Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

# THOMAS R. HUTSON

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background
- Born and raised in Nebraska
- University of Nebraska
- Marriage
- U.S. Army
- Entered the Foreign Service in 1967

Teheran, Iran; Rotation Officer 1968-1971
- The Shah
- Environment
- Visa and citizenship case studies
- Ambassador Macarthur
- Political situation

State Department; FSI – Serbo-Croation language studies 1971

Belgrade, Yugoslavia; 1972-1975
- Consular Officer
- Environment
- Security
- PLO
- Croatia tensions
- Banja Luka branch office
- Kosovo Albanians
- Tito
- Soviet Union
- Ambassador Toom

State Department; Special Assistant to Undersecretary Sisco 1975-1976

State Department; CA Bureau. Program Officer, E. Europe 1976
- Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania

Cultural exchange programs

Winnipeg, Canada; Principal Officer 1976-1978
- Consular district
- U.S. interests
- Relations
- Economic issues
- Liberals
- Environment issues

Moscow, Soviet Union; Consul General 1978-1980
- Jewish emigrants
- American "refugees"
- Pentecostals
- Senator Javits
- "Détente"
- Security
- Dutch embassy help
- Jews
- Unusual visa cases
- Ambassador Watson
- Jailed Americans
- Afghanistan invasion
- Objections to U.S. policy

Resignation in protest to U.S policy 1980

Post-Resignation Activity 1980-1983
- Independent contractor
- Houston oil services firm
- Interest in reentering the U.S. government
- American Council of Young Political Leaders

Re-entered the Foreign Service; 1983

Lagos, Nigeria; Regional Consular Officer 1983-1985
- Oil
- Education
- Visa management program
- Regional offices
- Duties and operation

State Department; FSI; Mandarin language studies 1985-1986

Taipei, Taiwan: FSI; Mandarin language studies 1986-1987

Taipei, Taiwan; American Institute; Chief Consular Officer 1987-1990
- Management
- Corruption
- Visa cases
- Visa fraud

Belgrade, Yugoslavia; Science Counselor 1990-1992
- Economy
- Bosnia referendum
- Ambassador Zimmermann
- Riots
- Industry
- U.S. Institute for Science and Technology
- Yugoslavia disintegration
- Slovenia independence
- Kosovo
- Croatia-Serbia split
- The Serbs

State Department; ex-Yugoslavia Task Force 1992

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Deputy Principal Officer 1992-
- Environment
- Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)
- Feliks Kulov
- President Akayev
- Troubles with ambassador
- AID
- Death of daughter

Barbados; Economic-Political Counselor

State Department career ended
- Charges
- Lawsuit

State Department short term assignments (TDY's) 1995-2003
- International Commission on Former Yugoslavia
  - Serbs receiving war material
  - Embargo
  - Meeting with Madeleine Albright
  - Crown Prince Alexander
  - Serbo-Montenegro issue
- OSCE Monitoring

Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan; UK Provincial Reconstruction Tm. 2003-2004
State Dept. Rep
Afghanistan Reconstruction Group (ARG)
Personnel problems
Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad
Environment
Rumsfeld visit
Group mission
"Hearts and Minds" issue
USAID
Mullahs
Meetings reports
Press reporting
Dostum and Atta
Uzbekistan
Karzai
The British
Non-Government Agencies (NGO's)
UN presence
Taliban

## INTERVIEW

*Q: To start with, please tell us where you were born and something about your family.*

HUTSON: I was born in Omaha, Nebraska on September 14, 1939. My father was a fireman - captain of the Fonteneille fire station in Omaha. My mother was a former vaudeville dancer. She had danced with Fred Astaire when he performed in Omaha. She was part of the chorus line.

*Q: Fred Astaire was born in Omaha as was Marlon Brando.*

HUTSON: Right. My mother dated Jack Teagarden, the great trombonist. Both of my mother's parents came from Denmark. Her father, Niels Peter Neilsen, worked on the Union Pacific railroad as a conductor. He was also the editor of a Danish language newspaper published in Omaha. My grandmother, who was Peter's second wife, immigrated from Denmark just to marry him.

My father's family lived in southwest Iowa. They had lived there for several generations. I am going to retire in Thurman, Iowa - a small town close to where the Hutsons came from. My father died in 1943 after retiring from the Omaha fire department. My mother was his second wife who married him after his first wife and daughter died from scarlet

fever.

After my father retired, we moved to Nebraska where I grew up. We lived in the south-central part of the state - in the town of Red Cloud - close to the Kansas border. (Red Cloud had been the home of Willa Cather, who moved there having been born in Virginia. She figured later in my life). Although she was well known, we never read one word of what she had written throughout my twelve years of education in Red Cloud. Everyone knew "Willy", but there is a penalty for being famous in a small town. Later, after I had left Red Cloud, it came to light that she was a lesbian which made her even more controversial.

In those days, Kansas was "dry." My father took over the management of a hotel and a liquor store. I suspect that he had a lot of customers from Kansas. He died in 1947 at the early age of 55, leaving my mother to tend to my older brother and myself. Both my brother and I graduated from Red Cloud high school.

*Q: Did either of your parents attend a university or college?*

HUTSON: No. I think my father got as far as eighth grade. My mother went all the way through high school - Omaha commercial high school. She learned book keeping and was a champion hand writer. One of her classmates was Roman Hruska, later to become a U.S. senator. I met him later when he visited Belgrade; he told me that he remembered my mother - she had "good legs." - what a politician!. She worked for the Harding Cream company as a book-keeper before she married.

*Q: Tell us a little about life in Red Cloud*.

HUTSON: The Hutsons were somewhat different from other inhabitants of Red Cloud because we had come from Omaha and had moved to a small town. Usually, the migration goes the other way. We also traveled frequently. We used to go to Omaha regularly which provided us fodder for briefing our school mates about life outside Red Cloud. We also went to Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver - where we stayed at the Brown Palace hotel. We were there, as a matter of fact, on VJ Day.

According to the 1940 census, Red Cloud had 2,010 inhabitants. At one time, it had been the temporary capital of Nebraska. It was a railroad town which declined rapidly in population once the railroads did not run there any longer. But for us, it was an idyllic place to grow up in. We played baseball, football or basketball. We had a church choir. It was a small town where all the neighbors looked after each other. We chased after the young ladies. My brother got one of them pregnant which taught me a lesson and I was very careful in my sexual endeavors. When this occurred, he was a freshman in college and the girl was a junior in high school. He married the girl which was the first of his four marriages. He became a doctor - he was the town's doctor until my mother suggested he leave after the break-up of his third marriage. My mother died in a car accident and then my brother married for the fourth time. That's what comes from having a good "bed-side"

manner which seemed to have served him well.

Red Cloud is on the Republican River which was dammed later by the Corps of Engineers. That stopped the flooding. It was also on "tornado alley." In the summers, I would move to one of the farms and work there. It was something like "My Ántonia" - Willa Cather's best book. I had a pony which I rode; we used to swim - naked - and fish in the creek. I also joined a boy scout troop. At one time, I thought of becoming a preacher. I think it was an idyllic childhood; I can' think of a better one for me. The only "downer" was the death of my father when I was seven. That was hurtful. Without a father, I couldn't have a gun and therefore couldn't go hunting which was important in my part of the world. It also meant that I had to depend on other people to take me fishing - until I became a little older. I missed doing all of those things with my father.

*Q: What about school? What interested you?*

HUTSON: Both my brother and I were valedictorians. We were good students. I was most interested in math, science, English, history and social studies. I won an award for journalism, even though that was not a study subject. But I entered a state wide contest and won, primarily because I read newspapers. I really started that when the Korean war broke out. The winters of 1949 and 1950 were terrible in Nebraska. That gave me a lot of time for reading. I remember those days because I had a job delivering the "Omaha World-Herald". I used to sit on a hotel radiator, carefully monitoring the movement of the front lines in Korea. That line moved north until the Chinese entered the fray crossing the Yalu River. I would buy GI Joe comic books which referred to enemy as the "gooks" and the "chinks." That started my interest in military matters.

I read every book that was in the Auld public library which dealt with American Indians. Both my brother and I were avid readers. TV had not become generally available. I am glad to say that my children inherited my great love of books.

*Q: You graduated from high school in May, 1957.*

HUTSON: Right. I left Red Cloud the next day to work in a resort place in Minnesota. In the summers, we would often go visit my uncle who lived in Minneapolis, who had a place in northern Minnesota. I loved to fish and really enjoyed my time on those lakes.

The winter of my senior year, I had typed - one by one - over 100 letters to potential summer resort places where I wanted to work. In previous summers, I had been a life guard in our local pool. I wanted to do the same thing at a summer resort place. I sent letter after letter with no avail. Finally, I got an offer to be a dishwasher. I took it for $75 per month plus free room and board - $15 extra if one stayed for the whole season.

After accepting that job, I received several offers to be a life guard. But I had accepted the dishwasher job and felt that I had to go through with it. It turned out to be the right move because in that summer, I fell "in love" - or whatever a seventeen year old feels - with a

beautiful Norwegian girl. It was a wonderful summer.

*Q: At this stage of life, did you have any long range plans?*

HUTSON: I got a scholarship to study civil engineering at the University of Nebraska. That was supported by a steel company (Paxton Vierling Steel Company) in Omaha; it still exists. That scholarship was worth $500 per annum. In addition, I received a Regent's scholarship worth $100 per annum and then there were some other scholarships. That allowed me attend the University free. My brother had been kicked out of school after his affair with the high school junior. He was also kicked out of his fraternity. I was not going to go through that path; so I stayed in a rooming house for $30 per month, which included breakfast and dinner for five days per week. I shared a bed with an old friend, who now lives in the Washington area working for the Department of Agriculture.

The scholarship required that I work in the summer. So in the summer after my freshman year, I went to work for the Paxton Vierling Steel company. Most of the workers were immigrants. I would go to work at 5 a.m. which gave me free afternoons which I used to spend on a golf course. When I got the scholarship, I remember waxing at great length about building bridges. By sheer coincidence, I worked in the steel mill fabricating various parts of bridges. So I found out what civil engineers really did. That cooled me on becoming one myself.

So I began to reconsider my major. I was tempted to become a philosophy major which had become a real interest after a course on it. Then I saw ads in "Man" magazines - this was the period when "PLAYBOY" got started. Those ads were plugging overseas employment. So I began to write to get more information. I was a good student, but I was not entirely happy at the University. I realized that I was studying primarily to earn good grades; I really wasn't learning that much. I decided to quit school in my sophomore year. I was going to go to work in Latin America. That started me on a Spanish learning course. I was a good language student. Then I decided that I wanted to immerse myself in the language and culture and move to Latin America.
I announced my plans to my mother - this was in the middle of my sophomore year. She already had "aged" considerably from my brother's escapades. My pronouncement did not ease her burden. I could see what I was doing to her. She sort of bought me off by buying me a car - a Fiat 600. She suggested that I join a fraternity - the one that had kicked out my brother.

That may have been the best thing that ever happened to me. I wasn't exactly a loner, but fraternity life forced me to socialize; I met some very interesting people, one of whom was the son of Ambassador James Riddleberger. He also attended the University of Nebraska; he is now with the World Bank and I still see him. At the time, the ambassador was our chief of mission in Athens. His son, Peter, would get the third copy of letters written by the ambassador's wife to his eldest son. (His sister, Tony, married a Foreign Service officer - Monty Stearns). In any case, we would gather in Peter's room where he would read the letters from his mother. That got me interested in the Foreign Service.

A couple of years earlier, the Soviets shot "Sputnik" into space. That made me more aware of what was going on in the world and raised a question in my mind about why I was studying Spanish. I came to the conclusion that studying Russian would be more important. And that is what I did. I had a good ear for languages. I also discovered that the university was offering a group major called "International Affairs" which included political science, etc. Art Hughes, who later became our ambassador to Yemen, and I joined this program.

My mother requested that I take advanced ROTC. As a land grant college, Nebraska required all male students to take two years of ROTC. My mother had a friend whose son was an Air Force officer - after taking four years of ROTC. So I did that and took two extra years of ROTC. I also studied Russian and majored in international affairs. I found out about the Foreign Service test and took the written. I was twenty at the time and failed it. Then I met my to-be-wife. She was from Latvia. She was born in 1941 and left Latvia when the Soviets invaded her country in 1943. Her family fled to Germany where they were encamped there until 1950. Through the Lutheran Church, they immigrated to the U.S. - first to Kansas and then to Nebraska. They ended up in Lincoln, which was the last place that the last president of free Latvia had studied and received a degree in agricultural economics. Lincoln had a sizeable Latvian community. I used to play a lot of tennis. A fraternity brother of mine, who is now the assistant managing editor of the "Omaha World-Herald" played tennis with this Latvian refugee; he suggested that I ask her out. He said she was good looking and furthermore, her father spoke Russian so that I could practice with him. I also got involved in theater activities. I met my future wife at a cast party after we had performed "Guys and Dolls." It turned out that both of our dates had too much too drink and so we spent the evening together. We married in 1963.

It took me five years to get a degree because I suddenly decided that I wanted to be an actor. I has sung all of my life; my mother played the piano while my brother and I sang duets. We used to dress like twins and performed that way. So I became distracted from my studies, which is why it took me an extra year to graduate. I got my degree in 1962. Then I went into the Army as a 2nd Lieutenant - just as the Cuban missile crisis broke out. I was assigned to a military intelligence unit - then called Army Intelligence and Security - after taking infantry training at Fort Benning in Georgia. After getting married, I went to Russian training school, which was what I had requested in Monterrey, California.

I was there for nine months. I was asked to become an instructor at the school - the Army was not getting many instructors from the private sector. I did that for about 18 months; I would have probably stayed longer, but the Army came to the conclusion that it really needed native speakers as instructors. I was assigned to Alaska, where I was in a Russian speaking unit whose main responsibility was to interpret for people who crossed the Bering Straits - a fair number. This included some defectors, but most of the people were just fishermen who wanted to know where the whorehouses were and who would get as drunk as they could and then return home.

I had taken the Foreign Service exam - for the second time - while still at the university. This time I passed the written, but failed the orals. The format for the orals was then three examiners who announced their decision almost immediately after the interview. I should note that I was playing "Mr. Snow" in "Carousel" at the time and had therefore long wavy hair. The chairman of the board told me that the panel had two suggestions if I was really serious about the Foreign Service: a) I should go live in a small town and really learn something about my own country and b) I should wear a more conservative hair style.

I later met again the chairman of the panel, who became our ambassador to Iceland, and we had an interesting conversation about my interview. Mel Levitsky, later our ambassador to Romania, went before the same board; he passed. Mel told me that he was told that he would be approved if he lost some weight - which he didn't do until much later in his career. In my case, I thought that I had lived long enough in small towns and my hair was long because of my thespian endeavors.

I took the written test again when I was serving in Alaska. I was the only candidate there - it was in the middle of a blizzard. I then took my orals in Seattle. At the time, I had been promoted to captain. I wore my uniform to the oral test - shoes shining, short haircut. I primed myself for the format I had known, only to find that it had been changed to a situational one.

I forgot to mention that the first time I passed the test, it was because I received an additional five points bonus for having a sufficient knowledge of a foreign language. I had passed a test given in Russian - taken, by the way, from a textbook that I had used. So I knew the material and passed the test.

After passing both the written and oral exams, I was faced with the question of whether the Army would discharge me before my due date so that I could join the Foreign Service. There were people going to Vietnam. Furthermore, my status was that of "volunteer indefinite" - a designation applicable to those who had attended language training. Generally, there was an implication that one had to serve for twice the length of time than had been devoted to language training, but as the term implies, it was really an open-ended tour of duty. In my case, having been in language training for eighteen months, it was assumed that I would have to serve for three years - 36 months - but no guarantee that that would be the end. At about this time, the government lost a law suit on a similar issue; so I was released and I joined the Foreign Service in October, 1967.

*Q: Did your language training also give you some feeling for the Soviet Union?*

HUTSON: Yes, indeed. Everything that I ever learned about the Soviet Union was intensified and magnified. We had wonderful White Russian teachers who had wonderful stories, which they were anxious to relate. I was a good and enthusiastic student and I cherished every moment of study. Our late daughter was born in Monterrey. I was fortunate to be able to use the language immediately during my work in Alaska. I was hooked on the Russia that did not exist anymore.

*Q: When you joined the Foreign Service, do you remember what your entrance class was like?*

HUTSON: It was an interesting group of diverse individuals. At the time, USIA junior officers went through the same course. We had quite a few women, quite a few minorities. Everybody was quite full of him-or-herself. One was George Moose who later became an ambassador. Rich Kauzlarich was also a member who was later ambassador to Azerbaijan and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This was a time when the CORDS program in Vietnam was actively recruiting candidates. It was open to single people, which left me out since I was married with three children by this time. If I stayed in the military, I would have done what I was ordered to do - even to go to Vietnam - a war which I opposed as being a serious policy error.

*Q: What were your early impressions of the Department?*

HUTSON: Dean Rusk was the secretary of state. I thought he was magnificent. I worshiped John F. Kennedy. Ted Sorensen, one of his principal advisors, came from Nebraska. The Department appeared to me as having its act together. I felt I had arrived. Coming from Red Cloud, Nebraska, and being able to work in the Department of State, seemed to me to have reached the pinnacle.

Alice Kearn was running the consular course at FSI. She was a holy terror and very good. I remember when we first went into her training course she handed us a "time card." I found that somewhat mystifying. Since when did professionals punch time cards? I asked once whether there was any room for a humanitarian interpretation of the law. She glared at me as if I had committed a great sin.

*Q: She used to lock the doors to her classroom so that latecomers could not attend that day's class.*

HUTSON: Right. Fred Chapin headed the Junior Officer program. He was very bright. Sometime after I had graduated from the course, I had a chance to read his evaluation of me. He said that I was a large, affable fellow who appeared to be intellectually lazy. He was absolutely right!! I thought that he had great insight. Ruth McClelland was Fred's deputy. Then there was a woman who ran the administrative side of the operation.

*Q: How did your wife feel about you joining the Foreign Service?*

HUTSON: In fact, I had some problems because she had to become an American citizen before I could be assigned. So she had to be naturalized and took some effort. She had never completed the required paperwork and I had to finish it for her. My wife was a very good Foreign Service member, although she was never really comfortable with our required lifestyle. She did not like the social aspects of our lives. When we went to

Tehran - our first assignment - Armin Meyer was the ambassador. The wives went through a whole process run by his wife, Alice - card presentations and all the other rigmarole that the wives of newly arrived officers used to have to go through in the old days. The spouses were then rated as part of the officer's efficiency rating. My wife did not like that routine. I had spent five years in the military; she hadn't like being an officer's wife either - the social obligations, etc. So joining the Foreign Service, which had even more social requirements than the military, presented some challenges to her. But she was a great trooper and did her best to cope with those Foreign Service aspects that were not her cup of tea.

*Q: While you were in JOT, you were undoubtedly asked where you would like to be assigned. Do you remember your choices?*

HUTSON: When I first joined, I was told by the assignment people that I just had to go to the Soviet Union in light of my language capability. Then they found out that my wife was Latvian with relatives still living there. So they suggested a "peripheral" post. That is when the idea of Tehran came up. In fact, I did use my Russian to a considerable extent while in Iran. I was assigned to a member of the Soviet embassy - that pattern in fact was repeated over and over again in my future assignments.

Q: *You were in Iran from April, 1968 to July, 1971. What was your first assignment?*

HUTSON: I did not rotate through various embassy sections. I spent my whole tour in the consular section, working for Maurice Ealum, a wonderful guy. He is now retired in Oklahoma. He was a superb boss. He was Russian speaker as well. He was the greatest manager I ever saw. I think he viewed himself as another Ernest Hemingway and he was a talented writer.

So I worked in the consular section until Arnie Raphel convinced me to take his place as staff aide to Ambassador Douglas MacArthur II. I did that for 18 months. That was also a great experience.

*Q: Let's start with your experiences as a consular officer. This was a period during which we had hundreds of Iranian students who wanted to come to study in the U.S. Not all were really students. Was that a problem?*

HUTSON: I don't think the big wave of applicants had quite started in 1968. In fact, the non immigrant visa section had a waiting room. At the end of it was a counter. Then there was a little office for a consular officer. The applicant would be brought in and be interviewed, most often with an interpreter since I and most of the other American officers did not speak Farsi. I discovered that one of the interpreters was a crook. At a lunch sometime during my tour, we were commenting that the embassy security officer seemed to have no interest in this interpreter's activities. I had to investigate this individual myself. In brief, the interpreter was the brother of the Christian Assyrian Senator in the Iranian "majlis" (Parliament). This seemingly dim-witted interpreter was

supporting a high style of living and his brother's political activities by selling U.S, visas to Jewish families who wanted their sons to avoid Iranian compulsory military service. He mad a small fortune. His name was William Bit-Mansour.

We did have a lot of student applicants for studies in the U.S., but it was not at the level it would reach a couple of years later.

*Q: What do you remember of Iran of the later 1960s?*

HUTSON: I loved Iran. I still believe that the Shah was a positive force, despite all of the corruption around him. I had a chance to meet his wife, the Shahbanou, Queen Farah, when I met the Queen of England in London at the 50th birthday party of Crown Prince Alexander Karageorgevic which was held at the Claridge Hotel on July 1, 1995. I thought she was extremely likeable.

*Q: Did you pick up on anything from the younger political and economic officers about the situation in Iran?*

HUTSON: Oh, yes. A number of us were involved in the International Theater of Tehran. Two younger officers, Raphel and Michael Michaud, organized a sort of junior officer committee to discuss some of the hot topics of the day, including U.S. policy toward Iran. We made a series of recommendations to the senior staff of the embassy. In retrospect, I think if some of them had been adopted might have led to a different outcome in Iran-U.S. relations. For example, we believed that our military in the MAAG was pretty insensitive to cultural issues. The U.S. military ran its own radio and television stations; it had of course its own commissary and clubs. We were insensitive to the feelings of the Iranian people living in the countryside. Both Arnie and Mike traveled with tribal people; both spoke Farsi and felt this insensitivity deeply. I know that the recommendations of this group of officers came to the attention of Ambassador MacArthur - I was his staff aide, as I said - and were given consideration by the senior staff.

My contacts with political and economic officers were enhanced by my participation in the theater group. The director was a Peace Corps volunteer who spoke Farsi and of course knew the countryside well. We used to hear his and his colleagues' views about the situation in Iran. We associated with many Peace Corps volunteers who really had a good feel for what was going on outside of Tehran and could describe to us the huge gap between what was happening in the capital and what was happening in the rest of the country.

I had a fair amount of exposure to the mullahs because of my consular responsibilities - e.g. issuing certificates of marriage. I attended a lot - a lot - of weddings. Of course, visas, as in many other countries, were very important and valuable documents. Whenever we went to a reception, invariably, many of the guests would say hello to the ambassador and then rush over to a consular officer to say hello.

*Q: Did you run across the familiar problem of an American woman marrying an Iranian with the marriage turning sour several years later after the birth of some babies, who were not allowed to leave the country?*

HUTSON: When I was the American citizen services officer, I dealt with a lot of problems like that. They were heart wrenching. I remember one case that Maurice Ealum was dealing with just as he was leaving post. He tried to resolve it; he got the American woman as far as the airport, but for some reason, she started to flirt with the Iranian customs officer. He got suspicious and after further research, found out who she was and what she was trying to do; that put an end to her departure from Iran. So we had lots of cases like that.

Iran of course was not the only country that had family situations where one member was American and the other a citizen of the home country. I faced similar problems later during my assignment to Nigeria. These marriages are not rare; my best Iranian friend almost married an American woman; she got "cold feet" at the last minute because she had heard enough stories about the some of the catastrophes that ensued marriage of an American to an Iranian. An Iranian man may look very attractive when in the U.S.; when he gets home, he may be an entirely different person. He certainly has a mother who is most likely to be very difficult for a foreign bride to get along with.

*Q: Did we have a set pattern on how to handle cases of this kind?*

HUTSON: We did a lot of "winging" - talking to the family or influential people. Sometimes, if they got the family's approval to leave, we used to hustle them to the airport as soon as possible - before any one had a change of heart.

I remember one case which fell out of the category we are discussing now, but is in part related. This was a case that Ealum started. He was a great writer and would send "Operations Memoranda", detailed commentaries about his visits to a woman who had sought his assistance. She had come from New York - from a family which was financially "comfortable." She had decided to come to Tehran and had taken a room at the Royal Tehran Hilton; she had been there for two years. She would not leave her room during the day - only at night. She only ate hamburgers and drink Coca-Cola. She hated Iranians. When the waiters would deliver her hamburger and Coca-Cola to her room, they had to be prepared because this woman - who was quite large - would come out swinging her handbag at the waiter. Maurice did finally convince the Iranians to deport her. They put her on a train to Istanbul and made sure she got over the border into Turkey. Six months later, while I was the acting chief of the section - Carl Clement having been transferred - I got a call from the police which reported that they had an American woman sitting at one of their stations with her eyes closed. They could not communicate with her and wanted our assistance. So I went to the station and it turned out to be the woman that Ealum had dealt with; she apparently had re-crossed the Iranian border. I found her sitting in her fur coat in the middle of a heat wave. She was a pitiful sight – made up with lipstick, rouge and powder, almost something like a clown.

