiated was rejected by the Slovene government. Not too long thereafter, he ceased to be Foreign Minister. He had been part of a coalition government. It was all rather painful and embarrassing.

The Slovene government at the time took the position that that the agreement was a sellout of Slovene interests. I don't think an objective person looking at what the Foreign Minister had brought back would have reached that conclusion. How much of all this was domestic politics -- an effort to embarrass a right of center member of the coalition government in power at the time -- and how much of it was a genuine belief that the Foreign Minister had gone too far in making concessions, I really don't know. My point is that a real opportunity to settle the issue was being missed. After all, the agreement had been negotiated by the Slovene foreign minister himself.

The Slovenes -- I thought at the time -- sometimes have a tendency to be a bit inward-looking and maybe to exaggerate the extent to which they were being encroached upon by outside interests. They had reason to be concerned -- no doubt about that -- but in no way were their vital interests really threatened. Perhaps this tendency came from their history of always being part of someone else's empire, so that they had to be tough-minded and tenacious in order to survive as a people.

Q: It's a new country. America is sort of the great-godfather of a lot of countries. Did you find that, as an American ambassador, they would talk to you about this? Or were you as the American representative off to one side?

WENDT: No, I was very much involved in all these issues. The United States often tried to play the role of honest broker behind the scenes. We never actually tried to mediate the dispute with Italy in a formal sense, but we were constantly making suggestions to both sides behind the scenes. At one point, we actually undertook a joint demarche -- one in Ljubljana, one in Rome -- the essence of which was that Italy would stop trying to block Slovenia's progress towards integration into the Western community of nations -- for example, by refusing to endorse an association agreement between Slovenia and the European Union, and by thwarting much that Slovenia was trying to do at every turn. The Slovenes, in turn, would change legislation they had on the books that prevented foreign ownership of property or land. The Slovenes, like some other small nations in Europe, tend to be worried that if they open up to foreigners the right to purchase property and land, their country will simply be bought up lock stock, and barrel by foreigners. The Danes had the same worry when they joined the European Community.

Q: There was the example of Spain back in the '60s and '70s losing their coastline to the Germans.

WENDT: Well, yes, that specter was raised by the Slovenes. At the same time I think the reality wasn't nearly so dire. But it's true that the Danes were very concerned that all of their vacation houses would be bought up by people from Hamburg. The Danes were able to obtain a special dispensation from the EU amounting to a restriction on foreign acquisition of property. But no country has been able to get anything like that since, no entrant into the European Union. The Austrians got something along these lines when they joined, though not nearly as far reaching as what the Danes got. But I have to reemphasize a point I made earlier -- perhaps in a somewhat disjointed fashion, namely, that the real problem that arose was that Italy was taking steps to block the forward movement of a neighboring country that was following almost precisely the prescriptions the West had laid down for ex-Communist countries about adopting a market economy, democratic institutions, and so forth.

Slovenia had even been accepted into the Council of Europe, a human rights oriented organization based in Strasbourg. When Slovenia was accepted into the Council of Europe, they were singled out for praise for the way they treated their minorities. There are legally recognized Italian and Hungarian minorities in Slovenia. That was another bone of contention between Italy and Slovenia. Italy was constantly accusing Slovenia of mistreating the Italian minority in Slovenia, which numbered about 10,000. And yet they never brought out any specific charges. They simply waved the specter of mistreatment of Italian minorities without ever specifying in

what way the Italians were being mistreated. In the absence of any specific accusation, the most you could say was that it was impossible to judge these charges. But the Slovenes were able to point to all the steps they had taken in favor of this minority, such as guaranteed representation in the Parliament, the schools in the Italian areas using Italian as a vehicular language, television and radio stations broadcasting in Italian, all of that.

Q: I was Consul General in Naples. As I recall, the Italians were quite nasty, maybe even up until now, I am not sure, about their Slovenian minority.

WENDT: Yes, I was getting to that. There were something like 80,000 Slovenes, not concentrated in one place, but spread out through the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region of northeastern Italy. The Slovenes documented chapter and verse about how Italy had failed to live up to earlier commitments, which were specified in the Osimo Accords, regarding the treatment of minorities. In fact, the Italian Parliament never passed legislation formally recognizing the Slovene minority, as they had recognized a French minority and the German minority in the Alto Adige region of Northern Italy. So, the irony in all this was that here was the pot calling the kettle black. I mean, it was possible to make a fair case regarding the absence of fair treatment of the Slovene minority in Italy. But if Italy had similar complaints about mistreatment of the Italian minority in Slovenia, it never made the case. Anyway, happily, the issue has gone away, I believe.

Q: How about the role of our embassy in Rome during this period?

WENDT: Well, let me get back to that. You asked me about the involvement of the respective embassies. All this was going on when Dick Holbrooke was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs at the State Department. We did undertake a joint *démarche*. The State Department sent out instructions to make a joint *démarche* -- one in Ljubljana and one in Rome. The Slovenes were asked to commit themselves in a reasonable timeframe to doing away with legislation that prevented foreigners from acquiring property and land in Slovenia -- in other words, adapting their laws and regulations to the norms of the European Union, which they were going to have to do anyway at some point if they intended to join the EU. Italy was asked at the same time to stop blocking Slovenia's accession to the various Western institutions and, most notably, the EU. Then both countries were urged to settle their differences bilaterally and take them out of an international, multilateral context.

Well, our embassy in Rome, I think, had doubts about the wisdom of making this *démarche*. I think it was the old notion that we've got other problems with Italy, major fish to fry with Italy. So, let's not overload the circuits by getting involved in this bilateral dispute between Italy and Slovenia. Washington's view was that maybe we could do some good behind the scenes by nudging both countries to be more accommodating and to get rid of an irritant that shouldn't have been there in the first place. When you consider all of the really serious problems that all these countries had to deal with, the notion that Italy and Slovenia should be quarreling is really rather odd. In fact, I always thought that Italy had every reason and every interest in becoming Slovenia's patron. I mean, here is a small country right on its doorstep. If Hungary became a member of NATO -- Italy, of course, is already a member of NATO -- here is a country between the two, Slovenia, which for security reasons alone should be also incorporated into this

arrangement. We also thought Italy stood to gain economically by becoming in a sense Slovenia's patron. Linking the economies of Austria and Italy more through Slovenia and letting Slovenia become a kind of corridor to Central and Eastern Europe as part of Italy's economic hinterland -- it all made a lot of sense. But the issue with Italy, as I said before, was being driven by domestic politics, by this minority group in Northern Italy, which had real influence in the Berlusconi government.

In any event, I made the *démarche* in Ljubljana. I made it very quickly. But I faced a dilemma. Here was the embassy in Rome coming in saying, "Wait a minute. Let's rethink this." But I had an opportunity to make the *démarche* in the most favorable circumstances. I was scheduled to have dinner with the Prime Minister. This was an event that had been scheduled previously, and I thought this was absolutely the best opportunity to make the *démarche*. But I didn't want to do it without letting Washington know that I was aware that our embassy in Rome had some qualms about the whole idea. I reached John Kornblum, who was then the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European Bureau. I said, "John, here's the situation. Embassy Rome has, in effect, sent in a *reclama* in response to the instruction from the Department, but I have a golden opportunity to make the *démarche*. I hate to miss it. What should I do?" He said, "Well, go ahead and make the *démarche*."

Q: Quick question for the historian who reads this. How did you get hold of Kornblum?

WENDT: I simply called him by phone.

Q: This is what I'm saying. These were telephone calls.

WENDT: This was a telephone call. But I also pointed out to Kornblum that the sense of the *démarche* to the Slovenes had to be that we were making a comparable *démarche* in Rome, that we weren't just singling out the Slovenes for action in this case. He said, "Well, you can fudge that issue as best you can." I could not say with certainty that we were making the same *démarche* in Rome when I wasn't really sure we were going to do so. So, I had to fudge the issue. I don't remember exactly what I said to the Prime Minister, something to the effect that "It's our intention to make a similar pitch in Rome." Anyway, the *démarche* was never made in Rome. Embassy Rome wriggled off the hook. I suppose nobody in Washington felt strongly enough to hold their feet to the fire and make the instructions stick. I thought that was a mistake and that it put us potentially in an awkward position *vis à vis* Slovenia. But I never dwelt on the issue after that. I always tried to avoid any situation in which the Slovenes might ask me point blank "What were the results of your *démarche* in Rome?" Fortunately, I was never asked. I'm not sure how I would have responded if I had been.

*Q: Did the Slovenes follow-through on your *démarche*?*

WENDT: Absolutely, they did. They took it very seriously. It wasn't too long thereafter that the Prime Minister announced his intention to amend the Slovene constitution following the required constitutional processes to do away with the ban on foreign ownership of property. So, the Slovenes did what we asked and the Italians did not. Again, I didn't want to become too much of an advocate on the matter. If you take up the cudgel too often or too vigorously, you lose your

credibility. But I did think that, having started on the path of a joint démarche, by not carrying it out, we had gotten ourselves into a bit of an awkward situation.

Q: Did you ever plop down to Italy and talk to anybody in Rome?

WENDT: Yes, I did. Maybe about a year later, I went down to Rome and visited our Embassy there. What I wanted to do was talk to the embassy, our own embassy, to get their perspective on the situation, and also to see some people at the appropriate level in the Italian Foreign Ministry and elsewhere to get a better sense of how the Italians saw the issue. Well, Embassy Rome did not want me to meet with any Italians. What they said was “That would look as if the US is trying to mediate the dispute.” Okay. I’m on their turf, and I was happy to go there under whatever conditions they laid down. I would not have reacted that way in Ljubljana. If somebody from our embassy in Rome had come to Ljubljana, I would have been happy to have them meet with Slovene officials. I would not have construed that to be tantamount to the US trying to mediate the dispute. But, so be it -- we all have different approaches. So, I didn’t meet any Italians.

Ironically, our Ambassador in Rome, Reginald Bartholomew, as I said before, had been my boss in Washington when I had the strategic trade and technology position. We got along quite well, and Reg had even gone to bat for me when I was being considered for an ambassadorial position abroad. He kindly invited me to stay at the official Embassy residence during my visit to Rome. Anyway, I was on his turf and needless to say, I abided by his wishes as to what people I would meet with.

Be all that as it may, I did have an occasion to meet a very senior and very able Italian diplomat, Ferdinando Salleo, who is now the Italian ambassador in Washington. Salleo came through Ljubljana briefly and met with everybody as I recall, from the Prime Minister on down. That was very useful. I had known him from my previous job in Washington dealing with strategic trade and technology when he was the director of the Italian Foreign Minister for all economic issues. After that, he went to the Soviet Union as Italian ambassador, and then back to Italy, where, I believe, he was the senior career official of the Italian Foreign Ministry. Or was he Secretary General? I can’t remember. Anyway, he was in a very senior position. I saw him briefly in Ljubljana. He actually came to our Embassy and I met with him in my office -- a very fine fellow, a top Italian diplomat.

