

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

JOHN W. KIMBALL

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 24th of May, 1999. This is an interview with John W. Kimball and it is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. John, let me start at the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born, and something about your family?

KIMBALL: I was born October 13, 1934, in San Francisco, California. My father moved from South Dakota in 1916 with his parents to farmland in Chino. My mother grew up in Wisconsin. She was a high school music teacher and worked in California in the late 1920s after teaching also in Alabama, Arizona, and Wyoming. They were married in Long Beach. When I was born, my father was working in an office in San Francisco. He managed farmland in the San Joaquin valley owned by gold dredging firms operating in the area. He passed away when I was eleven.

Q: Was your mother teaching?

KIMBALL: Not when I was born, no.

Q: Were you brought up in San Francisco?

KIMBALL: No. My parents were living in Burlingame when I was born. I went to public schools in Berkeley and Palo Alto. I graduated from Palo Alto High School and, later, Stanford University.

Q: What were schools like in Palo Alto? Let's start with the elementary school.

KIMBALL: I remember them very favorably. I can't assess the quality of education although we seemed to have dedicated teachers, some fun, and some homework. I remember winning a contest naming state capitals in the fourth grade.

Q: Name the capital of North Dakota.

KIMBALL: Bismark! Anyway it was a very friendly atmosphere. It was mainly middle class. Palo Alto was then kind of a bedroom community for Stanford and for other commuters to San Francisco.

Q: What was Palo Alto High School like?

KIMBALL: It drew students from Stanford families as well as other residents in Palo Alto. It was then the only high school in town, but it was still small enough to know - or know about - all the people in your class. The teachers were career professionals with good command of the subject matter. Most knew how to make it interesting. There was self-discipline in the classroom and students showed respect for the teachers. Our student body president in my senior year had been in the Japanese-American internment camps as a young child and went on to be a successful physician at Johns Hopkins. It was an idyllic time, in retrospect.

Q: Did Stanford University get itself reflected because I assume a lot of kids were from the faculty and all?

KIMBALL: Yes. Stanford Elementary School on the Stanford campus was part of the Palo Alto system and they fed into the high school. I suppose that raised the academic caliber a bit.

Q: Were you given the Stanford Benet Test and all of that? I assume that originated in Stanford.

KIMBALL: We had tests of that nature but I don't recall Benet specifically.

Q: While you were in high school did you do much reading or what were your interests?

KIMBALL: I guess my outside interests were sports and classical music. I was mainly a playground participant, but I played basketball in junior high school and on the high school JV's. I was also a pitcher on a local softball team that made it to regional championships. I was sports editor of the high school paper and contributed stories to the local Palo Alto Times. I ran for what they called journalism commissioner. I won third place in a Bay Area journalism competition for a story I wrote about the high school swim team and its "legendary" coach. The course work was also fairly interesting to me, although I was only a "B+" student. I liked chemistry very much and history classes. I also served as President of our church high school fellowship group.

Q: Did the international world intrude at all on you?

KIMBALL: It did. I was a graduate of the class of '51. The Korean War broke out in our junior year and there was lots of discussion about it. I can remember very sharp division. There were a couple of classmates who were very strongly opposed to what we were doing and that provoked good discussion. Don't forget, too, that we were old enough to have dim memories of World War II. In early 1942, for instance, my father was a civil defense warden in the hills behind Berkeley. We had to have heavy draperies pulled every night to avoid a glow from the East Bay that could silhouette the Golden Gate Bridge for Japanese submarines possibly lurking offshore.

Q: You say you went to Stanford?

KIMBALL: I went on to Stanford, yes.

Q: You were in the class of '55?

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: Was there any doubt in your mind about going to Stanford?

KIMBALL: No, there wasn't. I didn't really think about anything else. It was a hometown thing, plus it was a good school. I signed up for political science as a major and eventually got the degree. I think it is relevant to note that in the spring of my freshman year (1952) my mother offered me a trip with her to Europe. I think that probably did more than anything else to whet my appetite for working in the subject matter of foreign affairs and living overseas.

Q: Going to Europe in '52 was not something that many people did.

KIMBALL: True. It was still something of a new and special thing. It was a very interesting trip. Although I was too young to realize how short seven years can be, it was only seven years after World War II.

Q: Where did you go?

KIMBALL: My Mother had arranged for an organized tour and we sailed on the USS Constitution of the American Export lines. We went to Naples first. It was a small group that fit into three old Italian sedans and it took a couple months to drive through Italy, into Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and back to Italy.

Q: You say this helped whet your appetite?

KIMBALL: Yes. I've always been fascinated by seeing what places look like, the "lay of the land," so to speak. That, combined with first-hand exposure to European history, culture, music, and architecture, was an eye-opener for a 17-year old. Also, we had an elderly couple from southern Virginia who were avid fans of Robert Taft, who was then angling for the Republican presidential nomination. I used my "liberal" education to argue the merits of Dwight Eisenhower and an internationalist U.S. foreign policy. I think they were amused by it all.

Q: At Stanford you said you were in political science. What did that involve? What courses were you taking?

KIMBALL: Stanford was on the "quarter system" which allowed a greater number of courses, but mine were almost all within history, politics, and economics, e.g. "modern government problems", "Foreign Policy Control", history of the Balkans and Near East, U.S. Diplomatic History, Public Finance, the UN and its antecedents, and East Europe since 1945. I also enjoyed language courses: French, Italian, Romanian, and German. As you know, in that era you mainly learned languages by reading, not speaking, but I enjoyed the exposure. By my senior year in 1955 I realized how little I knew, and so I stayed on for a graduate year and did the class work for a masters in international relations.

Q: Did the McCarthy era impact at all while you were at Stanford?

KIMBALL: Yes. I had the task of closing up our church building downtown and they fortunately had a television set. Every night about 9:00, I would go there to secure the doors, and also to turn on their TV set and catch the McCarthy hearings. I was fascinated.

Q: I was wondering if any of the professors...

KIMBALL: I don't remember that it became a big political issue on campus, but we discussed it a lot among friends. I don't know of anybody who had any sympathy for McCarthy. It wasn't controversial because everybody agreed that it was kind of silly. Everybody was rooting for, who was it, Joseph Welch?

Q: Yes. What about while you were going for your masters degree, was there any particular specialization? Did you start looking at a country, or area, or something like that?

KIMBALL: Yes. I had by then developed an interest in Eastern Europe as something "European" but nevertheless off the beaten track. I wrote my masters thesis on U.S.-Poland relations between World War I and World War II. My faculty counselor was Witold Sworakowski, then Assistant Director of the Hoover Institution. He had been a Polish foreign service officer until World War II. He provided lots of support and insights on the subject.

The real turning point, if there is such a thing in one's schooling, was one seminar by the Director of Hoover, Easton Rothwell. He had worked in Washington on post-war planning during World War II. He was just a fabulous fellow. He conducted seminars like I've never seen before or since, and really got people interested in figuring things out. It was a policy planning 101 kind of course. He was very stimulating and I think probably did more for me than any other single person in terms of bringing to life what the policy process was all about.

Q: When you were getting you masters what were you looking at doing afterwards? This was 1956.

KIMBALL: Before the school year was over, I learned the Foreign Service Board of Examiners was conducting entrance exams. I passed the written exam. Then in San Francisco in the spring of 1956 I sat for the oral interviews. Lo and behold, they offered me a job I couldn't refuse.

Q: Do you recall anything about the oral exam? Any questions?

KIMBALL: It was held in a basement room of the Federal Office Building in San Francisco and chaired by Cromwell Riches, the Executive Director of the Board of Examiners. I was asked questions relating to international organizations (and specifically, the ILO), and international law. Regarding my views of important domestic problems, I

mentioned “the farm problem” and “segregation.” I was also asked to relate impressions of my travel in Europe and across the U.S. “What made me proud to be an American?” My notes show my reply as “nowhere else was the individual so unhampered by political and economic circumstances in his choice of thought and/or action...the material advances of American society had relieved most individuals of the drudgery of the common man found in earlier ages and most other areas of the world.” Afterwards, I concluded the questions seemed “rather superficial”, but then, so were my answers. Advice I had received before the exam seemed particularly relevant: one could make some mistakes, give several “I don’t know” and still come out on top. These were, after all, recruiting, not examining boards, - at least circa 1956.

Q: I later gave questions and they were really looking at how you responded.

KIMBALL: Yes, that is my impression.

Q: They already figured out you knew quite a bit but the point was could you put them together.

KIMBALL: Yes. This was, of course, in the middle of Wristonization and they were expanding employment in a hurry and I was lucky to be a part of that.

Q: I think a lot of us got in - I know I did - at a time when they were opening up a bit. I came in when they wanted a massive intrusion of Main Street.

KIMBALL: That’s right, they had begun to talk about getting out of the Ivy League mold. I don’t know how Stanford fit into that but at least I was from California and not New England.

Q: I was educated in the Eastern establishment but my residence was California at the time and I think this helped.

KIMBALL: To tie off the military side of it, I told them, “I’ve got the draft to look forward to.” I remember the people there saying, “Don’t worry about that, there will be some arrangement by the time you get to Washington.” I didn’t know quite what that meant but, as it turned out, I was able to join the reserve program. The program they had at the time was for six months of active duty, and a six year reserve commitment.

Q: When did you come into the Foreign Service?

KIMBALL: My entering A-100 class was August 1956.

Q: Could you give an idea of the composition?

KIMBALL: We had about 30 people and they ranged in age from 31 to 21. I was the second youngest at 21.

Q: Any women, minorities?

KIMBALL: There were several women. No African Americans. We had an Asian-American, but I didn't think of him then as anything but plain "American."

Q: Do you recall anything about the course?

KIMBALL: Not much. It was broken up in those days with something like six or eight weeks of training. Then, if you were going overseas immediately you had a second period of training more related to overseas assignment. I do remember taking quite an initial dislike to what seemed an overdose of sociology, promoted by an FSI instructor whose name I think was Scott Gilbert. However, soon after I began to realize how very important his points were for adequate analysis of foreign cultures and their politics.

Q: Where were you assigned? This would be late '56 or so?

KIMBALL: This was late '56 and I was assigned temporarily to the Soviet desk, pending, I believed, resolution of my military status. I never knew what was going on in Personnel but it was a lucky assignment for me and I enjoyed very much getting right into a substantive area, especially one as topical as Soviet affairs.

Q: Absolutely, because normally you don't touch that thing until later after lots of effort, and turmoil, and all of that.

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: What were you doing?

KIMBALL: I did odd jobs and backed up some of the regulars. I helped keep track of the comings and goings of Soviet Embassy personnel and their travel within the United States. You may recall we imposed all sorts of travel restrictions on them as reciprocity for what they were doing to our personnel in Moscow. I had some very good training from Bob Blake, then desk officer, and Nat Davis and Charlie Stefan, his deputies. I was also very fortunate to work with Virginia James, a civil servant who was the institutional memory and a wonderful individual.

Q: How long were you doing that?

KIMBALL: For about a year.

Q: So it was sort of '56- '57?

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: Did the military catch up with you for a while? Is that when you put in your six months?

KIMBALL: I left the Department in August 1957 first for basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Then I went to combat intelligence school at Fort Holabird in Baltimore.

Q: Were you married at this point?

KIMBALL: No, I was not. I lived in a house in Alexandria with three other FSOs, all from our August 1956 entering class. It was a very congenial bunch and initially included Roger Hipskind, Fred Purdy, and Richard Moose.

Q: After six months you were back, in late '57 or so?

KIMBALL: I was discharged from active duty in February of '58.

Q: Where were you sent then?

KIMBALL: I worked for a month or two for the Board of Examiners, then back to FSI en route to an overseas assignment in the summer of '58. In August, I was assigned on short notice to Saigon.

Q: You were in Saigon from '58 until when?

KIMBALL: July, 1960.

Q: That should have been fascinating.

KIMBALL: It was very interesting. I should add that I was married in the summer of '58 as well.

Q: Where did you meet your wife?

KIMBALL: In the State Department. Lyla (Rustan) was a secretary in UN Political Affairs and we were introduced by mutual friends. In those days one could arrange blind dates, and this one worked out very well for me.

Q: Not too much earlier I've had men say that they were called before personnel and some crusty old gentleman would say, "You've been overseas long enough and we want you back here in Washington and it's up to you to get a wife." It usually worked out too.

KIMBALL: Lyla went from IO on assignment to New Delhi and stayed there for about six months. I finally was able to persuade her to come back and we got married in July of '58. Soon after, I learned of my assignment to Saigon and we got there in late August, via stopovers in Tokyo and Hong Kong. (Our memorandum of assignment was dated August

13 and told us we should arrive at post on or about August 30!) I was assigned as the assistant security officer in a regional security office which covered Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Q: What was Saigon, South Vietnam, like at that time?

KIMBALL: I had to consult a map at FSI to make sure I knew where I was going because my interests had been concentrated on Europe. It struck me upon arrival as very much a French ambiance. That was because we drove down the main street of Saigon and saw what the French had left. There were still French restaurants, and French was still a language that one could get around in. Saigon itself was a very pleasant city. Cholon was also fun to visit, with its own ethnic Chinese population. But you didn't have to go far to see how lower-income Vietnamese lived in what for us were very poor conditions. I also learned that even in late '58, early '59, we were not to drive around the countryside at night. We had to take precautions.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you were there?