I sat down beside her and whispered in her ear. I finally convinced her to come with me. I knew who she was and her history in Iran. I put her in one of the embassy's transient apartments. Nicholas Thatcher was the chargé at the time - a wonderful human being. When I returned to the chancery, I went to see him and told him what had transpired. I also told him that the woman had agreed to leave on the next flight. Thatcher did not find my solution acceptable. He thought that after her history at the Hilton, I had made a huge mistake in letting her into one of our apartments. He gave me 48 hours to get her out of the country - or else I would be gone. I went to work on the case with David Boerigter, a colleague in the consular section. We lined up all the arrangements, including a flight out with PanAm. This was Flight PanAm 1, which made a number of stops at various capitals in Europe before flying to the States. I made sure that members of the consular sections at posts along the route would meet the plane when it landed, give her her favorite food and drink, and made sure that our woman was on the plane when it took off to its next destination.

I took her to the airport and put her on the plane. I watched as the plane started its run off the runway only to see, much to my dismay, it stopped half way down that runway. The plane dropped its passenger ladder and pushed my ward out of the door and onto the tarmac. She had bitten one of the stewardesses. That was unexpected. I walked out to the tarmac and told the pilot that he just had to take the woman back on and out of the country. My career depended on getting that done. He did and as far as I know, the rest of the trip went smoothly and I never heard another word about the woman.

*Q: Tell us a little about your tour as staff assistant to Douglas MacArthur and say something about Mrs. MacArthur.*

HUTSON: Douglas MacArthur II was the nephew of the General. He was a career Foreign Service officer. He graduated from Yale. He was a diminutive man with steely blue eyes with a deep voice. People were terrified to work for him. They were even more terrified of "Wahwee" - Mrs. MacArthur. She was the daughter of Vice-President Allen Barcley. Her given name was really Laura, but had picked up the name "Wahwee" somewhere along the line.

I worshiped the ambassador. He was the best. I have worked for many fine ambassadors, but he was the best. When you worked directly for MacArthur, you became a member of the family. I lived through the ambassador's very serious bout of pneumonia and an assassination attempt which was kept secret for over a year. That was the beginning of terrorism in Iran which eventually led to the revolution. There was no question in anyone's mind that he was <u>the</u> ambassador. He had a speech about the Persian Gulf situation which emphasized the importance of the region's oil to the industrialized western world. He believed that repetition was the "mother of learning" when it came to dealing with Washington. Of course, in those days, cables were the usual method of communication; phone calls were rare and not always reliable. So he would constantly bombard the Department pointing out the importance of the issues and the Shah's vital

role in maintaining our role in the Gulf. I thought MacArthur was extremely effective; he worked well with all elements of the U.S. representation in Iran. For example, there was no doubt that he was completely abreast of the CIA's operations in Iran; the station was well staffed, but all knew who the "leader" was. That went for the military as well; he was the boss there as well. He was a tough professional, but effective.

He had a very human side as well. I remember that at one time, there was a young boy who attended the American School who was killed in some kind of accident. He didn't know the family at all, but he wept openly when he got the news. I was really startled. He had the reputation of being a very tough leader, but he was so moved by this event that he just broke down.

MacArthur was a great bird hunter. My guess is that he got involved in that when he was our ambassador in Brussels and Vienna. He undoubtedly had a lot of hunting friends there; he would join them on their hunting expeditions. He brought a group of them to Tehran one time. That reminds me of a story which I call "Protocol and the Pig-Sty." The hunt was held on the grounds of an Armenian family where pigs were raised and pork and wine was manufactured on very good hunting grounds. The owners were friends of the ambassador. The family arranged to have a lunch for the guests - in the middle of a pig farm filled of course with droppings. Tables were brought out and nicely decorated, but the pigs' droppings were everywhere. The smell was overwhelming. I could not - and others could not - understand why this spot was chosen for the lunch. I guess the hosts preferred a "rustic" location. I remember that everything was proceeding smoothly despite the farm aura. At one point, Mrs. MacArthur called me over. She asked :"Tom, do you love your wife?" I knew the theater group involved an interesting group of women, but it seemed a very strange question. I said, "Of course, I do." Then Mrs. MacArthur said, "I am glad to hear that because she is not doing your career any good!" Then "Wahwee" noted that my wife had gotten in the food catering line ahead of Mrs. Lehfeldt, the wife of the economic counselor. They two were chatting and my wife, I am surely entirely inadvertently, had gotten ahead of Mrs. Lehfeldt - out of protocol order! I should note that Mrs. MacArthur had helped to write our own local protocol manual and so she was fully aware of all of it picky requirements. The point that Mrs. MacArthur made caught me entirely by surprise and I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I was very upset with Wahwee, but I was wise enough not to respond and the episode passed without any further notice.

Wahwee would not let local-hire staff into the residence to attend social functions there. That was appalling because most officers really needed translators since few spoke Farsi. When we had an event one of the embassy's substantive sections would send a suggested guest list. I would screen it as did our Iranian social secretary. The final word was of course the ambassador's. He would take it home, let Wahwee review it and then he brought it back and invitations were issued. I remember at one time, near the end of his tour, that Bill Lehfeldt was trying to get some of his local employees in the commercial section invited. He needed their help and would have added immeasurably to their status in the Iranian community. I reviewed his proposed list and didn't touch the FSNs on the

list. I sent the list to Mrs. MacArthur. Much to our surprise, the list came back with the FSNs still on it. We all thought we had made a breakthrough. The night of the event, as I was standing just before the receiving line, making the introductions, Mrs. MacArthur came up to me and said: "Tom, what are these local employees doing here?" I told her they had been on the list that she had approved. She then said: "Tom, in the future... Oh, I guess, you don't have much of a future in the Foreign Service!"

I should at this stage mention that Mrs. MacArthur was very nice to me at a later stage in my career. After the MacArthurs retired in Brussels, in part to be with their daughter who had married a Belgian, I had a chance to meet them again. I was traveling in Europe trying to find other employment - I was thinking of leaving the Foreign Service. I sent them a message that I would be in Brussels and would like to call on them. I really did worship him. I got a very warm response inviting me to stay with them. When I arrived, Mrs. MacArthur met me at the airport driving their old Mercedes by herself. She took me to their lovely apartment. They had kept the Filipino housemaid that they had had for many years and who stayed with him until his death. The MacArthurs could not have been warmer, although I did detect a second agenda. At the time, I was the consul general in Winnipeg working for Ambassador Thomas O. Enders. He had been the DCM in Belgrade for Ambassador William Leonhart. Leonhart had been MacArthur's second DCM in Tokyo. Leonhart had fired Enders, which in turn resulted in Leonhart's removal. The MacArthurs wanted to know all of the"dirt" surrounding this feud. I have never worked for a smarter man than Tom Enders; he was a very effective ambassador. Fortunately, I got along very well with Enders - many did not. So I had nothing but praise for the Enders. I think that disappointed the MacArthurs.

After Mrs. MacArthur died, I had lunch with the ambassador. That was the second time I saw him weep. This was about six weeks after her death and he was still very much in shock.

Being staff aide was a seven-days-per-week job. It was morning, noon and night. As I mentioned, I participated in theater activities while MacArthur's staff aide. In fact, I was the president of the International Theater of Tehran. It became a major enterprise; so I was busy acting, running the business end of the productions, etc. My wife began to wonder where I spent my time; I didn't have much time to be home. Douglas MacArthur, despite his demanding ways, was an effective manager; he knew what the objectives of his mission were. We encountered one major personnel flap and that was the result of the Vietnam war. It had a terrible impact on a very fine Foreign Service officer, Ernest Thomas Greene who was the consul in Tabriz. I really looked up to him; he was a Persian scholar; he was a superb manager who ran a very effective post. He had a British wife whose ancestors had been in the British diplomatic or colonial service. Tom had an employee, Murray C. Smith, who was leading protests within the Foreign Service against our involvement in Vietnam. Tom got caught in the middle and was burned by it. That was really sad.

I was not in the Service long enough to know how to stop the forces that eventually

railroaded Smith out of the Service. When he took his grievance to court, the anvil fell on Tom Greene because he was Smith's immediate supervisor. I think Doug Heck was the DCM at the time; he was a very decent human being; I think he did everything he could to prevent the final outcomes. Iran was one of the reasons I resigned from the Foreign Service in 1980. I think we made a big mistake in turning our back on the Shah; that was not what I consider a valid American policy. The Shah was our friend and Americans don't turn their backs on friends.

*Q: What did you think MacArthur's attitude was toward the Shah and the ruling clique?*

HUTSON: He related well with them socially. There is a wonderful book written about this period in U.S.-Iran relations by a former Fulbright scholar, James Bill; he was at William and Mary where until recently ran the Reeves International Center - he is now retired. He had the permission of the Department - a rare occurrence - to work in the embassy; he had access to all of our material and information. The book, "The Eagle and the Lion", describes how decisions were made. He has a more critical eye than I would have since I was so enmeshed in the day-to-day activities of the embassy. I think I was quoted in the book as saying "Never have so few been entertained so often." The fact is that our Iranian circle was small and consisted of the privileged and well-connected. USIS, through its various programs, tried to reach out beyond this very small cadre. But it was very hard to do when our policy was so centered on the Shah.

My main regret from this period was that we couldn't figure out how to manage a deteriorating situation. We should have known that the Shah was ill. If we had known it, we should have done more to assure some continuity after the Shah's departure through an outreach program which would have put us in touch with elements that eventually brought the Shah down. We should have tried to maintain the monarchical governmental structure. Whatever the sins of the Shah were, the sins of the successor regimes were far greater - the Pahlavis were far better than the Khomeini and the Rafsanjani and the Khatami that followed.

*Q: You left Iran in 1971. Did you have any views about Iran's future?*

HUTSON: I thought things were going well in Iran. There were signs of unrest - e.g. terrorism. But I thought that that would be suppressed. I was not really concerned about that suppression. In retrospect, perhaps I was too sanguine. But I was not really concerned about the activities of the SAVAK. I was not familiar with their practices; I had heard a lot of stories about their brutality, but I was probably too inexperienced to fully appreciate the potential effects of brutal repression on a society. Our interests in Iran were quite clear; Iran did things in the Persian Gulf that we could never do - during Vietnam. We and the Shah saw the region in the same way and our interests meshed well. But as I said, there were signs of unrest: some assassination attempts, which increased after I left. I kept in touch with my former Peace Corps friend who stayed in theater work. He went to work for the Queen and started a children's theater for her. That took him all over Iran which gave him a broader understanding of Iranian mood than he would have gotten just from

being in Tehran. At one stage, I was seriously considering bidding for a vacancy in the embassy. I asked my friend whether I should do that. His response was that I should not be asking him because he was leaving the country because it was coming apart. In 1977, he came to visit me in Winnipeg where I was the CG. He reported events in Iran that were beyond my comprehension because they were so different from those I had experienced in the early 1970s.

As I suggested, I liked Iran and Iranians and therefore stayed in touch with events there. Had I been a little more experienced, I might have picked up signs of deterioration, but I didn't.

*Q: Where were you assigned in 1971?*

HUTSON: I tried to get an assignment in the Soviet Union. But once again, I was told to try a peripheral post since my wife still had relatives living there. Leonhart was then our ambassador in Belgrade and because of my connection to Douglas MacArthur, I went to see him to see if he might have a place for me at his embassy. He did and I went to FSI to study Serbo-Croatian for nine months.

*Q: Who were your Serbo-Croatian teachers?*

HUTSON: Janko Jankovic and Father Milosević. The third one was an architect whose name has escaped me.

*Q: Did you study Serbo-Croatian or Serbian? Did you get much a feel for the country from your teachers?*

HUTSON: Serbo-Croatian. My teachers were very good in giving us a flavor of the country to which we would be assigned. Jankovic was especially good at that. He was from Sabac and I think we all felt by the end that we knew every inch of that place. The whole language program was great. Jankovic - and Milosević to some extent - were an institution. We got to know his whole family. He would tell us about the background of all the people on the tapes. We would encourage him to consider returning to Serbia, but I must say that after having served there, we were wrong in doing so.

*Q: You served in Belgrade from 1972 to 1975. What was Yugoslavia like at the time?*

HUTSON: I didn't realize at the time, but in retrospect, this was what is now called the "Golden Years." The dinar was firm. Tito was in robust health. We had a good group of people in the embassy. The time of the "Croatian Spring" had just been overcome. Yugoslavia looked firmly held together. We didn't have any clue of the hatred that I later witnessed and the atrocities in which people prided - the legend, the scores that were "settled", etc.

Malcolm Toon was our ambassador; he conducted relations in a major, very aggressive

way. I held Toon in high regard as someone who had firm control of U.S.-Yugoslavia relationships.

*Q: Tell us a little about the consular work you were engaged in?*

HUTSON: The consular work was fascinating. I must admit that I had some difficulties in Belgrade. I went through a period of cultural shock, including some depression. First of all I discovered that although I had tested 3-3 in Serbo-Croatian, I did not get a chance to use it very much. We had a wonderful local teacher, Mrs. Andrić, who proceeded to destroy any confidence that I had in my language skills. She did reconstruct my capability and probably improved it. But at the time, her approach was not good for my spirits. I also had to face some very difficult consular cases - dual nationals returning and being arrested. We were supposed to use our good offices to get them sprung. I also had some difficult personnel issues to deal with.

So it took me a while to get "my feet on the ground." Once I got over the initial hurdles, we decided to move the consular section out of the basement of the building we were in and into offices between the USIS building and the chancery. We built new offices for the consular section. That was progress.

The staff was well trained, although we did have one senior local employee who had to be "eased" into retirement because he was ripping off illiterate heirs who came to the Embassy seeking advice in estate cases. A charming, cosmopolitan crook. His name was Zarija Matić. He had to be replaced. Those were new issues to me and presented some difficulties to me.

The visa work was pretty straight forward. American citizens services was our most difficult task. I generally found that local officials were usually pretty helpful as long as you didn't try to buck the bureaucracy. We had a number of social security cases; they were wonderful because they provided a reason to travel throughout the country.

*Q: I know what you mean. I think I overnighted in 42 different places in Yugoslavia attending to those kind of cases - investigations.*

HUTSON: I loved getting out of Belgrade. I especially liked Bosnia. I remember one old social security case which involved a widow who was the beneficiary. We had to find out how old she was; there were no records to substantiate the date of birth. This case had gone on for a number of years. Finally, I was told just to visit her and make a guess of how old she was. Then Social Security would pay the appropriate amount. She lived in an old town in Bosnia. So I went there and took a guess - which I think was 83 or 84. A few weeks after my determination, she got a check for something like $20,000 which at the time was a huge amount. The next time I went back to that village, I was greeted by everybody; they wanted the same treatment.

We had many cases like that that took me to all parts of Yugoslavia including

Montenegro, which I loved. While I was serving in Belgrade, the administration started payments to black lung cases. Those who were eligible received very good pensions - about $400 a month, or twice what a normal social security pensioner received. We had people come to us with all sorts of records which were supposed to document that they had worked in American mines.

Death cases were often difficult. I remember one case which occurred on the Fourth of July - which was also a Yugoslavian holiday. I was at a swimming pool and got a call from the duty officer who reported that someone had died in the Hotel Yugoslavia. The duty officer reported that his widow wanted to speak to me right away. I said I would get dressed and go to the hotel. I was told that the widow wanted to speak to me right then and there. So she got on the phone and told me that according to their religion, her husband had to be buried in Los Angeles by sun-down the following day. I said that this was the Fourth of July which was a holiday in both of the countries involved. I told her I would try my best. I had a wonderful local employee whom I called. Lo and behold, the man was buried in L.A. by sun-down the next day. We got incredible cooperation from the Yugoslav authorities. When we dealt with human issues such as death, the Yugoslavs really came through.

*Q: For the record, today, April 14, 1999, we are bombing Belgrade.*

HUTSON: Unthinkable. Was and still is unthinkable. I became thoroughly acquainted with the culture through the good offices of one of our translators who worked on legal-court issues. I ended up singing in the Patriarch's choir. That involved me in marriages and funerals and baptisms. That avenue into Yugoslav society got me around in places which I would never have seen otherwise. It was a wonderful experience.

*Q: Did have any problems with the secret police?*

HUTSON: It did hang heavy, but I didn't pay any attention to it. I didn't let its snooping limit my activities. I found years later that every Yugoslav friend I had was under pressure from the secret police. They told me about later and it was clearly there.

The PLO had an office in Belgrade. The police used that as an excuse; they would tell my friends that they wanted to know as much as they could about me so that I could be protected from the PLO.

*Q: I was in Belgrade about five years before you. I never felt that I was being set up. I think they were probably were getting a lot of information about me.*

HUTSON: I didn't feel I was being set up either. But I assumed that all my telephone conversations were monitored and that the police knew where I was at all times. So I didn't try to hide any of my official or social contacts.

*Q: I know when I was in the field, I would always stop and talk to the nearest policeman*

*and introduce myself. I would tell him whom I was looking for - to discuss a social security matter. They could not have been nicer. Thus I helped each policeman to make the first report of my sighting.*

HUTSON: The only place where I found security heavy handed was in Macedonia. It was the only place where I felt that I was being followed. Also Bosnian authorities were difficult. There was no point in even trying to make an appointment through Bosnian authorities. I would just walk into their offices and announce my presence. If I had asked for an appointment, I would never have gotten it.

*Q: I was followed in Skopje. That was the only time that I was conscious of being tailed. Looking back, I realize that when I was in Yugoslavia, I got the full treatment, although I didn't realize it, from the Serb central mentality. I would hear about problems in Croatia, but I didn't realize the depth of the split between the Serbs and the Croatians. This was before the "Croat Spring." Did you have a different view of the situation?*

HUTSON: Let me go back a little bit. When I sought the assignment to Belgrade, I was hoping to work as a political officer in Zagreb. At one time, Arnie Raphel and I were driving across country in his new MGB. We had left Garmisch Partenkirchen. We stopped in Zagreb where Orme Wilson was the CG. He was a real Yugoslav expert. We had a nice long discussion during which he told me, in the nicest way, that I could not serve in Zagreb until I had had at least one tour in Belgrade. I had to see the scene from the capital's perspective. So I never got the political officer's job which at the time was occupied by Thomas "Harry" Dunlop. Leon Fuerth was there at this time as well; he is now the vice-president's national security advisor.

So I ended up in Belgrade. The Croatian tensions were put in some perspective because all the reporting from Zagreb had to cleared by the embassy. Whether that might have changed the reporting, I don't know. But I suspect it had a chilling effect on Dunlop's reporting. He was usually an extremely voluble reporter and a strong analyst. But I think that Zagreb's reports were probably tailored to reflect the embassy's involvement.

I think I did develop a knee-jerk reaction against the Croats largely over Jasenovac. I still judge books written about that part of the world by looking in the index to see how much of a discussion there is about Jasenovac. It was quite evident to me during the Serbian-Croatian war - the flight from western Slavonia and eastern Slavonia and later the flight from Krajina. I see the Jasenovac mentality behind those atrocities. If there is any rationalization for the Serb brutality, that was it. They were settling that score against the Croats. I have never been able to rationalize in my own mind why the Serbs were so cruel to the Bosniaks; I never knew of any reasons for that behavior.

Jasenovac was the death camp on the north side of the Sava River. I have estimated that tens or hundreds thousands - Serb, Jews, and Roma - were exterminated during WWII by the Ustashe. I did visit the camp; the first time was in 1997, while I was covering the elections in western Slavonia. At the time, I didn't realize its importance. There was a

museum there, but the camp was still in primitive conditions. It had not been cleaned up or restored.

When I helped to open up an embassy branch office in Banja Luka, Srpska Republika, I returned to the camp site. By this time, it had been cleaned up. A year ago, when I was there, the Croats had allowed the Serb president and prime minister to conduct memorial services there. That was one of the more enlightened Croatian actions.

So I saw the impact of that death camp during the Serb-Croatian war, when the Slavonijans got on their tractors and tried to drive away from the fighting. We would get calls at the embassy from relatives in the U.S. - from former U.S. Senator Birch Bayh who was working on some pharmaceutical matter at the time - saying that "people were out there not knowing what to do." I witnessed the panic - a WWII relived. Thousands and thousands of people were exterminated in that camp, but the full story is not well known. The camp commander in now on trial in Zagreb; he had fled to Argentina and was extradited.

*Q: Wasn't he found not guilty? I think they found him not guilty.*

HUTSON: Sadly characteristic of the regional attitude. As I said, I had a knee-jerk reaction. People I knew in Belgrade were Yugoslavs; as I traveled, there was no question that all-Serbs, Croats, etc - lived in a Yugoslav state.

*Q: That was my experience as well. I certainly did not find many Croats in Belgrade. There may have been some who had day time jobs there, but who would return to their home area at night. There was an atmosphere in Belgrade of which I am just now becoming aware - that was a Serbian culture.*

HUTSON: We noticed particularly in the officer's corps, which was primarily Serb. Token Croats were included, but the corps was essentially Serb.

I became aware of a problem in the Yugoslav diplomatic corps. Often, some members would be reassigned to Belgrade, where they really did not have a job. They would wander around awaiting the opening of a vacancy which had been filled by one of their own tribe - Serb, Slovene, etc. That was not terribly efficient, but that pattern was followed with quite a bit of religious or tribal dedication.

*Q: What about relationships with what we now call Kosovar - Albanians living in Yugoslavia?*

HUTSON: While I first served in Belgrade from 1972 to 1975, the Yugoslavs changed the constitution which gave them important constitutional certain autonomy. During my tour, I think we were processing 4-5,000 people who were leaving Albania through Yugoslavia. I assume that some of these were actually Kosovar Albanians who would get to Italy and would become "conditional entrants." A colleague of mine, Walt Lockwood,

would say that that these people had no right to claim "political persecution." He would point to the rights they had according to the constitution. I didn't think that that argument would ever be a winner, because there were so many NGOs and POs who had money invested in this refugee flow; i.e. they would receive funds depending on the number of cases they would process. Nevertheless, Walt took the matter up with Ambassador Toon and lo and behold, his view was upheld. The number of these people who were given "conditional entrant" status went down substantially - down to 4-5 hundred. In fact, Walt closed an escape valve. These "refugees" probably found haven elsewhere, but not on our quota.

In general there weren't many who qualified for non-immigrant visas. Many of the applicants had not lived in Yugoslavia long enough to qualify and certainly their families did not.

I remember coming across one day an immigration lawyer; he was the head of what is now called AILA - then it was known by some other title (something like ANIL).

*Q: Of course, to consular officers, immigration lawyers rank below ambulance chasers.*

HUTSON: This guy would always sign his name ending with the word "Esquire. " I thought that that was not exactly in good taste.

I was fairly new at the time. I decided to host a reception for this head of an organization of immigration lawyers. I wanted to use this as a vehicle to meet Yugoslav lawyers. Many told me that I was making a major mistake. I think the caliber of immigration lawyers has greatly improved; at the time, they were a pretty sorry lot. So I hosted the reception and I got to know this lawyer pretty well. His clients were primarily Kosovar Albanians. He told that in all the times he had dealt with those people, he had run into only once case where the client did not pay his bill. In that case, he called some members of the community; the money was in his hands soon thereafter. So he was very happy having Albanians as clients.

There was a seedy part to this story. Working for us as a secretary was a Bengali, married to a Serb she had met while he was working on a project in south Asia. She had two children. She was a wonderful human being - a great worker. Our immigration laws at the time allowed people qualified as secretaries who had a job offer in the U.S. to get an immigrant visa. In any case, the Bengali woman and her husband had a falling out and they got a divorce. That left her essentially homeless. So she and her daughters continued to live with her divorced husband. She used to come to the office with some bruises which were the consequence of beatings by her husband. So we looked for ways to help her out of her unconscionable situation. One day, this same American lawyer showed up and we asked whether he would he would offer her a job. When he agreed, we rejoiced. We helped set the whole thing up so that she could emigrate to the U.S. When she got to New York, she reported for work at his office. After about a week, the lawyer told her that he didn't think that he had enough work for her, but that he had some connection to a

place called the Eagle Bar - a topless bar, run by one of his Albanian pals. He suggested that she might want to go over to the bar to see whether they could use her services. When we heard what was going on, we tried to go after him, but he apparently was not doing anything illegal. It was a very sad outcome to a very sad story.