In any event the whole issue dragged on even after I left Slovenia in September, 1995. The Slovenes felt somewhat aggrieved because they had publicly committed themselves to changing their laws and regulations to provide for foreign acquisition of property, and they believed the Italians hadn’t done as much. I think the Slovenes had a good case. But it all changed, I would say, around the summer of last year.

Q: You’re talking about ‘96?

WENDT: Yes, the summer of 1996. A new left of center government came to power in Rome. I suppose they thought it was time to put an end to this quarrel. The Slovenes in the meantime had taken certain positive steps. An agreement was negotiated between the two countries that, I

think, settled the issue. An association agreement was finally signed between Slovenia and the European Union. It hasn't been ratified yet, but it was signed. As a result, I think Italy has now almost done what I was saying a little while ago they should have done from the beginning, and that is become Slovenia's patron. Now they're pressing for Slovenia to be in both NATO and the EU. It's a remarkable turnaround. Unless something goes wrong, I think that this whole issue has been laid to rest. There are still steps to be accomplished, and there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip. But it looks good right now.

In April of last year, 1996, I wrote an article about Slovenia that was published by The Washington Post as an op ed piece. I featured this issue fairly prominently in the article but tried to do it in a balanced way. I said there was fault on the Slovene side as well. But the major responsibility, I suggested, lay with Italy. Well, the Washington Post published the article giving it a title I had certainly not intended: "Slovenia vs. Italy." It was published very prominently. Of course, I said to myself, "Well, maybe my article had something to do with the change in attitude on the part of Italy." I'm just joking, of course.

What I was trying to do was give some publicity to an issue that was reasonably well known in Europe. It did occasionally get into the press in Europe. There had been a piece or two in the Financial Times covering it. But the American press paid no attention to the matter. It was small potatoes. So, the issue was not at all well known in Washington outside of a small number of people in the government who dealt with such matters and a very small number of Congressmen -- for example, Congressman James Oberstar of Minnesota, who happens to be of Slovene origin. Because of his interest in Slovenia, he's quite familiar with the issue. But I wanted to give the question some publicity and draw attention to it in Washington outside narrow government circles. I suppose I succeeded to the extent that people read the Washington Post. I thought press exposure might indeed have some impact on the Italians if more people realized, particularly in Washington, that the Italians were, in effect, holding a small, newly democratic and successful country in Central Europe hostage to the resolution of a bilateral issue being pushed by a relatively small number of people in northeastern Italy who had previously lived in this area of former Yugoslavia.

Q: It sounds like the Cuban minority in Florida, in the United States, having tremendous impact on our Cuban policy even today.

WENDT: Absolutely. I mean, the vast majority of Italians were probably not even aware of the issue. Who knows, they might even have considered their own government's position unreasonable. It was one of those issues driven by a small number of people who happened to have political influence in the government of Italy at the time.

Q: Turning eastward, again, what were the years you were in Slovenia?

WENDT: 1992 to 1995.

Q: What was the role of Slovenia -- from your end, what was your role in dealing with Slovenia as regards the major events that were happening both in Croatia, Serbia, and in Bosnia-Herzegovina?

WENDT: Having made its break with the region at considerable cost, which included a 10 day war, Slovenia was determined to remain aloof from the quarrels of the area to the south. Slovenia's whole claim to fame was "We're not part of the Balkans. We're looking north and west and not south and east. We are in no way a part of the Yugoslav quarrel." Parenthetically, they said, "The arms embargo was slapped on Yugoslavia hurriedly by the UN in September of 1991 and should not apply to Slovenia because Slovenia was not a part of the quarrel." So, they wanted to remain aloof and they did so. Of course, they couldn't ignore Croatia because Croatia has a long border with Slovenia and there were outstanding bilateral issues, mostly involving the Adriatic maritime boundary. It didn't matter when Yugoslavia was one country and the whole coastline was part of Yugoslavia. But with the breakup, Slovenia and Croatia had to try to resolve differences over the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Tiran.

Q: Who has Rijeka?

WENDT: Well, Rijeka is in Croatia. But if you look at a map, you can see how it might be rather complicated when you start drawing lines seaward from certain points along the coast. The Croatians did not want to recognize the maritime area beyond the coastline in Slovenia as the sovereign territorial waters of Slovenia. Slovenia thought that anything short of that deprived it of unfettered access to the sea. As of today, this issue, the Gulf of Tiran, the Tiran Strait, Tiran being one of the major Slovene towns along the Adriatic, is still unresolved. There was also a relatively minor dispute involving the land boundary and then a number of secondary issues involving the assets of Ljubljanska Banka, Zagreb -- Ljubljanska Banka having in the meantime become a Slovene bank following the breakup of Yugoslavia. But the only really major issue was the maritime boundary. The land boundary, I think, could be settled relatively easily.

The Slovene government was always very sympathetic to the Bosniaks, that is, the Muslims of Bosnia. The Slovenes thought that Milosevic was completely out of control, that the Serbs in general were out of control. The Slovenes urged us from time to time -- particularly when I first got there -- to get more involved. They said, "The only thing that will stop the Serbs is a strong Western reaction." They even went so far as to help us identify targets in Serbia that they thought we should bomb -- not civilian targets, obviously, but military targets -- munitions factories and what not. So, they were always in favor of a much stronger Western intervention than in fact took place. Eventually, they gave up encouraging us because they knew it wasn't going to happen, although in the end, in August of 1995, we did finally react with major air strikes. But the Slovenes had been urging that from the time I first got to Ljubljana three years earlier.

All that said, I think the Slovenes were always interested in a revival of commercial relations among the various parts of the former Yugoslavia because they had profited greatly from intra-Yugoslav trade. They would have been happy to see those ties restored. And I believe that's the case right now. The Slovenes, of course, did recognize Croatia. They had an embassy in Zagreb from the very beginning -- that is, after the breakup -- and the Croatians have a very active embassy in Slovenia. Similarly, the Slovenes are active in Bosnia and Macedonia. They have also recognized Serbia, and Serbia has recognized Slovenia's independence, though there has been no exchange of diplomatic missions as yet. That has been proposed by the Slovenes but thus far the Serbs have not gone along. I think today Slovenia recognizes the importance of

playing a constructive role in the region. They have offered us logistical facilities, for example, in carrying out our mission in Bosnia, Operation Provide Comfort, and helping logistically with -- what's the acronym for the NATO force?

Q: It was IFOR (Implementation Force), or something like that?

WENDT: Right, IFOR.

Q: Now it has a different name. But, anyway, it's basically the NATO units that are engaged in peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

WENDT: The Slovenes offered us at one point the use of an airfield near the Croatian border. It had been a Yugoslav air force field before. I don't think anything ever came of that. Today, I believe the Slovene attitude is, "We want to be a good neighbor. We want to play a constructive role. But we do not want to be drawn back into any kind of arrangement that has political overtones, that looks like it might be aimed at reintegration of the region. Recently, the US floated something vaguely hinting at this notion. I read about it in the newspapers. I don't want to unfairly characterize it, but it must have sounded to the Slovenes like something that moved in that direction. So, not wanting to appear unresponsive to a US idea, they were merely standoffish. Again, I think, they would be happy to see commercial and economic ties restored in the former Yugoslavia. And they do have a lot of trade with Croatia.

Q: I want to stick to your work while you were in Ljubljana. Were you called upon by the Department of State to, say, go to the Slovene government and urge the Slovene government to go talk to their colleagues in Bosnia or Croatia or anything like that to get more involved in what was happening in the war?

WENDT: No. I think Washington recognized that the Slovenes weren't likely to do anything like that. We did encourage Slovenia and Croatia to settle their differences. They made a number of attempts to do so, and that activity still goes on. There wasn't much we could ask the Slovenes to do vis à vis Bosnia because they were already doing just about everything that could be reasonably expected of them. Relative to the size of Slovenia, they had quite a number of Bosnian refugees in their midst when I first got there. The number dwindled during my stay, as, I suppose, a number of them went home, were integrated to some degree, became permanent residents in Slovenia, or moved to third countries. So, the refugee population dwindled. But in the beginning, I visited several refugee centers the Slovenes had established.

The Slovene record in dealing with Bosnian refugees was a good one. The Slovenes got some international assistance, but they provided a lot of help on their own. I think they were trying to play a constructive role. But there was still a feeling in Washington that the Slovenes were somehow selfish, even though in my judgment there was no objective evidence of that. In fact, the Slovenes believed the US should be doing more to help the Bosnians militarily. The Slovenes were a strong advocate of Western intervention in the quarrel from the very beginning. They believed this was the only way to rein in the Serbs. Now, that said, on an individual basis, almost every time I spoke with the Slovenes, they would say, "You know, we know the Croatians well. They are our neighbors. We have lived with them for years and years and years. But sometimes

they can be difficult, maybe a little devious.

The Slovenes would sometimes say they actually got along better with the Serbs on an individual basis than with the Croatians. They blamed the political turmoil on Milosevic and the Serb government, not on the Serbs as individuals. When they were pushing the idea of more vigorous Western intervention, they did make a point of saying the Serbs weren't such formidable adversaries, which I thought was historically quite interesting. The Slovenes said, "You know, you Americans, you've conjured up the notion of how tough the Serbs are, so that if you did get involved, there would be serious risks and, potentially, huge casualties. We don't believe it." They would then go on to say the historical record shows that, with the possible exception of a brief period during the First World War, the Serbs have never acquitted themselves well when faced with a serious military adversary. Even the Yugoslav partisans during World War Two and everything they did against the Nazis, all that was greatly exaggerated by Tito for propaganda purposes, and even exaggerated by the Allies, who wanted to build up Tito and propagate the image of really fierce Yugoslav resistance to the German occupation.

The Slovenes would stress what they said were verifiable historical facts. For example, contrary to what you read in the Western press -- namely, that the Yugoslav partisans tied down 30 German divisions during the occupation of Yugoslavia -- in fact, the Germans had only six divisions of second echelon occupation troops there -- and when they originally invaded Yugoslavia, they had only about eight divisions. The country was occupied in barely more than a week. All the major population centers and transport areas, supply centers, staging areas, which is all the Germans had been interested in the first place, were occupied and remained occupied throughout the war. Tito was really never more than a nuisance to the Germans. The whole partisan effort was blown out of proportion." This was the Slovene view. By the way, I think this version of those events is largely substantiated by the British military historian John Keegan. The Slovenes also maintained that, to the extent there was real partisan resistance, it was not being carried out principally by Serbs, but rather by Bosnian Croats -- people from Herzegovina, which I think is largely Bosnian Croats -- Montenegrins, and Slovenes in the northern part of what was then Yugoslavia. But in any case the resistance, such as it was, did not come primarily from the Serbs.