KIMBALL: Elbridge Durbrow was the ambassador for my entire two years.

Q: Did you have anything to do with him?

KIMBALL: At that time our Embassy was on a corner not far from the Saigon River (Vo-di Nguy and Ham-Nghi streets) and the security office and the administrative office were in the annex which was a couple of doors away. I didn't have contact with the Ambassador directly. However, our house was across the street from the Residence and we frequently went over there on Sunday nights to play badminton, and enjoy the gatherings he put on for Embassy personnel. Our cooks traded tablecloths when entertaining. Ambassador Durbrow was an old EE hand and he knew a couple of people with whom I had worked on the Soviet desk. However, as a junior officer in the "annex," I had no regular access to the substantive work of the Embassy.

Q: As a security officer what were your responsibilities?

KIMBALL: We screened local employees and conducted the traditional physical security checks such as controlling public access, Marine guard deployments, and document security. My supervisor, Warren McMurray, did the liaison with the Vietnamese authorities, assisted by a local employee, Dick Robertson, a young man of English parents who had grown up in Saigon. For a new junior Foreign Service officer it was a good way to find out how missions operated and for an administrative job - and maybe I shouldn't put it this way - it had some substantive overtones to it. You had to know what was going on. You had to work with some of the other agencies in town. There was a huge AID mission in Saigon at the time and we had to help them out sometimes. Incidentally, the first two names on the Vietnam Memorial on the Mall date to July, 1959, during our tour.

Q: We're talking about people killed in action, Foreign Service people killed in action?

KIMBALL: No, these were military advisors, whose names are etched on the Vietnam Memorial here in Washington. The first two military names on there are dated July, 1959, and they were killed by Viet Cong in Bien Hoa, outside Saigon, while watching a movie in their compound. We got word of that late at night. McMurray was away at the time, so I had to go immediately to the Embassy and make sure that things were secured adequately. One aspect of that job that I remember with pleasure was the opportunities to travel to our posts in Hue, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh, which were very interesting in those days.

Q: We didn't have one in Da Nang did we, it was Hue?

KIMBALL: Yes, it was Hue.

Q: What was Hue like?

KIMBALL: It seemed a very quiet and peaceful place. Lots of Vietnamese history and culture there. We had Vietnamese language officers assigned as consuls. Being in the boondocks, they were experiencing the realities of living in Vietnam much more than we in Saigon. I developed a lot of respect for the work they were doing. Especially after our next tour in Sarajevo, I often wondered how much the Embassy or the Department listened to their observations.

Q: Obviously some people had been shot, but how was the Vietcong or the communist insurgency viewed when you were there?

KIMBALL: It was something that we knew was out there in the remote areas of South Vietnam but you didn't need to worry about it on a personal basis living in Saigon. The rules were to not travel country roads at night, and to check in with the security office before you traveled to many places outside Saigon. I don't remember any specific instances where American civilians were threatened, or harmed, It was a precautionary thing rather than a response to specific threats.

After a great weekend in the cool hill station at Dalat, a small group of us returning in two autos had the misfortune of not just one but two flat tires, one on each auto. On one car the tire was changed but on the other, for some reason, the spare was not usable. So it was decided the repaired car should drive towards Saigon and seek assistance, while one colleague went along with a tire to try to find a place to get it fixed. Meanwhile, the remaining group, including us, had to sit parked on a remote stretch of road battling biting bugs and getting jumpy about those creepy jungle sounds as the sun began to set. Imagine the relief when a local bus came wobbling down the highway and stopped. Out hopped our colleague, Harry Christie, with a repaired tire. Always with a dry sense of humor, he had us exploding with laughter as he stated he would not have minded the hot and

crowded bus if it hadn't had all those ducks sitting on the rafters leaving their "calling cards" all over the place!

Q: I would have thought that in hiring Vietnamese it would have been somewhat difficult to screen them because you had this massive flow only three years before from North Vietnam and these tended to be probably the people that you were more likely to hire, I would think. They were probably a little better in French, better educated, and all of that. Was this a problem?

KIMBALL: In retrospect, I'm not sure we had a very reliable methodology. We handled name checks through a local employee who as I mentioned earlier had grown up in Vietnam and seemed to have a solid foot in both cultures. He conducted name checks with colleagues in the Vietnamese Sureté and I never understood exactly what resources were available to them. Of course, we checked with other elements in the Embassy too. At least nothing bad happened on our watch.

Q: Was it a concern that the communists might infiltrate into our secrets?

KIMBALL: I don't believe there was an active concern that they were actually going to infiltrate us by means of employment, although naturally we had to take precautions. In any case, our local employees were located primarily in the "Annex" and USOM (AID), not the Chancery. Our worries were more about the security of American personnel traveling around the countryside and the safe handling of classified documents.

Q: This was not the era where people were coming around with bicycles full of explosives.

KIMBALL: No, but it could have happened very easily given the nature of traffic and circulation in Saigon. Luckily for us, however, we were there in a trough between the French war ending in 1954 and the American combat involvement later on. We were there at a relatively benign time with no overt hostility to Americans, at least in Saigon.

Q: Was there much of a knowledgeable cadre of people in the officer corps who knew much about Vietnam when you were there?

KIMBALL: There were colleagues in the political section and in Hue who were Vietnamese language speakers. We also knew John Monjo, an ex-roommate in Washington, who was a Cambodian language officer assigned to Phnom Penh. Yes, there was a real effort to get below the surface and I think that they were doing that. However, neither in Saigon nor later in Washington in the '60s and '70s could I ever satisfy myself that their expertise and insights were being adequately factored into the decision-making process.

Q: What about our American military, was that very apparent?

KIMBALL: There were about 600 military advisors. Professionally I had few contacts, but there were several nice bachelor officers quarters or enlisted men's quarters which were always fun to visit. They had great steaks, lettuce, and ice cream! I'm sure these installations, and the advisors, must have been obvious to the Vietnamese. A commentary sometimes heard among the junior Embassy officers was that American advisors were helping the Vietnamese prepare for another Korea-type military invasion from the North across the 17th parallel, a contingency which did not seem as likely to us as a more subtle and insidious infiltration into South Vietnam's countryside, where we reckoned it would be difficult for outsiders to distinguish friend from foe.

There was a very large AID mission financing a lot of projects. In my second year there, I began to wonder whether there wasn't something missing: was money, or so-called development, going to solve all our problems? Was there a reciprocal desire on the part of the Vietnamese leadership to make the most of the foreign economic and other assistance they were getting? The longer I stayed there, the more that gnawed at me.

Q: Were people talking about basically corruption, nepotism, and all that?

KIMBALL: In my position I didn't notice corruption as much as I did simple unwillingness or inability of people in government to make decisions, or to make the decisions that we thought were necessary to use the assistance effectively and affect popular political attitudes. But there again I was an outsider as far as the AID program was concerned. There were a lot of well-intended things going on.

There was another factor that didn't get enough notice, I believe, and that was the Vietnamese' official antipathy to the ethnic Chinese resident in south Vietnam. While we were there, the Government decreed that all ethnic Chinese should use Vietnamese surnames. We seemed to let that pass, presumably out of our larger interests in the stability of the GVN. But it also seemed a symptom of the GVN's inability to capitalize on its own resources and co-opt the talents of a significant group in its society. On the other hand, this same antipathy led me to believe that we didn't have to worry as much as we did about the possibility of close cooperation between Hanoi and Beijing.

Q: Later it became almost overwhelming, but I was wondering about the CIA presence. This was something that as a security officer you would be aware of, but was it a big establishment at that time?

KIMBALL: I thought our office had a friendly relationship with the deputy at the time. They occupied a certain amount of space in the Chancery which I didn't consider overwhelming. In fact, the deputy, one Bill Colby, and his wife graciously included us in a dinner party at their home one evening. Beyond that I was not aware of what, specifically, they were up to.

Q: Did you have any contact yourself with the Vietnamese government, sort of at the local level, police stations, and all?

KIMBALL: I must confess that I did not because either my boss did it on the formal level or local employees did it on the working level. For some reason, it did not seem very necessary. It may have been a mistake in retrospect.

Q: You say you had Cambodia and Laos. Did you get to Vientiane much?

KIMBALL: I made a trip to Vientiane, where I did a formal security survey, with the assistance of a very cooperative Administrative Officer. At the time Vientiane seemed a long way away from anything and Laos had yet to achieve the notoriety that it did later. I remember being fascinated by a return flight from Vientiane on an Air Laos plane that was older than a DC-3. It stopped at dusty runways in Pakse and Savannakhet. For Christmas of 1958, we visited friends at the Embassy in Phnom Penh and drove with John Monjo to visit Angkor Wat. The stillness, the ambiance of Angkor in its undamaged and relatively undeveloped state, was a memorable experience. It was our first taste of an old colonial hotel, in Siem Reap, complete with sagging beds and huge mosquito netting surrounds.

Q: Laos was beginning to heat up wasn't it?

KIMBALL: It was beginning, at least in the remote areas. Again, it was a fairly friendly situation for Americans in the capital and of course we did not yet have the infiltration problems we later had with Laos and Cambodia.

Q: It's just getting impressions of this.

KIMBALL: Let's put it this way, it was safe to travel and what I remember most was the travel rather than the politics of it. I can't say I did anything that qualifies me as an expert on the area.

Q: When you were in Saigon were you picking up from other junior officers at all about whither Vietnam?

KIMBALL: Yes, I have mentioned several items already – the training objectives of the MAAG, the uses of our economic assistance, the use of our language officers, and the difficulties of getting the GVN to act in its own self-interest. I think we also covered the idea that the Vietnamese - north or south - had their own agenda and the seeds of doubt were sown in my mind about the “domino theory.” The Vietnam situation seemed just too unique and it was hard to imagine the North could have any interest, or ability, to carry its fight beyond Indo-China or allow their future to be mortgaged to the Soviets or Chinese. In the 1960s, I would ask myself whether it really would make any difference to us “who ran Saigon.”

If I can generalize about it, the feeling during our tour was that the Diem government was very hard to deal with. It was very hard to push in the directions that we wanted it to go to

but it probably was the only administrative mechanism available and probably better than any alternatives. That was kind of a dilemma that was I think noted at the time: that you can't really do without him and yet you can't do much with him. By then he had absorbed the opposition in the South, the local warlords, and the religious factions, and things seemed to be on a path towards improvement and on the way up. If they would just use our aid correctly and unbend a little bit, they would have a lot going for them.

Q: Any discussion about the ability of the South Vietnamese army?

KIMBALL: I never got involved in any specifics on that. I knew we were trying to train it and work with it but I never saw any evaluations.

Q: You were accepted for Serbo-Croatian while you were in Saigon and took Serbian from '60 to '61?

KIMBALL: Yes. I had applied for Russian language training and was offered Serbian.

Q: Can you talk a bit about the Serbian training, about your instructors, and what you were getting from them?

KIMBALL: We had a fine old gentleman instructor named Mr. Jankovich. He drilled us, as he should have, and we sat there for six hours a day, took it in, and ended up speaking it pretty well at the end. He was a very fine gentleman of the old school. Once in a while he would talk about the way things used to be in Serbia, and of course he was very anti-communist although he was probably told not to talk too much about that.

Q: How many were in your class?

KIMBALL: We had four people in our class, and his colleague, Mr. Popovich, had three or four. Jankovich and Popovich rarely traded classes, which might have been more stimulating.

Q: I was there the next year and we had Popovich who was a very difficult man. Finally there was a rebellion led by one Larry Eagleburger to get them to trade and very reluctantly they traded, alternated. Who was in your class? Can you think of any of the people who were in your class?

KIMBALL: Our class included Dudley Miller, Bill Dyess, both of whom went to Belgrade, and George Jaeger, who was assigned to Zagreb. I believe Goody Cooke and Doug Hartley were in the other class, along with a USIA colleague, Ed Bator, all of whom were assigned to Belgrade.

Q: What was your job when you came out in '61? What were you going to do?

KIMBALL: We were assigned to the American Consulate in Sarajevo primarily because the Vice Consul's spouse had to be the American secretary and Lyla was ideally suited for that. Also, there was no housing available in Sarajevo for another American family.

Q: You were in Sarajevo from '61 until the post closed when?

KIMBALL: It closed in August of 1963. In 1961, we picked up a new Volkswagen in Copenhagen and drove south and then down the Dalmatian coast and inland through Mostar. We found out quickly there was no such thing as a paved road from Sarajevo all the way to any major place outside it. Nevertheless, we felt at home seeing the old Washington, DC streetcars circling downtown Sarajevo against a backdrop of minarets. The Consulate had been set up in 1957 by Steve Palmer mainly to monitor the region where Yugoslavia's ethnic and religious groups got mixed up together. The consul did some political reporting and the vice consul took care of what economics there were and the consular activities. Lyla did all the classified office work and kept an eye on the local employees. She also kept up with the task of assimilating the constant flow of revisions to the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) that poured out of the Department, most of which had no relevance to a small post like Sarajevo.