In the very strict social stratification existing in Yugoslavia, the Kosovar Albanians were just one level up from the gypsies. They did all the menial labor - street cleaners, etc. When you might mention the Albanians to a Serb, you were bound to get some kind of derogatory comment. We had several working in our American club, where they seemed to be very happy and well-liked. Unfortunately, the last time I visited the club, I noticed that none of them were still around; they had all been fired for stealing meat. A regional security officer had been brought in; he had tracked down the thieves who were then fired. They went back to Macedonia and set up their own shops.

My exposure to Kosovo was very limited in this first tour. When I returned to Belgrade in 1990 as the science attaché, I had more opportunities to visit the area. When I went back in 1995, I met Mikhail Kertes, the head of Yugoslav customs and one of Milosevic's chief thugs, he said that he remembered me as having a particular interest in Kosovo. I had traveled there twice in 1990-91. He was right; I had become interested after 1989 when Kosovar rights had been revoked. There were a couple of token Kosovars in Belgrade, but they were obviously only a front for a total sham. I tried to report my views, but one of the section chiefs who had to clear my message, would not do so. I am sure that Ambassador Zimmermann would have cleared my message, but the section chief stopped my reporting on the Kosovo situation.

*Q: During your first tour in Belgrade, did you get any feelings about the Yugoslav views of Tito?*

HUTSON: I think Tito was very widely respected. He was a leader of the non-aligned movement. He would travel throughout Yugoslavia, in part to visit his many villas. There was no question that he was in charge. The practice of a rotating presidency came after Tito's death. He gave the country a feeling of stability for which earned considerable reverence. I suppose there were some dissidents, but since I was not in the business of political reporting, I did not come across any of them. I believe that Milovan Djilas and Micolov _____ were among the dissidents. I sort of looked at them as "professional" dissidents; I am not sure they had much popular support since things seemed to be working very well in Yugoslavia under Tito.

*Q: What about the Soviet connection?*

HUTSON: The Yugoslav-USSR connection was strained. I had a Soviet "follower" every time I was assigned to Belgrade. I stayed in touch with him. I think Tito knew how to deal with the Soviets. In 1973, during the Yom Kippur war in the Middle East, I was at the residence playing tennis and watching Soviet planes flying over Belgrade on their way to Egypt to provide support to that country. The Yugoslavs gave them over-flight rights for

that operation. The Soviets had a big cultural center which I used to frequent with my Soviet contact and duly report on afterwards. It was obvious that the Yugoslavs were put squarely in the middle on east-west issues; they didn't favor one side or another. They were milking both sides and everybody understood the game and was relatively content with that attitude.

*Q: When I was in Belgrade in 1962-67, I always felt that WW III could start either over Berlin or Yugoslavia if that country was showing signs of disintegration. Either of those situation might have had a negative impact on the "Iron Curtain" which the Soviets were bound to resist.*

HUTSON: I think I thought that as long as Tito was around, Yugoslavia would remain intact. It looked to me that he was doing his best to establish some kind of glue that would hold the country together after his death. But I guess it was a mistake to establish the practice of a rotating presidency; it build instability into the political system; it prevented any one from taking control to maintain a unified Yugoslavia.

*Q: Unfortunately, the Serbs, being Serbs, would have meddled with any attempt to establish any political leadership. The Croats would also have resisted.*
*Was Ambassador Toon there during your whole first tour? How did he operate?*

HUTSON: Yes, he was there for my whole first tour. He was a superb ambassador. He was a former Navy officer and he acted like it. One never sat in his office - even after I played tennis with him after Ed Bator, a USIA officer retired. I then became the "tennis attaché." The ambassador's secretary, Norma, would call up around mid-morning and ask that I put a foursome together for a lunch time game. It didn't take long to figure how this system worked, so that I usually had lined up the players long before Norma's call. I used to excuse myself before noon "because I had to go play tennis with the ambassador." We played a lot of tennis. I thought the world of Toon. He was always in firm control; he knew where he wanted to go with our policy. He dealt firmly with a number of issues, always keeping our interests uppermost in his mind. You could never accuse him of being "soft."

*Q: How did the ambassador deal with the media and the Yugoslav authorities?*

HUTSON: With the media, it was as little as a possible. I worked for Toon in Moscow in a later assignment where he was in constant contact with the media. But in Belgrade, that contact was not nearly as important. He was good friends with the *Washington Post* writers, Dan Morgan and Dusko Doder; he saw Ray Anderson of *The New York Times* and Roy Guttman of *Reuters*. He was always available for them, but I don't think he went out of his way to cultivate them - certainly not nearly as much as he did in Moscow later on.

*Q: On consular issues, did you get support from the ambassador on some of the dual national cases?*

HUTSON: They sometimes returned to their roots, flashing all of the material wealth they had accumulated in the United States. The ambassador was very supportive of our efforts. I remember one case, involving a George Sodić. He was from Chicago and was one of my first cases. He had returned to Yugoslavia to see his dying mother. He had been active in the St. Sava society in Chicago; he was incarcerated in Yugoslavia for five years. He managed to get Roman Pucinski - a heavy hitter in Chicago politics - to support his case - quite vigorously. Dean Rusk also weighed in along with many other supporters. Mac Toon would not go as far as Laurence Silberman did later on behalf Lazlo Toth, a sugar mill owner and operator. Toon kept these issues in perspective. There was not much I had to tell Toon about consular work; he knew the rules and regulations quite well having negotiated a consular convention with the Soviets. He knew his stuff.

*Q: You left Belgrade in 1975.*

HUTSON: I did. Arnie Raphel convinced me to be his successor as special assistant to Joe Sisco, the undersecretary for political affairs. I was there 1975 to 1976.

*Q: What were your impressions of Sisco who was quite a power in State in those days.*

HUTSON: I must admit that this did not turn out to be a good assignment. Mac Toon was trying to get me into Soviet affairs, but GLOP had come along which emphasized the desirability of experience in other parts of the world from those in which an officer had specialized. So I had tried to get assigned to Johannesburg as chief of the consular section there, but that was given to Joseph Segars, who was a close friend who happened to be African-American. That left me essentially without an onward assignment. Arnie happened to stop in Belgrade on one of his trips with Sisco. We had a great time together and he suggested that I take his job because he was anxious to move on.

I did what Arnie wanted, but it was on blind faith because I really didn't know the Department. I had never worked there. When I arrived, the whole under secretary's staff was changing - Ed Djerejian, another staff assistant, was leaving, Pete Martinez was leaving. I worked for Joe Sisco, but I will admit, I was not very effective. When I found that this was not the right place for me, I looked around for another assignment.

*Q: What wasn't working?*

HUTSON: I guess I was quite naive. I wasn't very good at wheeling and dealing - qualities almost demanded by a Seventh Floor job. When I fist reported to the office, I remembered I was faced with 14 studies on Angola with a fifteenth, which was a summary of the other fourteen, coming right along. Joe Sisco, wisely, avoided getting involved in Vietnam. It was a busy place working on a much larger scale than I was accustomed to. I didn't have the experience or the breadth of vision to scope with these global issues. I had worked for Ambassador MacArthur 24/7; I had enormous respect for him. I never had the same feeling for Sisco. He was always very kind to me. But he

needed someone to cheer him up and give him a moral boost and that was not my forte.

Our relationship fell apart over a very small thing. Sisco was a close friend of Bob Oakley. I don't remember whether it was Bob or Phyllis, his wife, who was supposed bring Joe's tuxedo to his office or whether it was supposed to be Mrs. Sisco. In any case, there was confusion and I was held responsible for the tuxedo not being delivered. That was the end.

My tour did not last very long and I was bruised by it. I was assigned to "Siberia" - the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. For a year, I served as program officer for Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania, working for Sam Wise and Yale Richmond - two wonderful people who were very good to me. Ambassador Harry Barnes' activism forced me to spend the major part of my time on Romania. Aurie Fernandez was the PAO in Romania and he was also very active. In fact, I enjoyed my year very much. I think I have always been a frustrated cultural affairs officer; so that the CU job was just right for me.

Maurice Ealum who had I known since the my start in the Foreign Service was the head of the EUR personnel office at the time. He thought I had been sort of screwed by Sisco; he was looking for a principal officer for Winnipeg, Canada. Barbara Watson, then the head of CA, had fought hard to get consular cone officers into some of these principal officer positions. Winnipeg had been so designated. So I was assigned to it - over the objections of Bob Duemling, the DCM, and probably Ambassador Tom Enders. But I finally got it because of Maurice and Watson's work. I beat out Al Adams, who nevertheless went on to have a fine career.

*Q: What were your views on our cultural exchange programs for the three countries you worked on?*

HUTSON: I thought the programs worked extremely well. We are now talking about 1976 - the bi- centennial - to which the Bulgars sent their Thracian gold exhibit. I knew the Yugoslav program from my previous assignments. That was well run. We did have some controversial grantees who were sponsored by the program - e.g. the rector of Zagreb University who had been active in the Croatian independence campaign. Romania had the most active program. The Romanians are hard to deal with - someone once said: "Romanian is not a nationality, but a profession". We could never bring a Foreign Service local from Romania to the States without he or she defecting.

James Billington, later the Congressional Librarian, was on the selection committee - the Council of International Exchange of Scholars. That gave me an opportunity to get to know him. Of course, both Yale Richmond and Sam Wise were delightful and effective people to work with. They focused on the Soviet programs assisted by Bob McCarthy, later the PAO in Moscow. Also Paul Hacker was there.

In the mid-1970s, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural affairs was part of the Department. Later it was transferred to USIA, which even later was transferred in toto

into the Department. So if you wait long enough, organizations will return to their origins.

*Q: What was your role in the process?*

HUTSON: A lot of it was just arranging various programs. The Fulbright scholars were handled by some Civil Service professionals; so it ran pretty much by itself and didn't need our involvement. I was in CU for only about nine months. When I went to Canada, I made good use of what I had learned and I was an extensive user of the international visitors program opportunities. One of the people I managed to get into the program is now Canada's foreign minister.

*Q: You were in Winnipeg from 1976 until 1978.*

HUTSON: Right. It was supposed to be a three year tour, but I only stayed for two because in 1978 Mac Toon asked me to come to Moscow to be his consul general.

*Q: In Winnipeg, what were your principal responsibilities?*

HUTSON: We covered the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and northwest Ontario. We had the usual consular operations - processing primarily third country nationals. The consulate was closed a few years later and even in my time, it was being reduced - from three officers to two although just as I was leaving, the staffing pattern was increased to the three level again. Ambassador Enders wanted an active presence in Saskatchewan where American industry had major investments in the potash operations. A New Democratic Party-which some called "socialist" - was trying to foster a government take-over of the U.S. potash holdings. I was almost declared *persona non grata* for defending U.S. interests. I used to be followed by the provincial police as I moved around the city and the province. The premier of Saskatchewan would not receive me. Our DCM in Ottawa would give me support - minimal, but finally Ambassador Enders flew out to see the premier and then took me to the meeting.

I was very grateful to the ambassador for that action because after that, I had no problem with the Saskatchewan government.

*Q: Wasn't it strange for a Canadian province to be so anti-American? After all, you were just doing your job in one of our closest allies.*

HUTSON: In fact, there was a fair amount of hostility towards us. There were a good number of Americans who left the U.S. because of the Vietnam war. There were socialists who had emigrated from other countries - like Australia. These immigrants had a point of view which held the U.S. responsible for all the ills of the world and who resented the alleged the overbearing economic and cultural influence with which we were "overwhelming" Canada. The potash mines were a substantial economic factor and these U.S. opponents saw those holdings as a potential wedge between our two countries. Some U.S. companies were willing to sell their holdings; others resisted strongly. It became a

little nasty.

*Q: What role did you play?*

HUTSON: I simply went around to try to find out what was going on. I tried to meet all of the provincial policy makers including the premier, who, as I said, was unavailable to me until Enders intervened.

The provincial government thought that we were trying to undermine it. In fact, although we had nothing to do with it, the NDP government was replaced by a Tory one. I kept in touch with a lot of the provincial politicians, some of whom actually asked me how they could join the U.S. Tom Enders was extraordinarily effective. He would take an issue which would arise from that huge unguarded borders between the two countries. It could be an environmental one or something to do with wheat exports. He would say that he would visit a province in two months' time to tell the local government what U.S. policy was on the specific issue he was targeting. That forced the U.S. bureaucracies to agree what our policy really was on that issue. That required an extraordinary effort in Washington to come to some agreement. Once he had that, he would go on a public relations campaign, through media interviews, speeches, etc. spelling out U.S. policy on this particular issue. The media loved this approach. When Enders passed away, the Canadian ambassador to the U.S. wrote that there probably had never been a better American ambassador to Canada than Tom Enders. I think he was right. He was fantastic.

So there was an impression that during the Enders period, the U.S. was doing an extraordinary amount of leveraging and pushing. Tom Enders was always quite open by everything that he did. In Saskatchewan, the natives were paranoid. I had no trouble finding fora in which I could explain the U.S. positions. I did that a lot. The interesting aspect of this part of the job was that the Canadians knew full well what our policies and actions were; that meant that there was no other place in the world where I had to defend our policies as vigorously as I had to do in Canada. I loved doing that. I was criticized by our DCM for being" too public" and for casting myself as a consul general when I was really only a consul.

*Q: Did you have any other major issues to deal with?*

HUTSON: We had problems on grain exports, but I was told by the Agricultural Attaché that that was his problem and I was not be involved in it. He couldn't say that to the ambassador, but to me that was ok. I thought I would be busy dealing with the Wheat Board, but obviously that did not turn out to be the case.

We had a fair number of Americans in jail in our provinces. It was about at this time that the Department issued an edict that all Americans in prison had to be visited at least once a month. That meant that either I or my colleague had to go to Saskatoon where there was a maximum security prison.

*Q: Did you go to Ottawa much?*

HUTSON: I got to Ottawa fairly often. Once I went to tell Ambassador Enders that his DCM was no longer welcomed in my consular district. That didn't earn me any great points. But I got to Ottawa often enough.

*Q: What was the mood during your tour among the Canadians about their country's future?*

HUTSON: Canadians are extremely introspective. Rene Levesque was very active at the time. In Winnipeg, there were about 90,000 Franco-Manitobans. So the issue of relationships with France was very active. In Saskatchewan, the conservatives used to talk to me all the time on how to replace the NDP government - or short of that, how they could get their province to be come part of the U.S. In Manitoba, the premier was Ed Schreyer (NDP) who was known as "Red Ed." He later became the governor-general of Canada. He got his nickname because he had shown some early interest in communist China. When the Tories won the premiership in Manitoba, I became good friends with the leadership; as a matter of fact, I took some of them to the Republican National Convention in Detroit - after I had resigned from the Foreign Service.

Among the liberals, we concentrated on people like Lloyd Axworthy, now the foreign minister. During my tour, he was an up and coming liberal leader; we sent him on a IVP tour of the United States.

I think in the late 1970s there was great doubt about Canada's direction. They held a referendum in May 1980 which rejected a plan for a separate status for Quebec. After that, the separatist movement quieted down, although we see some signs of rebirth today. The issue seems to rise about every twenty years. I stay in touch with Canadians and follow their political debates closely. I find it a wonderful place and return to it periodically.

*Q: How did you see the "cultural" war?*

HUTSON: There was a period when the U.S. knocked the Canadians in my provinces off their pins. This was in 1979 when the Twin Cities - Minneapolis and St. Paul, which are just south of Manitoba - decided to have a "Canada appreciation" week. Canadians are always complaining about not being appreciated by us - "we don't know anything that is going on in Canada!" What the Twin Cities did just knocked everybody's eyes out. It was incredible!. Canadian jaws dropped to the ground; we didn't hear a peep of a complaint for a long time.

It is true that without regard to the cultural medium the American influence is noticeable. I had box seats to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet - a wonderful group which had an American manager and other American presence. There was a terrific art museum in Winnipeg, managed by an American. Some of the Americans had left the U.S. in protest against the

Vietnam war or because of other unhappiness with their mother country; they just went north. Now there seems to a better balance with lots of Canadians to be found in movies, theater and other cultural endeavors in the U.S. But I think the "cultural" wars will continue despite the fact that Canadians have made an extraordinary contribution to American culture and could well take pride in that rather than complaining about what is coming north from the U.S.

*Q: Did you run into any border problems during your tour?*

HUTSON: Trans-boundary environmental issues were always hot. The issue may have been the Red River of the north which may have contained parasites that flowed into Lake Winnipeg which would have killed off the white fish. Or the issue may have been the Lake of the Woods which may have contributed bacteria that might have killed off the wall-eye pickerel. Or in Saskatchewan the issue may have been pollution from a coal-fired generating plant which might have traveled into Montana. I think the Montana National Guard was getting ready to march north to close the plants or some Indian tribal reservation in the U.S. to do the same thing. I had to talk to the governor to bring peace. In the same vein, we had pulp mills in western Ontario that were polluting some of the pristine areas of northern Minnesota.

By the end of the 1970s pollution was a well known hazard. But the question of much pollution represented a danger level was unsettled, much as it is now. Standards on one side of the border might be different from those on the other side. In fact, after I left the Foreign Service, I worked on the Reagan campaign in the hopes of coming back into government as a director of the International Joint Commission - a Schedule C position. I didn't make it, but I do know that some of the issues we were debating in the 1970s are still alive and well today.

There were some instances of smuggling across the border, but I don't think I ever got involved in any of those.

Finally, I should mention that I was assigned to Winnipeg for three years. One day I received a call from Bob Barry who was then the head of EUR/SOV. He told that Ambassador Toon would like to have me in Moscow to be his consul-general. I told Barry that I would be delighted with the assignment; I then asked whether he had checked with the Office for Security. I mentioned that because I had been nominated twice for assignment in the Soviet Union and SY had turned me down because my Latvian wife had relatives there. Barry thought he could take care of that problem and indeed he did. Later I saw my records and this transaction was straightforward. The ambassador had been asked; he was aware of the issue, but didn't think it should be a barrier to my assignment.

*Q: We are now talking about 1978. Did you take any Russian training before leaving for Moscow?*

HUTSON: Having studied Russian extensively previously, I went to FSI for just some brushing up for about six weeks and then left for Moscow, arriving in September, 1978. I stayed there until February, 1980. As I said, I was the consul general.

*Q: What was your impression of the Soviet Union when you arrived? What was the state of U.S.-Soviet relations in 1978?*

HUTSON: I had learned to have a great fondness for the "Great Russian Soul." I got largely from the White Russians with whom I had studied in Monterey. I had learned all the old Russian songs, etc. So I really was looking forward to my tour in Moscow. I had considerable sympathy for the people - not the system. I was immediately struck by the system. I changed my views in a hurry from someone who thought that eventually the system would change drastically to one who came to believe that the system had be terminated. It could never change enough. I agreed with Reagan's description of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire." I saw so many people who had been adversely affected by the system. Of course, that is the nature of a consular office; it sees many more dissatisfied people then any other embassy section.

The embassy was a "zoo." We did not manage the work; it managed us. During my tour, we witnessed the greatest emigration of Russian Jews in history. It was arranged by the Dutch, who set up a route through Rome and Vienna which eventually brought many of the emigrants to the U.S. In 1979, there were 50,000 Jewish emigrants. What is not well known is that in the same year, 10,000 Armenians also left the Soviet Union. Included were a number of "undesirables" that the Soviet authorities added to the flow.

It was also the year in which the seven Pentecostal Christians took refuge in the basement of the embassy. President Carter had given specific approval to giving this group political asylum. There were also three Armenians with them. Ambassador Toon called me and told me that he did not want any more refugees in the embassy. He was one of the best ambassadors I ever worked for. So we managed to get the three Armenians out. I worked assiduously to find another "home" for the Pentecostal Christians. That took five years! (Long after I had left).

*Q: What did you try to do to get them out of the country?*

HUTSON: I talked to them to try to convince them to leave. I talked and talked and talked to them. We negotiated with the Soviets who maintained that these were Soviet citizens and therefore subject to Soviet laws. They gave us no assurances not to prosecute. They would not tell us whether the Christians had violated any Soviet laws, which gave us concern. This group turned out to be a major work-load. We had two staffers who essentially spent all of their time taking care of them; they were also responsible for answering the large volume of mail that we received about the Pentecostals; the letters came from all over the world and were unanimously supporting them. I had been exposed to Pentecostal Christians in other parts of the world. They are essentially strong believers in their faith; the ones who took refuge in the embassy had literally walked across the

Soviet Union and managed to slip by the Soviet militiamen guarding the embassy. And they refused to leave the embassy to return to their country. They were convinced that anyone who entered their room - and there were many who wanted to help and talk to them - had been sent by God to help them. So they trusted all their visitors. We had other devout believers who came from the U.S. to see them. Among the seven were three teen age daughters. We even heard that some of these people might try to impregnate them so that the children could be born on U.S. territory and therefore be able to claim American citizenship. That, some thought, would have increased the humanitarian rationale for letting them emigrate.

Then of course we had major attention from the press. I remember one time when Dan Fisher, the correspondent for *Los Angeles Times* wrote a scurrilous piece suggesting that we had deprived the Pentecostals of a Christmas tree and toilet paper. We did try to prevent these people from receiving items that might be considered illegal or contraband by the Soviets. They didn't have diplomatic privileges so that we tried to stick by the rules as much as we could. But the newspaper article was completely false and even though I was very friendly with Dan, I told him that I thought he had done a terrible thing.

So these people were a major work-load for the embassy. Toon, whom as I said, I greatly respected, used to vent periodically and insist that I get the Pentecostals out of the embassy. He used to say, "This is my embassy. Get them out of there!" I would then go to talk to them, without avail. Toon was replaced by Thomas J. Watson, Jr. - the retired chairman of IBM - ; he spent a lot of time with the Pentecostals talking to them, unlike Toon who didn't want to see them. He did agree to meet with them on a couple of occasions. Also to no avail I must say that their stay in the embassy was quite an educational experience for me. After I left the Foreign Service, I moved to Texas. There I ran into one of the organizations who criticized us the most for the way we handled the Pentecostals. It was called "Christ for the Nations Institute," headquartered in Dallas. The Vashchenkos and Chymykhalovs have a world-wide following, particularly in Switzerland and the UK. During the 1978-83 period, they wanted to know why we cooperated with those God-hating heathens - the Soviets. They suggested we put the seven into diplomatic pouches and fly them out that way. So when I was living in Houston, I called the executive director of this organization - a woman by the name of Freda Lindsay. I called her in 1982 on the fourth anniversary of their asylum which this organization was celebrating. Ms. Lindsay invited me to come to Dallas; she said she would give me three minutes to speak in their celebration program.

She didn't realize that I was a former gospel singer. I had also done a fair amount of preaching in my life. So I took 33 minutes. I may not have spoken "in tongues" but they did tape my sermon and sent me a copy. I have never let anyone else listen to it; it was so far out of my normal speech that it would almost unrecognizable. But since this is my oral history, I will mention that episode. It was a unique experience.

*Q: When you arrived in 1978, what did you conclude about the state of U.S.-Soviet relations?*

HUTSON: That was the number issue on the U.S. agenda. I remember Senator Baker visiting Moscow; he was heading a very large CODEL. They were interested in assessing prospects for the SALT treaties. I should mention an interesting aspect of this visit. One of the members of the delegation was Senator Jacob Javits of New York. He was a brilliant man. He was part of the delegation, but didn't travel with it. He came in his own private plane. I was the nominal control officer, although the real "control" officer was Armand Hammer, the head of Occidental Oil. All the details of the visit were handled by Hammer personally. I used to call him frequently to check and get his approval on every move the delegation might make. One of the meetings was with Yevgenii Primakov who was then heading an economic research think tank. I remember Javits commenting during the meeting that he thought that someday the Soviet Union would have to deal with international economic and financial institutions, perhaps to seek their assistance. He told Primakov that the Soviets better figure out how they would approach those institutions. I was reminded of that comment when later Prime Minister Primakov was flying to the U.S. to seek the assistance of the IMF. He never got here because in mid-flight he had to return to Moscow because we started the idiotic bombing of Yugoslavia.

The relationship between the two countries was as good as it could be. Brezhnev was still in charge. I will never forget the first Marine ball that we attended. It was held in Spaso House. It was attended by at least a thousand people. Soviets came and one could feel the warmth of *detente*, despite some tensions. A Marine colonel, the assistant naval attaché, was at odds with the ambassador. He was a great supporter of the Pentecostals. In fact, on my own, I had taken him privately into the "tank" - the secure conference room in the embassy - to talk to him about the issue. He was giving information to British Pentecostal organizations in England which he would not give to the embassy. He was obviously conflicted by his faith and his official duties. I told him that and suggested that he decide where his loyalties laid. His wife went after me during the Reagan administration in an attempt to blemish my record. I heard that she lobbied against me having a political appointment I the Regan Administration because I allegedly tried to defend the State Department in the Pentecostal affair. So we had this tension at the Marine ball which was obvious when the ambassador and this senior Marine colonel met at the ball.

I think the colonel, as well as others, thought that through our actions we were pushing for the emigration of Soviet Jewry, but didn't really care about the Christians. He kept pointing out what we had done for the Jews and asking why we weren't doing more for the Pentecostals. That was the tension. I think for a U.S. military officer not to share information with his own embassy which he will share with representatives of foreign governments id a little beyond the pale.