Q: The Montenegrins.

WENDT: Yes, the Montenegrins, very good fighters.

Q: Of course, when you look at where the war took place, that's where it took place, not in Serbia per se.

WENDT: That's right. There was nothing happening in Belgrade. That was where the famous book, "The Bridge over the Drina" was written by Ivo Andric. He just sat out the war in Belgrade writing his book. So, the Slovenes made much of that, that the West had allowed itself to believe that the Serbs were so tough. They did appear tough going into a village and rounding up women and children, but, again according to the Slovenes, the issue was, how tough were they when faced with a serious military adversary?

Q: Did you become aware of Slovenia becoming sort of a way station for shipment of arms into Bosnia or anything like that?

WENDT: Yes. There was a famous case of a large shipment of arms that had been seized by the Slovenes in Maribor in the eastern part of Slovenia. As I recall, when I left Slovenia in September, 1995, those arms were still stored there somewhere. There's no question but what Slovenia allowed itself to be a conduit for arms shipments to Bosnia. They never really denied it, and the US just sort of looked the other way.

Q: It became a political issue at one point in the United States, not a big one, but a minor one. Did you ever receive instructions to either report on or do anything about arms to Bosnia?

WENDT: No, I didn't. I took it upon myself to try to find out what was going on. We reported as much as we were able to find out about what was going through Slovenia. But most of that information was developed in intelligence channels. I think Washington was pretty well aware of the extent and magnitude of Slovenia being used as a transit point for shipment of arms. It wasn't heavy stuff; it was small arms -- rifles, grenades, maybe grenade launchers, RPG's, I don't know. No heavy armor or anything like that. But Washington never instructed us to do anything about it, even though they knew about it. In effect, given their rather benign attitude towards the shipment of arms from Iran to Bosnia, Washington would hardly be concerned about war materiel going through Slovenia.

At some point, I think somebody in Washington raised the issue of whether or not Slovenia was sufficiently enforcing the embargo as a reason maybe for questioning how hard we should push for Slovene admission into NATO. I thought that was not a compelling argument. Actually, it wasn't the broad arms embargo as such that was at issue but the embargo specifically on Serbia. I did know something about the Iranian arms shipments that were going to Croatia. It was talked about, not with the Slovenes, but among my US government colleagues in the region. I know, for example, that CIA personnel, who, of course, knew what was going on, were quite upset about it. They believed this was the wrong thing to do and that it would lead to endless problems, like the growth of Iranian influence in the region. But there wasn't anything they could do about it. It was not their job to make judgments about what was considered a policy issue in Washington. But I can tell you, they were quite upset. Frankly, I agreed with them. I thought it was a mistake. I knew what was going on at the time, but I never got directly involved. I never sent any message to Washington on it.

There was a small Iranian presence in Slovenia. They were there legally in the guise of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) or charitable organizations. But I am rather confident they were up to no good. The Slovene government kept a close watch on the matter, which, of course, we encouraged them to do.

Q: Was Slovenia concerned at all about the Islamification of Bosnia and bringing with it a religious radicalization?

WENDT: I would have to say, in all honesty, that the Slovenes did not seem to me to be as concerned about that as a lot of Western Europeans, like the French and the Germans, although

the Slovenes did point out that the failure of the West to mount a more effective campaign to bring the conflict to an end and to rein in the Serbs was having the effect of radicalizing the Muslim population in Bosnia. They said, like everyone else, that these people -- the Bosnians -- were really all the same in terms of their origins. It was just that, through accidents of history during the Ottoman occupation, some local potentates converted their people to Islam in order to reach an accommodation with the Turks. Other local leaders did not. These are all facts of history.

The oft forgotten reality is that all these people are basically the same in terms of their origins. Unfortunately, the quarrel has had the impact of exacerbating all the religious differences. But the people themselves, like everyone else, express bewilderment that people who had lived side by side for so long could all of a sudden turn into such bitter enemies and commit such atrocious acts towards each other. The Slovenes were as bewildered as everyone else. But, you know, they didn't blame the people themselves. They didn't blame, for example, all the Serbs. As I said, on an individual basis, the Slovenes rather liked the Serbs. The Slovenes blamed the Yugoslav government and, in particular, Milosevic, whom they obviously had no use for.

The Slovenes were convinced that it was really Milosevic who was responsible for the breakup of Yugoslavia by refusing to accept anything less than complete Serb political and economic hegemony in what was Yugoslavia. The Slovenes didn't really seem to be so concerned about the religious aspect as such. Of course, the Slovenes themselves are about 95 percent Roman Catholic. There are a small number of Protestants left over from the Reformation. Actually, Protestantism made great headway at the time of the Reformation. Some of Slovenia's most revered historical figures -- poets and writers -- were Protestant. But then came the Counter-Reformation, and today the population of Slovenia is mostly Roman Catholic.

Q: Did you have any consultation, backward and forward, with our ambassador in Croatia?

WENDT: Yes, indeed. I went down to Zagreb from time to time...

Q: Peter Galbraith.

WENDT: Yes, Peter Galbraith. I know he came through Slovenia occasionally on his way to Italy, but he never came to Ljubljana. I never met him there. But I went down to Zagreb on a number of occasions and had lunch with him. I also saw him at chiefs of mission -- ambassadorial conferences in the region. We got along well.

Q: I take it that, from all you're saying, Slovenia, for the most part, although major things were happening almost practically on your doorstep to the east, was pretty well dealt out of the game, both by the former Yugoslav parties and by the Western powers, including the United States, and by the Slovenes themselves.

WENDT: I think that's a fair characterization of the situation. The Slovenes were there. They were in the neighborhood. They had to deal with a tough neighborhood. That's one of the reasons why they felt so strongly that the UN arms embargo should not have applied to them. They needed the arms for self-defense, which is a right guaranteed them under Article 51 of the

UN Charter. Moreover -- and this is important -- they weren't a party to the conflict. But on the other hand, they did not want to become identified with the region and its quarrels. In fact, they suffered constantly because of their geographic proximity to a combat zone. I may have covered this earlier, so I risk repeating myself, but I constantly ran into people who said, "Oh, it must be really dangerous there. Do you take a flak jacket with you when you go around?" "What kind of security do you have?" People associated Slovenia with the Balkans -- an historically tough, often violent neighborhood. This notion really worked against the Slovenes. They were thought to be in a war zone. I'll give you an example of this mentality.

The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) used to send out representatives to pharmaceutical plants in Slovenia because there were a few Slovene firms, previously Yugoslav firms, that were exporting to the US market. They could only do that if the firms had passed an FDA inspection. They were exporting the raw ingredients for some generic antibiotics. Actually, one of the firms is now exporting finished products. Anyway, it came time for another FDA inspection. We received an anguished letter from one of the Slovene pharmaceutical companies, saying, "The FDA refuses to send an inspector to Slovenia because they believe it's too dangerous." Well, we got involved immediately. The embassy sent a rather strongly worded message back to Washington saying the FDA's attitude was devoid of reality, that Slovenia and Ljubljana in particular were not only calm but a lot safer than the streets of Washington, DC. I never had any kind of security the whole time I was there. So, we started trying to crack this nut. It's hard to believe, but it was not easy.

The FDA had determined that this was a dangerous area, and they were not going to send an inspector. Well, to make a long story short, I had to send some rather strong telegrams to Washington, but we finally prevailed. The FDA relented, but then we found out they had circulated a notice among their employees requesting volunteers for this mission because of the risks involved. I recite all this parenthetically just to give you an idea of what the Slovenes were up against and why they wanted to disassociate themselves from the embattled regions to the south -- and why to this day, since the conflict is still not definitively settled, they really want to be identified with Central Europe and they want to look north and west rather than south and east.

This attitude does not mean the Slovenes do not want to play a constructive role in the region if the circumstances are right, and it doesn't mean that all they want to do is make money. I think they want to be good neighbors, but it isn't easy to be good neighbors in a situation like that. Yes, they have their problems with Croatia, but they're not major problems. They get along well with the government of Bosnia and with the Bosnians resident in Ljubljana. They get along well with the Macedonians. I think they're playing a constructive role in the region while at the same time safeguarding their major interests, which they see as getting their country fully incorporated into the Western community of nations, NATO, and the European Union. And they are without doubt a prime candidate for integration into these institutions.

Q: You left there in '95.

WENDT: I left there in September of '95.

JOHNNY YOUNG
Ambassador
Slovenia (2001-2004)

Ambassador Young was born in Georgia and raised in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Delaware. He was educated at Temple University and entered the Foreign Service in 1967. Before being named Ambassador, Mr. Young served in a number of embassies in the administrative field, including Madagascar, Guinea, Kenya, Qatar, Barbados, Jordan and the Netherlands. In 1989 he was named US Ambassador to Sierra Leone, where he served until 1992. He subsequently served as US Ambassador to Togo (1994-1997), Bahrain (1997-2001) and Slovenia (2001-2004). Ambassador Young was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: You were in Slovenia from when to when?

YOUNG: It was in the fall of 2001 that I arrived. Prior to my arrival in Slovenia I came back here for my hearings. I was preparing myself all along before returning in terms of the issues that we had with Slovenia. I had my hearing and I want to tell you a little bit about that hearing. There was a moment in it that I thought was quite memorable. I was up with Dan Coats who was going to Germany. The fellow who was going to the Czech Republic who was the cousin of the president. Ambassador Lynch who was going to Ireland. It was quite a nice hearing. We were all treated very nicely. No great controversy. Dan Coats of course it was like a lovefest since he was a former senator. Senator Sarbanes introduced me. My daughter and son were seated behind me and I had the pleasure of introducing them to the members of the committee. Senator Sarbanes was chairing the committee at that time, but at one point Senator Helms came in and he was allowed to speak and he said and I'll try to imitate his voice. I'm not sure I'm that good at it, but he said, "Ambassador designate Lynch, you're going to Ireland. There's something I want you to do for me when you get to Ireland." Ambassador Lynch said, "Yes, Senator Helms, I'd be glad to. What is it?" He said, "I want you to meet somebody who is going to be in Ireland and I want you to take good care of him. He's a good man and he does good work and I want you to treat him fine." Ambassador designate Lynch said, "Why, by all means I'll be happy to have him. Yes, I'll be glad to take care of him." Helms chimed in again, "I can assure you this is a very good man and I want you to take good care of him and I appreciate your pledge that you're going to take good care of him. His name is Bono." Well, my daughter kicked my seat behind me and later on she said, "Dad, I thought I was going to lose it at that point. When Helms tells the Ambassador designate to Ireland to take good care of Bono, I couldn't believe that that would come up at a hearing" and I couldn't either nor could anyone else.