Q: Who was consul then?

KIMBALL: When I arrived Charlie Stout was Consul. He was there for a year and Bob Shackleton came in from Belgrade to replace him. He was there for six months when it was decided to close. Bob was transferred to Munich in the dead of winter and we stayed to close it up.

Q: What were your quarters like?

KIMBALL: We lived in an old apartment building overlooking the Miljacka River about a ten minute walk from the consulate. It was an old Austro-Hungarian building and we lived on the second floor with a nice view out over the river in front and the building's coal bins in back. Our heat was derived from a coal burning stove in the bathroom. The coal itself had to be carried through the living room to the bathroom. There was coal dust everywhere. The kitchen was heated solely by a wood stove. Water too was heated on the stove; there was no hot water tap. Water was available generally only for three hours in the morning and again in the late afternoon.

One of the interesting things for us there was the ability to travel, to get out. Our consular district embraced the Republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, which included picturesque places like Kotor and Sveti Stefan on the coast. Our consular area also included the Dubrovnik district, a part of Croatia, but easier to reach from Sarajevo than from Zagreb.

Q: Much to the annoyance of the Consul General in Zagreb.

KIMBALL: Yes, I'm sure. For us, one of the redeeming things was to be able to travel to Dubrovnik or the Adriatic islands in our consular district, such as Korcula.

Q: Was there much non-immigrant work?

KIMBALL: Not much. The bulk of the consular workload was in citizenship and welfare cases. There were social security cases involving Yugoslavs who had gone to work in the steel mills of Ohio or Indiana and had come back to retire in their homeland. They were mainly located in the coastal areas near Dubrovnik, or in Montenegro. There was very little consular work in Bosnia itself.

We came to look upon Bosnia per se as a very remote, and shall I say, backward area of Yugoslavia. There were several paved roads leading out of Sarajevo but nothing was paved all the way to Belgrade, or Zagreb, or the coast for that matter. The countryside was dotted with small villages with a very rural, peasant look. A few places, such as Zenica with its iron works, were trying to develop industrial enterprises. Sarajevo itself had a somewhat cosmopolitan population, however. They had a symphony orchestra whose conductor, Mladen Pozajic, was able to attend Consulate receptions, and we got to know some of the people in the music department of Sarajevo University, among others.

Of course the key question now, in 1999, is "what did you feel about the ethnic tensions in Bosnia?" I have to say that at the time we were persuaded Tito had done his job. Of course the communist apparatus controlled events and people in Bosnia. But, ordinary people seemed to be getting along fairly well together and there was no apparent conflict among those we would now call Muslims, and the Serbs and Croats. Communist party control extended to formal and informal contacts with Consulate personnel. The head of the Bosnian Party, Djuro Pucar, allowed himself to have the consul visit maybe two or three times in our two years there. I had the feeling the Bosnian officials accepted Belgrade's need to allow an American Consulate in Sarajevo, but had decided to ignore it on a day-to-day basis as much as they could. But neither were we harassed to speak of.

Q: Were you able to travel without any particular restrictions?

KIMBALL: Yes. I don't recall ever having to seek permission to travel. I am fairly confident that they knew exactly where we were going and when we were going there. Among other things, and I can go into the reasons if you want, we were pretty sure our chauffeur at the time was passing on all the information they needed about our travel plans.

Q: What made you convinced of this?

KIMBALL: It's kind of a long story and I don't know whether you want that or not.

Q: It gives a feel for the time.

KIMBALL: First, with our predecessors he apparently was always the driver. I preferred to drive myself. We would take the Consulate's Land Rover ourselves and I think that miffed him a little bit. Secondly, we realized as we went along that he spoke and understood English much better than he let on. Thirdly, we think he was involved in a "bug" we found when we moved into the Consul's quarters. Finally, I have to jump ahead to a nostalgia trip that I made to Sarajevo in 1975 after the Consulate was closed. Before reaching the grounds of the former Consulate, I took pictures of the Consulate building and was promptly picked up by the police for taking pictures of the building that, unknown to me, was then being used as the Sarajevo City headquarters of the Communist Party. I was taken to the police station and interrogated. They asked me questions about my presence in Sarajevo and part of my answer referred to our past assignment there. Apparently to verify my story, they asked me about "locals" who used to work there with us. I listed them and when I mentioned our chauffeur's name, the interrogator's face lit up like a light bulb. I surmised that he then realized that I was telling the truth and he let me go, with apologies for any inconvenience. He even let me keep my film!

My wife became suspicious when she had to work with him during a period when I was out of town. As you may remember, in those days language training was not provided for spouses—even though in this case her availability as a secretary was the reason for my assignment as vice-consul. In a very short while, she announced that the chauffeur is quite a lot more fluent in English than we were led to believe.

In addition, later in our stay we located an electronic bug in the bedroom of the Consulate. (For the last six months, after the Consul had been transferred, we moved into his quarters which were on the second floor over the offices.) One day upon returning after a trip to the airport, we found telltale signs of an "intruder" – broken picture frames, for example. The maid confirmed that the chauffeur had been in there. Sure enough, the bug had been removed. My wife also recalls that at a party late one night, a local friend was heard saying something about us that could only have come from that hidden mike.

Q: I think that most of us working there felt that; some people probably more willingly than others. Some of our people would tell us that they were called in from time to time and interrogated. Probably the ones that didn't tell us were...

KIMBALL: And he never did.

Q: Was one sort of looking at, this one must be Muslim and this one must be Serbian, or that sort of thing trying to divide people up?

KIMBALL: No, and I've asked myself that a lot after 1992. What on earth were we thinking then? Yes, we knew that one of our employees, Vera Dragic, was Serbian originally and that she had come from Belgrade to live in Sarajevo. Yes, we knew that another, Hasan Ahmetbegovic, was Muslim. He lived halfway up Mt. Trebevic by all the picturesque mosques. Yes, we knew that the population was such and such percentages of religious or ethnic background. Yes, we knew that the head of the government in Bosnia

had a Muslim name and there was a bit of a balancing act in apportioning the top party and government jobs. But in terms of what was going on day-to-day, no, there was no particular reason to question or report any ethnic tensions. Of course, our impressions were shaped in Sarajevo and to a lesser extent in Montenegro and the Dalmatian coast. We traveled a few times to southeastern Bosnia, Tuzla, and Banja Luka, but not at all to Bihac, which I regret now. But don't forget, and you remember well too, that everything officially was focused on economic development in Bosnia. Everything in the newspapers, all the propaganda, was just how great they were doing and how much more they would do.

Q: And also the government hand was very heavy when it got to ethnic things. There is a street in every town and a bridge in every town called Brotherhood and Unity. You couldn't walk down any street in Yugoslavia without seeing "Brotherhood and Unity" thrown in your face and they didn't mess with it.

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: It's only really from these talks that I've had in these oral histories that I've realized how much we had absorbed sort of the Serbian point of view in Belgrade. It's sort of, well yes, the Croats kind of have this little national feeling but it's of a minor thing and all, particularly in that era. It was obviously simmering under the surface and you get it by sort of asides of contempt for somebody else or another thing but you just kind of put that down to, obviously they are not wild about each other but they certainly are not going to fight each other.

KIMBALL: That's right. And of course our contacts were circumscribed. I'm sure that people were encouraged not to talk to us. The ones who did talk to us were probably officially approved and would not wish to make ethnic comments for their own reasons, maybe in part because they believed it. After all, in retrospect, it wasn't a bad policy to try to squash ethnic hostility.

I can remember reading in the press that the Croats and Slovenes in particular, and maybe the Serbs, resented the investment funds that were going into less developed areas like Bosnia or Montenegro. Perhaps that was a straw in the wind. But it seemed to be valid on economic grounds in those days. Bosnia was really backward. You would get out of Sarajevo and into the countryside and into the hills and you were back a couple centuries, as you well probably remember. It was amazing to see people in huts, tending sheep, spinning yarn on the side of the road, and living in what were in any American's eyes real poverty and backwardness. They did seem suspicious of any outsiders, no doubt including other Yugoslavs as well as westerners.

Q: Did you get down to Mostar?

KIMBALL: Yes. I had no experiences there but we would always pass through there on the way to the coast and often stopped to look at the old Turkish bridge, since destroyed,

that figured in all the tourist literature. One of our jobs was to look into the economy and trade opportunities. For some reason I never took that task as seriously as my predecessors did in terms of interviewing the leaders of commercial enterprises and making reports about possible export opportunities. There was almost no interest shown by west Europeans or Americans in that period to doing business in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We preferred to go down to the coast and look up the welfare cases. We enjoyed trekking these little back roads up the mountain to find the huts that they or their relatives were living in, and trying to gain insights into their lives and living conditions. It was primitive.

Q: How did the hand of the embassy rest on our consulate in Sarajevo?

KIMBALL: Very lightly. In fact I never received any feed-back from the Yugoslav desk (in Washington) in two years. Moreover, my guess is even the consuls received only one or two official-informals from the Department during my two years there. People visited us from the Embassy of course. They came down on courier runs. I think you did once, didn't you?

Q: Yes. The narrow gauge railroad I think.

KIMBALL: Yes, that was an option as well as the standard railroad. In terms of coordinating reporting, getting guidance from the embassy on what was important, what they were interested in at a given time, I don't remember hearing any of that. I certainly never got any and I don't believe anything was passed on to me via the Consuls. Ambassador Kennan came down to visit us at least once, maybe twice. He was very impressive and pleasant. He sent his daughter and son-in-law to visit Sarajevo once when they needed the extra bedroom for visitors to Belgrade. The DCM, Eric Kocher, came down at least once; again very pleasant, but in all these cases I don't remember much of any substance being discussed, at least in my hearing.

Q: In a way things seemed to be going our way, it seemed to be quiet.

KIMBALL: Yes. Some of our most noteworthy events were visiting Americans. For instance, Walter Cronkite came to town with a camera crew filming a segment for his TV show Twentieth Century. I cooperated by driving down Obala street, by the river, in the Consulate's 59 Plymouth sedan with the cameraman sitting on the right front fender filming the route taken by Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. Cronkite was filmed standing in Gavrilo Princip's footsteps at the corner where the Archduke was assassinated. Mr. Cronkite and his producer took Lyla and me to lunch at a nice restaurant at Ilidza, outside Sarajevo.

I might as well talk about closing down the Consulate. The Ambassador, as I understand it, finally decided that Sarajevo should be closed because we were not getting the respect that we should from the local government. With all due respect, I felt at that time that we could swallow that very easily if we were contributing something to the American

establishment. As I say we never did learn about that. Lyla and I were sympathetic to closing it but only because we didn't seem very used or useful to Belgrade or the Department.

Q: I was chief of the consular section at the embassy at the time and I remember very distinctively being called into Ambassador Kennan's office and he said he was thinking about closing Sarajevo and what did I think about it? I said, "Well there are political aspects and I can't comment on those but we can certainly pick up the workload," which we could because there wasn't that much. I made some nice trips down there.

KIMBALL: Did you get Dubrovnik back?

Q: Zagreb grabbed Dubrovnik and it did okay there. So that was my great contribution to the closing and I said, "Thank you very much."

KIMBALL: The consular workload was not overwhelming and it was not the original purpose for the Consulate's establishment. I think we mentioned to the Embassy that just moving down to Split or Dubrovnik would be better for consular work. The British had a Consul in Split which was a one man post. I think I read somewhere recently the one-man, unclassified post may be coming back into vogue. Having such a post in Sarajevo would have made sense too. In the end, I guess the Department lumped Sarajevo with some other smaller posts around the world that were being closed for "budgetary" reasons.

Q: Kennan had talked about overstuffed places while he was out of the service and I think this may have done something. I can't remember if he was still alive at the time, Ivo Andric who was a Nobel Prize winner and author who wrote "The Bridge on the Drina" and the "Bosnian Chronicle" and all, I was wondering if he ever...

KIMBALL: I never met him or saw him personally but we of course devoured his books, especially the *Bosnian Chronicle*. It featured a French Consulate in Travnik, where the Ottomans ran their Bosnian affairs, and the way the French staff were being treated as they pursued the interests of Napoleonic France. I've read it again since then and confirmed my feeling that there were many parallels with our own lives in Bosnia 150 years later.

Q: I read it when I went as an election monitor to Bosnia in Tuzla and it really rang for the whole time, the isolation. It also did bring out a bit more of the tensions of that period, the Napoleonic period. It is a very good book for anyone who wants to do this.

KIMBALL: It's very, very good and *The Bridge on the Drina* too. But Bosnia could, and did, change too. I had occasion to visit Sarajevo a third time in 1983 when the Counselor of the Department, my boss, was invited to inspect the Winter Olympics preparations in Sarajevo. Comparing the Sarajevo of 1983 to that of 1963 was an eye opener. The city had really progressed in a material sense. The city was comparatively very developed, and

the people looked very Western compared to the old days. For example, Levi jeans had replaced peasant garb as the dominant dress on the Bašcarsija. At the time this was a comforting thought that gee whiz, they are really on their way. Our local Olympic hosts, whose public relations director, Pavle Lukac, was one of the Consulate's best friends in 1962, were very upbeat about their accomplishments and what it all meant for the future development and prosperity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is interesting to me that later, in the early 1990s, when the ethnic conflict broke out, this economic "progress" was totally wiped out, hurting all the ethnic groups. It makes one wonder about the incentives for economic development and whether material progress leads inevitably towards peace and stability.