*Q: Did you detect any bias in the U.S. policy which supported Jewish emigration more than Christian?*

HUTSON: I think that slowly but surely a balance was being achieved. It was slow in coming, but there was a beginning. At the time, the Christian fundamentalists were not as

strong politically in the U.S. as they are today. In retrospect, I do recall that Billy Graham was active as was Olin Robison, the president of Middlebury College, whom Carter sent as an envoy to assist the Pentecostals. The major difference is that Soviet Jewry had an established infrastructure in the Soviet Union. There were a number of well publicized cases, such as Sakharov, Ginsberg, etc. The consular section was the point of contact in the American embassy and the Jews could enter our facilities to discuss consular matters; they were not allowed into the chancery to discuss political matters. So we became quite familiar with these émigrés and talked to them regularly.

There was a Ukrainian priest, a Mr. Moroz, who got considerable help in his efforts to emigrate. But most of the assistance went to the Soviet Jews.

*Q: Was there any sentiment among your contacts that we were giving preferential treatment to one group of Soviets and not others?*

HUTSON: Not very much. I already mentioned to you the one case of tension in the embassy, but it was not a widespread view. There was an assistant air attaché who had views similar to the Marine colonel's, but I didn't sense that view in information we were receiving from the press or CODELs or other visitors.

*Q: Tell us a little about your contact with Soviet officials.*

HUTSON: The Soviets had known of me for quite a while, starting from my first assignment in Iran. They knew I spoke Russian. I had a "friend" who later became chief of the Soviet KGB station in Iran. So my dossier was quite full. I was a known commodity to them when I appeared in Moscow and I assume that they were not unhappy to see me since they knew so much about me already. I would describe my relations with the Soviet authorities as "correct." I had one close contact, who was probably a KGB agent, who was an expert of Soviet emigration. His wife was an administrator at the Bolshoi. That gave us an entry and enabled us to get tickets to the Bolshoi whenever we needed them. I used that route on a couple of occasions, but I knew that it was always available if needed. I had very frank discussions with the KGB officer about Soviet emigration policy. He was very frank with me which just reinforced my view that he was indeed a KGB agent.

At the time, I was writing a new policy paper which I called "the depoliticization of Soviet Jewish emigration." I thought we should let them go to wherever they wanted to go rather than have having go through this tortured route through Rome and Vienna and then go to Israel.

*Q: How was the process for getting people out of the Soviet Union?*

HUTSON: For us it was relatively simple because the Dutch did all the paperwork. One year I visited the Dutch embassy on Christmas Day. I saw the cheerful Dutch consul - Geoffrey Van Fleet - personally issuing over three hundred visas on that day. For years, I

have tried to get him to tell his story. He kept copious records on the applicants - where they came from, their family backgrounds, their histories. Eventually, the Dutch ambassador wrote a book - several years later - about this process; VanFleet contributed to this book, but never wrote a full exposition of his experiences. He always thought that the story was not his to tell; it was Israel's whose interests the Dutch were representing. I contacted a number of Jewish organizations to see whether they would not be interested in VanFleet's story. I thought he was a latter day Raoul Wallenberg; he did incredible things. He bribed people all over the Soviet government to help Jewish emigration. The political dimension of the emigration by this time had pretty well evaporated; now it was strictly a matter of income for the bureaucrats.

*Q: Didn't the Soviets require reimbursement for the alleged education that these people had gotten?*

HUTSON: Yes. It was a fig-leaf for collecting money. But most of the bribes went into the bureaucrats' pockets. Some must have gotten fabulously rich. I still think that Van Fleet's story would have been a great addition to the history of the times. The ambassador's tale was not first hand and was much too much an academic endeavor. Geoff's narrative would have been much more personal and emotional.

*Q: Explain to us how the emigration system worked*?

HUTSON: Israel had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The Dutch had been designated to represent Israeli interests. If a Soviet Jew wanted to leave his or her country, he or she would need an invitation from a relative living in Israel. Then the Soviets might issue an exit permit. That was the way most of Soviet Jewry left. In fact, that is how the Pentecostal Christians in our embassy eventually left. They had invitations from "relatives" (real or contrived) in Israel. So this process became the main avenue for Jewry to leave the USSR. Of course, the invitation was only the first step. A number of the Jews had security clearance from their employment in scientific or military activities, which prevented them from leaving for a period of time. The U.S. embassy became heavily involved in making representations to the Soviets on behalf of these cases. I don't think we made much of an impact, but we went through the steps. I think I can only recall a half-a-dozen cases where one could see our representation having a relatively immediate impact. For example, one such intervention was made by Vice President Mondale. When we took his views to the Soviets, there was an immediate positive response.

I took one of these cases up as a personal matter. I told the Soviet bureaucrat that I needed a favor. I was advocating an exit permit for the sister of one of our language instructors at FSI. She had mental problems; she had a daughter that essentially lived on the streets of Kiev in the Ukraine. Fortunately, the Soviets actually helped in this case. The irony of that case is when the sister and daughter arrived in the U.S., our teacher didn't want the daughter, who then started to live on the streets of Washington. Then the sister joined her daughter. Finally we had to ask the Soviets to take these two women back, which they did. So the Soviets every once in a while would make a humanitarian gesture.

*Q: So in the case of the Soviets Jews, you were essentially there to help.*

HUTSON: That is right. There were at least two officers in the political section who also worked on these cases. We certainly spent much more time on Soviet Jewry than on Soviet Christians.

*Q: What other activities were you responsible for?*

HUTSON: The work involving the Pentecostals and Soviet Jewry was largely informational. The political section reported on these issues; we worked on statistics and we maintained contact with the various players in these drams.

Our heavy workload came from emigration cases that became headline material. There were at least twenty-five American correspondents in Moscow at the time. A man by the name of Yuriy Vashchenko blew himself up in my office; he was trying to leave the Soviet Union. There was an American woman formerly from Soviet Georgia who tried to smuggle out ancient ceramics. These were all front page material for the American press, but a heavy workload for us.

One other part of the job - which I hated - but I think did well was to prevent others from imitating the Pentecostals. My job was to talk them out of seeking refuge in the embassy. I hated doing that. Sometimes, this would take days - 24 hours per day. We managed to get all of them out. I succeeded in my assignment, but it was not a happy one. I didn't use physical force on any of potential asylum seekers, but we everything short of that. We had teams consisting of such stellar officers as Alexander "Sandy" Vershbow, Steve Mann, and Ben Fairfax who worked with these people. Some of the embassy staff were very good at this task. I think by this time it was more or less evident that the Pentecostals had not advanced their cause by staying. They were still in the basement. We used to say to new seekers that the longer they stayed in the embassy, the greater the ire they would generate in the Soviet government and correspondingly reduce their chances of ever leaving the USSR.

If they had a basis for an emigration visa - e.g. relatives in some foreign country - or if they had some other valid rationale for leaving, then we could urge to leave with some hope. There were other cases in which we just outright lied. We did whatever we could to get these "unwanted" visitors out of the embassy. Had we not done that, we would have been overwhelmed by such people. I was commended for my efforts in this process, but in retrospect, I think I should have refused to participate. But at the time, I saw no choice except to do the job as defined by my bosses. Even when Latvians came in - and as I mentioned, my wife was born in Latvia - I would talk them into leaving, even though I was sure in my own mind that they would have been better off in an embassy asylum than outside the gates. They had a better chance of emigrating by remaining in the embassy than by leaving.

*Q: Describe the process that these refugees went through. I assume they had trouble just getting into the embassy grounds. Did you find out what happened to them after they left the embassy compound?*

HUTSON: There were several ways these people sought refuge. There were people who had legitimate consular business; they would bring me documents necessary to transact some action. At the time, we had practically no embassy American security; we relied entirely on Soviet militiamen; they provided security services. At the beginning, we hoped that people could pass that Soviet screening; we were not anxious to have the militiamen serve as a barrier to people who wanted to deal with us. Later of course, we changed our views 180%. So if a Soviet citizen, or any other foreigner, had a valid document - a letter of invitation, some pension claim or an estate case, etc - they would be permitted to enter the consular section.

There were others who tried to run the Soviet gauntlet in masse. They would try to rush by the militiamen and enter the premises.

Those in the first group, which had some documentation that legitimized their visit to the embassy, who wanted to seek asylum gave us more time to discuss the issues with them. Those who rushed in were awaited by the militiamen who would grab them as soon as they left the embassy grounds and probably give them a thorough beating. That made it much more difficult for us to persuade them to leave, but we had to do it knowing that their future was going to be a very rough one for sometime to come. Those were our instructions.

*Q: Earlier, you mentioned a case of a man who tired to blow himself up in your office. When was that?*

HUTSON: March 28, 1979. A man came into the embassy; we had no metal detectors, and was not searched by the Soviet militiamen because he was escorted by one of the embassy's officers. The son of our Naval Attaché had taken a year off from his academic studies at Yale to learn and practice Russian. He lived in Moscow with his father and spent a lot of time with Soviet people of his age. That is how he practiced his Russian. In this way, he met a former seaman who had worked on a Soviet commercial fleet. He was homeless and lived illegally on the Moscow subway. That young man began to pester the American youth about getting help to leave the USSR. That was not unusual; I think most embassy staff had been approached at least once by someone wishing to leave the USSR. We would explain to these people what the general criteria were and what the individual's prospects for emigration really were. If prospects seemed a possibility, we would invite them for an interview. We might even do that for people who had no chance, but who were making pests of themselves with our colleagues.

This seaman really fell in that second category. He had given some letters in Russian to the American, who had shared them with his father. I think the letters clearly indicated that there was something wrong with the Russian; they were not what we would have

considered “normal.” So in an effort to help the young American out, my colleague went out to get the seaman and brought him into the embassy; thus bypassing any screening by the Soviet militiamen. This was not really exceptional; there was a lot of this going on. Once inside the building, the seaman was taken into the consular section’s “little room” - an allegedly secret room where we listened to the stories of potential emigrants. My colleague listened to the seaman for 10 or 15 minutes and essentially said that at the moment there didn’t seem to be any opportunity for emigration to the U.S., but that we would be in contact if any possibility arose.

This is now late winter in Moscow. Outside it was very cold. He was warmly dressed. He sat down in our waiting room and started to take off one layer of clothing after another. He finally came to a metal object that was strapped around his waist. That had a coat-hanger-like rod hanging from it. He then announced that unless he was allowed to emigrate, he would blow the embassy up. That was the beginning of a saga that went on for about nine hours. We cleared out the waiting room and eventually got the seaman inside escorted by two embassy officers - the one that interviewed him and another who was very good at handling people. The consular section which was on the first floor of the north wing of the embassy complex was cleared out. We got Soviet fire trucks to come stand by; television cameras were there in mass. After a couple of hours, I relieved my two colleagues and became the sole interlocutor for the Soviet seaman - as chief of the consular section, I thought that this was my responsibility. In retrospect, it was one of the few times in my life that I was glad I smoked cigarettes; that got me through a thoroughly draining seven hours. Between the two of us, we smoked all the cigarettes we had.

After many long conversations, we finally came to a bottom line: couldn’t we just help the seaman out by his case considered by Moscow State University. He had been an officer in the merchant fleet and had applied to the university after he left the sea. He had not been accepted because, in his view, his family was not part of the *nomeklatura*. He viewed his turn down as the result of lack of political “strings.”

We finally got a Soviet bomb expert to come into the embassy under the guise of being a Moscow State University official. He was supposed to look at the device that the seaman had, which looked like the metal back of a seat from a subway car. It had straps and was in the shape of such a seat. The expert looked at the device warily. I was sitting in the little room with the seaman. At the time, we were still using the heavy consular impression seal, which I was tempted to use as a weapon - hitting the seaman on his hand or arm before he could pull the wire to his device. However, that seal had a joint in it and that meant some different strategies than just a outright attack. I had envisioned several different scenarios.

The bomb expert seemed eager to be very helpful. He promised to help in whatever way he could. After studying the device for a while, he concluded that it may well be a bomb. As I said before, the seaman and I had smoked constantly until we ran out of cigarettes. I finally decided that we needed more cigarettes and I got up and left the room. I thought the seaman might then take the opportunity to pull the pin, but he didn’t. So he was left in

the room all by himself.

The Soviets wanted me to return to continue my efforts to get him out without an incident. Jerry Tolson, the security officer who was a good friend and Ambassador Toon said absolutely not. The Soviets then asked permission to take extraordinary measures to try to disable the seaman - sharpshooters or other deadly force. It would have been possible, given the location of the small room, to take shots into someone in that room. Ben Reed, the Department's executive secretary, was telling Toon by telephone from the Department not to allow any shooting in the embassy. Toon however took the position that this was his embassy and that the Soviets could do what they felt they had to do to their own citizen. And that is what the Soviets did. The seaman was sufficiently visible through a window that he could be shot and he was. He was hit a couple of times in his arms and legs. He ran out of this small room into my office and pulled the pin. Something went off and the area became a mess. It turned out that he had a flash bomb. The seaman died on the way to the hospital having been dragged out by the Soviet firemen who had entered our building to put down the flames. They also used lots and lots of tear gas - remnants of which stuck in the rooms for months. Our safes were still open; we were ill prepared from such an invasion. The seaman was burned; he was not blown to bits, but the Soviets maintained that he died on the way to the hospital.

At the time, we had a junior officer in Kiev by the name of Vladimir Sambaier - now in EB. He had been working in the General Services section of the embassy and then had been sent to Kiev. He had just returned to the embassy a few weeks earlier. He went to work on the wreckage and had us back working within 24 hours. He received all sorts of commendations for his work - mostly written by me. He did a superb job. When I later asked him how he managed to accomplish this feat, he just said that he had paid every off - he just bribed everyone and got the job done.

I must add an unfortunate footnote to this story. The officer who had gone to help the naval attaché's son was "hung out to dry" by Malcolm Toon in an uncharacteristic way for that man. Mac Toon wasn't very fond of the officer to start with. He then thought that he had violated standard operating procedures in what he had done with the seaman. In fact, there was no SOP for such a situation. What was done was based on precedent; that is the way cases like this had been handled before and that was the way this case was managed. But Toon took advantage of the situation and made the officer accountable for something that had precedent. He was transferred to South Africa. *The New York Times* correspondent reported that this poor fellow had been sent to the U.S. equivalent of "Siberia." Eventually, this officer left the FS. I had to write his last Moscow efficiency report, in which I criticized him primarily for his lack of drafting skills. I probably would have written the same report had the seaman incident not occurred. He then went to work for the CIA; he was very bitter about his Moscow experience. I think he was a good officer who had been treated unfairly. It was not one of Toon's finest hours; he was wrong. Toon having been a Navy officer should have recognized that the embassy was his "ship"; he was responsible for its operations and not some lowly officer. He should have taken responsibility on his own shoulders! The lower level officer should not have been

punished for what he did.

*Q: Tell us more about the woman who "hid" her jewels on her way out of the USSR.*

HUTSON: She was an American citizen from Chicago. She was born in Soviet Georgia. She had visited her family in Georgia. They gave her some very valuable ceramics - real antiquities— that she was supposed to smuggle out. As she went through customs at the airport, Soviet authorities discovered the antiquities. She was arrested. I went to visit her. I'll never forget that episode.

I met the Soviet official and the woman in his office. When the American found out what the penalty might be, she literally vomited on the official's desk and on him. It was either the greatest act I have ever witnessed or the damsel was in real distress. It was a sight! The official screamed. It was at about this time that Senators Adlai Stevenson and Charles Percy were coming to the USSR - both from Illinois. Both knew Soviet policy well. They helped us to work on this case which we finally resolved.

There was never anything routine. The moment something unusual happened, the press was all over it. That meant that we would be devoting our time almost exclusively to that event, until a resolution was found.

*Q: There must have been a number of cases of people trying to smuggle out information, or people handing other people letters, or people trying to smuggle Bibles in, etc. How did you deal with such cases and how were they eventually resolved?*

HUTSON: We dealt with each in a "full court press" mode. We would go to the Foreign Ministry - the consular department-which often would refer the issue to the political department, which meant that the DCM or the political counselor would have to get involved. Occasionally, even the ambassador would have to get involved. Mac Toon was very familiar with consular processes, having negotiated the consular convention between the USSR and the U.S. Mac knew his stuff; he didn't need much prepping. That was one of the reason he was great to work for.

That changed considerably when Thomas Watson became ambassador. All consular work was new to him. He had the aura of being a "captain of industry" who had flown lend-lease planes across the Soviet Union. The theory was that the Soviets liked to talk to a "captain of industry"; that he could cut a better deal with them because of his reputation. That didn't seem to pan out.

*Q: I think that appointment was made by President Carter in an effort to change the relationships between the two countries.*

HUTSON: Of course, it didn't help that soon after his arrival the ambassador had to face the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. That pretty much soured the atmosphere for arms control negotiations.

*Q: Let me go back to the issue of what happened to people who broke the customs laws and regulations. What happened to them? Was it a problem for you?*

HUTSON: These really were "run of the mill" violations, but they used to escalate because of the press interest. Most of them were kept in confinement for a while and then were released, sometimes because of political pressure coming from the U.S. Probably the more effective means of exerting that pressure was through the Soviet embassy in Washington. None of these violators stayed in confinement too long. People who were put in prison were usually not kept in Moscow, but rather were sent to prison camps outside the city - usually far away which might then take 26 or 48 hours to reach. At one time, we had three Americans in one of those camps. They were caught smuggling 38 kilos of heroin from Malaysia to the Netherlands. They took a cheap flight on Aeroflot which stopped in Moscow en route. The Soviet authorities may have been tipped off or it was just circumstances - allegedly there was a malfunction on the aircraft which required a change of planes requiring going through customs at which time the heroin was found. The three Americans were sentenced to five, seven and eight years in prison camp. This happened before I got to Moscow.

We were required to visit the Americans at least once each quarter. The Soviets would bring them to Moscow and we would visit with them in a prison there. In fact, one of them tried to write a book together with George Feiffer - a well known writer on Soviet matters. The book would have been called "The King of Thieves." The American who would have been at the center of this book claimed that he had almost taken over the camp beating the Soviets at their own corruption game. He became a super-patriot while in this prison camp and apparently converted from being a thug to being a hero. It was a great story in which I invested both in the writing of the book and the supposed follow-on movie. I lost my house and most of my savings on that investment although the project is still alive.

There were many, many minor cases, but they were usually resolved in four or five days.

*Q: I guess you were playing the customary consular game in which officials of both sides are interested in getting the violators out of the country. They are just too much trouble for both sides as long as the foreigner is kept in jail.*

HUTSON: I think that was true in the USSR. In Yugoslavia, on the other hand, the officials liked to put Americans into jail. I may have mentioned earlier the story of George Sodić, a man from Chicago. He was sentenced to five years in jail for anti-regime comments. We worked and worked on this case and eventually got him released after six months. That was the toughest case I ever handled.

*Q: Did you get a chance to travel around the Soviet Union on business?*

HUTSON: To my great regret, no. That was because I worked seven days per week -

24/7. There was just no relief. I did go to Leningrad a couple of times, largely to go to Helsinki. The only time I managed to go on a personal trip to Riga, Latvia. We specifically did not see my wife's relatives. It turned out that while we were there the Latvians celebrated the 60th anniversary of the independence of Free Latvia. That reinforced our - and my wife's especially - disdain for what the Soviets had done in Latvia. That was my only trip within the USSR. I did fly to Washington on several occasions; we had annual consular negotiations with the Soviets and then there were some other work-related matters. The publications procurement office had a travel program and were looking for people to send to various parts of the Soviet Union. But I never had the time.

I would have liked to see the Soviet Union. Initially, I was supposed to be on a three year assignment. I certainly hoped that before the end of my tour, I would be able to do a little traveling. But I ended up resigning after about 18 months.

*Q: What speculation was there in the embassy in December 1979 on why the Soviets invaded Afghanistan?*

HUTSON: I think there was great dismay when that happened. There were many embassy officers who were hopeful that U.S.-USSR relations were about to improve considerably. This is when I stopped using "hope" as a basis for relationships between countries and used the word "expectations" instead. People were hopeful that detente and the SALT agreements would work. We all joined the Foreign Service - especially those who had studied the Soviet Union - in the hope of being to contribute to an amelioration of tensions in the relationships and to the "humanization" of the Soviet empire. The Afghan invasion was a major setback for the "hopeful" people. One just had to watch Ambassador Watson; he was sent to Moscow with a very lofty goal and all of a sudden, he had no reason for being there. All prospects for improvement in relations evaporated.

We had many discussions about this event among ourselves. I had just finished a metamorphose of my own, from being willing to give the Soviets a chance to a very hard liner who felt that the whole Soviet establishment had to change - with our support. I therefore found the Carter's administration policy to be toothless. It was nothing. Anthony Lake would hem and haw on the issue. I happened to be back on home leave when the attempt to rescue our hostages in Iran failed miserably. That was a disaster; you don't rescue people with eight helicopters flying long stretches over a desert. That was just poor judgement by the administration. I thought at the time that we should have done with Iran what we did later in the Gulf war - use maximum force.

So when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan and provoked a toothless response from the Carter administration, I mentioned my views to the ambassador. He was similarly dismayed. With Malcolm Toon, I used to discuss consular affairs especially when we played deck tennis - which was not as frequently as we played tennis in Belgrade. But Toon certainly did not need my advice on political issues. Watson, on the other hand, listened to everyone. He used to boast that as chairmen of IBM he used to spend 60% of

his time talking to his people. I am a talker and have all kinds of ideas about policies. I used to think that Watson should take a page from a book written by Tom Enders, who was one of the best ambassadors I ever saw. He was the most brilliant and the most effective ambassador to Canada that we ever had.

I suggested that Thomas Watson, seen by the public as an unblemished captain of industry, go on a speaking tour in the U.S. so that the American public could hear what we understood to have happened. It was obvious to me that we were in for some heavy sledding ahead. We could not bank our hopes for better relations on disarmament and arms control. We had to confront the Soviet Union; it only understood raw power. I thought that we would have to put a lot on money into such an aggressive program, which eventually the Reagan administration did in order to seem militarily credible at a negotiating table. I tried to convince Ambassador Watson to take this approach. He did make a commitment when he was confirmed that he would return in six months time and make a report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

At one stage, he suggested that I undertake this speaking tour around the U.S. So, in fact, I did go on a speaking tour - I was a "hot" product. I am not sure that this program is used much more anymore. I spoke to the World Affair Councils in Seattle, California, Omaha and a couple of other places. I gave the Omaha "World Herald" a big interview - this being my home town newspaper, I knew a lot of the staff. I found myself in an immediate conflict of interest. The grain embargo to the USSR had just been invoked. I thought I would get the usual questions about living in Moscow, the conditions in the USSR, etc. But NO; the first question had to do with my views of the grain embargo. I asked whether this interview was "on the record." They asked me to say what ever I could. So I said that the grain embargo wouldn't work. That was the view of the agricultural attaché, a wonderful man from South Dakota. At a country team meeting he told the ambassador that it wouldn't work. After the meeting, the attaché was pulled aside and it was suggested that he keep comments like that to himself because his views would leak to the press greatly expanding the debate. In Omaha, I explained the administration's position and rationale, but then off the record I reflected the views of the agricultural attaché. So, having to defend the administration while having serious reservations gave rise to major conflicts of interest.

This conflict eventually resulted in a major debate with my wife towards the end of home leave while we were staying with her brother in Kansas City. I had been in San Francisco where I had taken it upon myself to see Laurence Silberman - former ambassador to Yugoslavia and now an appeals court judge in Washington, DC. He was part of the Reagan foreign policy team, along with Fred Iklé and Richard Allen. I had actually left Belgrade before Silberman arrived, but my wife and children had remained behind to finish school. The Silbermans had been very kind to my family; our two youngest daughters were best of friends. He was a very blunt critic of the whole Yugoslav policy - not being tough enough.

In any case, I went to see him to seek his advice. He was very kind and frank. He asked

me what I intended to do if I resigned. He asked whether I was independently wealthy. Not even close!!! I told him about some of my business ideas and even a movie concept. His advice to me was that I select a field in which I could progress and stick to that and not dabble in a number of various fields. He didn't encourage me to resign, but encouraged me to think a lot more about the future.

While on this home-leave speaking tour, I also served a couple of weeks as a reserve officer at DIA, updating biographies on Yugoslav military officers.

My family joined me in this home leave a few weeks later. By this time, I had come to the conclusion that I had to resigne from the Foreign Service because I could not support our Soviet policy. As I said, my wife had a very active argument about my views, both in Seattle and Vancouver, where we were visiting some Canadian friends. But we came to no conclusion. But we did end up in Kansas City at Easter time, with my whole family and the major argument started again. I was still convinced that I had to leave the Foreign Service in light of U.S. policy.