Q: You might explain who Bono is.

YOUNG: Well, Bono is the lead singer in the U2 rock group and Bono does incredible humanitarian work particularly in Africa.

Q: He made man of the year.

YOUNG: He's been knighted by the Queen of England. That aside, you wouldn't think of Senator Helms, this right of right fellow lining up with this knee jerk liberal doing humanitarian work, but they became great friends. I thought it was interesting. We were asked a few questions and it all turned out very well. I had a statement prepared and I remember at one point Senator Helms saying, well, this looks like a really nice group of nominees here. I think they're all fine. We're going to break for lunch, not break for lunch; we're going to break because we have to take a vote. I think we ought to wish the best to this group and thank them for coming here. We just put our statements in the box at the end of the table. I was getting ready to say that such is the prerogative of the senate. They can do whatever they want in terms of how they interpret their role to advise and consent. You can prepare and prepare, but in the end if they say to you just drop your statement in the box at the end of the table, that's what you do. I mean we did have a small amount of time to make our individual statements, which we did. We were asked a couple of questions, but it was all brought to an end by Sarbanes and that was that.

I decided after I was confirmed that I would do something completely different for my swearing in. I had had three previous ceremonies in the Benjamin Franklin room to which hundreds of persons were invited. This time I decided I would do something different. I was told that the Secretary of State would swear me in if I decided to hold it in the Department, but my decision was to take it away from the Department, the swearing in, and take it to my high school in Philadelphia. I attended a vocational, technical high school in Philadelphia. It was a school that catered to underprivileged kids in the inner city and I wanted to do it there as a symbol of what is possible from kids coming out from that kind of school, not that they could all aspire to be ambassador or what have you, but to offer them a symbol and some encouragement.

Q: That's great.

YOUNG: I did that at the Edward Bok Vocational Technical High School in Philadelphia. I asked my mentor, Assistant Secretary Mary Ryan, to officiate and she agreed. We arranged with the wife of the then Mayor of Philadelphia, he's now the Governor of Pennsylvania, Ed Rendell, for his wife to swear me in and we had it in Philadelphia. It was in September and it all turned out very well. Following the swearing in, which was something that these kids had frankly never seen before, we had a little reception in the library which had been named for me, the Johnny Young Library, which I thought was very nice. The local TV station covered it and it was written up in the newspaper. Billy Boy makes good, that sort of thing. There was one thing that made me feel particularly good about the whole thing. I was talking to a young girl who was graduating from this high school and she said, I wasn't sure that I wanted to go to college until today. Now I know I want to go. If she is the only one that I touched on that occasion, it was worth it.

Q: Absolutely. What was the situation in Slovenia?

YOUNG: In my statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I had mentioned several items that I knew were controversial and that would get things kind of stirred up, but I wanted them to get things stirred up. I used that as a deliberate mechanism to engage the Slovenes in dialogue on these issues. One was the return of property confiscated during the time

of the Tito regime, property that had not been returned to American citizens. Mind you the property had been confiscated before these persons had become U.S. citizens. Nevertheless, they were making claims now on their property. Slovenia was one of the countries that upon its independence said that it would return property. This was something that they decided that they would do on their own and that was a good thing. It was something that was looked upon very favorably by the transatlantic institutions that they wanted to get into such as NATO, European Union, etc. That was one issue.

The other was intellectual property. Slovenia had the reputation of its pharmaceutical companies taking the data developed by American drug companies and using that data to manufacture generics. This had the pharmaceutical industry up in arms. That was an issue I wanted to flag. Another was Slovenia's candidacy for NATO. The U.S. had not committed yet to supporting Slovenia's candidacy and I wanted to keep the dialogue on that open also. I also wanted to make sure that we could get as much leverage out of this as possible before we committed to supporting Slovenia's candidacy. Another was, of course, to try and help the country in whatever way we could with its transition from a centrally directed economy and state to one that was more open, with open markets and that was democratic and things like that, to support their civic institutions.

I arrived in Slovenia. The press had interpreted my remarks about the return of property as no support for Slovenia's candidacy for NATO if these changes in terms of property, in terms of intellectual property rights, did not occur in a positive way that we would not support Slovenia's candidacy for NATO. I had immediately to try and correct that misunderstanding because it was clear that it was going to follow me everywhere. That was one thing that I found right away. The Slovenes were very thin skinned. They didn't like criticism at all. They were worried about me. I began to see in the press right away racial comments about me. I was portrayed in local cartoons in an unflattering way in terms of my race and what have you. I said right away, look, if I am going to have any relationship with the people of Slovenia and with this government, then we've got to take race off the table. There's no way that this is going to fly. I said, you can challenge me, you can challenge my government on anything that you want except it cannot be based on race. Let's put that aside and if we put that aside we can be friends and we can discuss business and we can work together. If that's going to be on the table, I can't deal with you. That cleared the air. I did it on television. I did it in editorials to the press. I made it very clear that that was a topic that I would not accept as a responsible basis for any kind of dialogue. The government never engaged in this sort of thing, but it certainly could affect my relationship with the government. We got that cleared up right away and we could then move on to do business.

After being in the country a very short time, it was very clear to me that Slovenia was indeed a very good candidate for NATO. I favored strongly supporting their candidacy although we had not committed yet. I continued to press them on the reform of the law on intellectual property. What had happened was in preparation for their European Union candidacy, Slovenia had passed a law that made it illegal for companies to use the intellectual property of someone else to support generics. That was good, but they did that well in advance of their candidacy for European entry. What happened was their own pharmaceutical companies were furious. They realized what this meant to them. They pressured the government which immediately passed a law that rescinded the law that they passed. Pharmaceutical companies reverted back to using

this data developed by other drug companies.

Q: When you're talking about pharmaceutical companies, you're talking about the indigenous pharmaceutical companies.

YOUNG: Yes.

Q: Because in no way could a country go into the European Union which is engaging in stealing of intellectual property.

YOUNG: That's correct, right, that's why they passed this law, but they passed it almost two years before they had to meet this requirement. The pharmaceutical companies said my God, that's two years that we can continue stealing, so rescind the law. That's what happened. The American companies of course were furious. I continued to pressure. They thought, oh God, if we don't do this we won't get the U.S. support for our candidacy for NATO and they knew that if we didn't support them for NATO, they would never get in. They had had an opportunity to join NATO in 1999. It was a foregone conclusion at that time that of any of the countries to be considered, Slovenia was going to be number one. Slovenia was going to be number one, not the Czech Republic, not Hungary, not Slovakia, but in the end Slovenia was cast aside and it was Hungary and I think it was Hungary, Poland and Czech. They were brought in. The Slovenes were devastated.

Q: What was behind it?

YOUNG: Well, no one has heard the definitive answer why. Some say it was the French who screwed them at the last minute and did them in because they wanted these others in. Some said no it was the U.S. who did it and I don't know what the pressures were, but we never got to the bottom of it frankly. Anyhow, they were devastated that they didn't get in. They wanted this more than anything else. This to them was a badge of respectability and of status and, you know, it really made sense. Also it meant that they could reduce the amount of money that they were spending to defend their small territory and basically count on the umbrella that would be provided by NATO and channel their funds in a more efficient way. It really made good sense.

We made our case to our government that we should support Slovenia, but we were not getting full support. I mean there was a great deal of opposition by one element in the Department of Defense to this. There was the feeling out there at that time, I don't know how it started, but the feeling was that Slovenia was somehow arrogant about its candidacy, that it was too sure of itself, that it was too cocky. If you looked at it in terms of GDP, when you look at it in terms of democracy, when you look at it in terms of economic reform, when you look at it in terms of the military, the kind of military they had, the discipline in the military, all of these kinds of issues, they were at the top of the list. Number one, number one, number one, but the feeling developed that because they were number one in all of these categories, they were arrogant. They weren't taking it seriously enough. That they needed to do more to demonstrate that they really wanted this in the worst way. Well, the Slovenes' response was we do want it in the worst way, but hey don't you remember what happened to us in '99 when you screwed us? They said we're like a rejected suitor. We tried the first time and we were turned away. We're trying again, but we are

afraid we may be turned away again. So we are reserving a little bit of perhaps enthusiasm and are being a bit guarded just in case this doesn't work out. We will not be as devastated and as disappointed as we were the last time. This didn't fly over. Nobody bought this in Washington and as I said the biggest obstacle to a more immediate support from the U.S. side came from the Department of Defense.

Q: Any particular branch?

YOUNG: Yes, specifically the office run by Ian Brzezinski. I don't remember the specific office. He was determined that he was going to make Slovenia a case that to demonstrate the seriousness with which we were taking this whole business of the expansion of NATO that we weren't going to just take a country because they were good in every respect, but we were going to really be tough and hard on them.

Q: It sounds like something that I've seen described before and that is one somebody trying to show they have, let me put it in diplomatic terms, somebody in a bureau or a place in the government showing they had balls. At the same time picking on the small country when they knew they couldn't get away with it say with Poland or something.

YOUNG: That's the bottom line.

Q: I can prove to my guys at the golf club that I'm really tough. I mean did you get that feeling?

YOUNG: Oh, no question about it. I'll demonstrate that in other ways later on. Here we had this little country that was doing things its way and we feel that little countries frankly should dance to our tune. When we want them to do something they should do it and that should be that. Slovenia was a very successful country. One that succeeded because it did things its way. For example, the World Bank and the IMF had counseled Slovenia to take a certain approach in its economy following its independence in 1991. Slovenia didn't listen to that advice at all and did it its way and was able to demonstrate in black and white that if it had taken the approach suggested and recommended by the fund in the bank it would have been in a terrible state compared to where it was. So, it did it its own way and it made it very difficult for subsequent IMF and World Bank teams to come out and tell them do this this way, because they had done it themselves. That was in their nature and it's part of their nature anyhow. They're very stubborn people and I always said that's part of the reason why they existed for 800 years under Austrian rule because of a certain stubbornness and a certain cautiousness and carefulness as well.