Q: When you were shut down in '63 was that sort of the end of your tour?

KIMBALL: Yes. And we literally did most of the packing ourselves. By coincidence, there had just been an earthquake in Macedonia. Relief supplies were being directed there by the U.S. and others. The Embassy was very involved. Unfortunately for us, they had to put Sarajevo on a back burner and could not spare boxes or packing materials for either personal or official effects. One of our employees literally scoured Bosnia for appropriate packing materials. Lyla has often wondered what the reaction was in Belgrade or Washington when they unwrapped those indispensable manuals packed in straw and whatnot. Eventually we got it all on trucks and up to Belgrade. We turned the key on the Consulate and gave it back to the Bosnian authorities.

Q: Did you get any reaction from them? Were there any people saying, don't go?

KIMBALL: No. I sent a notice to the consular liaison person in the Bosnia-Herzegovina government. I don't think it was even acknowledged. We just packed up and left. Of course, we mailed notices to all our constituents and told them they would have to deal with Belgrade or Zagreb. After a little effort, we got a small news story in Sarajevo's *Oslobodjenje* newspaper about our closing. If anyone noticed, they sure didn't tell us!

Q: Where did you go in '63?

KIMBALL: I came back to the office of United Nations Political Affairs in the Bureau of International Organizations (IO/UNP).

Q: You were there from when to when?

KIMBALL: From 1963 to 1968 as an action officer on various political subjects in the UN arena.

Q: When you went there in '63 what did you have?

KIMBALL: I was assigned a portfolio that included East Asian and South Asian topics in the UN. In practice, this meant that most of my time was spent on the Kashmir conflict

(where the UN had peacekeepers), Korea, and Vietnam. In that period there were also tangential issues such as Malaysia-Indonesia and Cambodia-Vietnam border disputes..

Q: Who was the head of IO during these different parts?

KIMBALL: In this period Joe Sisco was there. I think he was Director of IO/UNP when I arrived and he was IO assistant secretary when I left. Harlan Cleveland was IO Assistant Secretary for much of my tour. Elizabeth Brown and Bill Buffum were active in the UNP front office and George Moffitt, Bill Jones and Bill Gleysteen were among my immediate supervisors in those years. I learned a lot about drafting precision and political problem-solving working with them. It was a very interesting place to work because the UN was important to us in those days and important political issues found their way to the UN whether we liked it or not. Even if you didn't want to use it for something to your purposes, you had to defend yourself, not only in the Security Council or the General Assembly, but often in the various meetings and conferences of the Specialized Agencies and UN Commissions.

Q: When did you start in IO in '63?

KIMBALL: We left Yugoslavia in August and took some annual leave driving to Norway and back down to Genoa to catch the USS Constitution for New York. We reported to the Department in October, having deferred our home leave to early 1964.

Q: You would have been there at the time of the Kennedy assassination.

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: How did that hit?

KIMBALL: Like a ton of bricks. Like everybody from that era, you can remember precisely where you were that day and how you heard the news. A UNP colleague and friend from the Saigon days, John Dorrance, and I were out to lunch in the Columbia Road area and we heard about it on the car radio returning to the Department. Lyla and I stood along the approach to Arlington Cemetery to watch the funeral cortege pass by. It was a very big event. Perhaps because we were younger at the time, in the 1960 election we had welcomed enthusiastically what we saw as a generational change in our leadership, probably more for the style than the substance. With the benefit of hindsight we can see that he and his team made mistakes too, not least of which was his selection of Vice-President.

Q: In the UN battles, for part of the time you were there Adlai Stevenson was there?

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: What was the impression of Stevenson?

KIMBALL: I think people in the Department held him in great respect and those in the IO front office seemed to enjoy working with him on a day to day basis, as far as I could tell. Once again I was the junior officer of the bunch, especially in the early days there, and did not have direct contact. Later on, Arthur Goldberg was our UN Ambassador and he tried to do a lot on Vietnam so I probably got to think about him a little bit more than I had about Ambassador Stevenson. Goldberg testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in October 1967 giving a full and definitive account of our negotiating position and what we tried to do in and through the UN to settle the Vietnam conflict or at least persuade Hanoi to negotiate. We in UNP contributed most of the written material for that testimony so it was fun to watch even though we didn't get anywhere through the UN on Vietnam, unfortunately, but that is another story. The full Committee report, including Goldberg's testimony, is entitled "Submission of the Vietnam Conflict to the United Nations", GPO, 1967.

Q: While you were there was the UN considered a place to try to do something about Vietnam or was it more a holding action?

KIMBALL: The answer depended a lot on your view of the conflict, but for the Administration's policymakers I think it was the latter, clearly. I don't think there was any stomach in the higher reaches of the administration for trying to work out a solution through the UN. U Thant was probably considered something of a pest and I don't think that in the '64, '65, '66 era there was any serious consideration given to giving the UN any kind of role, least of all a role that would get in the way of what we felt we had to do militarily or that would compromise our war aims.

We weren't given much help by Hanoi. You may remember that we took the Tonkin Gulf incident to the Security Council (UNSC) and, unusually for us, we even offered to have both North and South Vietnam participate in the UNSC discussions. But Hanoi responded that the UNSC had no right to examine the problem and any Council decisions would be "null and void."

Nevertheless, I often toyed with the question "what can we do through the UN" in effect to unload the problem and make it a responsibility for the international community through the UN, rather than our own unilateral problem. If we then won in Vietnam, fine. If we didn't, at least it wouldn't have been such a strategic, or unilateral defeat for the U.S. That kind of thinking didn't get anywhere in those days, and I realized there were some practical problems.

Q: While you were dealing with the United Nations affairs, were you having people, your fellows, yourself, questioning what we were doing and how it was going and all of that?

KIMBALL: That's a very good question and I've really pondered that in the years since. I guess the answer is probably we didn't do enough but there were so many built-in obstacles to any independent thinking. This is in the realm of hearsay, but one had

friends, including language officers, who I think were politely complaining that they couldn't write all the things they wanted to write back out of Saigon or especially from field posts in Vietnam, and you certainly had no room in the Department for independent thinking in the '64-'66 era. I wrote up a suggested UN alternative once for my front office, but they knew better than I the intellectual climate in the Department. Overall, I detected no interest in alternative courses. At the so-called working level, we concluded that the career officer who headed the Vietnam Working Group had been replaced by a White House political appointee in 1964 or so precisely because he dared challenge the Administration's conventional wisdom that the U.S. just had to tough it out.

There was a surface willingness to work with the UN Secretary-General if he could persuade Hanoi to negotiate with us on what was, essentially, our agenda. But our effort seemed geared to winning the military battle, which in the end we did. On a day to day basis in UNP, it was just putting the best face we could in UN fora on our well-intended objectives in Vietnam and writing letters, or speeches, or summaries of all our diplomatic efforts to try to get Hanoi to the negotiating table and/or withdraw their forces from the South.

Q: What were the issues with Korea?

KIMBALL: The main issue for the U.S., though never really stated as such, was to preserve the legitimacy of the UN Command in Korea, which had served a very useful purpose for us and continued to do so in preserving the 1953 Armistice Agreement. Of course, the UN Command was established by the Security Council and was not on any agenda of annual General Assemblies. The Assembly's interest stemmed from a 1947 resolution supported by the U.S. to establish a Commission to facilitate Korean unification. By the mid-1960s, it was called the UN Commission on the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, or UNCURK. In the mid-'60s the General Assembly was still, each year, considering Korean unification stemming from this earlier activity and it was quite independent of the 1950 Security Council action. However, in those years the U.S. faced a declining ability to garner majority voting support among UNGA members for all its policy preferences in Korea.

Q: Was there any effort made to make contact with the North Koreans?

KIMBALL: No, not that I'm aware of. They were, I think deservedly so, real pariahs in those days and probably still. Occasionally I would think about the whole package of what we called "divided states" issues: why continue to keep North Korea and North Vietnam out of the UN as members and was there any leverage, or benefit for us to get them in along with South Vietnam and South Korea? One could make a reasonable argument along these lines, for Vietnam and Korea, but there was always the East German parallel, which would have been a definite no-no. So the bureaucratic culture wasn't ripe for promoting such ideas.

Q: Did China and Taiwan fall within your orbit?

KIMBALL: Chinese representation was a very important matter for the (UNP) office every year. But it was a representation, or procedural issue, as distinct from an East Asian political issue, and I did not get personally involved in that in the 1960s. Yes, it was an annual battle and noses were counted very carefully. Again, to jump ahead a little bit, I think it was in '71 that Dr. Kissinger was working on his opening to China. I remember the folks being very nervous and upset that there was no word out of the White House in the fall of '71 approving or disapproving of our usual plans for Chinese representation for that fall session of the General Assembly. Of course finally it came out that he had his own agenda and was resolving it for us.

Q: Japan?

KIMBALL: We had regular contacts and very good consultation with the Japanese in those days, and probably still do. We had annual meetings before each General Assembly session at the Assistant Secretary level. Japan was very helpful in the UN context and we stayed in very close touch.

Q: I know there was always a group in the United Nations that was out to give us a difficult time. I think Puerto Rico was always coming up as a colonial part of the United States and that we should do something. There was Zionism, racism and that sort of thing. Was there any particular group that was sort of hammering away at you in your particular area?

KIMBALL: I alluded to our declining ability to muster majority votes for some of our positions, but our real problems with the non-aligned movement, so-called, were more serious in the 1970s.

Q: Let's stick to the '63 to '68 period.

KIMBALL: The writing was on the wall in the '60s and things were getting more difficult. Of course in '67 we had the Six Day War in the Middle East and that dominated things for a while but that was not my territory either.

Q: You were in the UN I guess until the spring or summer of '68 which meant that the Tet offensive would have hit you. Did that make any difference in your area?

KIMBALL: No, not in terms of workload. We did not do anything in the UN, as I recall, one crisis that came up in the UN about that time was the seizure of the USS Pueblo by North Korea.

Q: This was the American monitoring small naval vessel that was captured.

KIMBALL: It was captured by the North Koreans and it created quite a stir. But that issue zoomed up to a high level and I didn't have an operational role.

Q: I take it that the secretary general of the United Nations at the time was U Thant, wasn't it?

KIMBALL: In the '60s to 1971, followed by Kurt Waldheim to 1981.

Q: But from what I gather you're saying he was not held in very much regard?

KIMBALL: I can't say that he was a bosom buddy of the United States but we respected him and his office. He didn't carry much weight either in the Administration or at the working level, as far as I could see, and we weren't willing to use him very much.

Q: I'm interviewing Harlan Cleveland now. He's in his late '80s and still going strong.

KIMBALL: He'd be a good one to ask. He was my boss in IO in the '60s and later at USNATO.

Q: Did any of the other areas of East Asia or South Asia particularly intrude? In Indonesia you had the gradual overthrow of Sukarno and I was wondering if that had any particular impact?

KIMBALL: We had some minor items involving mainly border disputes. In 1964 Cambodia complained to the Security Council of South Vietnamese military incursions into Cambodia. The GVN and U.S. suggested some kind of UN presence might be established along the border. Three SC members were designated to go to the area and make recommendations, one of which was for a UN observer group to be stationed on the Cambodian side. But the Cambodians then announced they could not accept the report or its conclusions, and nothing more was done.

Various problems concerning Indonesia were considered by the UN in the 1950s and '60s. For example, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker helped the UN broker a deal on West New Guinea between the Netherlands and Indonesia. The UN undertook a mission to ascertain the wishes of the people of North Borneo and Sarawak before they became a part of the new state of Malaysia. Neither the Philippines nor Indonesia accepted the results of the UN mission, but Malaysia was formed anyway. Malaysia complained to the Security Council in 1964 about an Indonesian airdrop of some 30 persons into Malaysian territory. An even-handed draft resolution asking the two countries to avoid recurrences of such incidents was vetoed by the USSR.

The demise of Sukarno was surprising but didn't affect us in UNP. Nevertheless, I'd like to read the oral histories of our area specialists about its overall impact on the rest of Southeast Asia.

Q: It did sort of subtract him from that non-aligned group.

KIMBALL: It did.

Q: How about New Guinea?

KIMBALL: That problem had been resolved before my assignment to UNP.

Q: Any island problems?

KIMBALL: Not for me. UNP had a separate office dealing with Micronesia and the trusteeship territories. There was always an annual exercise to keep the rabid anti-colonial representatives from taking over the UN meetings. Then Kashmir was a perennial issue and the UN observers there, but in the 1960s these were not front page issues for the United States.

Q: Was there sort of a UN corps with the State Department and if so what was your impression of how they were able to do things?