After my interview with the "Omaha World-Herald", the editor suggested that I resign from the FS and run for the U.S. Senate. I looked at him open mouthed, but understood that the "Herald" could be a king-maker in that part of the country. Eventually, I bit the bullet and told my wife that I was going to resign from the FS; then I told my mother. My plan was to go on the airwaves and announce my resignation and the reasons therefore. The "World Herald" was going to print my whole radio commentary. After my mother heard the broadcast, she called and asked me not to come home; she was canceling the family reunion. She had lived through the depression; she could not understand how anyone in their right mind could give up a government job. She called me just a "little fish in the ocean" whose views would not make an iota of difference. That was certainly one of the most difficult times in my life. If I had to do it over again, I would have resigned but done so quietly.

*Q: What happened?*

HUTSON: I had one very strong personal obligation - and that was to end it correctly. I had been shown in Washington a copy of what Anthony Lake - then the director of the State Department policy planning staff - had drafted as testimony for Cyrus Vance which he was to deliver to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee - after the Soviets had invaded Afghanistan. This statement went on at some length about U.S.-Soviet relations in 1980. As far as I was concerned, it was a "nothing" statement - full of platitudes reflecting the administration's view that the tension caused by Afghanistan would soon blow away. It is true that drafts go through a lot of hands before they become a finished protect and do change in that process, but what I saw infuriated me. I went around and talked to people in the department; I talked to Marshal Shulman, an academic well known as a Soviet expert. I talked to Tom Enders, then the assistant secretary for Latin American Affairs. I talked to Marc Palmer who was well known in the Soviet field. People heard me out but I suspect I left a number wondering what I was doing. I spent a lot of time

doing this and then I quit - I slammed the door behind me.

I went out to seek my fortune in the real world. I changed party registration (to Republican), I worked as a speaker for the National Republican Committee. I really didn't have the "dirt" that the Committee was really looking for; I had just a strong disagreement with the administration's policy. That made me somewhat less than an attractive speaker. I always tried to explain the administration's position as honestly and strongly and I could and then I would point out where I differed with it. I remember my mother, after getting over the shock of my decision, asking me what I intended to do. I told her that I did not intend to get a job; I was going to make a movie - among other dreams.

So I set out to make a movie and other things - e.g. backing some musicians. I returned to Nebraska and started a consulting firm. I got five people to invest $1,000 each in this effort. I managed to get a line of credit using a house that I owned in Maryland, even though it still had a mortgage on it. Everyone thought I was either crazy or the next genius. People in Washington generally turned their backs to me; I was too controversial.

There was some glamour. I was interviewed by "CBS Evening News"; I was on the front page of "The Washington Post" and "The Philadelphia Inquirer." Stories about me appeared in foreign newspapers; my daughter Bessie read about me in the "Manchester Guardian". She called to ask what was going on. Israeli friends told me that "The Jerusalem Post" had carried a story about me. This was just a "five minutes" of fame; it faded soon. Then I had to do something.

I tried to do some consulting with an agricultural corporation in Omaha. The timing was not very good because it was at this time that our relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated badly. I witnessed often, in the USSR, Yugoslavia or Iran, people being dispatched by their American firm, even though they had absolutely no qualifications for such an assignment. Anyone who knew the situation would have been able to tell in a half an hour whether the candidate would be able to navigate in an overseas environment. So I was hired in part to participate in such a screening process. I was also supposed to "open doors" although at the time my name was not a real asset in the Soviet Union since I was advocating its destruction.

Interestingly enough, a lot of what I said was reported in the Soviet press although they were given such a spin that some of my friends in the Soviet diplomatic corps thought of me more as a hero than a villain.

I am still in the consulting business. I am useful to some because of my connections. I help to "open doors" and "closing deals." It is mostly the former, although I am around as deals are closed. I am working on some major construction projects now which I am trying to move along using my connections. I have met a lot of people in the last twenty years, many of whom are now in key positions. When I was in the service, I met a lot of people, but they were not then in key positions. So I try to move potential deals along by

getting the right people together.

I resigned in April and went to work as an independent contractor. I had a client in Houston, TX who was in oil-related services business. That was my first paying consulting client. He convinced me to come to work with him full time. That was a mistake; I should have continued our contracting relationship. If I been able to maintain my independence, I probably could have acquired other clients and would not have returned to the Foreign Service. I must say that my wife, just as my mother, was very concerned by our financial situation, fearing the loss of all we owned. They thought I was crazy to pursue the movie angle. Others did as well.

I must say that in some strange way, it is hard to fail totally. When I was in the Service, my kids were in private school with tuition being paid by the Department of State. When I resigned, the oldest had graduated from high school, but the two younger ones were still in school. I ran out of money and had to tell the headmaster that I would have to take them out of school. He said that that was not necessary; he would find some way to allow them to finish their high school education at his facility. He worked out a deal whereby they could stay in school and I paid back their tuition over a period of many years. When I went to Nigeria as a Foreign Service officer, I sold my car and paid off all my debts.

I think there were a number of people who had sympathy with my dreams. I guess they were kindred spirits who wished that they had had the audacity to do the same thing that I did. They never expressed their views but I could feel their support.

As I said, I eventually went to work for a Houston oil services firm.

I then returned to Washington and re-entered the Foreign Service, primarily to put the family back together.

*Q: You had been active in supporting the Reagan administration. Did you hope that that might lead to some senior position in the government?*

HUTSON: Yes indeed. I was an active candidate for a Schedule C appointment. I wasn't looking to be secretary of state or deputy or even assistant secretary; I would have been delighted to be a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Consular Affairs. I would have been happy to be the head of the U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission, dealing with trans-boundaries issues. So I wasn't looking for glamour jobs, but I did want something challenging. Frankly, I didn't even get close to being considered for these jobs. That just shows you how naive I was.

I have been through this process of a political appointment several times now, both as an aspirant and an observer. You have to be in the right place at the right time. In my first effort for a Schedule C appointment, I had the full support of the Nebraska congressional delegation; that did not help me one iota. When Reagan won the presidency over Carter, I sent a letter to Secretary Muskie requesting a reappointment to the Foreign Service. Such

action is sanctioned by the Foreign Service Act. That began the process during which I got help from a lot of people. I went through an oral exam during which I was asked whether I would follow my previous pattern again. I told the panel that I didn't think so; that this time, I was going to stay in the Service until retirement. I got through security clearance without problems.

On Christmas Eve, I was informed that I would not be reappointed because I had a medical condition which would limit me from world-wide service. I had never known about this "medical condition." Someone had concluded that I was suffering from bipolar affective disorder - that is not good! Some said I was a manic-depressive. That finding would bar me from reappointment.

I had had two brief episodes of depression. The first was in Belgrade which lasted about two or three months. Our embassy doctor sent me to Wiesbaden where I saw a psychiatrist. He diagnosed me as suffering from external depression - not chronic, but rather work related. He prescribed Valium which I could not tolerate. Eventually that bout ended. Subsequently, I had a recurrence of this depression while in Moscow, which was a little more severe. By this time, the department had created positions of regional psychiatric officers. One was stationed in Vienna and he came to Moscow periodically. I had no problem going to see him which I did. Carl Lydell was the embassy's doctor; I thought of him as a good friend. In any case, by this time, some new medication had come on the market for depression. I tried that, but I didn't like that either. But this bout also passed. However I didn't know - did not find out till later when I saw my records - that on the day I resigned from the Service - as announced in the media - that the embassy had sent a NIACT cable which in general suggested that I didn't know what I was doing. The cable speculated that I was on a "manic high" since I was suffering from a bi-polar effective disorder. The message concluded that if I were to apply for re-admission to the Service, I should be denied or some other medical action be taken. I was never informed of this "medical" finding nor was my family. It seems to me that good medical practice would have dictated that I or at least a member of my family be informed; in retrospect, it seemed more like an act of vengeance than a medical finding.

So I went to see some friends in the department. One of them was Sheldon Krys who was an old friend who had been the administrative counselor in Belgrade. At the time, I think he was the NEA executive director. He told me that he thought that I would be reappointed, but that it would take a while and he suggested that I get a lawyer. So I hired Martin Mendelsohn who had been the chief "Nazi hunter." I had known him from a previous occasion when he introduced me to a law firm in Omaha which had been a spin-off from the law firm of Kutak, Rock and Huey.

So I did get help from a variety of sources. It took me three years minus eleven days to be reappointed. I had to take medical test after medical test. Then there were changes in the Medical Branch's front office which often meant starting from the beginning. We submitted countervailing medical evidence and finally the department caved and reappointed me.

In the meantime, I had taken a job as the executive director of the American Council of Young Political Leaders. At the beginning of this three year period, it was very difficult to finding anyone who would speak to me, except Spencer Oliver, who was the staff director of the Helsinki CSCE Congressional Commission. His deputy was Sam Wise, with whom I had worked in the old Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. I thought I was being interviewed for a job dealing with dissidents, many of whom I knew personally. But Spencer was looking for an executive director for this Council. On the board of this organization were people like Pat Buchanan, Peter McPherson and some other less well known persons. The board wanted to restore a Soviet program which it had conducted previously which made me attractive to them. It had been suspended when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, but now the board wanted to restart it. So I became the executive director of this organization and stayed there until my reappointment.

Spencer worked for Dante Fascell, who was the chairman of the House International Relations Committee. I think it is fair to say that it was Spencer's assistance as well as Mendelsohn's work that got me back in. They and the medical evidence I think showed that I would not be a problem for the Service. And that is what happened.

*Q: You re-entered the Foreign Service in April 1, 1983. What was your first assignment?*

HUTSON: For people in my situation, the first assignment had to be one that "was hard to fill."-i.e., a job no one else wants. In my case, that was the position of regional consular officer in Lagos, Nigeria. That turned out to be one of the best jobs I ever had. I was there for 2 years until 1985.

*Q: What was the situation in Nigeria at the time?*

HUTSON: The country was filled with hope. It was to be the leading democracy in Africa and was to be the model that others would have to follow. The governmental structure was similar to ours and the hope was that would also catch on in Africa.

I arrived in June after a brief brush-up in French, which I needed since my responsibilities were regional and covered some French speaking countries. A new set of elections were scheduled in Nigeria for August. I became very involved in that particularly in light of my experience with the American Council of Young Political Leaders - an organization that sponsored young Americans politicians to visit foreign countries to observe elections. In fact, the head of the Democratic representatives in the Pennsylvania state legislature came out to observe the Nigerian elections - at his own expense. Unfortunately, there was very little that was democracy left after those elections. The military took over the government on December 31 of that year, expelling the elected officials. They ran the country until General Olusegun Obasanjo was elected as president.

Nigerian oil had produced unprecedented resources for the state. That allowed Nigeria to send huge numbers of students to the U.S., for advanced studies. They had beautifully

printed scholarships awarded to them by the Nigerian state governments. Unfortunately, in many cases, these documents were primarily decorations because they had no money to support the awards. There is a wonderful book "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe. He has written a number of books many of which emphasize the importance of a young Nigerian being sent by his or her village for an education. The future of that village is placed on that young person's shoulders. These young people had to succeed. No excuse would do, even if there was no money behind the elaborate scroll given to the youngster. The American colleges and universities kept these students as part of their communities hoping that eventually some money would come. It didn't. The whole enterprise ended up as an enormous fraud perpetrated by some Nigerians who could not bear to return to their villages without that education for which they had left their homes. Lots of fraud was perpetrated to keep these young Nigerians in school.

*Q: I had a classmate of mine who was a banker in Baltimore who told me that one practically had to keep your hand on your wallet when a Nigerian came into your office. They had become real experts at gathering money from banks, individuals, institutions, etc. They were miles ahead of any other criminal.*

HUTSON: Right and they still are. I just came from Houston which has a large Nigerian population. It is almost unbelievable what you hear about those people's activities.
In the mid-1980s, Tom Pickering was the ambassador. It was the first time I had ever worked for him. I found him to be an utter disaster as ambassador - although we overlapped only for a few months. He didn't know how to relate with people. He didn't know and seemed not to care.

He was very nice to me. In addition to being a regional consular officer, I was also supposed to reopen the consulate in Enugu. He never asked the Nigerian's blessings; he just said that that was what we would do. Of course, the Nigerians did not agree. The military was even less forthcoming than the civilian government. They eventually shattered all the high hopes for Nigeria. We tried to put the best possible face on the elections - we are good at that. We believe that any election is a "good" one - it moves "democracy" forward. It ain't necessarily so. I witnessed many similar election disappointments in Bosnia since my Nigerian tour.

A good friend of mine was consul general in Lagos. He convinced Pickering to approve a visa-management policy which called for the issue to visas to all Nigerian applicants who were not demonstrably ineligible thereby turning the law on its head. But it became the policy for our visa operations in Nigeria. I had about a one month's overlap with this friend. He didn't want to hear about all the fraud the Nigerians were perpetrating in the U.S. There had been a fire in the embassy. The department had instructed the post to keep NIV applications not for only one year, but for five in light of the extensive fraud in the process. This friend of mine refused to do so using the excuse that the fire had reduced the amount of space available and that therefore was no storage space for such a large file. I think in fact that they could have accommodated the department, but he and Pickering just didn't want to have evidence of this fraud in their compound. It is a lot

easier to issue a visa than to deny one.

*Q: What was your job? How did you manage to serve in 12 countries?*

HUTSON: I was the deputy chief of the consular section of the embassy in Lagos and the regional consular officer for 12 countries. Joan Clark was the assistant secretary for consular affairs at the time. She was very interested in this regional approach. There were five regional jobs, to the best of my recollection: Nairobi, Dakar, Lagos, Johannesburg and Kinshasa. The job turned out to be a lot of fun. I had been away from consular work for an extended period, so that I had some catching up to do.

The posts that I serviced were primarily staffed by Agency personnel. Some took their responsibility to represent the U.S. government very seriously; others were much more interested in their narrow Agency responsibilities. I think my availability to these twelve posts was a useful function. I got to travel to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Niger, Cameroons, Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea. It was a wonderful opportunity to see all of these places. Sierra Leone was my favorite African country - the most African country I had ever seen. Now of course it is a disaster area, rendered by strife and turmoil. But then I could read for the first time, Graham Greene's "The Heart of the Matter" in settings described in the book.

*Q: But what was your job? Was it to give advice or to actually issue visas?*

HUTSON: I had a different approach to the job than my predecessor did. He had had good support from the consul general, but he had some difficulties. He ran into some difficulties, particularly in Ghana, where he encountered a generally recalcitrant consular officer, who did whatever he pleased. He was an embarrassment. This officer should have been sent home. My predecessor, with the support of his consul general, sought that the officer in Ghana found greener pastures, but the department did not take any action.

This officer would issue U.S. passports from 3-5 p.m. on Fridays - <u>only</u>! An applicant who might have come in on Monday would have to wait for five days. Passport issuance in those days was not a very difficult job; it should have been taken care of immediately. But the officer said it was more efficient to wait until Friday afternoons.

He had another quirk: he would not issue visas to any Ghanaian citizen. There may have been a few exceptions, but his attitude toward Ghanians became well known. I took a different approach: instead of trying to get him moved, I tried to work with him. I offered my advice, as I did in the other 11 countries as well. I didn't file efficiency reports on the people I worked with; I told the officers what my views were. I saw my role as one of assistance, not supervision. I think my approach worked well. I did what I would have found useful had I been in the shoes of those consular officers in these twelve countries.

The guy in Accra was less than a success. He made sure he would not be in country when I arrived in Accra. I couldn't even sneak in; he would just disappear.

I loved Africa. It was fascinating. I had a wonderful time in Lagos. I formed a University of Nebraska alumni club. We would be sent films from football games. I think there must have been 90-100 people who belonged to the club. Many were from the agricultural school which did considerable work in Nigeria and nearby countries. The club was highly organized: we had club officers responsible for this or that. It was great. The best part may have been that none of the members tried to use me to get favorable treatment for visas from the embassy's consular section.

*Q: Well, was your regional work mostly advisory or did you actually also issue visas?*

HUTSON: I was an advisor. I did fill in when the consular officer job was vacant in Burkina Faso. The interesting aspect of that assignment was that the consular officer for whom I filled in was actually the station chief. He had been PNGed. Only when I got to Ouagadougou did I realize the delicate position I was in.

*Q: In Nigeria, however, you did have line responsibilities. Were Americans getting into trouble there?*

HUTSON: Fairly often. We had one case of some note. We had woman from New Jersey who was a prominent African-American politician. She came to Nigeria as an advisor to a local politician. The Nigerian military threw her in jail. She was there for a long time - almost a year, I think. She was never charged; the military just held her. It became a *cause celebre*, but eventually we managed to get her released. We got lot of commendations for our efforts. Our consul general, Joseph Segars, was a wonderful guy and did an extremely effective job on this and many other cases. The consular section ran well and was staffed with a nice bunch of people. None of us were there by choice; circumstances had gotten us this assignment. Nevertheless, the mission functioned well and most of the staff was quite happy.

*Q: In 1985, where were you assigned?*

HUTSON: I returned to Washington to study Mandarin for two years. I was to become the chief of the "Travel Services Section" which was an euphemism for the consul general in our office (The American Institute in Taiwan") in Taipei. At one time, I had mentioned in my "April Fools" preference form that I would like to study Cantonese. I never got that, but my career management officer asked whether I would settle for Mandarin. I told him that I was 46 years old and that I didn't know whether I could still learn anything. He asked me to consider the offer, which I did and agreed.

Initially, I was supposed to study for one year. But a few weeks after our initial conversation, the career officer called again and asked me whether I would like to study Mandarin for two years. The opening in Taiwan was not going to occur as originally thought. I said okay; it turned out to be one of the most difficult two years in my career. It was a tough two years! I suffered from despair on a number of occasions. It was very

frustrating. I can still speak it, but I can't write or read it anymore.

I spent the first year of studies in Washington. It was during this time that my wife was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The Department was completely unhelpful. The Medical Division was no help at all. But she got effective treatment from her doctors. Her doctor recommended that she accompany me to Taipei; the Department's Medical Division would not give her clearance. I insisted that she go with me. I had to take her at my own expense. Eventually, we got a waiver and fortunately she fully recovered.

So I took my second year of training on Taiwan. I found the language school there to be very good. Neil Kubler, who ran it, was superb. He was replaced by another dean who was also very good. The only problem of studying Chinese is that the Chinese are convinced that foreigners are "big nosed" people who could never learn their languages. So they humored us students until we hit the 3-3 level when we could get our bonuses for having survived. I always thought that non-Chinese should teach basic Chinese first so that the students could gain enough confidence in their ability to learn it and use it. After that, the students could be put in the hands of native Chinese speakers; by then the students would be assured that they could use this strange foreign language and not be put off by the Chinese attitudes. One of the major aspects of learning new languages, particularly those so different than western ones, is the confidence factor. If you think you can use the language, then you probably can. If you have teachers who deep down feel that you will never be able to use that language, it makes doubly tough to learn it.

*Q: You were in Taipei from 1987 to 1990 at the American Institute. You were essentially the chief consular officer.*

HUTSON: Correct, although my official title showed absolutely no relationship to consular matters. It was the largest "consular" section I had ever managed. We had eleven consular officers and fifty locals; it was a huge operation.

*Q: How were our relations with Taiwan at the time?*

HUTSON: They were quite good. The director of the Institute was David Dean who was the first director. He was a legend and a wonderful human being. He had a sensitivity to Chinese concerns that gave a tone to the Institute and to our relationships with the government which made matters work quite smoothly.

*Q: What was your job?*

HUTSON: It was essentially a management function. While I was there, an inspection report was written which criticized me heavily for being too strict on internal controls. That meant, in my mind, that I did my job extremely well. When I arrived, there were no controls over the visa issuance process. Some were being sold for $10,000 each on the streets of Taipei. There was no control to monitor this process. It took me six months to get control of the process. I had to threaten to fire all the local employees; I even

threatened to shut down the operations. I didn't do either; had I done so I probably would have been fired myself. Every Chinese employee in the visa section was either "on the take" or knew someone who was, but were too scared to report the transgressor. They felt that if they had reported on someone, their lives would have been in danger. We were talking about big money and a very profitable criminal enterprise.

That was my first introduction into Chinese corruption, which is a major aspect of that society. It is a sophisticated, cosmopolitan corruption; I could have had anything I wanted–money, women, etc. I found it easier to do my job right. I spent a lot of time instructing my staff on how to do "visa referrals." We drove the refusal rate from 23% down to 6% during my tour. I much preferred issuing visas to people who walked in the front door and went through the process as they should, rather than buying them in some alley in Taipei. Scott Halpern, who was the deputy director of the institute, said to me after I stated preference for the "front door process", that some people just wouldn't take "Yes" for an answer.

I was delighted with the drop in the refusal rate. I wanted to issue visas. We did not issue visas to children because we found that too many of the children were taken to the U.S. and were left there. There had been tens of thousands who were left in California. I assiduously tried to get the Taiwanese authorities to deal with this problem, but got no cooperation; they were interested in having their kids dropped off in the U.S. One could tell very early on in a child's educational process whether the child would be accepted by a prestigious institution as Taiwan National University–or a good high school before that. If the child did not seem to perform up to those standards, then the parents felt they had enough money to take him or her to the U.S. where they could finish their education - in a grand style in most cases because they worked harder than American students. Not only would the child then have a better foundation for life that what he or she might receive in Taipei, but they would also serve as a potential "foot in the door" should the parents wish to emigrate to the U.S. It was a very difficult issue, but I finally decided that no child would travel legally to the U.S. - i.e., no visa. We did make some exceptions, but they were rare indeed. This was perhaps an extreme policy, but under the circumstances, it was the only defensible one.

*Q: Did your approach raise any pressures from Congressional sources?*

HUTSON: We told those sources that we had no control over whether these children would return to Taiwan or not. We said if the state of California would help us to deal with the problem, we would take another look at the policy. We never did get any offers to help us. I tried to engage American authorities in a dialogue on this problem, but without success. Our approval rate was so high (99%) that we just stopped interviewing these young people. They just sent in their passports with the necessary documents. They were not happy; they wanted to be interviewed to get their visas. But I found in the case of university students that the process was so pro forma that it was the waste of our time. But when I was asked whether any of them had returned to Taiwan, I had to admit that it was too early to say. That situation has changed dramatically because these students were

now getting better job offers in Taiwan than they were getting in the U.S.

My gut feeling was that applying Section 214 (b)–which is the presumption that an applicant is an immigrant rather than a student–was very subjective. One of our great exports is our educational system and we should not resent foreigners taking advantage of that opportunity as long as they abide by provisions of the immigration acts.

*Q: How did you handle fraud cases?*

HUTSON: We had investigators who looked into those cases. They were primarily related to the immigration visas. We eventually found out that both of our investigators were themselves crooked; we had to fire both. So we were never sure what we were dealing with. My whole approach to immigrant visas was that 98% would be approved in any case. There were immigration lawyers who were prepping the candidates. So I urged my people to issue the visas and not to spend too much time worrying about the 2%. If there was something blatantly wrong, obviously that had to be deal with, but in the great majority of cases, it was not worth spending much time on them. I welcome people coming in the front door because many of them will try the back door and get in that way.

We didn't issue visas at AIT. The visas were issued with a Honk Kong visa plate. Theoretically, we would have sent to passports to Honk Kong overnight and would be returned with an American visa stamped in them. In fact, we had the plates and stamped the passports ourselves. But we did charge a $2.00 fee at the beginning; then it was raised to $10.00 and then $20.00. It was called a" visa processing charge". It became a major source of income for AIT. I battled the administrative section to hang on to that money on the grounds that the use of the money was specifically designated in AIT's charter. It was supposed to be used for the benefit of the applicants, but I never could get the administrative office to go along with that.

I raised the issue with the visa office in Washington because I was uncomfortable with what was being done with these fees. I found that Washington was receptive to my suggestions and in fact considered applying it world-wide. So when the inspectors came along, I submitted my idea to them. Eventually–not due to my efforts–the system of using feds for the benefit of the applicants did become part of the world-wide visa issuance system. It became one way to pay for the visa operations. It probably provides for half of AIT's budget now.

*Q: You left AIT in 1990. What was your next assignment?*

HUTSON: While in Taipei, I began to have problems with my eyes. I had four surgeries to try to correct the problem. This resulted in a slightly reduced tour. I stayed in Washington trying to get my eyes taken care of.

When the eye problem was resolved, we started looking for another assignment. The political counselor job in Belgrade was open and I bid for that, but was not chosen. But I

did get the science counselor job there. I was in Belgrade until June 1992 when we instituted a sanction regime which made a science program unnecessary.

*Q: In 1990, who was our ambassador and how were our relations with the regime?*

HUTSON: The ambassador was Warren Zimmermann, who was one of the very best. We had a difficult relationship with the Belgrade regime. Milosevic wouldn't receive our ambassador. The CIA report which predicted that Yugoslavia was coming apart had been leaked and that certainly did not endear us. Nationalism was rising. When I first got to Belgrade, the economic prospects for Yugoslavia seemed upbeat. Ante Markovic, who was the federal prime minister, had a stabilization plan for the dinar; he pegged the dinar to the German Deutschmark. It seemed to be working. I kept wondering how an economy, such as the Yugoslav one, which produced nothing, could peg its currency to a strong monetary unit.