Anyhow, we had this resistance on the part of DOD in saying okay we're going to support Slovenia whereas we had said we were going to do this. In terms of a few other countries, we'd said it informally; we hadn't come out and said so publicly. There was good support in the congress for Slovenia's inclusion. There was support in other quarters as well. All of the European countries, all of the European members of NATO were fully committed to Slovenia, but we had not committed yet. Anyhow, in May of 2002 we succeeded in getting a visit to the United States by the then prime minister of Slovenia, Drnovsek. He came and was able to make his case with President Bush. He had visited the country in June of 2001 where he met Putin for the first time. They had their meeting in Slovenia. When I had my photo op with President Bush

in August of 2001, he greeted me and he said, "You're going to Slovenia?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You're going to love it. It's a wonderful country. I loved it. Laura and I had no idea that it was so beautiful and that the people were so nice" and on and on. He said, "You're going to enjoy this." When I met him again in May of 2002 for the pre-brief prior to the meeting in the Oval Office with Prime Ministers Drnovsek, the first thing he said to me was "How do you like Slovenia?" I said, "It was just as you said, Mr. President. It is absolutely wonderful." He said, "See, I told you so." Then we got down to discussion the issues and he said, well, what are the problems? I said the problem is Slovenia wants to join NATO and it would like our support. I think it should be a member of the alliance. They continue to make the reforms necessary to complete their application for NATO membership and they're doing a good job in reforming their economy. It's a solid democracy and on and on. He listened and then we had the meeting. The photographers came in and they're snapping all away and then the word was get them out. Then like rats leaving the ship, they all left and we were left there to have our discussion with the Slovenes. President Bush, Secretary of State Powell was in on that meeting, Condoleezza Rice left to attend another meeting, but Scooter Libby was there. I'll never forget that because I have a photograph of it.

Q: Libby being the principal aide to the Vice President.

YOUNG: I don't know what role he was in at that point, but he was in the meeting and Dan Freed who was the head of the European office in the White House was in on the meeting as well. Now, a couple of amusing incidents during this meeting. Of course the Slovene expressed his friendship and solidarity with the U.S. in terms of September 11th. They're with us and they want to help us and what a good relationship we have and what an important role we played in terms of Bosnia how important a role Slovenia played in that as well. When we got ready to do the bombing we had asked for overflight clearance from Austria and Austria denied us and then we asked Slovenia and Slovenia agreed. So, the planes came over Slovenia and then into Bosnia.

The president was at one point reared back in the chair like this, just his basically his shoulders resting on the back of the chair and his legs way out. His heels basically on the bottom of the floor and he's sort of swinging a little bit like that. The prime minister said, oh, we'd love you to come back to Slovenia and the president said, well, I don't travel. My Secretary of State doesn't like me to travel. He's afraid I'm going to make a faux pas. We all had a good laugh and Powell didn't say anything, he just looked on. The president asked good questions. He was briefed. He knew exactly what to ask. He asked how the reforms were coming along and how was the country doing, etc. Then he said, "Oh, I don't know why but there's this reputation that Slovenia has taken for granted that it's going to get into NATO. There's this feeling that Slovenia is arrogant about this whole process. Mr. Prime Minister, do you have any idea why that happened or why this has gotten out and is circulating?" Prime Minister Drnovsek is a very sour looking fellow with a sort of a pear shaped face, he looks almost like something out of Munch's painting, The Scream. He literally has that kind of head and that kind of tight mouth, very serious intellectual. I mean a brilliant man. He said in his perfect English, "Mr. President, I have no idea where these things circulate. I, too have heard rumors of that type. But, I want to tell you there's no basis to them whatsoever. We work very hard to try and meet all of the requirements of our NATO membership application. We will be a good and responsible member of the alliance if we are selected. I don't know how these things get started. Maybe some low-level person on your

staff has put this in a report and its gotten its way up to you. At that point the president turns to Dan Freed and says, “Dan, did you put this in my report?” Well, I thought I would fall out of the chair at that point. Dan said no or didn’t respond, I’m not sure what it was. That was really quite something that he would do that because Dan wasn’t fully committed either I must say at that point, but I give Dan full credit in the reporting cable, he reported that incident in the telegram which I thought meant a lot. That showed a great deal of integrity on his part. He was at least faithful to what transpired although it was sort of in a light moment. It was a good meeting. In the end the president kind of let slip when he said to the prime minister, he said, I’ll see you in November at the summit which was the big meeting that would decide who would be invited into NATO and who would not. That was a slip. It was a positive one because the president did not commit in that meeting. He was as supportive as he could, but he didn’t commit that, you know, you have our support. It was a good meeting. The prime minister left happy. I left happy and all turned out well. That was May of 2002.

The big NATO summit was scheduled for Prague in November of 2002 and it would be at that meeting that the decision would be made. Now, prior to that we had many meetings in the United States trying to firm up our position. Prior to the Prague summit we received a cable in which I was instructed to go to the government and tell them that the U.S. would support Slovenia’s candidacy for NATO. That was one of the most wonderful moments that I can remember.

Q: Did you get any feel for where again the Department of Defense you’re saying one section of the Department of Defense, did you feel that the prime minister’s visit had sort of trumped the, I mean it was, I’m sure the prime minister knew exactly where the problem lay.

YOUNG: Yes, I think that it was certainly beneficial. I think that there were two meetings that were crucial and that helped. The prime minister also had a separate meeting with Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense. Now, Rumsfeld had been an ambassador to NATO, so he understood I think to a much greater degree what was involved here versus members of his staff including Brzezinski with all of his brilliance.

Q: This is Zbigniew’s son?

YOUNG: Yes. So, those two meetings were key and of course the meeting he had with the Secretary where the Secretary was very favorable and very positive. I think it was basically those three meetings that helped to bring it all together and we had piled on the reporting. We had put it on every way you could possibly think of in terms of our analysis of the economy, of the political situation, of the reforms of the military; all of the data was there and clearly positive in terms of this is what should happen. As I said that glorious moment did come when I could go to the government and say we will do it. The cables went out to all of the posts at the same time. I think it was either in Estonia or Latvia the ambassador went in and told the prime minister or president of the U.S. support. The official said, “Read it to me one more time. I want to hear it again.” It was truly a glorious moment.

Then in November there was the summit where it was all formalized. The day following the summit Rumsfeld visited Slovenia to reaffirm what had occurred. He said, now that this has happened and we want you to follow through on these reforms. Brzezinski was there and was

just chomping at the bit to say, you got in, but let me tell you, let me just slap you around a little bit. But he was kept in check. I remember later on in a private meeting Rumsfeld saying to Brzezinski, "I knew you wanted to say something, but I'm proud of you that you kept quiet." It was really a good meeting. It was with the prime minister, the president and the foreign minister and all. That was my first time to meet Rumsfeld, the most charming guy you'd want to meet. Smart as a whip. It showed Slovenia at its most glorious so it was really wonderful. That was in November of 2002.

Q: Okay, well, we'll stop at this point and we'll pick this up the next time. We talked about Slovenia and NATO. Not much else about Slovenia.

YOUNG: I want to talk about the intellectual property rights and some of the other reforms. I want to talk about what we were doing with some of the civic society or civic institutions. Then I want to talk about the Iraq war.

Q: Today is the 31st of January, 2006. Johnny, just refresh my memory. You were in Slovenia from when to when?

YOUNG: From 2001 to 2004.

Q: Okay, you were mentioning a whole series of things to talk about. Do you want to start with intellectual rights and explain what that was and what the problem was.

YOUNG: At my confirmation hearing I had put down a marker in terms of intellectual property rights being one of the issues that I would take on. I knew that this would get people stirred up in Slovenia, but I wanted them to really engage with us in dialogue on this particular issue. I arrived and the press was waiting for me to just shock me to pieces. The pharmaceutical companies in Slovenia had put pressure on the politicians in the country and on the press to go after me. The issue was a very simple one. American pharmaceutical companies had spent considerable money in developing their brand name products. Slovenia has a very extensive and successful generics industry and they would take the data developed to support the American brand name products to produce generics and then sell these generics throughout Europe, Africa, India, you name it, making lots of money.

Q: With no money going to the drug companies?

YOUNG: Oh, absolutely. None going to the American drug company for the use of their data. The drug companies were very upset. All of them, Pfizer and Wyeth and all of them were there and they were quite upset. They would come to me and they appreciated that I had taken this on as an issue. They wanted me to move ahead on it and I did in press conferences, in TV interviews and in special meetings that I would hold. In other words, press conferences that I would call to speak on this issue. I was just relentless in raising this and in making it known that this was something that had to be dealt with.

Q: Would you call it stealing?

YOUNG: Well, that's what it is. We just said it was wrong and it was wrong and Slovenia knew that it was wrong. What had happened was in preparation for its candidacy to enter the European Union it had passed a law that made it illegal to use data and intellectual property illegally. That was fine. It had passed this law well in advance of the time that it would be required to be passed. Then the pharmaceutical industry in Slovenia pressured the politicians to pass a law to repeal the law that they had passed. They basically said, look we've got a good thing here. We don't need to have this law in place for another year and a half to two years, so why do we do it now. Let's repeal it and enjoy for the next two years the benefits of being able to use the intellectual property and data from these American companies. Now the Europeans didn't concern themselves with this. It was only the Americans who were carrying the ball on this.

Q: Were the pharmaceutical companies doing this in Slovenia really homegrown or were they sort of offshoots of other outfits in other parts of Europe?

YOUNG: These were companies developed locally. These two companies were Slovene inventions and were part of the Slovene success story. These two companies together had sales of \$1 billion, which is quite substantial for a small country of two million people. They were just quite a force to be reckoned with. Since during my time there one of them was bought out by Novartis and is a part of Novartis at the moment. I had all kinds of meetings with the parliamentarians and I told them, this is not going to look good. If you want to be a real member of the alliance you've got to demonstrate that you carry yourself in a way that is consistent with the standards expected of the members of the alliance. I used that as part of my argumentation as well.

Q: Was there any illicit threat on our part?

YOUNG: No, our only threat was how they would be viewed in the alliance and the kind of support we would give them. We were giving them military support as well in order to prepare them for their membership in the alliance. No out and out threats. This was through jawboning and moral persuasion that we finally succeeded and we got the law repealed and the American pharmaceutical companies were very happy. The Slovene pharmaceutical companies were not and it was amazing how they bounced back though after that. For example, shortly after that I mentioned one of the companies became part of Novartis and then what they began doing was bid on American contracts for generics. They had still some requirements to fulfill before they could really succeed in that era in that way and they finally did and then began selling generics to the United States. It was a win-win all the way around. Now, that didn't end all of the problems in terms of pharmaceuticals. Let's face it, American pharmaceutical companies I don't think are 100% happy in any country that they're in. They are constant moaners and groaners and that's just the way it is and it's our job to try and help them in whatever way we can.

Their next complaint was that the government had concocted a scheme to bring down medical costs which is something that I think governments around the world are faced with and it's no different in this country as well. The government's program was very similar to one in Italy. It was similar I think to one in practice in one or two of the Scandinavian countries. It was basically to limit the amount of reimbursement patients could receive for their medications with the highest reimbursement going to those patients who use generics versus those who used name

brand products. Those who used name brand products got a very small reimbursement. This had an impact on those American pharmaceutical products because all of the American products were name brand products and some of them of course were able to stand on their own and really didn't have generics to equal them. This was another complaint. They wanted my support in trying to get the government to implement a scheme that would be more generous to brand name products. I did my best on that, but really there was little defense that I could offer for that. This was a problem that is being dealt with internationally.