KIMBALL: Joe Sisco was a UN stalwart in the 1950s and '60s. In fact, my wife worked with him in UNP before I did. Later he was named Under Secretary. Bill Buffum, later an IO Assistant Secretary, and Elizabeth Brown, were long-time "IO hands." These were people who made a career in multilateral diplomacy. UNP had a good reputation for being a hard-working, busy place to be, especially during the General Assembly or when crises erupted in the Security Council. It was action packed and dealt with many of the important issues of the day. It was a challenge to pursue U.S. policy objectives in general and UN tactics in particular. The only down-side might have been the need to think tactically so much of the time - how to manage the next vote or just get by the next public relations threat. There was no doubt, however, that the people I worked with were very intelligent and expert at getting good diplomatic results in New York.

I think you eventually run into the common problem of whether a functional bureau like IO can compete career wise with a geographic bureau. I think in my day the answer was still no, on balance. However, it provided a lot of great experiences for this mid-level employee.

Q: Did you get sent up to the United Nations?

KIMBALL: Yes, I did. Action officers in UNP would frequently go up when their agenda items were being discussed. (End of tape)

Q: You were talking about going up to the UN.

KIMBALL: Yes. For the Washington based operative it was always interesting. The one I remember most, strangely enough, is Tibet. Having earlier seen the drafting of a speech on Tibet, I went up when the agenda item was discussed in the General Assembly. Actually, I sat in the U.S. Delegate's seat in the Assembly while Ambassador Goldberg

delivered the speech. For a young officer, it was exciting being the only U.S. representative for 30 minutes, even if it was in the evening - hardly prime time at the UN!

Q: You sort of moved around by this time. You had been in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and you had been in Vietnam and now you were in the UN. The system makes you try to get concentrated, were you thinking about that?

KIMBALL: I liked being in Washington. I enjoyed being in so-called multilateral affairs. I was interested, in other words, in a truly generalist view of foreign affairs, knowing a little bit about a lot of policies. It wasn't until much later that it dawned on me that it might not be the best career route. My next post - USNATO - was in the same tradition. The bridge for me was the fact that Harlan Cleveland left IO and was appointed ambassador to NATO. His deputy in Brussels was Bill Cargo, also an old IO hand. Somehow I guess my name was recognized on the list and I was assigned to USNATO in 1968.

Q: You were in NATO from '68 to when?

KIMBALL: To 1971, three years.

Q: In the first place what was your impression of how Harlan Cleveland ran his organization?

KIMBALL: My impression was very favorable. I admired Harlan Cleveland. I learned a lot from him and I enjoyed working with him. I remember his saying once that the modern organization chart ought to be a circle instead of the usual hierarchy, the ladder type chart. Such a chart would permit the chief, especially at USNATO, to draw on one person's expertise quickly and directly without having to go through layers. My first year at USNATO was as his executive assistant. I sat right outside his office and frequently tapped the resources of the U.S. Mission on his behalf.

Q: Being in NATO from '68 to '71, you must have been caught up in the removal of NATO. Where was NATO then?

KIMBALL: NATO had just moved from Paris, and was settling into its Brussels headquarters. The military people had moved down to the new SHAPE headquarters near Mons, Belgium. The Harmel report had just been promulgated in 1967, and that gave everybody a fresh slogan to work with: "defense and deterrence." Harlan Cleveland really pushed very hard on this idea that NATO is not only a defensive military alliance, but also a political consultative mechanism. The North Atlantic Council is not there merely to discuss defense against the Soviets: it is also a mechanism for coordinating North Atlantic policy among NATO members. He later wrote an excellent book entitled "NATO - The Transatlantic Bargain."

Q: France was a member then?

KIMBALL: France was a member then and a very active member of the political side, the North Atlantic Council. It did not participate in the Defense Planning Committee. Nevertheless, the French military, within bounds, was also being cooperative with NATO military units, especially in the Mediterranean.

Q: You arrived there and shortly thereafter the Soviets with their reluctant allies moved into Czechoslovakia and squashed the Czech Spring. How did that hit NATO?

KIMBALL: Well, that was a very exciting period. There were a lot of meetings at all levels of NATO. Cynics will scoff at the idea of more meetings, but I think the meetings symbolized the concern among NATO delegations about the consequences of Soviet actions, and the need to consult regarding a common response. It was a hectic period with consultations within the Alliance and, for USNATO, between Brussels and Washington. There was a rather clear, if unwritten, assumption that like Hungary in 1956, the West could not, and would not, intervene in Czechoslovakia. But NATO had to be sure of Soviet intentions and be prepared in case the Soviets went any further than Czechoslovakia. In addition, the East-West public relations battle had to be won.

Q: What jobs did you have then?

KIMBALL: For a year I was Cleveland's staff assistant. The job title included Secretary of Mission, which was essentially a formal channel for paperwork to the NATO Secretariat, to other delegations, and to the front office from within our Mission.

Q: And then what?

KIMBALL: After that I was in the political-military section for two years. My main responsibility was the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee. It doesn't sound like much but it was a worthwhile effort to get NATO allies to coordinate their civil emergency planning, the activity that is now under the aegis of FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) in the U.S. We were in the early stages of trying to encourage NATO allies to designate civil resources to back up any military efforts that we might need, especially in the context of the new strategy NATO had adopted in the Harmel Report, i.e., to prepare for periods of tension or conventional warfare rather than immediate resort to nuclear weapons. One example of this approach is the civilian reserve air fleet for which the U.S. had planned in conjunction with many U.S. airlines, to supply civilian air transport for military purposes in defined emergencies. We worked on a similar program as a NATO-wide tool.

Q: I think the planes were configured with doors that were of the proper size and all of that which I don't think the Europeans are.

KIMBALL: We encouraged NATO-wide planning to duplicate this kind of military/civilian cooperation that would provide extra resources in case of need. In the

Committee, we tried to nail down arrangements that could be activated in such contingencies. There was inertia to overcome.

Q: I would imagine. How did you find for one the French and dealing with them?

KIMBALL: The British representative and I were the only foreign affairs people sitting on the committee. Other delegations had civil emergency or civil resource people on the committee, as did the NATO Secretariat staff. All were great people and easy to work with. The French delegate was very likable and outgoing, but clear that he was skeptical of the whole idea of planning ahead on a NATO-wide basis. The French had their own reasons for not wanting to work closely on this approach, but we talked around that and everybody else seemed fairly sympathetic. Of course, for the Europeans it was helpful to have the Americans planning to add resources to the defense of Europe, and we managed to get the right planning documents adopted by our Committee and endorsed by the NATO Council. Whether anything else was ever actually done, especially within individual countries, someone else will have to tell.

Q: Was the planning in case of a Soviet invasion or did it include earthquakes, typhoons, whatever?

KIMBALL: It was keyed to levels of tension or limited conflict. Those were the buzzwords, stemming from the conclusions of the 1967 Harmel Report. Obviously, it was not going to be all or nothing in terms of defending Europe; there might be some shades of gray and we needed to assess what we could do, especially during periods of tension. This kind of planning and preparation could be very useful for responding to natural disasters too.

Q: How about the Germans? Did they play much of a role?

KIMBALL: Yes. The German representative in my day was a professional emergency planner and very knowledgeable. Incidentally, he was a nephew, as I understood it, of the famous baritone, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Also, I think it was in their national interest to be so active in this area.

Q: Yes, they were going to be the battleground.

KIMBALL: They had resources to work with and they seemed very interested in doing this. They were very helpful, as were the British and Canadians. Greece and Turkey didn't have many resources to work with at the time. The Dutch representative had very strong ideas. He was a very competitive fellow but also easy to work with. And I got a lot of help and inputs from the logistics experts at USNATO, notably Colonels John Policastro and Dick Rantz. The latter, I believe, returned after his retirement to work on this subject for the NATO International Staff. Wally Farrant, a British civil emergency professional, was very knowledgeable and a great asset on the NATO staff.

Q: Were we looking at a cooperative response or was it each one do their own thing?

KIMBALL: There was a very cooperative response. All seemed interested in the idea and its ramifications, and generally the right NATO documents were adopted. The concept was there but whether anything was actually being done on the home front was always a question. One of the problems in this business, as you well know, is that you don't always have the opportunity to learn what happened after your watch and I've never heard about it since that period. In 1971, shortly after my return to IO/UNP, EUR conducted an interagency study of civil emergency planning, trying to expand on many of the same thoughts. I was invited to participate and I contributed more drafts.

For a relatively junior officer it was a challenge to have one's own committee responsibilities. It was a peripheral subject at NATO, but very interesting work.

Q: How about the usual thing of the Greeks and the Turks?

KIMBALL: One had to be conscious of the sensitivities but we didn't have any problems in civil emergency planning, probably because both were relatively passive in that area. The Mediterranean issues, especially NATO training exercises, were different.

Q: The colonels were in charge then.

KIMBALL: In Brussels, there were no "knock down-drag out" fights. USNATO had a State Department contingent and a Defense contingent. The DOD officers had action responsibility for planning in the Mediterranean, including military exercises and relations with the NATO commands in the Mediterranean. In my time, they were handled very capably in an office headed by Col. Jeff Davis. We in Pol/Mil looked over their shoulders. I guess NATO would not have been the place for either Greece or Turkey to berate each other, especially as both were represented by very capable and sensible Ambassadors. There were, however, political sensitivities. At the time, we were trying to get some things organized in terms of Allied naval forces in the Mediterranean, as distinct from strictly Sixth Fleet naval forces. You had to walk gingerly around it and the French problem too.

Q: It is interesting, when you got to the military and particularly the navy, the French were really onboard.

KIMBALL: Yes, they were.

Q: The Greeks and the Turks, the main thing was to make sure that you treated them equally and didn't get them into fighting each other.

KIMBALL: Right. You had to schedule your military exercises carefully and equitably. I remember that there was a lot of head scratching about just precisely how to arrange them, but they usually went ahead.

Another aspect of an assignment in Brussels at that time was to observe the parallel development of the European community institutions. Our mission to the EC was in Brussels, and George Vest came to NATO as DCM from the same job at USEC. George seemed to be open-minded about critical thinking. This inspired me over the slow Christmas season of 1969 to write nine pages questioning whether the U.S. really should encourage a separate European voice - an economic competitor, as it were, while we were picking up the tab for European defense. Would an integrated North Atlantic approach to economics be more consistent with the NATO concept and, incidentally, with long-run U.S. interests? George sent an appreciative note for my efforts, but, perhaps because the political momentum was so much the other way, no other recipient, including Larry Eagleburger, the Political Counselor, gave it the time of day!

Q: Today is the eighth of June, 1999. John in 1971 whither and what?

KIMBALL: In July of 1971 I arrived from USNATO in Brussels to my second tour in United Nations Political Affairs in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

Q: You did that from when to when?

KIMBALL: From 1971 to 1975.

Q: You were in New York?

KIMBALL: No, this was all in the Department, the IO Bureau.

Q: What was your responsibility in IO?

KIMBALL: I was an officer in charge of a unit that dealt with geographic areas like East Asia, the Middle East, and some of the institutional problems like peacekeeping, the politics of the budgets, the non-aligned movement, and propaganda issues in the General Assembly like a Soviet item entitled "strengthening international security." I ended up my four years as an acting deputy director covering more or less these subjects, some of which I had in the 1960s in UNP, specifically East Asian Affairs. Vietnam wasn't quite as much in the UN at that point, but we still had Korea in the UN General Assembly. Dr. Kissinger had just taken care of the Chinese representation problem for us.

Q: Who was the head of IO then?

KIMBALL: The head of IO was Dave Popper and then Bill Buffum. The UNP Office director was Jack Armitage for a while, then Lee Stull, and towards the end of my tour, John Baker.

Q: When you arrived what was sort of the main thing on your plate would you say?

KIMBALL: Preparations for the General Assembly session, which was just about to get underway in the fall of 1971. There were numerous items on the agenda that touched on a number of disparate U.S. interests. I've mentioned peacekeeping. Also, for example, if the President visits Japan, does he support Japan's interest in permanent membership on the UN Security Council or does such "enlargement" pose too many other difficulties for the U.S.? UNP argued the latter. Even within IO, UNP had to argue not to rock the boat on existing UN peacekeeping missions with the budget side of IO which was under pressure to reduce U.S. contributions to the UN system. Elsewhere, the India-Pakistan War had broken out. Dr. Kissinger and others were dealing with that but we did have some UN aspects to cope with. UN observers had been in Kashmir ever since the late '40s and there were Security Council details to take care of. We worked with the NEA bureau on various contingency papers.

Korea was again on the front burner because the approach favored by the U.S. and Korea was again under attack in the General Assembly. The UN presence in Korea, the UNCURK machinery that had been set up in 1947 before the Korean war to deal with unification, was getting to be unpopular with the more unfriendly non aligned and we either had to find the votes or another approach.

Q: Let's talk a bit first about the India-Pakistan thing. This was at the time when there was a renowned tilt towards Pakistan on the part of Henry Kissinger because of supposedly their role in helping us get into China. Did that play out in IO?