Not too long after my arrival, the international financial institutions, pulled the plug. They determined that Yugoslavia was really not that important to the world–either politically or economically, which meant that it would not be treated as generously as it had in the past. It was time for Yugoslavia to pay its debts. I think that was an important decision which became a factor in the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

One of the reasons why I went to Belgrade was because it was clear to many that Yugoslavia would fall apart, sooner rather than later. Even as the science attaché, I was kept abreast of the developments. Warren Zimmermann ran the embassy and made sure that everybody was kept informed. He would convene the senior staff in the "safe" room and conduct a seminar on our relationships with Yugoslavia. On one occasion, I asked what the role of Vojislav Sheshel Chechno was in Yugoslavia. Everybody looked at me as if I had lost my marbles. He was viewed as a madman. Nevertheless, I was interested in exploring this issue.

The Bosnian war had not yet started. The Serbs were shelling Vukovar but we turned a blind eye to this first Milosevic war crime. We had no one in what is now the Republic of Serbia. If the CIA had any one there, I don't know, but I never heard any reports from someone on the ground. It was as if nothing was happening there. When I got to Belgrade it was just before the election in Serbia and Montenegro. I have supervised or observed fifteen elections in that part of the world. I traveled throughout the country. I went to Serbia and Macedonia (in the early 1990s). There were plane loads of Shiptars (people of Albanian descent) - people who were flown in from places they had emigrated to vote.

I covered the referendum that took place in Bosnia on February 28, 1992. That was the deciding factor in the breakup of Yugoslavia. I observed the process in Herzegovina. It is the home of some of the most arch-conservatives Croatians. I remember that there were many foreign observers present including David Evans and Bob Hand of the CSCE staff. When I returned to the embassy, I wrote my report which essentially concluded that what I had witnessed was not an election, but rather a census. People voted their ethnicity.

Others reported that the referendum had been a wonderful example of democratic expressions by the Yugoslavs. In fact, the final report by the observer team, left out my comments entirely. So I had a chat with Warren Zimmermann about what I had observed and questioned why my contribution had been left out. He told me that the die had been cast; the future of Yugoslavia had been determined and there was no use trying to change the course of history. We were going to support Bosnian independence. So my observations were lost in the decision to call the referendum a great democratic event.

After the results of the referendum became public, all hell broke loose. The shooting started; the international observers had to hunker down in their hotel–the Holiday Inn- in Sarajevo. That inn was later blown up. I finally called the embassy to ask for a plane to take us out. The Soviets asked me whether we could guarantee the safety of all of those who wanted to get aboard the plane. I said we were going to the airport; they could join us or not as they wished. During this period I became a great admirer of the Irish. We had as an observer an Irish major who stood out. They wore white clothes with no weapons. He led the caravan of busses going to the airport–three or four busses. We drove through barricades in the middle of the night. Machine guns were firing away at us–most of us were on the bus floor. I don't know whether the guns were aimed at us or just into the air. In any case, we made to the airport and hustled aboard the plane.

As I mentioned earlier, I was in Belgrade as the science attaché. But our program ended when economic sanctions went into effect in 1992. When I first got to Yugoslavia, we had a program that took me to all the corners of the republic. It was a great job because I got to meet a lot of people all over the country. The science cooperation program had been one of long standing, financed initially and for many years with counterpart funds–i.e. dinars generated by our economic assistance program–mostly PL 480. These funds were divided up according to an agreed upon formula among the various republics that made up Yugoslavia. There were 13 different American science agencies that were involved in the Yugoslav program. They loved it. In fact, there was some very good science work emanating from Yugoslavia. Our program consisted primarily of conducting science research in Yugoslavia on issues of interest to the American scientific community. Because we had adequate financial resources, we were able to attract the best Yugoslav talent to work on projects of interest to us. For example, there was a program to map the human genome and this was back in the 1980s. The Yugoslavs were second in finishing this map. They now have a company in California which continues this work. So we had the best and the brightest working on our projects.

We worked in agriculture, fisheries, mining, and geology. I think it was a marvelous, cost-effective program. The science program spawned many cooperative efforts between the Yugoslav scientists and a U.S. government agency, such as NIST (the National Institute for Science and Technology). So the two scientific communities became quite close with many resulting cooperative efforts. I think some excellent work was being done in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. There have been some outstanding scientists spawned in those areas - people that laity never heard of, but that the scientific community really appreciated - e.g. Nikola Tesla. In fact, I was so impressed by the

capabilities of some of the Slav scientists that I tried, even when I worked later in the private sector, to resurrect the exchange program. Warren Christopher, when he was the secretary, gave lip service to these scientific endeavors, but in fact, the department essentially did away with it. There is not much left today of a science program in the Foreign Service.

My job really was to keep Washington abreast of science developments in Yugoslavia as well as to foster international cooperation in scientific program. I was not a scientist, so that I emphasized the latter role. A science program proved useful in other ways as well. Whenever there was state visit, it was almost mandatory that some agreements be signed. Science exchanges were always a natural for this kind of diplomacy. Science exchanges were not controversial and served the purpose of showing a close working relationship between two countries.

*Q: You were in Belgrade as the country was falling apart. Were you in Belgrade when Slovenia broke away and what was the embassy's view on that?*

HUTSON: That was an almost bloodless separation. Let me go back to when I first arrived in Belgrade. I think I have already mentioned that I had difficulties receiving medical clearance and that therefore my transfer was done in rather hectic conditions. On the day I arrived in Belgrade, an annual regional science attaché conference was starting in Zagreb. I went there as quickly as I could. The Croats had extended some welcome, by arranging for the conferees to attend a concert, for example. Included also was a visit to an art museum which was featuring works of art collected by a Croat who had lived in Berlin during WW II. We were shown the collection proudly by the Croats. My Serb friends and I were nauseated. The art was obviously Jewish; one could almost see the blood dripping from it. We walked out. The Croats were completely oblivious to what they were doing. It was hard to believe how little they understood about history and their participation in it.

The tension at the conference was quite high, some of it stemming from the relationship between Consul General Mike Einik and Ambassador Zimmermann. Mike was a fine officer; he most recently was our ambassador in Macedonia, although I think he is retired now. As I think I mentioned earlier, I had been interested at an earlier stage in becoming the political officer in Zagreb, only to be told that I was not qualified since I had not served in Belgrade. This was at the time of the "Croatian spring" (early 1970s) when all political reporting from constituent posts in Yugoslavia had to go through the embassy. Those days passed by the 1980s, but there were still tensions between Zagreb and Belgrade. It is almost pre-ordained that the view from a constituent post like Zagreb is most likely to be different than the view from Belgrade - although no one saw Franjo Tudjman in a positive light.

Zimmermann could not have been a better ambassador. He knew Yugoslavia inside out and had great contacts, even though he could not speak to Milosevic for a long time. After Warren was recalled, Bob Rackmales was the chargé. I happened to be the duty

officer one Saturday in spring 1992 when Radovan Karadzié and Nikola Koljević walked into the embassy and asked to meet with senior officers. The chargé and the political counselor sat down with them and listened to them asking for assistance to get rid of Milosevic. That dumb-founded us. That was an interesting development which went nowhere.

After Warren departed, the embassy was not quite as focused as it had been. Zimmermann was convinced that Bosnia would become independent; he was sympathetic to Izetbegović. I could understand his point of view, even though I think in part Zimmermann's views were driven by his desire to get back at Milosevic. So, in part, our relationships with Yugoslavia were driven by personal animosities.

*Q: Was the embassy's view that Slovenia's independence was not a serious matter because it had never really been an integral part of Yugoslavia? What was the embassy's view on that break-up?*

HUTSON: As I said, I don't think the embassy was greatly concerned by Slovenia's move. Zimmermann, in his excellent book, lays the blame on the Slovenes who apparently were not at all concerned by what their secession might do to the rest of Yugoslavia. I didn't sense at the time that this was the beginning of the end of the republic. I thought that Slovenia's secession would not necessarily result in the complete break-up of Yugoslavia. In fact, since Stjepan Mesic - now the president of Croatia - was the president of Yugoslavia at the time - they had a rotating presidency. He was viewed as a reasonable guy even though eventually many people believe he led the break up of the country.

The Slovenes had always shown an independent streak and had been known to go their own way even while part of Yugoslavia. So I think the consensus was that Yugoslavia could survive as one country even without Slovenia, although there were some expert who fully understood that Slovenia secession was the beginning of the end of the nation of Yugoslavia.

*Q: Was the embassy monitoring Kosovo in those days?*

HUTSON: An interesting question. The only time I was ever advised to change the tone of my reporting was after my first trip to Kosovo. I went there and found a "Potemkin village". I talked to Albanian Kosovar officials, but there were always Serbian officials monitoring these conversations. The latter were clearly in control. When I returned to Belgrade, I wrote a rather pessimistic cable about the situation as I saw it. P.J. Nichols, the economic counselor, was my boss; he was very kind to me and usually passed on my drafts without making any changes. However, in this occasion, he suggested that I re-write the whole report and concentrate on issues related to the science program. I became acquainted with a number of Kosovars. When I returned in 1995 as the deputy chief of the Border Monitoring Commission (ICFY), my interlocutor was Mikhail Kertes who was the head of Customs. In the book written by Mischa Glennings, Kertes appears as the

arms supplier to the Serbs outside of Serbia. As heads of Customs, he had a lot of resources at his disposal to corrupt whatever bureaucracy he had to in order to serve his mission.

We would talk to Kertes about the monitoring of the border between Montenegro and Bosnia. Milosevic had been forced to apply some sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs. So we were at border crossings monitoring traffic to make sure that the sanctions were being applied. In our meetings with Kertes, he would bring out a bottle and dispense drinks and then the talk would start. He once told me that he knew of my great fondness for the Kosovars; that presumably was based on my experiences when I was the science attaché. Apparently, my disapproval of Serb behavior in Kosovo had become known; in fact, I thought their behavior was outrageous. Although I didn't think I had made a big thing of my views, apparently it became known and followed me wherever I went. I think my views became overstated, but it is true that some of the worst criminal elements in various countries come from that part of the former Yugoslavia.

*Q: You were in Belgrade when Croatia and Serbia split. What were your views on that event?*

HUTSON: I tended to have some sympathy for the Serbs for trying to hold the country together. The army was a positive force in that struggle; it was Serb dominated. I didn't really want to believe what I was told was happening - e.g. the shelling of Vukovar. Before that happened, I had gone out along the Danube to do some reporting. I had stopped in Borovo Selo, a town near Vukovar. That was where the trouble started when allegedly the Croats came and run up their flag in the center of town. Then it is said some local militia got drunk and bet each other that they could take that flag down. That is how the shooting started. This was in August, I believe. Serbs crossed the Danube into Serbia as the Serbs took flight. I was monitoring that. I will never forget walking along the Danube and stumbling across a picnic area which was filled with some of those local militia sitting there with their guns. I sat down to talk to one of these militiamen. I asked him what was going on; he said there was just some shooting, but that it was the beginning of a much more serious confrontation. He predicted a major battle. There was a certain mood that struck me; the combatants had built an aura of inevitability. I suppose this enmity went back for generations, although I don't think I sensed during my first tour in Yugoslavia. But it sure happened during my second. I had no clue that it would be as bloody as it turned out to be. I remember Larry Eagleburger predicting spillage of blood up to combatants' knees. He knew those people and was very accurate in his predictions.

I would like to return to an issue you raised earlier. During the time of the break-up of the republic, many of the senior officers, like Eagleburger, were old Yugoslav hands. They had to recuse themselves from any involvement in the making of U.S. policy in the Yugoslav area because of their previous involvement with Zastava, the manufacturer of the ill-fated "Yugo" auto. Eagleburger had been a member of the Kissinger and Associates firm and had a financial interest in that enterprise. I think that the unwillingness of turning to the old Yugoslav experts in the Department made our policy

development much more difficult and perhaps even misguided. Jim Swihart, later our ambassador in Lithuania, was the head of the EUR division handling Yugoslavia. I knew him from my first tour in Belgrade when he was a junior officer in the political section. He knew what was going on and was very accurate in his predictions. He was replaced by Michael Habib, who had been the DCM in Vienna. He was a fine officer, but knew very little about the situation in Yugoslavia. It was a poor assignment; the department needed an experienced officer like Swihart. Habib's deputy was Laura Clerici - a consular officer known as "screeching Clerici". She also didn't have a clue about what was going or about what had previously occurred in the area. You add this lack of experience to Secretary Baker's proclivity for getting advice only from a small group of "insiders" and you can see why our policy was so misguided. Everybody assumed that Larry Eagleburger, the deputy secretary, would take care of our Yugoslav policy, but he had in effect recluse himself from partaking in that development because of his ties to Kissinger and Associates.

Part of the problem also stemmed from the Department's somewhat rigid career requirements. An officer had to have had certain experiences before being considered qualified for a vacancy. It was a serious departure from previous practices when old Yugoslav hands ran our policy toward that part of the world.

*Q: That part of the world was a very complicated area. You had to have had considerable background in it if you were to develop any sensible policy. I have noticed from my own experience and from talking to the "old Yugoslav" hands an allegiance to either the Croatians or the Serbians. There is a pernicious split. I have been shocked doing these interviews by listening to some people who defended the Serbs for their activities in Bosnia. There is a residual Serb allegiance–almost–from people who should have been completely unbiased observers.*

HUTSON: I think your observation is 100% on the money. I am as guilty of this partisanship as many of my colleagues. I should add that now, anytime I pick up a book about that part of the world, I look in the index for the word "Jasenovac." If that name isn't there, I put the book down because I consider that it is an incomplete discussion. You cannot begin to understand what the Serbs did until you recognize what was done at Jasenovac where hundreds of thousands Serbs, Jews and Gypsies were slaughtered by the Ustashe Quisling government with a ferocity which appalled even the SS. I was the duty officer when Birch Bayh - former senator - then a lawyer representing a large pharmaceutical company said that I had to do something because people were clogging up the roads with their tractors. These were Serbs in eastern Slavonia seeking refuge from the Ustashe who were "ethnic cleansing." I later interviewed these escapees in refugee camps. These Serbs had heard stories from their childhoods about how their families had been slaughtered by the Bosnians; it therefore didn't take much to set the population in panic. There was not much we Americans could do. Peter Galbraith, who later was in Zagreb, took some heroic steps when confronted with similar situations. We should have done the same thing, We had a propensity to ally ourselves with those we knew. It was said by many in the embassy that one should really listen to the Serbs because they had a

point of view of history which was "compelling" because they understood the situation– which we foreigners could not since we had not lived though these many decades of history.

I love the Serbs, but I will be the first to tell you that they are their own worst enemies. One also has to understand the Serb concept of "cutting off your nose to spite your face" (the Serbs have a wonderful word 'ignat' for that concept) If you don't understand that predilection, then you will see the Serbs as people who will take actions which are the most damaging to their interests. But if you understand their point of view, then I think you can sympathize with their point of view. A friend of mine who worked with the International Rescue Committee after the start of the Bosnian war was fired from his job because he insisted that if humanitarian supplies were to be delivered to Sarajevo, then you had to get Serbian permission or at least acquiescence. But the head of the UNHCR in Belgrade, Judith Kumin wouldn't hear of it. So my friend, Gus Konturas got sacked. In part I think also stems from Gus' unorthodox of dealing with his female boss and the bureaucracy. He was as likely to throw his arms around her shoulder and say, with the charm of a Greek god, "How're you doing, babe?" That may have also prejudiced Kumin against him. She is now the spokesperson for UNHCR in Geneva.

*Q: In 1992, you were reassigned. What was next?*

HUTSON: The science position in Belgrade was being cut since the program had been brought to an end. Bob Rackmales asked me whether I would take charge of the Kosovo portfolio. It was the first and last time in my career that I turned down an assignment. I considered the offer for 24 hours and finally concluded that this was an assignment with nothing but heartaches. When I returned to Belgrade in 1990, I said that I wanted to be there when they turned the lights out. But I really had no appetite to tackle insoluble problems like Kosovo.

Kosovo had not yet reached the crisis stage, but it was a loud ticking bomb. I think I made the right decision; I needed to get away from that part of the world for a while. I did return in 1995, left and returned again later. You can be involved in the Slav world over a period of time, but not full time continuously.

In 1992, I was in Colorado on home leave. I got a call from the Department announcing that it was ending the science program in Belgrade. It was then that Rackmales proposed the Kosovo job. When I turned that down, I joined a task force which worked on what had been Yugoslavia. Those who had been in Belgrade and whose jobs had been abolished by changing nature of our situation in that part of the world were assigned to the task force. Earle St. Aubin Scarlett was one of my colleagues on that task force. We each got a little office and worked on this task force. In fact, it was an invitation to go out and find yourself a permanent assignment.

So we shopped around for jobs. Earle was a Jamaican-American, a former professor with a Ph.D. - a brilliant raconteur. Zimmermann couldn't stand him because Earle could

never finish an assignment on time. One day, in the secure room, the ambassador turned to Earle and said, gritting his teeth in a very unusual manner for Warren, clenched his teeth and said that he wanted a certain cable on his desk by 2:00 p.m. I have never seen Zimmermann in that mood!

So we were all on this "task force" together. One day, Earle turns to me and says that he is having breakfast with Colin Powell the next day, but that he didn't want it known. Powell was then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. It is not often that someone of Earle's ranks has breakfast with the chairman. In any case, the next day he came and reported that he not only had breakfast with Powell, but also lunch with Secretary Cheney and the Joint Chiefs. That night, Cheney went on TV to announce that we would not put any troops in the former Yugoslavia republic. Earle had at one time covered Bosnia-Herzegovina; he knew the territory. He knew how to deal with the "natives." He had access in the U.S. government far beyond what his rank would have suggested. I later found out that Earle's sister had been one of Powell's high school classmates. So he grew up in the Jamaican-American community in New York.

I finally located myself a job. Earle, I think went to Brazil - Sao Paulo - as political officer. I ended up as deputy principal officer in Bishkek - Kyrgyzstan. Taking that job was the greatest career mistake I made in my life. It was a new embassy, but the department was not willing to give me the title of deputy chief of mission. We were housed in a very small place - a one story bungalow really. It had a lot of partitions. We worked long hours - there was nothing else to do.

One day an American working for an NGO came in seeking advice on some issue. He came to my office and we sat for some time discussing the matter. At some stage, Ambassador Ed Hurwitz came in and told me that I shouldn't be talking to this man; I should be writing a political report or something. This was right in front of the visitor. Later, I went to Hurwitz' office and told him that I hoped he would never do that again– the language was a little stronger. I was furious. I thought that he had been exceedingly rude; not only had he berated me in front of a visitor, but he also had no idea who it was or why he was in my office. I was just helping an American citizen. That was just one of the encounters I had with the ambassador.

*Q: The tiniest embassy I ever saw. What was your impression of the country when you arrived in late 1992?*

HUTSON: I felt I was getting into a box that had been sealed for 70 years. It had popped open all of the sudden and the people inside began to peek over the edge–very hesitantly. They were so naive about the world; they were wonderfully fresh in their insights. Ed Hurwitz was the ambassador; he and I parted ways after about five months. I did my best work of my career in Bishkek. My Russian came back to me so that I could really use it.

*Q: What were we doing in Kyrgyzstan?*

HUTSON: Secretary Baker wrote a wonderful book in which he discusses this issue and related ones. As the Soviet Union was breaking up, the U.S. government decided that it was important to have some representation in all of the new republics that were becoming independent nations. So the department sent people out everywhere. Kyrgyzstan was a place that would have been forgotten except for one person: their foreign minister, Rosa Otunbayeva. She was a very competent person. She had been their ambassador in Washington first. So as soon as the U.S. government decided on its approach, lots and lots of NGOs decided that there would be money available for programs in the former republics, including Kyrgyzstan.

The foreign minister encouraged the NGOs in their quests. She facilitated the initiation of their programs. She inspired them. We had people lined up at the door of the embassy, asking that we make appointments with the foreign minister. Of course, they knew nothing about the country; they had to be taught about how to get around. It was a great moment. I helped convince McKinney Russell of USIA to open a cultural center, even though Hurwitz really objected. One was opened in Bishkek with the assistance of Ian Kelly who was then the regional cultural officer based in Vienna. He was great.

While Hurwitz was away and I was the chargé, I had the chance to sing "White Christmas" over national television. Ian announced during the same program that USIA was going to open a cultural center. No one had bothered to tell Hurwitz of that decision which didn't go over very well.

But the opportunities for us in Kyrgyzstan were just enormous. We gave the country two military hospitals which had been in storage in Great Britain almost since WWII. It took two train loads to get all the material to Bishkek. The U.S. military installed them. This happened after I left, but I was told it was quite an event with local girls hardly able to contain themselves at the sight of the GIs. For them, marrying one of them was a ticket out of Kyrgyzstan. This was particularly true of the Russians who really had no place to go. About 20% of the population was of Russian ethnicity.

I became a personal friend of Feliks Kulov, the country's vice president. Hurwitz told me to stop meeting with him. I would guess that President Akayev asked that I cease and desist. Kulov had been a former KBG major general and undoubtedly was viewed as a threat to Akayev. He was very personable; we used to drink together. It is interesting how intense a relationship can develop in a new post where you have to work 24/7. Of course, the ambassador had the right to tell me to break off my relationship. But, lo and behold, Madeleine Albright, with whom I seldom agreed, decided to take up Kulov's case primarily because he was viewed as the leader of the opposition. As far as I know, he is still in prison. If I should ever get back to Bishkek, I am going to ask my old friend John O'Keefe, who is now our ambassador there to try to find a way for me to see Kulov. Someone should be remembering him because he does not deserve to be in jail. (In the "Rose Revolution" of early 2005, Kulov was finally freed, and is back in politics, running for Vice President on the strongest ticket.)

*Q: What was the feelings about Akayev?*

HUTSON: Akayev was viewed as enlightened. He played the game well. He was the hope of the future. With him in Bishkek and Otunbayeva in Washington, Kyrgyzstan seemed to have a bright future. The deputy foreign minister was Makoff, the son of a famous Russian writer. He was enlightened, worldly. So the future seemed filled with opportunities. Unfortunately, the country really has few natural resources. That became the reality.

*Q: What happened with Hurwitz?*

HUTSON: He didn't like me from the moment he heard my name. We had a couple of mutual friends - Marty Wennick and Bill Farrand. Hurwitz was an enigma to me because he was a very quiet guy. Farrand could make Hurwitz laugh. We had a meeting one time, when we were all in stitches. I thought then I could get along with Hurwitz. The assignment was a great opportunity for me and there were no other bidders for the job. I had had some household effects stored in Antwerp from my days in Belgrade. I wanted to stop there to see what I wanted to take to Bishkek. I had another reason to stop in western Europe. One of the good sources of information about Kyrgyzstan was Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty which was then based in Munich. The head of those organizations was my good friend Kevin Klose, a former American correspondent stationed in Moscow. I called him and said that I might drop by to see him to get briefed on Kyrgyzstan. So I sent a cable to Bishkek outlining my itinerary and asking for approval. The reply said that I was not to stop in either Antwerp or Munich; I was to arrive in Bishkek ASAP.

I disregarded those instructions and stopped in Antwerp even though I didn't get my stuff out of storage. But in any case, this episode made me *persona non grata* from the day I arrived.

As you know, I am an old consular officer. I was assigned to Bishkek as the number 2 in the embassy. When I got to the post, I thought that we should register the few Americans that were in the country. There was a small group of missionaries in Kyrgyzstan that was teaching English, while also doing engineering work. I told the ambassador one day that I was going to those groups to start the registration process. He told me not to go. He considered them a "cult." That came as a surprise to me, but he had been in country for a period of time and I assumed he knew what he was talking about. But I did nosey about and found that some of our local staff were studying English surreptitiously with this group. It was the only English language program in country and they wanted to improve their language skills. I further found out that this group consisted not only of Americans, but included Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians. It was most likely to have been a group of fundamental Christians of some kind. So I began to wonder about Hurwitz' views. He had fought for the rights of Soviet Jewry for all of his career; why did he suspect a Christian group? Why did he call them a "cult"?

He even so characterized them when talking to the Foreign Minister and even perhaps the

president. That was wrong! I called him on it. The fundamentalists also called him on it; they were going to protest to their headquarters which I think was in Chicago.