I just wanted to add one thing on the success of our program in Slovenia. It was cited in telegrams that went out worldwide as an example of how this can be done. I remember Tony Wayne, the assistant secretary for economic affairs, sending out a telegram and we took great pride in that I must say.

Q: What was the reaction among the Slovenian contacts, the ones who were not specifically connected to the pharmaceutical thing? I mean did they understand what they should.

YOUNG: They did. Many Slovenes who were anti the regime in power gave me a pat on the back. You're showing them. This government needs to be shown that it can't get away with anything and it needs to do the right thing. They were pleased with the moral implication of pushing the government to do the right thing. That is not inconsistent with Slovene morals. They are very strict people, very moralistic. They don't look for sideways to do things. They're very straight.

Q: How did you find the government reaction in the people you would meet in government. Were they just sort of uncomfortable?

YOUNG: They knew that it had to be done. They knew that it was something they had to do. It was a requirement to join the European Union. They just wanted to postpone it as long as possible. I got cooperation from the folks in the government and they knew that it was political, that it was the money and the influence of the pharmaceutical firms that brought about this problem.

Q: How did you find the media? Was the media a good response?

YOUNG: The media was after me. They were after me because of what I had mentioned earlier in terms of Slovenia's entry into NATO. They thought that I was going to sabotage Slovenia's entry into NATO by working to deny them support from the U.S. government for their candidacy. They learned very shortly that they had one of the best allies they could find in me and applauded my efforts.

Q: Was there any other intellectual property problems like books?

YOUNG: No, you didn't find counterfeit books and you didn't find counterfeit CDs and tapes and that sort of thing. They had a good record in that regard, but that was petty business. It's not a country that specializes or has much of that kind of gray market trade.

Q: Sometimes border countries are basically smuggling countries. It's what they do for a living.

YOUNG: Yes, but this is not a smuggling country. This is a very successful country with a developed economy and a sound political system so they don't have those kinds of problems. It was just in pharmaceuticals because it was such a big business. Those two pharmaceutical companies there, they were national treasures and they were regarded as part of the patrimony. These companies were incredible. In many ways they were exactly like Hershey. It's not just the product that they produce, but its their impact on the total community where that product is produced. That was true in the case of these two pharmaceutical companies. They run schools, they run clinics, they have basketball teams, they have soccer teams. I mean they have all of these different things, all of these different institutions that you find in the community and very often maybe just supported in a small way. I mean they literally run them and it's so funny to see the basketball team. They've brought in a couple of black players from the United States and those few black players and myself, we were the only blacks in the entire country. Of course they stood out even more than I did because they were so tall.

Q: What were some of the other issues you were dealing with?

YOUNG: We tried to contribute to the development of civil society. We tried to help with funding small groups that had begun to support and encourage democratic governance in various areas at the community level. We attempted to help groups that would try and help with wayward youth and with the elderly. We tried to work with the judiciary in areas of judicial reform particularly in the implementation of the alternative dispute procedures. That was very important particularly with the judiciary. Slovenia had a wickedly backlogged judicial system. Our goal was to try to break that up so that justice could be administered in a more efficient and faster manner. We brought over judges. We sent judges from Slovenia to the United States to meet with judges here to show them our court system in all of its different levels and had terrific dialogue on that particular issue.

One big problem was also in trafficking of persons. Slovenia was not a destination point. It was a transit point for people coming out of the Dalmatian coast, Albania, Macedonia and Serbia through Slovenia and into Italy and then into Europe. There were some who remained there. The majority of the people traffic were of course women. There were no organizations really set up to deal with that problem. One group began during our time there and we helped to fund them to get them started. They opened up a shelter for women who were traffic and we worked with the government in providing them some money so that they could continue this work and expand it. We had some leverage there because Slovenia was a category two country. We classified countries in their trafficking as category one, two or three. Category one is basically the top of the line, no problems of any significance and category two countries have some problems and government needs to do more. Category three countries are where you have major problems. Slovenia, as a new member of the alliance and as an aspirant to the European Union, wanted to be in the same company as European Union countries and that is category one. The leverage was in persuading the government that it had to do more to get into category one. At the time of my departure we were lucky in maintaining them in category two because there was a push really to move them into category three.

Q: What was the problem because I think of Slovenia as being so small and you have this all going through and if they don't stay over, I mean.

YOUNG: The government had no laws on the books to protect people who were the victims of trafficking. That was the problem to persuade the government, the parliament to do something, to put some laws on the books, to protect those who were traffic. What you raise is a very good point. You would go next door to Italy and trafficking was as obvious and as flagrantly practiced as you would want to find it anywhere. In the middle of the day in Rome you could pass these little alleys and you'd see women waiting there, African women and Asian women, waiting to be solicited. We raised this with the folks in Washington. Why was Italy with this kind of practice being so obvious being in category one, and yet a country like Slovenia where you didn't have that kind of behavior at all was a category two. They said, as bad as it is in Italy, Italy has laws on the books. So people who are traffic can actually go to the courts and say under law number 23 or so and so my rights have been violated. There was nothing like that in Slovenia.

Q: I'm thinking Slovenia since they weren't the ultimate destination there would be no particular problem for them to pass a law.

YOUNG: Well, they finally did, but it took a lot of pressure to get them to do so. It finally did.

Q: They didn't see a need or were they forced to say don't do this because we're making money.

YOUNG: Slovenes are inclined to let things alone if they don't see it as a problem. I don't think that's so unusual. I don't think they're unique in that regard. They feel that if it's not a problem, you know, why bother with it. They didn't see it as a problem. It took a lot of sensitizing to get them to see it differently and they also view sex completely differently than we do. We think it's immoral and wrong to have people trafficked and to have people engaged in prostitution and that sort of thing. Their attitude is different. I forgot the number, but there were something like 60 private clubs in Slovenia where prostitution was practiced and the government knew that it was practiced and it was legal. It's a completely different attitude.

Q: What about relations with Italy? You know for years particularly around the area of Istria and all there were Slovenians trying to have Slovenian taught in the public schools, the Italians were vehement about this and all. How did that work?

YOUNG: I think overall I would say relations with Italy were good, but there would be flare-ups from time to time. As you probably know there is an Italian minority in Slovenia and there is a Slovene minority in Italy all around the border areas where the border had shifted back and forth before the lines were finally drawn. Anyhow the Italians do have a member in the Slovene parliament, but I don't think there's a Slovene in the Italian parliament. I could be wrong, but I know there is an Italian in the Slovene parliament. Relations were good. Problems occurred when Slovenia was moving towards its entry to the European Union. One of the minority parties in Italy rose up and said it was going to block Slovenia's entry because Slovenia had not settled debts from World War II with the Italians who had lost property and business interests in Slovenia at that time. That was not true. There had been a settlement on those issues. In fact the U.S. government was party to it, but the Italians despite having signed the agreement at the time

hadn't moved to collect the money that had been put in the accounts to settle those disputes. That would flare up from time to time. Slovenia was a little bit uncertain about Italian support for its entry to NATO. I mean it finally did get it and for its entry to the European Union.

As far as Croatia is concerned, there were border dispute problems. There were some other problems that had been around since the time of independence in 1991. Those issues were believed to be resolved in an agreement that was initiated by the prime ministers of both Croatia and Slovenia in 2001. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief that this agreement was resolved. The borders were established. Property claims were settled on both sides and a number of other issues as well. Number one was the border and also the demarcation of the territorial waters. That was a major issue as to where the Croatian line was in the Adriatic and where the Slovene line was in the Adriatic. This affected fishing and lobstering and that sort of thing. This was a very nice agreement. Prime Minister Drnovsek was very pleased with it and the Croatian government seemed pleased and little by little it began to fall apart. The Croats said we're not going to adhere to it, this is no good; the party that raised this was a party that was campaigning to be elected in place of the party that had signed this agreement with Drnovsek. The Slovenes just stood their ground. They said we signed the agreement. We're not going to budge. That's it. It's up to you to honor it. This went back and forth and back and forth. When I left in 2004 it still had not been resolved, but the Slovenes had not backed up at all. Special envoys were appointed to go to negotiate between the two countries, but when I left in 2004 nothing had been resolved. It was basically the status quo. There were flare ups during my time there when Slovene fishing vessels were seized and then Croat crabbing vessels or lobstering vessels were seized. They had these little spats going back and forth. Then you'd have Slovenes who would say, well, I went down to Croatia for my vacation. I was treated like a dog. They were disrespectful and it was nothing but contempt and they looked down on me. Mind you, they'd go by the tens of thousands to their vacations in Dubrovnik and Cortula and all of these lovely places along the Dalmatian coast. Some of this resentment goes back decades because when they were all together in the Republic of Yugoslavia, Slovenia was the most envied of all of them. The other members of the republic thought the Slovenes were haughty and arrogant and disdainful of them and the Slovenes thought the others were a bunch of slackers because the Slovenes work hard. They had the most successful economy in the republic. They made up about a thirteenth of the population, but produced a quarter of the GDP. They were very proud of this and they are very proud in any case. Then there was also the feeling that when Slovenia broke away in 1991 that they left the others holding the bag. Some of them said, well, yes, those Slovenes broke away and they had a war that lasted 10 days, but the rest fell on us. That's not quite the case either. There are a number of reasons for that kind of resentment, but nevertheless things were good. As I said, relations stayed fairly even. You'd have these flare-ups over fishing, you'd have flare-ups at the border and the Croats would decide all of a sudden that they were going to slow things down and the cars couldn't get through and they'd be at the border backed up for tens of miles and that sort of thing. Overall, pretty good.

Slovenia knows that the best place for Croatia would be in the alliance and in the European Union.

Q: The alliance, you mean?

YOUNG: NATO. That these are key anchors for stability in the region. The only one who has that at the moment is Slovenia, but Slovenia would like to see the other members of the former republic of Yugoslavia become members of these institutions as well. Relations with Austria were good except again for some of the same reasons that I mentioned earlier in terms of Italy; you have a Slovene minority in Austria. You don't have it the other way around. You have some of it, but not too much. You have more the other way around of the small Slovene minority in Austria. Unfortunately it was in the region of Styria which is the area headed by Haider.

Q: I was going to say Haider, we've talked about him.

YOUNG: Yes, well, he's quite a guy to say the least, a real troublemaker. Austria had laws that said there would be bilingual education in the schools where the Slovene communities were located. There would be bilingual signs and things like that. This was by law and by affirmation by the courts of Austria. Haider said, I don't care what the courts say, we are not having bilingual education any longer and we're going to take down the signs and they're going to be in German and that's that. Of course this got everyone riled up and by the time I left things were still pretty much the same. There would be these flare-ups that would occur in that region of Styria where Haider was.