KIMBALL: IO was pretty much told what to do and merely dealt with the tactical requirements at that point. On that kind of issue, especially with a Henry Kissinger in the White House, the "working level" quickly rises to the Undersecretary and Assistant Secretary level. Anybody below office director was not in the flow of telegraphic traffic or the planning stages, so I frankly don't remember now exactly how it played out. I'm sure the IO front office monitored developments in New York and kept the Secretary informed of what UN delegations were saying, more or less publicly, in New York. But the operational action was handled at higher levels or by NEA.

Q: Did IO maintain any contacts here in Washington with embassies or was this sort of off limits?

KIMBALL: IO conducted its UN lobbying efforts mainly through our UN missions or through our Embassies in the countries concerned. However, we also had direct contacts with Embassies in Washington, depending on the issue and its importance to us and the country concerned. The IO assistant secretary was consulted fairly regularly by various ambassadors here who had points to make, or by visiting officials from other capitals. We did all this in close consultation with the relevant geographic desks. We worked with the Korean embassy and had close contacts with them at all levels. I traveled to Seoul in May 1972 with one of the Korean desk officers, Wes Kriebel, and we spent three or four days

in detailed talks with the Korean foreign ministry. Our consultations continued here with the Korean embassy afterwards.

Q: I'm really not familiar with this particular period in Korean affairs. I ended up there in '76 but from '71 to '75, could we go into some detail about what the problem was with Korea?

KIMBALL: The problems from the UN standpoint were the apparent erosion of support in the General Assembly for the pro-Western stand on Korean unification that had been adopted in 1947, the erosion of support for the idea that the Republic of Korea was the only legitimate government in Korea, and that North Korea should not be invited to participate in the General Assembly debate. We recognized that the ROK had enjoyed the political support of General Assembly endorsement and would be leery (in that era, at least) of equating itself in the UN context with the North, even though they were themselves initiating contacts directly with the North. We were also concerned about the possible impact of GA voting on the UN Command structure in Korea, although technically that was a subject only for Security Council decision. All that evolved into a lot of tactical problems in any given General Assembly during that period of '71-'73.

In this context, we talked first among ourselves and then privately with the South Koreans, about ways of modifying our tactics, or, if necessary, removing the item at least temporarily from the agenda of the General Assembly. That kind of question could not be answered, especially by South Korea, in a short time span, so at first we had to maintain a mini diplomatic campaign to maintain our voting majority for reaffirming the UN role in Korean unification and keep the North Korean membership issue away, that is keep the North Koreans from being admitted as permanent observers or as participants on this item in the General Assembly. In the background, we kept working quietly with the South Koreans to find ways to get the Korean item at least temporarily off the General Assembly agenda for our mutual benefit.

The Koreans were of two minds. They disliked the prospect of giving up the international endorsement of the General Assembly but they realized that it would not be in their interest to have a losing vote in the General Assembly. In the fall of 1972, the U.S. and ROK were able to defer discussion in the GA, that is the General Committee (a steering committee) and the Assembly itself voted not to discuss the agenda item at that session.

In 1973, some were concerned that the UNCURK approach to Korean reunification was inconsistent with the direct North-South talks then being undertaken, if tentatively, by the Koreans themselves. In the fall of '73, the GA voted to accept UNCURK's own recommendation to end its mandate.

Q: Was it ever on the agenda or thought that we might have a North Korean and a South Korean representative in the Assembly?

KIMBALL: I don't think we formally addressed that question in the IO or EA bureaus, if you mean UN "membership" for the two Koreas. As I mentioned earlier, I had played with the idea in the Vietnam context in the 1960s, but in the early 1970s we would have again run into a complication with the divided-Germany parallel. We had brought ourselves to accept an "even-handed" invitation to both Koreas to discuss the Korean item in the GA, if this became necessary. In conjunction with the 1973 decision on UNCURK, the ROK also withdrew its objections to North Korean membership in other international organizations. I don't recall how long it took for the process to unfold, say, in the UN specialized agencies.

Q: By this time we had recognized East Germany or hadn't we?

KIMBALL: Slightly later, in the fall of 1974.

Q: Did you also feel the very heavy hand of the National Security Council? I mean was that where things were coming from?

KIMBALL: We had good staff-level cooperation with the NSC on the Korean item, for example, but on other issues we realized where the policies were being made. In 1973, Dr. Kissinger became Secretary of State. But from the standpoint of the middle levels of the Department machinery, it wasn't a lot different since it wasn't a terribly open system in any case. But that didn't lessen the value of the experience or the challenge of our work.

Q: Do you recall the UN ambassadors during this time?

KIMBALL: George Bush was there in the early 1970s. The Korea country director, Don Ranard and I once went to New York and briefed Ambassador Bush on our thoughts on the Korean item in the up-coming General Assembly.

Q: Don Ranard was of course THE man on Korea.

KIMBALL: Yes, he was. I believe John Scali followed Ambassador Bush and then Senator Moynihan was appointed. I remember him in this role mainly for a public blast at the Department for our alleged inability to stand up to the non-aligned. It caused me to write a rebuttal, of sorts, that was published in the in-house dissent periodical. I entitled it "The UN: Blocs, Ballots, and Baloney." The last, obviously, was a reference to his argument. Later, in London I was control officer for one of his visits as a Senator. After meeting him and escorting him to his Club downtown, he generously offered me a drink at the bar, which I accepted with pleasure, but I didn't have the guts to mention this episode four years earlier.

Q: Before we get you out of the UN, did the fall of South Vietnam in '75 have any effect?

KIMBALL: Not in the day to day dealing with the UN. I remember sitting in the Op Center, however, when the news had just come and everybody was fairly devastated. I was just very concerned about getting everybody safely out of the embassy and Vietnam.

There is one other thing that I would like to add about that period. I participated as a State Department advisor to the U.S. congressional group in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, or IPU. All Senators and Representatives were eligible, but only a small group went to each of the IPU meetings, which were somewhat like UN General Assembly sessions crammed into a week of meetings. The first one I attended was a parliamentary CSCE meeting in Helsinki in early '73. This was at a time when the U.S. government delegation was meeting in Helsinki officially to negotiate what eventually became the governmental CSCE declaration. George Vest had a small mission there in Helsinki. The point I would like to make is that if anybody is interested in that history, I think the parliamentarians in January of 1973 came up with a break-through document that actually foreshadowed the later governmental agreement. It was the first time, I believe, that the Soviets agreed to even mild pronouncements about human rights in language that applied to Eastern Europe as well. I always felt pretty happy about being able to achieve that. We had another parliamentary CSCE meeting in Belgrade in 1975 when the IPU's "Final Act" was adopted. This advisory role also enabled me to accompany the U.S. IPU Delegations to Tokyo, Colombo and London for other semi-annual meetings of the full IPU membership. The State advisor always prepared speeches and draft resolutions on current international topics and most of the time they were used and/or read into the record. He also wrote up the results, which the U.S. delegation Chairman published as Congressional Committee Prints. Altogether it was another valuable experience.

Q: Was there much liaison with the desks?

KIMBALL: Yes. In our part of IO we had to work very closely with the geographic bureaus. I believe we worked very closely and cooperatively with the Korean desk. Again, the Vietnam policy was probably made for the most part elsewhere than the desk or even EA, but we had to check with them regularly. We were in touch with EUR on German affairs and NEA, of course. Yes, that was part of normal operating procedures. We could not have separate policies in UN bodies, after all, although we might juggle the nuances.

Q: Did you get involved at all in the Greek, Turkish, Cypriot problem?

KIMBALL: Yes. The problems then were about the same as they are now. That's one thing that hasn't changed much and I don't think will until Mr. Denktash leaves the scene, frankly. My boss in my first UNP tour, George Moffitt, had just come from that area when it first came before the UN Security Council in December, 1963. In 1964, he was the UNP point man for getting the UN force (UNFICYP) established. There have been lots of efforts since then to mediate a Cyprus solution, some of them during my second UNP tour in the early 1970s, and some even later in the mid-1980s when I was in the Counselor's office. But they still seem to go nowhere for whatever reason. Yes, Cyprus

was another one of those issues that was not always on the front pages but often required time and attention in UNP.

Q: Middle East?

KIMBALL: The same thing there. We were not directly involved in peace negotiations or anything like that but you always had General Assembly agenda items dealing with Middle East issues, usually framed to promote the Arab point of view. Resolutions were introduced on the status of Jerusalem. There were periodic renewals of the mandates for UN peacekeeping missions in the area, and renewal of the UNRWA mandate regarding Palestinian refugees. We had to follow these items closely, for obvious reasons.

Q: I guess it was the '73 war, the October war, between Egypt, Syria and Israel, did that come up?

KIMBALL: Yes, clearly that was a big item though it was the kind of problem that operationally was handled at higher levels in the Department. However, it affected the other things we were doing and, as before, we had certain information-gathering and drafting duties to do regarding attitudes in New York. IO and NEA always worked closely together. They had to. And this was underlined by the fact Joe Sisco moved from IO to NEA as Assistant Secretary.

Q: I think he was moving over about that time. You left...

KIMBALL: I left in '75. I thought it was time to try something else. I became deputy director of International Security Operations, or ISO, in the Political/Military Affairs bureau. George Churchill was then the Director of ISO.

Q: You were there from '75 to when?

KIMBALL: From '75 to '77, a two year tour. Though educational for me, compared to UNP it was rather like a vacation in terms of workloads and deadlines. There were two slots in the office filled by officers seconded from the Navy or Air Force. They were very good, very knowledgeable and very fine people. They carried the load on things like overseas bases and operating rights, while I kibbitzed on the politics of our force deployments and presence overseas.

Q: What was your responsibility?

KIMBALL: I was officially deputy director. A principal topic was negotiating for renewal of base operating rights. At one time, I accompanied Ted Heavner, then Caribbean Country Director, to Antigua and Barbados when it was time to renew agreements for U.S. naval facilities there. There were also DOD and JCS reps with us. It was interesting to observe the nitty-gritty of such negotiations, especially after USNATO and UNP, but I

don't believe I contributed much new thought or insight. I do remember being surprised at having a Washington, DC lawyer sitting down on the Antiguan side of the table.

The more intellectual challenge in that office is illustrated by a problem of sifting through the intricacies of the Montreux Convention, governing the passage of ships to and from the Black Sea. We had some hint that the Soviets were about to suggest revising the Treaty to allow passage of their new Kiev-class aircraft carriers. On the surface, at least, carriers were prohibited by the Convention. After poring over arcane legal texts, we concluded it remained far preferable not to facilitate transit of Soviet carriers and to avoid opening the Convention to amendments.

Q: Who was sort of the top pol-mil person?

KIMBALL: I think George Vest was by then in charge of PM. When the administration changed in early 1977 Les Gelb came in as Director. Jim Goodby was the deputy for a while, a very fine fellow. Another very able person, Reg Bartholomew also served as deputy.

Q: When you went to London, we've had pretty good political relations with the British for years, how were they at this point?

KIMBALL: Very good. At least I never saw any problems in bilateral relations, except possibly over Northern Ireland. The working relationship with the Foreign Office and later for me with the Northern Ireland Office was just superb. They had very friendly and perceptive people in all ranks. Of course they had their own interest, I suppose, in keeping in close touch with the Americans but their doors were always open. The intellectual quality of their analyses and advice was always high caliber, even if the U.S. didn't want to follow it precisely. They had really impressive people at all levels in those jobs and it was just a real delight to work there and to work with them.

My subjects evolved a little bit. I was assigned there on the understanding that a long-time DOD civilian pol/mil position would revert to State, but it didn't happen. When I arrived, Jack Sulser was the affable head of the political section. Bob Blackwell was already there dealing with disarmament, NATO, and European security issues. Jim Dobbins followed Blackwell. Jack Binns was doing internal reporting and later became Political Counselor. Tom Simons followed him as Counselor. Ray Seitz was the African specialist and later Deputy of the section. April Glaspie was doing the Middle East. Brunson McKinley followed internal affairs. Midway through my tour, Peter Sommers took over the DOD civilian slot from the DOD incumbent. In retrospect it was an all-star cast and many of them eventually became Ambassadors. One of the ironies of my career was a phrase in one of my London efficiency reports saying "he carried on his duties in a highly professional manner and *became the most valuable single member* of a highly talented and closely integrated section."

I started, not surprisingly, with a portfolio that included liaison with the Foreign Office on United Nations affairs, humanitarian issues, and refugees which, in the aftermath of Vietnam, was a subject of frequent conversations. The humanitarian issues involved me with Amnesty International headquarters in London. The individuals there struck me as much more sensible than some of their later pronouncements, but of course we were in the middle of the Carter Administration and officially quite sympathetic. I was also backup on all European security and NATO issues. That occupied some time, especially in the care and feeding of numerous official visitors to London. After Jack Binns headed the political section, I took over his Northern Ireland portfolio.

Q: The Carter administration came in strong on human rights and you had Northern Ireland. Did this get us involved?