As it turned out, I happened to be chargé over Christmas of that year. Ed's wife was German; she worked for the German foreign assistance program and he was going to spend some time with her. As I have mentioned before, I love to sing and I participated in Christmas caroling whenever I could. I told Ed that I was going to organize a caroling in Bishkek. He told me not to do it. He thought it was too dangerous. That really puzzled me. He thought that the Kyrgyz wouldn't understand. At one point, someone said that I should listen to Ed and then do what I thought was right. Which is what I did; I organized a Christmas caroling session. We sang at the Orthodox Cathedral, at the national opera, on TV, at the foreign ministry. There the foreign minister said to me that he hoped that on the following Christmas his English would be good enough so that he could join the caroling group. I think our efforts were a great success. We invited that "engineering" group–whom Hurwitz had tagged as a "cult"–and found that they were wonderful people. They were very happy to be invited to their embassy.

When Ed came back and heard about what I had done, he was furious. But the thing that did me in was when he turned me in to the inspector general. That really ended my career. It cost me thousands of dollars to clear my name. But even after I did that, no one would have me and that is how I ended up in Bosnia. I have mentioned that by the time I arrived in Bishkek, a number of NGOs had already established themselves. They came to the embassy for advice and assistance as did a number of the recently established embassies - German, Russian, Chinese, British, etc. They also turned to some to us for advice. Hurwitz used to get very upset by those visits and told us to get those people out of the embassy. He didn't want to see them and he didn't want anyone on his staff spending time with them.

When I got to Bishkek, they were making a movie about Genghis Khan which had Charleston Heston in it. Parenthetically, I must say that I feel some sympathy for that son-of-a-bitch, that fascist, now that he has Alzheimer's. As president of the NRA, what he did was the opposite of everything that I thought was right. I feel very strongly about that organization particularly since my daughter was murdered by a man with a gun about ten years ago. Heston only had a cameo appearance; John Saxon was the lead actor. We became friends. He was dating an FSN; his driver eventually became my driver because at one time, Hurwitz complained that I was using too much over-time for my driver. There were no lights on the streets of Bishkek, there were ten foot deep holes in the sidewalks in the center of town; so that traveling by car was the only safe method. We were paying our drivers maybe $10-15 per week. But the ambassador became upset because I was "using too much overtime." So when Saxon left, I hired his driver - a wonderful Russian engineer who used to work in a torpedo factory. Just like the Russians to build a torpedo factory in a land-locked country!

*Q*: *They tested their torpedoes in Issyk Kul, a very deep sea, where they could not be observed. Issyk Kul is a large lake, one of the highest in the world.*

HUTSON: There is a fish from there which when smoked is a real delicacy.

So I had my own driver over whom the ambassador had no control. There was another issue which came between us. Senators Lugar and Nunn had passed legislation which authorized that funds be made available for undergraduate scholarships good for one year for students from the former Soviet Union republics. Great idea. Hurwitz was totally opposed. He didn't want us to participate. I was on the other side. I was invited by the Kyrgyz to be a judge in a competition for these scholarships primarily to test their language skills. I told them I would be glad to observe, but that I couldn't really participate in the selection process. The person who was running this competition was a Russian from the ministry of education. Nice young man. The competition was held and Kyrgyz and Russians participated. When the final selections were made, they did not include a single ethnic Russian. The fellow from the ministry came to me and said that the competition was not held objectively. The Kyrgyz position was that the Russians would never return. I told them that that was palpably discriminatory and that we could not accept that position. So they fired the Russian employee and I hired him for the embassy. Hurwitz was opposed to that; so I put him on the payroll of a non-profit which I called "Consultimate International Inc" for $50 per month. That got me in a lot of trouble.

This non-profit began its own educational counseling service. I asked friends at Amerika Haus in Munich, Bonn and Frankfurt to send us their year old college catalogues. Ed Hurwitz sequestered those boxes in his office–you can imagine how many boxes there were. He was compiling evidence against me for misuse of the U.S. pouch. I should mention that I was also the AID person in the embassy. The regional supervisor was an AID employee by the name of Paula Finney, who was the wife of our ambassador in Almaty, Kazakhstan. They have since divorced. She was the regional general project officer; she covered Kyrgyzstan from Almaty. When she came to town, I was her embassy contact. One time, I took her to Hotel Dostuk which was a hole. I remember arguing with hotel "administrator" for a half an hour that we had a reservation; he finally made a room available. The next day, Paula came to complain that she hadn't slept a wink; someone in the room next to her had been murdered and there had been a huge commotion. That put an end to our use of that hotel.

We had a number of AID personnel studying the delivery of secondary health systems, who came to Bishkek who had to put up somewhere. They would rent vehicles and go into the countryside during the day and then return to Bishkek for the night. I saw the same thing in Africa where these consultants got paid lots of money for two week stints– it is a great racket that I have tried to join, but have not been successful. I suggested to these people that they take 10% of their grant in hard cash and give it someone to start a business. Cash was a scarce commodity in Bishkek; reports were plentiful. That was my general attitude towards AID projects; it still is. Later on, I was supposed to go out to evaluate economic and business education in Central Asia for AID. The offer was withdrawn, I think, when they found out more about me; I would undoubtedly have given the program a negative rating.

Hurwitz saw the NGOs and the international organizations as problems. I didn't. I took my friends - the driver, the education guy - and suggested that they form a travel service company. This company would take care of all travel requirements of these official visitors. There was an organization in Almaty called "Statistica" which provided such services. It was going to open a subsidiary office in Bishkek, but never did. I had started long before a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization which I told my friends they could use as a base. They could advertise through it. I bought them a fax machine; they rented a little apartment and turned it into an office. The first customer was Paula Finney who was going to evaluate a proposal by a well known Central Asian scholar, Martha Brill Olcott – who is now at Brookings. She was then a consultant to the secretary of state, to the secretary of defense, to the CIA director on central Asia. She was a real expert on the area. We were good friends. I suggested that we use this new organization to accommodate Paula Finney and her team from USIAD Washington. I swear that I told her that that was the plan and I fully revealed my relationship to the organization.

I fully admit that I was going to finance this AID project through my organization. It would have cost the non-profit very little - perhaps $350 for the rent of the apartment and some equipment. Paula came and the work began. She went to the Hotel Issykul which had a Korean restaurant on the top floor. As a matter of fact, the whole top floor was run by Koreans - and run well. Somewhere along the way, Paula Finney asked her interpreter what the relationship of the "Top of the World" - that is the organization I put together– was to the U.S. government. She was told that it was an embassy operation or perhaps he even told her that it was mine. He didn't really know; he had been hired as an interpreter and knew nothing about such matters.

Paula then decided that she would raise the issue with Ed Hurwitz. He then wrote a report to the Inspector General, accusing me as being involved in a profit-making operation - the company had just started, so that this was a slight exaggeration. He called me into his office and told me that he was going to send this report. I asked to see it, but was refused. So I turned around and told him that I was leaving. Larry Napper was the head of EUR/SOV; he was no friend of mine, but he was a friend's of the ambassador. Jim Shumaker, an old Yugoslav hand, was also working in EUR as Napper's deputy and he advised me to leave Bishkek as quickly as possible. That is what I did. I left Kyrgyzstan.

When I returned to Washington, I went to the I.G. and explained the situation. I told them everything. A while later, my daughter was killed and I went almost around the bend in grief and in the American mania for guns. The Department sent me to Barbados. I was there for almost a year when I got a cable from the I.G. ordering me to Washington to face charges.

I returned and once again told the I.G. the whole story of what had happened in Bishkek. I always respected I.G. people and expected a fair hearing. Some months later, I got a summary of the investigation which found me guilty on a number of charges. It was a prosecutatory document, not an investigative one. Finally, after hearing my rebuttals, I

was told that I would be suspended without pay for ten days. I could hardly believe it and then went out to hire a lawyer. That was the smartest move I ever made; I should have done right from the beginning. It took another three years for us to win our grievance charges. The department ended up paying $17,000 for lawyers fees out of my total costs for those services of $27,000. But despite this success in the legal avenues, it was the end of my career.

*Q: You did however continue to work in the international field by doing such things as monitoring elections.*

HUTSON: I mentioned earlier that I quit the Foreign Service in 1980 and became the executive director of "The American Council of Young Political Leaders." I was interested in training programs conducted overseas for young leaders who wanted to take on leadership roles at local levels. In part that stemmed from my own interests; I considered once retiring from the Foreign Service to run for some local political position in Nebraska.

While in Barbados, after my daughter's death, I did not function very well. It took me a long time to get over the shock of that event. First I worked for a politically important ambassador (Jeannette Hyde) - a friend of Al Gore's whom it took about a year to be confirmed. During this interim, I worked for Tain Tompkins - a wonderful human being. I was the acting DCM - that took sometime to establish. Tain was an expert on the Middle East. In any case, he carried me for that year when I really was not functioning. I intend to write a book about my daughter - about her life, friends, accomplishments. Despite my psychological condition, I was viewed in Barbados as the "golden hair" boy for this politically important ambassador. We got along well. I was on paper the economic-political counselor. But I acted as the DCM.

When the government set up a commission to monitor the borders of the former Yugoslav republics, my name came up on the computer as being a Serbian-Croatian speaker. The department called me and said it wanted to send me back to the area to monitor some border crossing point. I was at that time about to become the chargé in Grenada. There had been only one American there, but thanks to Congresswoman Maxine Waters and the Congressional Black Caucus, it was decided to leave the office in Grenada open. Ollie Anderson had been the chargé but he had been reassigned and no successor had been picked. So it was decided to send me to hold the fort. I told whoever called me from the department about the border monitoring job that I was already slated to go to Grenada. I went to the ambassador and told her that I really wanted to pursue the Grenada opportunity, but that after the regular chargé arrived, I was to go to Bosnia–or somewhere in the area–for ninety days to do the monitoring job.

She didn't understand what I said; I don't think she understood what a "90 day TDY" was all about. I probably should have taken the time to explain to her what was involved. She asked me whether that was what I wanted to do and I said "Yes". The more I discussed this TDY assignment with people in the department, the more they recognized not only

that I knew that languages, but that I had considerable familiarity with the territory. I think my background became of increasing interest to the department after Richard Holbrooke fired Chris Hill and some other people who were experts in the area. I had met Holbrooke after being offered the DCM position in Sarajevo by John Menzies. That meeting took seven or seventeen seconds. He looked at me and asked me whether I was not the guy who had resigned sometime earlier. Holbrooke had been the politically-appointed assistant secretary for Asian affairs at the time of that episode. Either he was going through a *pro forma* meeting or it just dawned on him that I had resigned in protest against the Carter administration's policies. He was not one to hire someone who might make public waves and not be loyal. So that was the end of that possibility.

I made the appointment with Holbrooke through a third party, whose name now escapes me. Between the time the appointment was scheduled and the time it actually took place, Holbrooke had fired his whole EUR/EEY staff. Chris Hill, who had been the deputy in EUR/EEY was promoted to chief of that office. He was shell shocked by the amount of responsibilities that had just been dumped on him.

The third party was sent out to Serbia as the deputy to the Swedish general who was in charge of ICFY (International Commission on Former Yugoslavia). The general's name was Bo Pelnis - a colorful guy who wrote a book about his experiences with ICFY. This guy, not too long after arrival in Serbia, was made the political counselor in Tel Aviv. So the department asked me whether I would be interested in that deputy's job. I went to the ambassador and told her that although the assignment was only for three months, it sounded right down my alley. She said okay.

I live all these short term assignments to the fullest. It was a fascinating and intense period. This was 1995. As I said, I was the deputy chief of the Border Monitoring Mission of ICFY. We had 22 border stations down to the Montenegrin coast. We had 200 people working for us. About 50 of those were Americans – mostly former special forces and enlisted personnel. The Brits were great; there were a lot of Scandinavians involved, Russians, too. We were trying to determine whether the sanctions that Milosevic, under U.S. pressures had imposed on the Bosnian Serbs, were being applied as intended. The sanctions related primarily against military materiel.

It was fascinating. By the time I arrived in February, the Swedish general had been replaced by a taciturn Finnish general. When he was absent, I was to take the issues up with Milosevic. He would not receive me; I guess he too had heard of my previous life in his neck of the woods.

I think there was a significant amount of materiel going to the Serbs, not by road which we monitored quite well, but probably through the use of Yugoslav National Army helicopters over which we had no jurisdiction. We knew that the Serbs were receiving the materiel; we could observe them buying and selling it. I tried to get NSA, CIA and DIA to give us some air photography assistance; that was part of my job. I even formed a committee headed by a British brigadier by the name of Ian McLeod. He was our special

envoy to Montenegro. But that didn't help much. Either the weather was too bad for photography or the film hadn't come our some other excuse; we never did get what was needed in the way of aerial photography.

We were based right opposed Srebrenica. That is the place which caused the Dutch to be so severely criticized for allegedly failing to protect a group of Muslims who had tried to take refuge in that town. But in fact, they were very helpful to us. They spotted the traces of the helicopters and told us about them.

*Q: Do you think our presence made much of a difference?*

HUTSON: I don't think so. We allegedly showed the world that we were serious about peace keeping in the former Yugoslavia. We sent in monthly reports to the UN–that is how I met Madeline Albright for the first time. We reported what we had factually found. The totality of all the papers would suggest that nothing was going on - i.e. the embargo was a great success. Madeline Albright and her deputy Skip Gnehm were telling everyone about the terrible things that were going on. I told them that they were not using information they had received from us. I went to New York to see where the disconnect was. I had gone to the intelligence agencies and they did not seem to be the source of the information. The first time I went to New York I saw Gnehm and that worked out well.

There is a story that I should tell at this stage. The co-chairs of ICFY while I was the deputy of the Border Mission were Thorvald Stoltenberg - a former Norwegian minister - and Lord David Owen. Owen had no time for Bill Clinton to bring him up to speed on what the ICFY was doing. He was accustomed to dealing with Cy Vance. Owen was brilliant and arrogant, with whom I got along right away. It turned out that a former lady friend and political supporter of his was one of my friends. When I sat next to Owen at our first dinner together, I told him that I thought we had a mutual acquaintance. That is how that relationship started. We got along famously after that.

I did notice the tensions in New York among the delegations, including ours. So when my assignment to Serbia was about to come to an end, I said that I would create a job in Geneva because that was where ICFY got its financial support. We had no appropriation set aside for us; we had to beg from other international activities. I wanted to set up a job in Geneva for me as a liaison between ICFY and the UN organizations. I got a lot of support for the concept. I had to see Madeline Albright to get U.S. approval.

So while back in Washington, I set up a meeting to see her in New York. It was scheduled for a Friday, but it did not come off. I stayed around in New York and was told that Albright wanted to see me. The meeting was rescheduled for 4:30 p.m. At 4:15, I got a call from Crown Prince Alexander Karageorgevic. He told me that he understood that I had been telling people that he had some plan for bringing peace to the Balkans. He went on to say that he didn't have the faintest idea what I was talking about nor did he understand why I was saying such things since we had never met. I was speechless. How did he hear about this? How did he knew where I was?

In fact, I did have a plan which I had been discussing with people. Part of the plan was for a royal presence - which the Crown Prince was. So I told him of my plan. He told me to go ahead and tell it to the secretary. David Owen had already decided to leave his post as co-chair of ICFY. So I there really was no longer a *raison d'etre* for the Geneva job. But I had picked up the support of Crown Prince Alexander. So I proceeded to the meeting with Albright and spent a fascinating hour with her to talk about my plan. She knew Alexander, so I brought her greetings from him and from Dusko Doder, my old *Washington Post* friend when he was a correspondent there. She was interested in what I had to say. This all happened at about the time when an American pilot had been shot down and we were searching for him. That led her to say that she didn't think that the time was ripe for my plan.

I thought I had done good work. But days later, I began to hear that people thought that my plan was just crazy, particularly the aspect of restoring the monarchy. The United States was not in the business of putting people on thrones. I had the same reaction from Holbrooke after I briefed him on my plan. Of course, Alexander is back in the Baltics now. I suggest that if anyone is interested, they look at his Web site; he is doing wonderful work He had no political ambitions, even though people are trying to push him into a political role. So the Serbia-Montenegro issue remains unresolved.

*Q: Whatever happened to your assignment to Barbados?*

HUTSON: The ambassador in Barbados heard that I was seeking a job elsewhere. The chargé in Belgrade, Rudy Perina - a wonderful guy - talked to me about coming out as the DCM. He thought somehow or other, I should become involved again in Baltic affairs. I told him that I had a commitment to return to Barbados. I got a call from Jack Leonard from the Caribbean desk, suggesting that I return to Barbados promptly. He said I was in trouble for having been gone so long.

So I returned to find that not only that I was in trouble; in fact, as far as the ambassador was concerned, I was *persona non grata*. She didn't really want to see me. She asked me where I wanted to be - in the Baltics or Barbados. I said that I probably should be in the area that I knew best. She said okay. In the private sector, if you want to leave or are fired, you leave. In the department, there is a long process throughout which I had to stay in Barbados, even while the ambassador didn't want me. So it was a very bad time for me. The DCM-designate would have crucified me, if he could have.

I stayed in Barbados while the department was making up its mind. I thought I would be assigned to one of two jobs–DCM in Sarajevo or member of the sanctions task force, It didn't happen. I don't think there was anything personal; the assignments just couldn't be made. So I was jobless.

So I started getting into the OSCE monitoring. I was the first OSCE person to be officially assigned to the peace process. Charles B. Smith, Jr. was the expert; he knew all

that had taken place before we got there.

*Q: I think this might a good place to stop. We will pick your story later.*

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*Today is April 23, 2004. We will focus today on your time in Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan. When where you there? What were you doing there?*

HUTSON: I was there from July 23, 2003 to January 12, 2004. I got that assignment on a fluke. When Jerry Bremer came out of retirement to become our chief representative in Iraq, I volunteered to join him there. But, after months of waiting, nothing materialized. I had read an article in the "State Magazine" by a Richard Norland about working in Mazar-e Sharif. I called my friend Don Norland - a retiree - who suggested that I call his son Dick quickly because he was on his way to an overseas assignment. I did that and Dick suggested that I call Pat Haslach. This was the week end of the Fourth of July. I went in on Monday and two weeks later I was on my was to Afghanistan. Pat is a wonderful officer who just yesterday had her confirmation hearings to be our ambassador in Laos. They don't make officers like her anymore!

*Q: What did you find in Afghanistan in July 2003?*

HUTSON: I first of all should make it clear that I do not claim to have known much about Afghanistan. I had served in Iran many, many years earlier and knew some people who had served in Afghanistan. I was the CG in Moscow when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. I resigned in protest of the Carter administration's policy on that action. I followed events there passively: my first boss, James "Maurice" Ealum, had been chargé there and one of my last bosses, Ed Hurwitz, had been chargé there. So I knew people who had known the country well over a period of years. But when I went, I can't say that I was up to date.

When I arrived in Afghanistan, I spent about a week in Kabul getting ready to be the State Department representative to the UK provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Mazar-e Sharif. This was the first the non-U.S. entity of the sort. I spent about six months there. I probably went to Kabul every month or six weeks.

When I arrived in Kabul, we lived in a huge compound which was continuously under construction. By the time I left, the compound was in a continual lock-down status. We lived in "hooches" - containers. I bunked with eight or nine other guys in one of these edifices. The mess hall served some of the worst food I ever had to look at or eat.

I did not know what was going on outside the compound. That was one of the great curses of being assigned to embassy Kabul, although I am sure it happens in other places as well - e.g. Baghdad. One lives in a cocoon. The security situation was not terrible. Mazar-e Sharif, which was north of Kabul, was considered to be a lesser security risk.

The tension there stemmed primarily from factional disputes between warlords, some stemming from drug trafficking. This was in contrast to the Kabul-Kandahar corridor which was a real security problem; it was a very unstable situation. A good friend of mine was in Gardez, as the AID representatives. He told me that on 42 separate occasions his compound was subjected to mortar fire. That never happened in Mazar-e Sharif.

*Q: Who ran the American operations while you were there?*

HUTSON: That is an interesting question. When I arrived, Ambassador Robert Finn was in charge. He was summarily sacked soon after my arrival. I had known him slightly when he was the DCM in Zagreb. I had heard good things about him. When I arrived in Kabul, I called on him only to be told by him that he was leaving. My understanding was that this was the result of a house-cleaning operation; the ambassador, the DCM were removed. The AID director was fired a little later. That was Craig Buck with whom I had worked earlier in Central Asia and Bosnia and Kosovo; he was the best as far as I was concerned. But the powers-to-be just wanted a different team in Afghanistan. The current ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad was then just going through confirmation hearings. I guess Washington wanted to give him a free hand. There were also the Rumsfeld people who filled the slots of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group (ARG). That was not a bad idea; in fact something like that occurred in Bosnia when I was the deputy special representative for economic reconstruction. There were a half dozen other special envoys - all political appointees, all of whom acted somewhat independently driving our ambassador crazy. In the Afghan situation, the ARG came directly under the authority of the ambassador. That made sense.

*Q: In Kabul, what were your colleagues talking about*? *Were they happy? Did they think things were going well?*

HUTSON: They were miserable. First of all, there were unhappy with the personnel sweep at the top. They thought Bob Finn and DCM Brad Hansen were good people. They thought they had been shafted. The staff began to bail out. There was one person in the political section who had requested to be extended for a year and would have been the deputy political counselor, changed he mind when the changes were announced. She felt the way the wind was blowing. She decided to leave without the extension. The Department summarily cashiered two female offices who were at FSI for Dari training. I knew both. They were within a couple of weeks of leaving; were all packed only to be told that their assignment had been canceled.

The chargé was a very bright, capable officer, but lacking confidence. He was sent to Beijing as DCM–I guess on the theory that if you have screwed up in one place you can get a bigger job.

*Q: What was your assumption as to what laid behind this house-cleaning?*

HUTSON: I had a hard time understanding what was going on. I still don't fully

understand it and I suggest you talk to some of the people who were involved. I was on the periphery and didn't know the actors very well at the time. I knew Craig Buck. I had just started in Mazar-e Sharif when I heard that he had quit. He was one of the best AID directors I ever met. I had heard that he had quit. The next time I was in Kabul, I was standing in line at the mess hall when I ran into Craig. He was a complete professional who never spoke ill of any of his associates. He told me that he said to headquarters to take "this job and shove it." The word had reached him from the White House that changes in AID directorship was being contemplated. That was unusual in itself.

*Q: Tell us about the new ambassador.*

HUTSON: The new ambassador was Zalmay Khalilzad. He was a former Afghan citizen which in my mind raised a question about the wisdom of former nationals becoming the representative of the United States. I can't say that from my experiences he was a bad choice. I thought he did a pretty good job, although many people have very strong views about "Zal". I never heard any specifics, but I did hear a lot of discontent. A former boss of mine, who had been chargé, knew Zal when he was working for the Rand Corporation and later for the NSC. He used to say that he didn't want to be mentioned if I were writing or speaking to Zal. He came to Kabul after serving on the NSC where he had been responsible for Afghan and Iraq affairs.

The first thing that I heard was that the some people in power were not nearly as interested in having him in Kabul, but rather wanted him out of the NSC. He got to Kabul shortly before December 5, when Rumsfeld came for a visit, to Mazar-e Sharif. I had never met Zal, but I managed to establish a sort of relationships with him through Thomas E. Gouttierre, the dean of international programs at the University of Nebraska. That is where I hang my hat as a diplomatic associate. The dean was the sponsor of a center on Afghanistan studies. He had been Peace Corps volunteer and Zal's basketball coach. So he knew everyone in Afghanistan. The dean never said anything, either positive or negative, about Zal.

But through him, I did meet Zal. He came to Mazar-e Sharif about 45 minutes before Rumsfeld. The secretary was coming to meet the local warlord, Dostam and the Tajik warlord Mohammed Ustar Atar. I remember I had to fight with my British colleagues to be bale to use my own vehicle to go to the airport. They wanted to know why I had to go. I told them that it was after all my ambassador who was coming in. I told the British that in the Foreign Service it was customary to greet one's ambassador when he arrived at your post.

So I did meet Zaul and perhaps a three minute conversation - some of it in Dari. Later, I tried to call on him on a couple of occasions when I was in Kabul. But I was always short-stopped by the DCM. I don't think he wanted me to see the ambassador since I was viewed as a maverick–a reputation gained from my colorful cables. I tell it as I see it. The cables I wrote were all unclassified since we had no facility in Mazar-e Sharif for secure communications. I think the DCM would have liked to shred my reports and perhaps

would have liked to fire me, but I was receiving enough praise from readers of my cables in Washington that he couldn't really touch me or my messages. I never really got a feel for what Zaul was doing; his personal staff was huge which was separate from the embassy. As I said, he supervised the Pentagon people in the ARG; then he had many special assistants and press people. I had never seen so many people devoting their time to the press.