Q: Haider had been Prime Minister for a little while, wasn't he?

YOUNG: Oh, yes, he was impossible.

Q: He was essentially seen as a neo-Nazi.

YOUNG: Well, he is.

Q: Certainly an extreme nationalist.

YOUNG: An extreme nationalist is a gentler word.

Q: He had his followings in Styria?

YOUNG: Yes, Styria. You know the Slovenes were ruled by the Austrians for 800 years and that has put a certain stamp on the Slovenes. I think their sense of orderliness, their drive to work hard, I think there's a streak in them that you find in Austria as well.

Q: Sort of Germanic.

YOUNG: Yes, Calvinistic I would say. They worked very hard. Don't take too much outwardly, don't make very outward shows of emotion and pleasure. I went to a dinner hosted by the U.S. government for the graduates of a program we had in the region to send college graduates to the States for graduate education where they got masters. It was for the Balkans and for Central Europe. I remember at this function the speaker was giving awards. He said, now we have an award for Mr. so and so of Romania. There would be some applause. Then he said, we now have such and such an award for Mr. so and so let's say, Hungary. Again, gently even applause. This

went on and on. Then he said we have an award for Mr. so and so of Slovenia, very quiet applause. Then he said we have an award for Mr. so and so of Serbia. Well, the room went crazy. There was all kinds of yelling. The Slovene fellow next to me gave me a nudge and said, Serbs. In other words they're full of emotion and you don't get this outward show of emotion on the part of Slovenes. They certainly have fun and they make jokes and what have you, but they are completely different in terms of they are more Germanic and more Austrian in that sense of the word. The Slovenes have this great admiration for Austria and they take pride in, they're also neat the clean and as I said orderly. That's why if you travel from Slovenia into Austria it's a seamless transition. You travel from Italy, from Slovenia to Italy; you can see the difference. You travel from Slovenia to Croatia you see the difference. You travel from Slovenia to Hungary you see the difference, but into Austria it's a seamless transition. It's amazing.

Relations with Hungary were very good. No major problems there. The Slovenes looked at Hungary as a model of what they could do in terms of being a member of NATO. Hungary had not yet entered the European Union. They were in the same line of candidates as the Slovenes. There is a Hungarian minority in Slovenia and there is a Hungarian member of the Slovene parliament. There is a Hungarian who is in the Slovene parliament, but not the opposite way around. Very good solid relationships there, very good.

Q: Well, how did the Balkan troubles, particularly Bosnia and Kosovo. We're talking 2001 to 2004. How did they play I mean or were you seeing new repercussions or was Slovenia somewhat removed?

YOUNG: They were removed, concerned, and the recipient of many thousands of refugees as a result of this. As removed as they were, they were affected. They played a key role for us in the bombing of Serbia because when we were ready to do it, when we were ready for the air strikes we asked the Austrians because that was the shortest distance to fly and the Austrians declined. They wouldn't allow us to overfly their country. Then we asked the Slovenes and the Slovenes said yes. We did it and the Slovenes felt it was the right thing to do. They knew that this problem had to be put to an end.

Q: The Serbians _____ Kosovo in the area and it was a tremendous crisis.

YOUNG: They got all of these refugees in, mostly Serbs. They got some others as well, but the majority were Serbs and that created some problems for them. They had to find a place for them and then at some point they gave them the opportunity of becoming permanent residents there and they handled it fairly well. In 2001, however, this issue of those refugees who had come in became a political issue. One party said that the people who had come in had been given permanent resident status and was then stripped of that status and were not allowed to vote and things like that. This particular candidate wanted that whole issue reexamined and it became a huge issue in the campaign for prime minister in 2001. It was a significant issue. The guy who raised it. He won. He ousted the regime that had been in power since the time of independence.

Q: Was this a major factor?

YOUNG: It was a factor, definitely. But I think the main reason why the opposition was elected

was because people had grown tired of the regime that had been in power since independence in 1991 and wanted to try something different. The feeling was that in some ways this was basically like the old communist days with the old regime. Everybody knew everyone and everything got done through these connections and they felt that the time for that was over.

Q: Were there any other developments of this political nature? I mean was this something that, did we get involved in the refugee matter at all?

YOUNG: No, we didn't. We got involved to the extent that we kept emphasizing human rights. The need for the rule of law, the need for fair play and those kinds of things. Its amazing these human rights cases. Some of them were just unbelievable. There's a small Muslim community in Slovenia. The Muslim community had been campaigning for years to build a mosque and the government finally gave them land or agreed that they could buy land in this particular area for this mosque. Then this became a huge issue whether they were going to get this mosque or not. They got the land and then questions were raised as to putting this issue to a referendum or just allowing it just to go forward on its own. We knew that if it had gone to a referendum it would have been defeated. Then it would have gotten into another area in terms of a religion not being able to practice freely. We kept emphasizing with the government the importance of demonstrating that there was religious freedom in Slovenia and that this mosque would move forward. In the end it got into the courts and everyone got involved. I mean these things that seemed so small became an emotional issue. This was a serious issue though. I mean serious concern here. In the end they agreed, I think it was a result of a court decision, that basically said even if they had a referendum they couldn't have abridged the right to religion or freedom of religion. That was a basic right that everyone enjoyed.

Q: Well, now, what was the role of the Catholic Church?

YOUNG: Good question. The Catholic Church. If you ask a Slovene what religion are you he'll say Roman Catholic. About 85% Roman Catholic, by profession, not by practice. You'd go to Catholic Church on a Sunday and you could count the number of people in the church.

Q: Particularly all women.

YOUNG: The majority, you're right there, but that's not unusual anywhere.

Q: It was like that when I was in Italy.

YOUNG: Yes, that's very true, but you ask the man and they'll tell you they're Catholic. Almost everyone in the country, 85%. My wife and I are Roman Catholic and we'd go to mass there on Sunday. We would make these observations that you have, look its all women. The Catholic Church had considerable influence and had owned at one point extensive properties. Following independence the Slovenes said they would return property to former owners and one of the former owners was the Roman Catholic Church. They owned forests, they owned basically state parks. I mean what came to be a state park that encompassed hundreds of thousands of acres, way up in the mountains. They had these schools all over. They had monasteries all over. They had chapels all over. The church played quite a significant role in the evolution of the country

going back to the time of the attempts by the Turks to conquer that area. You go to Slovenia for example and on every hill there's a church. On every hill there's a church and those churches were placed on those hills for strategic reasons. They would serve as lookouts and around the church there's always a wall. The person who was the lookout would keep an eye out for the Turks. If he saw Turks coming he would give the signal, the villagers would come into the yard at the church and then they would fight the Turks from the wall of the church. The role of the church in Slovenia as being able to defend the country from subjugation from the Turks is just one example of their influence. Then they ran all of the schools at one time. They ran the universities. They've had a tremendous impact in the evolution of the country, but during the time of the communists the church was cut out. Basically the church was brought back into society at the time of independence. People were allowed to exercise their right to practice their religion, so the church was basically reborn at the time of independence. It wasn't happy with just being able to practice as it wanted to. It wanted the government to give it more money. It wanted the government to insist on religious education in the schools and things like that, that just would not go, would not be acceptable to Slovenes. So you had this tension between the church and the government. While I was there an agreement was hammered out between the Vatican and the government that allows the church to operate freely, to have its own schools, to have Catholic education in the schools, but not have it in the public schools and not getting huge amounts of money from the government. The archbishop was a very controversial fellow named Rodey who has subsequently moved on to be one of the key figures in the Vatican working with the present Pope. He was very outspoken. In fact he on occasion would inflame the situation in Slovenia particularly among the people in the Muslim community. In one public statement he equated them to all being terrorists and the government had to be careful in measures to be sure that we weren't encouraging them in their terrorist activities and that sort of thing. Well, everyone went ballistic when they heard. He would do things like that.

He was very influential. For example, in terms of persuading Slovenes to vote for NATO and also persuading Slovenes to vote for entry into the European Union. Slovenia was the only country of the candidates invited to join NATO that had a referendum on it. The referendum succeeded. I think I mentioned that earlier that the referendum succeeded.

Q: Yes.

YOUNG: I wanted to go back to that a little bit because it leads to what was happening in terms of the war on Iraq. In 2003, at the beginning of the year, the talk of a possible war was getting louder and louder and as it got louder and louder the opposition to it in Slovenia grew in intensity. It was very clear. The Slovenes wanted absolutely nothing to do with the war in Iraq. The referendum on NATO and the European Union was scheduled for March 21st I think in 2003. Little did we know that the war would begin I think it was the 23rd of March or the 22nd of March, 2003, so it was literally within days. We had no doubts about the Slovenes agreeing to enter the European Union, but the polls indicated that it was very uncertain about the Slovenes voting for entry to NATO. We were afraid that with the war on the horizon that the Slovenes would vote against it. In the end they voted for it, two-thirds of them voted for entry to NATO and 90% voted for entry to the European Union. That was a big success.

Q: Were certain assurances given at that time saying the war in Iraq is not a NATO matter?

YOUNG: Despite those assurance and what have you, it was the U.S. NATO was looked at unfortunately through the prism of the U.S. -- that this is a U.S. run institution and you know, if we vote for this, we are voting basically for the U.S. and we're agreeing to war with Iraq. A very important thing did occur just before the war started. We knew we were going to go into Iraq. I got a message from Washington instructing me to go to the government to get permission for our planes to overfly Slovenia to get to Iraq. I went in, put the request in and the government was very quick to get back to me. They said no thank you. I communicated that back to Washington. They were very unhappy as you can imagine. Literally we had hours to move because the instructions were given that we were going to go that night. We couldn't do it, so the planes were going to come out of Aviano in Italy and over Slovenia and then on down. But we couldn't do it, so they went over Macedonia.

Q: Did they have to go over Albania?

YOUNG: They did that as well and so those two countries as a result of that became our best friends, among our dearest friends and best friends. Slovenia ended up in the dog house as a result of that. That was a major item. The war started. The opposition just grew and grew in intensity. We had all kinds of demonstrations outside of the embassy. My car was attacked one day while I was leaving for home. The editorials in the papers were all anti-U.S. and it was all directed at President Bush. It was all seen as a result of this man. It was Bush, Bush, Bush. Nothing we could do would deter them from this. I continued to give access to the press anytime they wanted it. They were relentless in asking me about the war and what the U.S. was doing and how wrong it was. I would give the spiel about what we were trying to do there and how we were going to build democracy and how this was necessary and we got rid of a wicked dictator and that sort of thing. I don't know if I mentioned what had happened with Slovenia's signing on to the Vishegrad statement. This was when Powell went to the United Nations. Did I mention that?

Q: No, I don't think so.