KIMBALL: The Embassy was already quite involved in consultations about Northern Ireland. We were able, if I may say so, to avoid meddling on human rights grounds. We were interested in having Northern Ireland come out right, that is, peacefully and fairly for both communities. But we were very careful not to tell the British what to do or to imply that it was a so-called humanitarian issue. For one thing, we would have been preaching to the converted about human rights. The British Government deplored violence and any excesses by one side or the other in Northern Ireland. Of course, we had to draft an entry for the annual U.S. Human Rights report. In it, we said the British Government faces a dilemma of maintaining fair judicial processes even where terrorists abuse, discredit, or violate those processes. I don't recall whether this approach was retained in the Department's publication.

What life in London usually boiled down to was arranging visits for Washington officials and Congressional delegates. Patt Derian (Assistant Secretary for Human Rights) came through frequently, especially when the Labor Government was still in power. She once had a meeting with the Foreign Secretary, then David Owen, in his office, which I was privileged to attend. We had statistics showing that during one month in the fall of 1978 the Political Section of six officers was tied up with 58 visitors for 80 person-days. Each FSO spent 13.3 days out of 25 calendar work days just with the visitors, not counting planning and follow up.

Q: I would think that you would be getting some pressure from the Senate, particularly from Senator Kennedy and all, on the Irish issue. He seemed to take the IRA side.

KIMBALL: Yes, the so-called Irish lobby was strong in those times too, but I guess they regarded the London Embassy as hopeless. Most of their advice that we heard about seemed directed at the White House. I think our ambassador in Dublin (Ambassador Shannon) sympathized with those efforts, naturally.

Q: It was an Irish American political appointee.

KIMBALL: He was a political appointee. Kingman Brewster in London was also a political appointee, and it was natural for the two Embassies to have different views. A good friend of mine from the UNP days was a political officer in Dublin so we could compare notes. While pressures were indeed exerted by the Irish American lobby, in fairness, this was a period when leading Irish-Americans were beginning to say that Americans should not support the IRA with money or arms. So that was fairly helpful. Tip O'Neill came through London once with an entourage but I was not included in his group's meetings with Prime Minister Callahan. They had separate meetings with Margaret Thatcher as head of the opposition. I don't know whether they mounted any pressure on Northern Ireland issues.

My biggest disappointment on Northern Ireland was in July 1979 when the Administration, reportedly the President and Secretary Vance personally, agreed with the Congressional Irish lobby to ban U.S. arms sales to the Royal Ulster Constabulary, that is, the Northern Ireland police force. I drafted a cable saying the decision would go down hard in the UK, as indeed I think it did behind the facade of civility always shown to us. I was probably insufficiently attuned to our own domestic political cross-currents. Some might say I suffered from clientitis. But I was really upset by our apparent capitulation to the "Irish mafia" and by the implied moral equivalency of the RUC and IRA in U.S. eyes. Several of my draft cables along these lines were never acted upon higher up the Embassy ladder. I later learned from someone who had worked for a Department principal in this period that "balanced" talking points prepared for the Secretary's meeting with Speaker O'Neill had been "totally ignored." It was also a time when there were many new proposals for U.S. economic investment in Northern Ireland as a means of jump-starting political accommodation. This was a sensible idea, but the means of implementation were not always fully explored, nor were the results as advertised. The DeLorean auto assembly plant was widely touted at its inception in this period, but ran into early difficulties and closed.

Q: How about the Carter administration, Carter was pushing Germany to accept what was called the neutron... (end side one)

KIMBALL: I'm fuzzy now on the details, but I recall that Deputy Secretary Christopher made a special trip to Europe at one point to say that after all our pushing for production and deployment of a neutron bomb (actually, a "reduced-blast, enhanced radiation" weapon), not a popular policy in western Europe, that we wouldn't do it after all. Our policy reversal was noticed in London and I think the inconsistencies made the Embassy up and down the line uncomfortable. But in terms of bilateral relations I think British officials absorbed it and no damage was done.

Q: Do you recall when Thatcher came in? Was it during your time?

KIMBALL: Yes.

Q: Was there any feeling that we really were going to have a revolution in the British system?

KIMBALL: Not so much a “revolution” but a revitalization, certainly. Maybe it’s my own prejudices but after looking at the way the British economy was going for a year-and-a-half there, I was hopeful that a new government would be able to turn things around. It seemed clear that the welfare state had probably gone too far; that the labor unions had used their power more to stifle than to create; and that things needed to be done in Britain to encourage business initiative and get the economy rolling again. They were in kind of a decline, I thought. I guess there were varied opinions in the political section; some were apprehensive about the implied threat to the labor unions. Anyway, to answer your question, I think it was mainly a matter of hopefulness that a little fresh air might turn things around.

Q: The ambassador during this time was Ann Armstrong?

KIMBALL: No, it was Kingman Brewster, the former president of Yale.

Q: How was it felt he was an ambassador? What was the impression?

KIMBALL: My impressions were all favorable. I liked him very much as a person and enjoyed working with him as a subordinate. I think the British community respected him. He fit in well with them, and had the intellectual qualities that Britons admire. As far as influence over British thinking is concerned, I always felt that if the British really wanted to make a point they would make their case in Washington. I think in terms of relations with British society, Ambassador Brewster was an excellent choice.

Q: How was living in London in those days?

KIMBALL: Superb. Simply superb. It was the best living we ever had overseas. We were given embassy housing on a beautiful landscaped square in Kensington. It was one of perhaps 20 atmospheric old rowhouses on the Square, built in Napoleon’s time and convenient to transportation, good schools, shopping, and the Embassy. Compared to suburban Maryland, ours was a little run down and ill equipped, and certainly its amenities were behind the others on our Square. It took perseverance to get General Services to do much about it. Our children attended the nearby British grammar school as well as the excellent American School in London. It was a perfect place for a school age family, to say nothing of the cultural attractions. I can account for attending 60 plays or concerts in 30 months, plus 3 invitations to Buckingham Palace and one to Royal Ascot races. In short, it was fabulous.

Q: When you left in 1980, where to?

KIMBALL: Back to Washington as the director of the Office of International Conferences (OIC) in the International Organizations Bureau (IO). That lasted about three

years, to late '82. It involved me in another new set of learning experiences in dealing with management issues and budgets. Essentially, OIC officially accredits U.S. representatives to international conferences, and attempts to pay for the travel and the participation out of a special appropriation for that purpose. It was at a time that we were trying to introduce economies into the delegation selection process and trying to relate participation by the U.S. government more directly to the substance.

Q: When you talk about international conferences, did you have much to do with the composition of American representation on the conferences?

KIMBALL: We tried to, yes. Again, we were trying to economize as everybody always does in government - at least they say they are. This involved our having to decide the size and composition of the delegations. The legal authority to appoint (or accredit) U.S. delegations had been delegated after World War II, from the President, to the Secretary of State, to the IO assistant secretary, who in turn for certain conferences delegated it to the director of OIC. Our goal was to accredit delegates who were knowledgeable about the subject matter and essential to achieving U.S. goals at a given meeting. We did not want to send them just for bureaucratic representation reasons or for political reasons, if we could help it.

Once we achieved such lean delegations, we were willing and happy to pay for their travel. In fact one of our never-ending arguments with the administrative side of the Department was whether we could get a rule that conference travel would be funded exclusively by that conference appropriation. It would have given us a lot more leverage over the selection process, but it never came to pass.

Q: Who else had the money?

KIMBALL: Individual bureaus or individual government agencies had the money to send their own people anywhere they wanted to at any time. If they felt strongly about it, they would do so.

Q: There must have been two components that you would have to deal with. One with the bureaucracy both within the government including State and other governments. And then there would be the political side which would be run more or less out of the White House. Certain conferences, for various reasons, you would find people that really weren't overly suitable, or wanted to go either for prestige, or they just wanted to travel, or the Bureau of Fisheries wanted to make sure that it had a representative there. This must have been the battle ground.

KIMBALL: You described it very accurately. I should distinguish between what I would call the routine conferences and the mega-conferences such as the International Women's Year, for example, which did attract White House attention. The new Reagan administration was very interested in what opportunities there might be to place people on U.S. delegations to international conferences. Sometimes their people had relevance to

the subject matter, and sometimes they didn't. That was always a problem for my office and even more so for the IO assistant secretary, who found himself in the middle of White House pressures and what we regarded as our operating policy guidelines.

We finally worked out a procedure with the Department's White House liaison office as well as the White House itself, to notify them of impending conferences and of the qualifications needed for potential delegates, in case they had any nominations. It settled down to a fairly workable arrangement for forming relevant delegations.

Q: I would think that particularly the International Women's Conference, just by the fact that you are talking about 51 percent of the American population is automatically eligible for a conference and they vote... Was this a yearly thing? There was a big one in Mexico.

KIMBALL: The first Women's Conference in 1975 was in Mexico City. I attended from UNP as a political advisor. There was another one in Copenhagen, and more recently in Beijing, held in five-year intervals. It's rather like appointing political ambassadors. You know the current Administration has a right to appoint whomever they wish, but you just hope that they will choose wisely, and choose people with some kind of relevance to the subject and ability to carry out the duties. It was the same thing with delegations. We just hoped it was not just a political payoff and that some consideration would be given to the size and relevance of the delegation.

Q: What about the one in Mexico City?

KIMBALL: In Mexico City, I was a political advisor. We had the same kinds of political issues that we usually faced in the UN General Assembly, which we either had to defeat or sidetrack. We had other advisors from IO and USUN on the essential women's issues. They also had a very capable leader, in Pat Hutar accompanied by a large but capable delegation representative of the gamut of women's issues in the U.S.

Q: What would happen? You would send a delegation out and we would put together experts but essentially do they all go out and talk, or was one in charge? Where did the directions come and how did they work as a unit?

KIMBALL: Yes, back to the 1980-82 period, We generally put together background papers and talking points for the guidance of delegations or we ensured it was being done by some backstopping agency. We tried to make clear a delegation's responsibility to work together and to speak as instructed. It was up to the leader of the delegation to decide the tactics, and it depended on the conference as to who did what, where, and when. We usually knew what was coming up on any given agenda, so we could accredit experts to the delegation who were competent in the areas we knew would be discussed. Communication with the Department was constant and close. Of course in the case of high-profile conferences, such as the Women's Year Conference, we had political

constituencies that had to be satisfied too about representation on delegations. Lots of times there were redundancies, but that's the way we Americans do things.

Q: One of the things I'm wondering, when you get down to it here's an American delegation and another delegation and if you get people who are not all professionals, all marching to the same tune, and you get to a conference, I think it would be very hard to keep the people on the range.

KIMBALL: I guess that was always a problem. I think at least in the '70s and '80s people were pretty good about that. For one thing, the high-profile conferences often had alternate meetings. The private organizations or "NGOs" (non-governmental organizations) would come to town at the same time and set up parallel meetings in opposition. That kind of induced a cohesiveness in the official delegation that might not always have been there. In my experience, there were no individuals on our delegations who were likely to just get angry and mouth off, and not be a part of the team.

Q: With these conferences, these were not negotiating groups?

KIMBALL: Yes, negotiations were usually involved in reaching the final outcome. A lot of it was precooked in meetings in New York or elsewhere leading up to it but you still had to negotiate the final documents, and there were speeches to be made in all of these areas.

Q: Can you talk about any type of conference? I mean you have a conference, people get together, they make a statement at the end. What is this all about?

KIMBALL: The high-profile meetings usually end with a ringing Declaration. In the case of the Mexico City Women's Conference, it was a "World Plan of Action," a very lengthy document reflecting an uneasy compromise between the western view of "equality" and the (then) non-aligned view of economic development (i.e. more aid) as a prerequisite.

A lot of our conferences were recurring ones too. Don't forget that most of the things that OIC dealt with, at least 70 to 80 percent of them, were periodic meetings of a given organization to which we were sending representatives by virtue of our membership in the organization. The International Labor Organization, for example, or the World Health Organization and the World Health Assembly, meet every year. They just have continuing requirements.

Q: Were there any particular types of conferences that you'd kind of dread because there was always difficulty either with the delegation or the issues?

KIMBALL: Yes, these "high-profile" ones, the very public ones, where there was a lot of political interest. However, in a sense it was easier for us because the White House or a special appointee took them over. They would name the heads of the delegations and send

them over, and we'd go through the motions. We were always a bit nervous about the demands on us. By our guidelines we were interested in smaller, more efficient delegations, and not a deluge of a given conference site with hordes of Americans. We were always concerned about the precedent that might set for everybody else in the government who wanted to go to a conference. But the high profile, public conferences were decided in the White House. We could make suggestions and usually did. After the delegations were named, we supported the delegations administratively at the conference site.

Q: Early on, each administration goes through a youth, middle age maturity, and all. You were dealing with the youth of the Reagan administration which came in with a certain amount of almost isolationism, this view, at the beginning. Was this something that you were having to deal with?

KIMBALL: Yes, very much so. I don't think it is too out of school to say that I got a call from a lady in the White House once who gave her name as Helene Von Damm.

Q: She was the president's secretary.

KIMBALL: Yes, but I didn't realize it at the time. I found out about that only later. I tried to explain politely what our operating guidelines were and she listened. Later on we discovered the White House had some other ideas. In the end we worked out reasonable procedures, recognizing that American representation doesn't always include only experts.