Zaul was confirmed around Thanksgiving. There was an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* about what this new ambassador was going to do. It was rather visionary. I later saw some e-mails which convinced me that he was not the author of the pieces coming out of Kabul. About Christmas time, there was an article in *The Washington Post*. Dick McGraw, who headed the P.R. staff in the ARG. He had worked for Rumsfeld in private industry (where I met the secretary briefly) and later became the deputy spokesperson for the Pentagon. I remember seeing McGraw in the cafeteria and mentioning that I thought the *Post* was pretty good. He said that he was surprised it had come out as well as it did since about 20 people had a hand in writing it. It put the most positive spin possible on what was going on in Afghanistan. I began to wonder why the American taxpayers should be paying the salary and associated costs of so many people in Kabul whose sole job was to write glowing press releases that would make the operation look good in the American media. Was that a necessary expense?

*Q: I want to go back to the story you tell about the two women Foreign Service officers who were in Dari language training only to be reassigned from Afghanistan to somewhere else in the world. Did that represent a bias against women?*

HUTSON: I don't think so. I think it was more the fact that they had been approved for assignment by a preceding regime at the American Embassy in Kabul. They were not chosen by Zaul or David Saidny, the DCM. I knew one quite well; she worked for me as my deputy when I was with the OHR. She may not have been right for the Kabul job; she has moved up in the ranks and is now the deputy head of our office in Pristina. I think after their jobs in Kabul were washed out, both went to the Sudan or Somalia. The other woman was a pol-mil expert; I think she was fantastic. But as I say, the change in assignments came because Zaul and his team had not selected these officers; they had been selected under a previous regime. It sort of reminds me of Holbrooke who when first assigned responsibility for Bosnia, just fired everybody working on the issue and brought his own people in.

*Q: Let's turn to Mazar-e Sharif. What was the situation there when you arrived.*

HUTSON: Mazar-e Sharif had a population of about 500,000 people before the war. It then grew to about 1 million due to the influx of refugees and displaced persons. It is one of Afghanistan's major cities. It is a major trading center with a long history. It had been the center of the northern alliance - the group that eventually assisted us in overthrowing the Taliban.

I got there on July 30. It was hot–hotter than anything I had ever experienced - 135%. It was dusty–no rain had fallen for six months. I had two vehicles and lots of security guards. It actually turned out to be relatively safe. As I said, I was assigned to a British unit from the Second Royal Anglian Rifles. I worked with the best possible English commander; he was fantastic. He had served in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia and Kosovo. He knew instinctively what had to be done.

I didn't really know what to expect. I didn't have a title; no one ever told me what to expect. I just created my own job description. First I was known as the "U.S. representative." When an AID officer was assigned to Mazar-e Sharif I became the "U.S. State Department representative." I was viewed as a political advisor (POLAD). The DCM said that we were "agents of change". That was our job.

As I said, the British colonel - Richard R. Davis - was fantastic. He was an engineer - a very tall man, about 6'6", soft spoken. His unit was the first non-American unit; the previous ones were all American. Each of them had had a POLAD attached to them. I was the fourth since the job was established. My predecessors had been in Mazar-e Sharif for roughly three months each. The Department kept looking for someone who would stay for a whole year but had not been successful. I ended up staying for six months, before being relieved by another officer In January.

It was a fascinating assignment. It was without a doubt the most challenging and interesting and satisfying assignment of my almost 40 years of service.

The colonel's nickname was "Dickie." That sounded very strange to our American ears. I had a Foreign Office colleague who I well remember one day rasing her hand and saying :"Dickie" as he was talking to his troops. I could never have called him that! He was the age of my son! He was damn good. My only problem was understanding his British accent.

I mentioned that Rumsfeld came to Mazar-e Sharif. That was a big deal. The British invested a lot of time and effort into this visit. They did a fantastic job. Rumsfeld was accompanied by the British ambassador. The latter had his own plane and used to visit us every week. He viewed the Rumsfeld visit as a standard by which he would be judged. The colonel was asked to extend his tour by a few days so that he could brief Rumsfeld. Of course, the secretary was well guarded; you can hardly imagine all the security that was devoted to his visit. General Barnhart, who was the commander of all U.S. forces in Afghanistan - and one of the best I have even encountered - came up a few days before the visit to make sure that all was in order. I might parenthetically add that if we are at all successful in Afghanistan, much of the credit should be given to General Barnhart.

When Rumsfeld came, we met in a little room, not much bigger than 15' x 15'. We of course had a big screen in it for the Power Point presentations. I sat next to Dickie. The colonel started his briefing, only to be interrupted periodically by Rumsfeld who was having a hard time understanding him. Rumsfeld, as you may know, is hard of hearing

and with Dickie's accent, that made for a difficult briefing. But Dickie was non-plussed.

*Q: What were you and the British doing in Mazar-e Sharif?*

HUTSON: Our mission was disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). Also we were involved in security sector reform (SSR) - police, institution building, etc. We were starting almost from the ground when it came to institution building. The police had been and was still to some extent corrupt. We were not involved in the drug growing and trafficking business. That was specifically excluded from our mission. I was supposed to report on war crime issues–when I finally got my reporting instructions - but neither the British or the UN had no interest in that issue. Therefore we did very little on that score.

We covered five northern provinces. By the time I left, we had teams and safe houses in each of those provinces. We had British special forces (SAS) who were great; they didn't tell us what they were doing but they went all over the countryside doing what they were supposed to do. A lot of these troops were reservists - 007 types. I think they were very good, although I have no idea whether they ever found any of the "bad" guys. I spent a lot of social time with them, but they never once mentioned their assignments; they were curious about me because I spoke Russian and Farsi. They concluded that I was a CIA employee. In fact, the Russian served me well because the Soviets had occupied that territory for several years. When I called on the chancellor of the university, I took a Dari translator with me only to find that he had studied in Moscow; from then on we spoke in Russian. Eight of the nine faculty deans had studied in the Soviet Union. In general, I found that many of the worthwhile contacts had been trained in the USSR and I could speak with them in Russian.

*Q: As an example, why did you call on the chancellor or the deans at the university?*

HUTSON: I am a "hearts and minds" guy. That is not very popular today or then in light of our experiences in Vietnam. Furthermore, I was viewed as a person who trashes USAID. I like to see taxpayers' money spent well because I come from a poor part of the U.S. - southwest Iowa, south-central Nebraska. We needn't need curbs and culverts built in Mazar-e Sharif when we don't have them in Webster County, Nebraska. They should be built at home first. So I was a vocal proponent of tackling the issue of "hearts and minds" before worrying about some of the infrastructure. At the university, I became quite interested in the journalism school. In fact, I am still working with the New York School of Journalism to set up and exchange program with Afghanistan; I think that will happen. The Journalism School had six faculty members, all Soviet trained - half women, half men. Those female faculty members were some of the most effective people I met in Afghanistan. More than half of the students were female.

The radio and TV stations were all controlled by the local warlords. There was no independent media outlet. There were no newspapers as we would know them; they were some rags. The editors kept coming to me for money, which I didn't have. That also got me into arguments because I would raise the question whether the appropriated funds

were AID's or ESF (Economic Support Funds) - an assistance program managed by the Department of State. Of course, it was all taxpayers' money, but that answer didn't resolve the issue of control. My British friends did not want to engage in the "hearts and minds" struggles, nor did my USAID colleagues. Interestingly enough, when the new U.S. ambassador, Zaul_____ came on the scene, that is all he wanted to do. He considered "hearts and minds" an important matter.

For months, I would talk to the faculty and students at the university. Some would come to see me - they called me:"Mr. Tom." I kept telling them that I had no resources to provide their programs. One day, a couple of students came in and said that they wanted to talk to me, but they had a secret - i.e. no interpreter. So I dispense with his services. Their English and my Dari were good enough to have at least a basic conversation. They told me that I had the picture all wrong. I didn't seem to understand, according to them, that there were young men who would cross the border from Pakistan, from Egypt, from Chechnya, etc. These people had money in their pockets and a message. The Americans and British were viewed as occupiers. What we really needed was to bring some American and British Muslims to give out the same messages as we did; they however would have credibility. In fact, we did have some American Muslims working in Afghanistan, but we paid them $150,000 to work for Bearing Point; they drove around in a white vehicle and live in a compound so that they have little if any contact with the younger generation of Afghans and whoever crossed the border.

So I suggested that we would establish a program for these students and their contemporaries using the domestic Peace Corps as a model. We would expose them to American "values" and then, at a very modest salary, we would send them into the countryside to help their countrymen. They could even have white vehicles. They would be expected to talk to the villagers about the future of Afghanistan. I asked these two students to draft a proposal along these lines; nothing ever came of it. One of my interpreters, whom I trusted, said if we gave money to fifty Afghans, one of them might give us an honest day's work.

Then we switched our focus on the mullahs. That is the traditional way to get information out to the Afghanistani population. That has some promise. The Department's ECA (Educational and Cultural Affairs) Office - part of the public diplomacy bureau - had already committed to get in touch with 25 mullahs. We took them in groups of fives. In fact, I had two in the first group of Shia mullahs to come to the U.S. I think that is the right approach; bring these religious-secular leaders to the United States and let them see by themselves what democracy has to offer. What is needed is the will to enlarge this program, which we called "Islamic America." I don't care if along with all of our progress they also see our worts. I think these leaders will be so amazed; they will have never have experienced anything like that and have no idea how Islam is practiced in the U.S. Even the deficiencies - i.e. some of out actions against Muslims after 9/11 - will be accepted by these Afghans as necessary; in fact, they would probably br surprised that we didn't take more severe actions.

USAID was slow to pick upon this possibility. We really didn't have a propaganda ("minds and hearts") dimension to our programs. I think Zol wanted that. But I was flabbergasted that it had never developed before his arrival; it was such an obvious approach.

*Q: Was there a reluctance to deal with the religious ailments in Afghanistan*?

HUTSON: Not at all. I never could convince my British counterpart of the advantages of the "heart and minds" approach; he was dismissive of the idea. He was very skeptical of possibility of success in that approach, but never stated his reasons. My USAID colleague, who had been a Peace Corps in Afghanistan during the 1974-78 period, said that we couldn't do that. She started with the premise that the Afghan were good people and all they needed was stability which would be followed by prosperity which would be followed by a pro-U.S. point of view. I personally don't think we have a prayer of making Afghanistan stable and prosperous. My views, as expressed to anyone who would listen including the university students, was always that the U.S. was in Afghanistan out of the kindness of the American heart, nor because of the kindness of the Afghan heart. We were in Afghanistan because we never wanted to experience 9/11 again, and that meant pursuing terrorists and potential terrorists wherever they might be. That was the sole reason for our programs. The students would look at me and nod, but I am sure they really did not understand regardless of the language that was used. They just did not comprehend what American presence in their country was all about.

*Q: Did you find that the more virulent strain of Islam was being promulgated by the mullahs in the Mazar-e Sharif area?*

HUTSON: I don't think so. The area was hard to penetrate. For example, I knew that the program to send mullahs to the U.S. was going to be announced soon. That meant that we had to nominate some candidates for the program. So I decided to travel around our area to make some contacts and get some suggestions. I remember I went to the largest Shia mosque in Mazar-e Sharif. I met with the chief mullah and his deputy. First I had my interpreter collect whatever information was necessary in order to nominate one or both of these mullahs. There was one question on the standard International Exchange program questionnaire which asked the candidate whether he or she had any special interests in the U.S. Both of these guys wrote that they wanted to take their families to the U.S. and settle there; they did not want to return to the U.S. I had to tell them that that was not an acceptable reply.

We had some conceptual approaches that we could never get across to the mullahs. I felt very comfortable with them. One time, the embassy's political counselor came for a visit. It was on a holiday. We tracked down Atta, the Tajik warlord who was in the mosque at the shrine. This was in mid-winter and it was cold. We took our shies off of course and in bare feet ran across the marble floor of the mosque, including some parts that were outdoor. The warlord was there praying. I had been at this mosque often enough that people would greet me or wave to me. I never felt threatened at all, although I would not

say that the potential for some anti-American activity does not exist. So far, at least in the north, we were perceived as honest brokers who brought hope for the future to Afghanistan, not to mention as the best avenue for the people there to get out of the country.

*Q: How was the "Warlord situation" during your six months in Mazar-e Sharif?*

HUTSON: I would almost have paid to do what I was supposed to do. Ambassador Khalilzad was the key American. The Uzbek warlord, General Dustin will tell you that within an hour after 9/11, he called Khalilzad who was then on the NSC staff and pledged his loyalty to the U.S. He supposedly said that he was on our side. By doing that, he managed to survive–as he had for the last twenty years. I would see him, I guess, every other week and would spend hours with him. We are both story tellers; so we would sit and tell each other stories. I got a lot of information from him.

I would write up reports on these periodic meetings, which were well received in Washington, but sent tremors through the embassy in Kabul. I would have frank conversations with Dustin about war criminals, such as Milosevic. I pointed out that he had been essential to us in the Dayton peace process, and then I would ask "Where is he now?" I would talk about the Shah of Iran - another essential American ally whom we had failed when he needed us. Then I would refer to Aristide in Haiti. Dustin had never heard of Aristide or Haiti, for that matter. I pointed out that he had made a deal with the U.S. which enabled him to survive. I would then suggest that he, Dustin also consider making a deal which would enable him to leave the "warlord" business. I even offered him a job as executive producer for a couple of movies I was trying to produce. I said I didn't care where the money came, as long as he brought it. I would bring some cigars which I would get from a Gurka battalion which had replaced the British troops in Mazar-e Sharif. The Gurkas were great; they would do anything for me. I said that we would go to Grenada, which I knew from my chargé days. Dustin always complained about his health problems - he had gum problems; there were rumors that he had cancer. I told him that he could first class medical care in Grenada and that he could just go there and relax. I don't think he considered any of my suggestions very seriously, but I kept telling the embassy people and to some degree the people in Washington, to make Dustin an offer he could not refuse. He should have been removed from that part of the country - or even from the country.

*Q: Was he a problem?*

HUTSON: If you had picked up within the last month any western journal or newspaper, you would have read about fighting in northern Afghanistan. That was a bunch of crap. There was no way Dostam would blotch his copy book with Ambassador Khalilzad or with President Karzai. He is unhappy with the president because Karzai would not appoint him minister of defense. Dostam said that if he were the minister, he would take care of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. He sees himself as an Afghan; he is a major force in the Northern Alliance and will remain a major force in future Afghanistan. Dostam will

not be a problem as long as Khalilzad stays in Kabul; he will keep him in line.

*Q: Was there another warlord in the northern region?*

HUTSON: It was sort of embarrassing. John Negroponte, who is to be our ambassador in Baghdad, was the U.S. representative on the UN Security Council. He brought the whole council to Mazar-e Sharif to meet Dostam and Obtak, the opposition leader. In fact, no one really cared about Obtak and it was embarrassing the Security Council even sought him out. Dostam was the chief player. Obtak was a Tajik - big and impressive - but he didn't have the clout or the aura that Dostam had. I used to call Dostam a babyface Stalinesque Tito. He was just fascinating - to me and everyone else in the region. Dostam and Obtak were allies in the Northern Alliance; now they will have dissipates from time to time, primarily over the control of drugs.

*Q: What was the drug trade situation at this time?*

HUTSON: We were not charged with following that aspect of Afghan life. I did hear that opium cultivation and drug trade was about 40% of the economy. Mazar-e Sharif was a trading center. So most of the disputes between various factions and tribes had to do with who control what part of the process. Many of the drugs moved through Mazar-e Sharif as they moved north. Dostam controlled the so called "Freedom Bridge" going from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan. Nothing seemed to use the river for transportation, but the bridge was busy. If anyone was paying customs, none of it was going to the central government.

*Q: I thought that that border ha been technically closed.*

HUTSON: That is right. Uzbekistan is one of the most corrupt and dyspeptic nations in the world. It is on the verge of blowing sky high, either from its population's dissatisfaction - the per capita income is less than $300 or from outside influences. We would visit beautiful Bukhara or incredible Samarkand and see all the infrastructure provided by the Soviets. But they had no money. The people were desperate.

It was never clear to me what Dostam's connection with President Islam Karimov was. Uzbekistan made a choice, very early in the game, to provide us with a military base, which we used to tranship humanitarian relief supplies and may find other purposes for later. So we are beholden to Karimov, even though he is undoubtedly one of the worst autocrats in the world.

In the last month or so, there were about 40 fundamentalists killed. Karimov is trying to keep a lid on that group. I don't think he will be successful because there is such general dissatisfaction with his regime among the Uzbeks.

*Q: How was Karzai viewed?*

HUTSON: He is the president of the transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan. He never visited the north. He was viewed as a weak figure, afraid to leave the American-provided security blanket in Kabul. We provided his security detail, called in the embassy something like "Karzai's protective forces." It was a contract with an American civilian organization.

Karzai was viewed as a very nice man - not particularly strong, as I indicated. I think since Ambassador Khalilzad arrived, he sits at his right hand and gives strong advice. I don't think it is bad advise. I remember Dostam on the occasion of our first meeting - which took place while Khalilzad was going through his confirmation hearings - saying that he should not be the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan; he thought that he should run for president - he would be elected overwhelmingly. He was not joking; his comment was just a matter of fact.

Khalilzad was born near Mazar-e Sharif. That was his home town. From a group that was identified as future leaders, he was clearly a member. He left Afghanistan while still young and stayed abroad while the Soviets occupied the country. He got involved with think tanks, including RAND. That led to some tours in DoD. He has written some books. I don't think he ever became a professor, but certainly had close connections with academia. He knows everybody and everybody knows him. I must say that there are some people whom I respect who live in this think-tank world, who are quite negative about him.

*Q: He sounds like an "operator" (used in a positive way). There are some who are very effective but who are not loved or respected.*

HUTSON: I think that is an apt description for the ambassador.

*Q: Tell us a little more about your activities in Mazar-e Sharif*

HUTSON: I was essentially a political reporting officer. That's what I did, even though I was also a consular officer. There was a lot to write about. For example, the police in Mazar-e Sharif. The police was fractionalized. They split the town and behaved often like thugs. Some put up check points. The British took the lead and convinced minister Julali - who was an American citizen and had been the head of the Persian language service at VOA - to send 300 Kabul-based, non-Tajik, non Uzbek law enforcement personnel to replace some of the police then in Mazar-e Sharif. So we had to write papers on how this transfer of responsibilities would work I should mention that Dyne Corporation had a contract to train 50-60,000 professional policemen. We viewed our 300 men unit as a pilot project in this major effort. When they came, one could see immediately major change in the city. We closed the checkpoints and sent people back to their barracks. The Kabul-based police took over. The only problem was that Kabul never paid them. So eventually, they ended up doing the same thing their predecessors had done - exacting bribes, etc.

Before leaving Afghanistan, I held a briefing for the American country team. I got up and with considerable vigor made the point that if we couldn't pay 300 policemen, how in the world would we ever pay 50-60,000 of them? I didn't see a solution. That was a major problem. Furthermore, even if there were a functioning police system, there were no court system or adequate facilities to process the criminals. For example, in 2002, there was an American who worked for the NGO Octet - a French organization with which we had a close working relationship, who was part of a convoy of goods which was highjacked, was raped - repeatedly. Fortunately, there was one Afghan in the French NGO who managed to finger three of the criminals who were brought to justice. The fourth was tried later, but the fifth escaped and was on the loose. Actually, he was in Ibek and people knew who he was and what he had done. He was under protection of the local warlord. We decided to after him and went to Dostam for assistance. On November 3, I went to see Dostam about this case and was met by one of his subordinates - a general Rozzi - a Soviet trained officer. He told me that they had gotten him (the fifth perpetrator). He asked me what he should do with him. I told him to turn him over to the transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, as a previous letter had so instructed, who would then prosecute him. He threw up his hands looking at me as if I had lost my mind. He said that there was no justice in Afghanistan. Two days later, he was freed. That is the way the law was enforced in Afghanistan then.

*Q: What were the British doing in what was really their "sector?"*

HUTSON: The British were extremely active, progressive. They would not enter the drug fight or war crime issues. They saw their mission as being the eyes and ears of the alliance in the five northern provinces. They tried to influence the warlords. We achieved real disarmament. There was fighting in October between the two main factions. That gave us some leverage. The British decided that the heavy weapons could not be used anymore. They told the faction leaders that they had to turn those weapons in to them. And they did. I have pictures of serious Soviet tanks, artillery, APCs, etc. which were turned in by the factions to the British. We really achieved disarmament. The British were perceived to be far ahead of any of the allies. They had a much lower profile when it came to force protection. I was concerned about that policy because a vehicle full of explosive could have been driven up very close to my bedroom. If the Americans had been in charge of force protection, there would have been a major separation between the Rada and the barracks of at least 100 meters. Not the British. They intentionally minimized the separation because they thought it was important to be seen as maintained contact with the population. I had hard time arguing against that policy even though at times it made me uncomfortable.

The British were ahead of all other allies on police issues, disarmament and demobilization, integration. They were very active on women's issues, institution building - e.g. judicial system building. It was wonderful to work with them; they knew their stuff.

*Q: What about some of the non-governmental agencies? What was your impression of the*

*work they did in your area?*

HUTSON: The UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) was very suspicious of what we were doing. We courted them. I recommended to the British commander that he invite a UN representative to his meetings and that one of the British officer attend UNAMA meetings. We got in bed with them. It paid off big time. We used to get visitors galore. One time, an American colonel came to see us - she later became the head of one of the PRTs. She said that the U.S. military tried to marginalize the UN efforts. I thought that was really stupid. We could not have operated without UNAMA. They had much better sources of information having been in the region for many years. So what started out to be a contentious relationship, ended by being a lovefest.

To a large degree, this relationship was true for most NGOs as well. There were two NGOs with whom we had tensions, in part because we used a heavy foot on a couple of medical efforts we were making. One of these NGOs was NFS and the other was "Save the Children-UK." They just told us that they didn't want us anywhere near their medical programs. We would bring in teams of American medical teams, including veterinarians (which is probably our most effective program since no one else brought any veterinarians). We would enter an area and perform an intensive treatment program - perhaps as many as 2000 people and 2000 animals per day. That really had an impact. Of course, the UN wanted to have the financial resources so they could conduct a similar program of their own. They felt that they were much more likely to sustain the effort much further than we would and to some extent they were probably right.

But beyond those two NGOs, the British relationships with the NGOs were great. They had one advantage: they had a bar. We invited people to share a drink with us. When they drink and play with you, strangers become friends and barriers are broken.

*Q: What about the UN? What was your impression of its staff in Mazar-e Sharif?*

HUTSON: We were very fortunate; we had very fine UN people. There was Michelle Lipner from New York; she was very skeptical at the beginning about our mission. She was particularly concerned about a State employee being there, but eventually we eased her concerns and we had a good working relationship. A Canadian lady was her deputy and she was also very good. The UN mission had two political officers; one had been in Mazar-e Sharif for years. If I wanted to know what was going on, he was my best source. There was a retired Hungarian colonel who was the head of the UN security efforts as well as protection of all NGOs. We found the UN group very helpful; they would give you any information that one might need. So we worked hand in glove with them. We were blessed by the presence of a top-notch UN staff.

*Q: Was there any residue of Taliban presence in the northern provinces?*

HUTSON: Yes, but they were too busy being involved in the drug trade and other criminal enterprises. When I first arrived, we had an ODA team in Mazar-e Sharif. I don't

remember what the acronym stood for, but it part of DoD. It was made up of special forces reserves. They were perceived to have been in Dostam's back pocket. Whenever Dostam went anywhere, they would be around. The British commander told the ODA team that Mazar-e Sharif was his area of responsibility and that unit was withdrawn. Before they left, they talked to us. We found that they had a lot of good information. They were predicting "gloom and doom" - i.e., that Al-Qaeda and the Taliban would return to go after us. That did not happen while I was there. Whatever they were doing in the northern provinces did not interfere with our duties. They were too busy, as I said, cutting deals with the powers-to-be.

*Q: We forget that the Taliban had long before this time had moved from being religious fanatics to a corrupt group interested primarily in its own well-being.*

HUTSON: That is true. The only positive contribution the Taliban made earlier was to shut down the drug trade. I can't of anything else they did for the benefit of Afghanistan. They were "evil". There was nothing so inspiring as seeing the little girls in their black dresses and white scarfs carrying their school bag walking down dusty roads on the way to their classrooms. It was such pictures that convinced people that we had done the right thing in Afghanistan.

*Q: Were women moving ahead in the northern provinces?*

HUTSON: They were not free from "tradition." You would not have seen any of them uncovered. There were all kinds of NGOs which focused on women's issues - e.g- micro-enterprises, etc. The University of Nebraska at Omaha is training a dozen female teachers at the present and has been doing so for a number of years. The schools in my area were reopening. So I think the answer to your question must be a "Yes." There was progress, but of course I don't think their status will ever reach the levels that we consider desirable. They have their own culture. We should be prepared to make the long term commitment. The day I left, a journalist was talking to my British commander and me; he wondered how long a commitment might be necessary. We answered almost simultaneously; the colonel said "40 years" and I said "Check with my grandson." We thought it would take that long before anyone could judge whether our intervention in Afghanistan would have any impact.

*Q: I guess this is a good place to stop. I want to thank you for your time and your contributions to our oral history project.*

*End of interview*