YOUNG: Oh, okay, well that was a big issue. We were looking for support in terms of proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that the United Nations should support the Secretary in what he was proposing to the United Nations. We went to the 10 countries that were proposed for membership in NATO and/or the European Union. They were called the Vishegrad 10. All of them had signed this letter except Slovenia. I remember calling Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel and saying this is going to look really bad. You want to look good. You want to be counted among those who have signed this letter. We've got the proof. Holding up like Powell did later on, we've got the proof. He said, well, I've got to run this by a couple of people here and I will get back to you and I gave him I think 15 minutes and I called him again and I said, we're waiting in Washington, you know. They're waiting for you. You're the only holdout on this. We need this. This is so important. This is critical; we've got to have it. He said, well, I've got to run it by more people. In the meantime I learned later on that one fellow who was sort of a real anti-American member of the ruling government was pressing him on how to tweak the statement and Rupel did make a few little tweaks here, but nothing significant in terms of the substance of it. This letter basically said, based on the evidence that Secretary of State Powell has represented

to the United States, we believe that the United Nations blah, blah, that this is what they should do. That was pretty powerful stuff. Anyhow, I kept after the foreign minister. I was relentless in my pressure on him and in the end he signed. We were able to communicate that back to Washington and that was one of the statements that Powell used in his discussion with the United Nations. The Slovenes regretted that later on and Powell did too as a matter of fact, but anyhow that was what happened in that particular case.

Q: Did you feel, I've had sort of the impression that being the number one, the most powerful country in the world and all, obviously this brings resentment, you can't help it. I mean this just comes with the territory and the fact that Bush seemed to give no attention or care to European sensitivities allowed all this anti-American resentment to sort of well up and concentrate even before the Iraq war.

YOUNG: Yes, at the time.

Q: There was the ____ agreement, a lot of this, a little could have been done to assuage the sensibilities of the Europeans which other presidents had done, like Bush's father, but he didn't. Did you have a feeling that this was kind of built into it?

YOUNG: There's no question about it that that was the case. When Bush was initially elected there wasn't euphoria at his election, but there was certainly a willingness to stand back and give him a chance to see what he was going to do. Then when he took these unilateral moves, abrogating agreements that we had signed and what have you.

Q: Anti-ballistic.

YOUNG: Yes, an alarm went out, not only an alarm, but opposition and criticism and it just never stopped. They felt that, well, if we are members of an alliance, if we have this relationship that's very special. I'm not just saying Slovenes, but Europe in general, then we should be consulted. I remember having a discussion with Secretary Powell and I said, "You know we don't do a good job in communicating with our friends in telling them privately, not going public, but handling it in a private way that this is how we feel about a particular issue. We know you don't feel that way about it, but we want you to know this is how we're thinking. This is how things are shaping up in the U.S. This is how it's likely to come up." That would I think have had a different result than just barreling ahead without any kind of consultations at all. That's just not the way you deal with a friend.

Q: How did Powell respond?

YOUNG: Well, he listened. I think he was just in a listening mode at that point. I think Powell was a believer in this. He was a believer in consulting and conferring with your friends and what have you, but this was a little bit beyond him.

Q: Tell me, now this is, I'm just moving as we do these oral histories with people who have been dealing with this particular time and I have to state my prejudice. I feel this has probably been the darkest period of American foreign policy since World War II I mean as far as our ability to

exert our influence through diplomatic means. Did you find one in yourself and also in the officers there having trouble dealing with this major reverse in American foreign policy?

YOUNG: We did, but we kept that to ourselves. We realized that we had a responsibility to represent the president and to do that in a professional and resolute way, and if the situation got so bad that we couldn't do that anymore, then it was really time to leave. Someone like myself, for example, I knew that upon completion of my assignment, that I was going to leave and that I would be a free man in a relatively short time. So, that sort of helped me to stay the course. The others would voice their views privately. They wouldn't even voice them to non-Americans, but amongst ourselves there was great disappointment of the direction we were going. I think it may have changed a little, but I think the Secretary has done some positive things to try and change it.

Q: I've talked to someone who was serving as the DCM at a European post. He had a lot of trouble because people would come up and say, all right, you've talked about this and you've presented it, but what do you really think.

YOUNG: Oh, we get that. We get that, yes. If you're dealing with the press, you have to be extremely careful or else it will get out, well, although Ambassador Young said so and so and so, he privately believed so and so. I never let my private thoughts out in public.

Q: Did you have much consultation with your fellow ambassadors around the area?

YOUNG: They were very nice, very gracious. You mean of the fellow American ambassadors?

Q: Fellow American ambassadors.

YOUNG: We'd have a conference here in Washington once a year, which was always interesting, because we'd have 54 ambassadors there. I was the only black in the entire room. I said that I was president of the association of black ambassadors in Europe. Then later on we got one more, the guy who was in Iceland, and so I told him, now you're the vice president. I'm the president. We would have those and they would provide an opportunity for informal discussions. The career people did their job in terms of defending the president and speaking out and not trying to hide and duck from the issues. I think some of the political people took a very low profile and wouldn't speak out and wouldn't have the same kind of relationship with the press that they would normally have. So, we would meet there. NATO would have an annual regional conference and we'd meet at that conference as well, but that was about it.

Q: How did your public affairs officer deal with this matter because this was a very difficult time.

YOUNG: An extremely difficult time. I was very fortunate though in having one of the best public affairs officers I have ever worked with. A woman named Laurie Weitzenkorn who worked with me in seizing every opportunity imaginable to do exactly what I wanted to do which was to show the U.S. government in a very positive way. If we were doing something for example with the judiciary and an alternative dispute resolution conference or something like that, she would arrange for me to have press conferences. She would arrange for me to give the

keynote address and of course this would be carried in the papers and then she would arrange for me to be on a panel or something like that with other ambassadors or jurors or jurists. Again all of this would be picked up in the press, and it was neutral. It was neutral; it wasn't political at all. That worked out very nicely. She would arrange to do something with Fulbrighters. We had a good size Fulbright program. Programs with scholars and speakers on different issues. She programmed me to the hilt, but always with one goal in mind. She didn't skirt those occasions when it was clear that the reporter or the press or the television wanted something said politically. That's what they were after. She did her best to prep me and to get me ready for this and it all ended up very nicely. She was just an extraordinary public affairs officer. Engaged, creative, full of energy, very well connected in the community, particularly among people in the press and academia, just what you want.

Q: How did you find life in Slovenia?

YOUNG: I always tell people that I certainly enjoyed the issues and enjoyed my time there. I couldn't have asked for a nicer post to conclude a career. To do so in a country that was democratic, that had open markets, that respected the rule of law, that believed in integrity that didn't have problems of corruption, that was moving ahead, that believed in reforms. I mean it was doing all of those things that we had attempted to do in one way or another in so many countries that we had been in over the years. Then to be able to do that in a country that was so spectacularly beautiful was an extra treat. The other thing was to also do it in a country that took such pride in culture and art and music was also an extra treat. I went to more concerts in Slovenia than I have gone to in total in the United States and other countries combined. There were all kinds of world class performers. They had a world class orchestra of their own. The little country had three symphony orchestras. Just unbelievable. We just loved it, soaked it all up, traveled all over the country, just loved it.

I attended the ski flying competition in Planica. I had never been to a ski resort let alone to a ski flying competition. We were at the foot of the mountain where the skiers land and to see them come off of this run. Slovenia has the longest run in the world for this kind of jump. Its I think its 250 meters which is just unbelievable. To see these people go up in the air and then come down, they literally are like birds, but its just absolutely spectacular. I've never seen anything like it. It was one of the most breathtaking and thrilling things I've ever seen. I went every year I was there except the year that the war started and I wanted to go. I had been talking about it for a long time and my country team advised me don't go. They said, look you're going to be very visible, there's no question about that although you'll have 40,000 people there you're going to be a very visible person in that 40,000 crowd. That was the one year that I didn't go, but I did go the next year and loved it, loved every minute of it. It was wonderful. Slovenia is a gorgeous country. Ljubljana is just a delightful town. A small city of 325,000 people. One person described the country to me I think in a very apropos way. She said, you know if Disney created an Alpine village it would look like Slovenia. I think there's some truth in that. Its just gorgeous.

Q: I'm thinking as sort of an up to date note, just last week they had an election and a very solid free election in Palestine which the fundamentalists Hamas won and you were saying that in talking about Bahrain that you know if they had a full democracy in Bahrain, you thought that sort of the fundamentalists could well win.

YOUNG: I think that's the case if it were a one man one vote because its clear with three quarters population of Shia and the Shia being very sympathetic to Iran and to other Islamists and sympathetic to the Shia in Iraq, I think that that would probably be the outcome and I don't think that would be in our interests frankly.

Q: We're pushing democracy, but at the same time it's a complicated world out there.

YOUNG: It's a very complicated world. I don't know what will finally prevail in Bahrain, but they do have a charter that was voted in democratically and that charter does provide for some participation by the citizens in those who represent them in the legislature. As I mentioned final veto rests with the king and the king wants to maintain his power. In fact when the former emir ran into difficulty with the legislators, that is Sheik Isa, he disbanded it. He disbanded the parliament because it was clear the parliament was moving in a direction that if it continued to exercise the power that it did, he and his entire family would have been out on the street. He disbanded them and they had no legislature until his successor. His son made this new arrangement as a result of a national charter that was voted in.

Q: Well, back to Slovenia, is there anything more we should discuss do you think?

YOUNG: No, I think we've covered the major issues, the intellectual property, the war continues to be a big thorn in our side. After the war got started, Slovenia was asked if it wanted to be a member of the coalition of the willing, even a silent member of the coalition of the willing and they said no thank you. We don't want to be a part of the coalition of the willing. We have to also keep in mind that at the time Slovenia had a new prime minister. He was afraid of taking any stance that was inconsistent with public sentiments for fear of not being reelected which he was not eventually and so he was not about to stick out his neck at all. He would say the right things when we would meet privately and he talked a good game, but he was not prepared to back us. We were pressing him to send some forces to Iraq, to send some forces to Afghanistan, but they were not prepared to do any of that unless it was under the cover of NATO. Slovenia was not about to break on its own, break ranks with its European Union allies in order to demonstrate support for the United States. If it demonstrated any support for the United States it would only do that under the umbrella of NATO or the European Union. Now, for example, they are about to send I think a few people to Iraq, but this would be under the NATO training program that is being worked out now. They do have people in Afghanistan. That started while I was in Slovenia, but again this is not a unilateral thing. It is part of NATO. They are part of the NATO alliance and they're demonstrating that they're good members. They don't have huge numbers out there. I forgot the numbers, but its small, 10, 12, 14 or something like that. As we know it's the symbolism that's important in this. We talk about the coalition of the willing. If you look at the real numbers it was still the U.S. that was doing this. It was just symbolic.

End of reader