Q: Did you find that every once in a while we would reach into the ranks of show business, personalities, or something like this, that would come out of more or less the political side?

KIMBALL: I don't remember any really egregious cases of square pegs in round holes. In the initial stages you would find somebody saying, "There is a friend in Southern California who wants to go to this meeting in Rome." "Well, what is his expertise?" It could be something that had nothing to do with the meeting. Usually these cases went away by themselves. If you were going to name a head of a delegation, or the deputy head, it was almost uniformly somebody who was nationally known in the subject and happened to be a member of the right party. In that sense they were good appointments.

Q: How about within the bureaucracy? Everybody wants to both get representative and for some it's a boondoggle.

KIMBALL: That was another side of it and we had to be very alert to the idea that delegates were being nominated simply because their office or agency did not want to be left out of the action. Usually there were two or three lead offices in the government, whether it was State or another agency depending on the subject matter, and after that there was mainly peripheral interest. We tried to deal with the peripherals with some

success, but never totally. Even if we didn't accredit them to the conference, if they really felt strongly about it they were able to pay their own way to the conference site anyway.

I think the main thing for me was after being so much in political subjects for 10 or 15 years, it was really interesting to apply a substantive perspective to the idea of staffing and supporting delegations, selecting delegates, and dealing with budgetary issues. I even found myself testifying to a House subcommittee once in favor of our appropriation.

Q: How was Congress at that point? Was it receptive?

KIMBALL: Yes. For this ICC, International Conference Contingencies, we never had any real problem. It was one of the few appropriations that had no fiscal year deadlines so we carried over our money each year. They were interested but it was pretty small potatoes as far as they were concerned. Perhaps one reason was that the Congressional IPU appropriation was buried in our bill, since it was an international conference, technically.

Q: By '82, what happened to you?

KIMBALL: The Inter-Parliamentary Union comes into it again. One of the most active members of the U.S. group in the Inter-Parliamentary Union was Ed Derwinski, a Republican from Illinois on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In 1982 he had lost his seat through redistricting. He had then been named Counselor of the Department during Secretary Haig's term and took up his duties in December of '82, after George Shultz had become Secretary. Ed had known me from the international parliamentary (IPU) meetings in the 1970s and asked me to be his Executive Assistant. I did so from the end of '82 to '86 when I retired.

Q: Derwinski is an interesting character. I remember when I was in Yugoslavia, I think, in the mid-'60s and all, somebody talking about when he came to Congress, for some reason. Normally you didn't hear about that but that he was sort of a very rough, uneducated cobbler who arrived in Congress at about that time out of the Chicago political machine. I'm not quite sure it is a machine but anyway, he was very much sort of a local boy product coming out there. He had evolved over time. How was he when you saw him at this point?

KIMBALL: I did not know him in the '60s. Yes, he was a product of the ethnic politics of Chicago. He is Polish-American and he had a special interest in hyphenated American groups over the years, especially the Greek-American community. He was a pragmatic person, interested in results and he liked to wheel and deal to get things done.

I can still only guess why he was appointed. He was a Republican. He was apparently a good friend of Vice-President Bush, going back to befriending the freshman Congressman Bush in the early 1970s. Derwinski had also been a Congressional member of the U.S. delegation to the UNGA during Ambassador Bush's tenure at USUN. The main problem during my assignment was finding issues in which the Counselor could

usefully be involved. As I look back on it, active Counselors of the Department have usually been close to the Secretary, whoever it may be. Their work, their prerogatives, and their leverage in the bureaucracy derives from that closeness. It was often hard to see that relationship in this situation.

Ed was a great person to work with. He was good humored. He was very kind to his staff and relatively undemanding in a paper processing way. For him, the fewer papers the better. The other FSOs in the office and I were always on the lookout for issues that he could usefully get involved in. We had some that were interesting or could use some 7th floor oversight or impetus. But we often seemed to be on the outside looking in. He was particularly interested in Cyprus, probably for Greek-American reasons. But this was a period when the U.S. wasn't doing much on Cyprus. Moreover, he kept running into what he might call pro-Turkish sympathies in EUR. EUR had valid reasons. I didn't mind that, but it certainly was frustrating.

We had other obstacles to weaving a beneficial relationship between Ed and the Department. I remember being on a trip with the Counselor in Korea in April 1985 when the *Washington Times* reported on a meeting the Counselor had earlier with its editorial board. The *Times* quoted Ed as saying "the State Department is a bureaucratic snarl... what is needed is for someone to shake up the whole damned structure." The Foreign Service Association (AFSA) complained about this interview and I'm sure there were raised eyebrows in the Secretariat too. It was typical that the FSOs in our office had no advance notice of this meeting with the *Times*. In Seoul, I drafted a reply to AFSA which was duly sent. It stated, among other things, that he was trying to explain some of the obstacles the Department faces but that the *Times* article did not properly reflect his efforts and put a negative cast on key points. He expressed his "highest regard" for the Foreign Service. AFSA generously published his reply in full. Later, Ed also explained his position to Secretary Shultz, I think, in a brief private meeting. However, Ed also received a letter from a well-known Senator who thanked Ed for what he had to say "about the professionals who have outlived their time" and who wished the Secretary would follow the Senator's advice and "fire every SOB who lives below the 8th floor and hire new ones all the way up."

Q: Did you have the feeling that Shultz in a way ignored him?

KIMBALL: Yes. I think they were not on the same wavelength if I may say so. Ed could have contributed a lot more to the Department's congressional relations.

Q: I was going to say, I would have thought that he could have been used as a line to Congress.

KIMBALL: That's true but the traditional Department way of dealing with Congress was not his cup of tea either. He liked to be on the old boy circuit. I don't think he had many missions from the Administration to his liking. He could have been used a lot more

effectively in informal ways. I do know that Ed helped significantly to secure support on the Hill for the Secretary's proposal to build the new FSI in Arlington.

Q: Would he sort of go over and have lunch once a week or something?

KIMBALL: I don't know about lunch, but he kept up his contacts on the Hill. I also had a feeling that in general he kept his Congressional and State lives separate. The FSOs in the office were involved on the State side but not on the congressional side. He brought two of his Congressional staff with him to Schedule C positions and they took care of his personal schedule and Hill contacts. They were both wonderful people, I hasten to add.

Q: Would you get telegrams in, that you had to clear and things like that?

KIMBALL: Yes, on some subjects. He was assigned, for example, an oversight role in the U.S.-Canada salmon fishing negotiations. He would go out to Seattle or Vancouver several times and pat everybody on the back. He was very good at that. He would jolly the Indian tribes and various state representatives, and get them in a good frame of mind to tackle the scientific and economic issues and reach agreement. It worked at the time. I believe his efforts helped a lot, especially on the American side, which was a more difficult negotiation than later with Canada.

Another oversight role involved his designation as State Department coordinator and liaison for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Inevitably, a lot of the day-to-day activity fell to us on the staff and that provided a lot of entertainment.

Q: Were there any sort of foreign affairs issues? I recall the Soviets boycotted it.

KIMBALL: They did. I have always been irked by the fact that Peter Ueberroth, President of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, who did a superb job in LA, chose to write a book afterwards that in effect said State Department ineptitude caused the Soviets to boycott the Olympics.

The White House - Michael Deaver in person - made it clear to all of us that the 1984 Olympics would not be a political football. Moreover, nobody needed to be told that a former Governor of California was going to countenance anything that would hurt the Los Angeles effort. US policy was to facilitate the entry of all Olympic participants, meaning Soviets too, while we expected all would follow Olympic rules and respect those of the host country. We told the Soviets they could use Aeroflot charters to fly athletes and staff to LA, even via Cuba if they preferred. We only asked they request normal flight clearance. We signaled agreement for a Soviet cruise ship serving ostensibly as a dormitory to dock in Long Beach harbor, even though some saw this Soviet request as a ploy to eavesdrop on U.S. defense activities in the LA area. We agreed to consider a Soviet request for a special Olympics diplomatic attache, even though no other country had made such a request. We had told the Soviets we would approve a "suitable" individual, but also that a name they had floated - a known KGB operative - was not

within our definition of “suitable”. We were also prepared to waive travel restrictions on Soviet officials resident in the U.S. (restrictions imposed only because of comparable Soviet restrictions on our diplomats.) Protective security arrangements in LA were very well-organized through effective cooperation among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and the Soviet officials knew it. Their professed fear of anti-Soviet threats were a pretext, not a cause, for their eventual boycott. I have no evidence, but I’m sure they had made a decision early in the game to boycott in retaliation for our boycott of Moscow in 1980.

At least I made it indirectly into Ueberroth’s book as an illustration of his view of bureaucrats. In the course of one of Ueberroth’s discussions in Washington in preparation for his meetings with the IOC in Switzerland, Secretary Shultz had offered him the help of two State officers involved in the planning for Soviet attendance in Los Angeles. He declined the offer. On page 283 of his book, he acknowledges the offer but refers to these two unnamed “minor functionaries” as having the “diplomatic clout of Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee.” His book was not very kind to Ed Derwinski personally, either. Nevertheless, the fact is the U.S. Government did everything it could to facilitate a Soviet presence at the 1984 Olympics. At the time, we worked very closely and cooperatively with excellent LAOOC representatives both in Washington and Los Angeles. I’ve often wondered why Ueberroth went out of his way to describe it otherwise, especially when LAOCC’s own official history contains an accurate account.

Q: Was security, terrorism, something that you all were concerned with?

KIMBALL: Yes, it was very much of a concern.

Q: Where did you see the threats?

KIMBALL: I think mainly the Middle East. Most everyone had the 1972 Munich terrorist attack in mind. The problem was that the Olympic venues and housing in the Los Angeles area was so spread out over a wide area, which multiplied security concerns. The Los Angeles police and sheriff’s department in Los Angeles County, did a wonderful job, helped by federal agencies including the FBI. State’s own regional Office of Security in LA was a huge help to our office. Fortunately I think it all came out pretty well from a security standpoint.

Q: Would Derwinski make trips around, when they needed somebody to go somewhere just to show that we were interested, or not?

KIMBALL: That would have been a reasonable approach. He made trips but they were often at his own initiative to places like Cyprus, or Athens. There was something in the South Pacific, again a fisheries problem. At the Secretary’s request, Ed went to several of the early meetings leading to Asia/Pacific economic cooperation. Apparently the Secretary looked upon him as being pretty good for these things that needed a symbolic

7th floor presence or involved different agencies but nevertheless were on the periphery of what the Secretary or other principals were then focused on.

Q: Having come from places where a lot of stuff was coming in, did you feel kind of cut off, isolated, in a way?

KIMBALL: Yes. That is an astute question. I don't know whether that was because we were not asking or demanding enough, or whether we were being quietly restricted. I don't think we were getting all of the relevant traffic for example, and certainly not what our next door neighbor, the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, was getting. The desk people, and EUR especially, resented having to deal with an extra layer, especially one they could not control or predict. On the other hand, I remember once being reprimanded by the Secretariat for "allowing" the Counselor to communicate directly with the Vice President's office without going through S/S. "Big Brother" was clearly watching!

Q: While you were sort of kept off the periphery, what was your impression of George Shultz as secretary of State?

KIMBALL: I had great respect for him myself. Looking back, I have no quibbles. His autobiography is excellent, by the way.

Q: I would have thought that being an FSO... You were up on what floor?

KIMBALL: The seventh floor.

Q: With an office that was sort of being bypassed, you had all these hotshot people, particularly the staff aides, all these guys and gals who are trying to make it. This was often the place where you come in order to jump up and down and be seen and show you're effective. There are a lot of egos and professions on the line and here you are almost observing it. Was this sort of an interesting microcosm of the Foreign Service to observe?

KIMBALL: Yes, it was. I had wonderful colleagues in the office, all of whom deserve recognition and thanks. But I belatedly began to realize that they might not be getting the career impetus out of their 7th floor job that they expected. It was understandable that the trend was to look at the proverbial "next" assignment as being more important in some ways than the job at hand, but it still bothered me. On the other hand the staff members in our office and in neighboring 7th floor offices were very bright people, very serious people, who almost always did well, career wise.

Looking back, I realize that I may have been a little naive to think that merely well-intentioned efforts to integrate my somewhat unconventional boss with a somewhat suspicious building would be favorably recognized by the system.

Q: What happened to Derwinski after he left there, do you know?

KIMBALL: When I was retired in '86 he was still Counselor. He moved shortly after that to be the Undersecretary for Security Assistance for the remainder of Reagan's term. He then became Secretary for Veterans Affairs under President Bush.

Q: So he really had quite a lifetime.

KIMBALL: Yes, he did very well.

Q: You retired in '86. What did you do then?

KIMBALL: I dabbled in real estate. I obtained a Maryland real estate license and worked for several years in the Potomac area trying to adjust to that business but eventually gave it up. I was a seasonal tax preparer for H&R Block for five years and am now working with a Rockville tax and accounting firm. I'm an avid reader of current events and write letters to the editor, a few of which even get printed. Between my family and the Foreign Service, it's been quite a wonderful trip.

Q: Okay. We'll stop at this point.

End of interview