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

MILDRED A. PATTERSON

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is May 6th, 2003. This is an interview with Mildred A. Patterson, P-A-T-T-E-R-S-O-N. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Do you go by Mildred or how do people call you?

PATTERSON: Mildred.

Q: Mildred. All right. Let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born and then we'll talk a little bit about your family.

PATTERSON: I was born March 15th, 1951 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Q: Okay, now, let's talk about your family. Let's talk about your father first. What's sort of the Patterson background? Do you know how they got to Kansas City and all that?

PATTERSON: My father came from a Scotch Irish family that immigrated to Missouri from Pennsylvania. He was the son of an engineer.

Q: I see. And your father, where did he go to school?

PATTERSON: My father went to the University of Missouri. He was a member of the fraternity of Beta Theta Pi, which he was always very proud of. He went to Harvard Business School after serving in the Navy.

Q: What did he do in the navy?

PATTERSON: He never talked very much about it. He was on a destroyer, the U.S.S. Charles Ausborne, in the Pacific and although he left the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander, it was something he played down always.

Q: On your mother's side, what was her family background?

PATTERSON: My mother's maiden name was Pierson. She was of Swedish background. Her grandparents immigrated to the United States from Sweden and ran a grocery store in Kansas City. Her father was a businessman. He started a company called the Vendo Company, which made vending machines. During my childhood, I used to hear a lot about coke machines; my grandfather would always go looking to see if there was a Vendo machine in any of the gas stations or restaurants where he stopped. He was a philanthropist and endowed, among other things, a sculpture garden at the Nelson Gallery

in Kansas City, and gave money to the University of Missouri at Kansas City for an auditorium.

Q: What about your grandmother? Your grandmothers on both sides.

PATTERSON: Right. My paternal grandmother died when my father was a freshman in college. She also came from a prominent family in Kansas City. Her father was the first German undertaker in Kansas City, and he founded what was then the German hospital and later became Research Hospital. My father's mother was one of the early leaders of the Junior League in Kansas City. I have several lovely pieces of silver that she was given after stepping down from her position as President of the Junior League. My maternal grandmother came from a small town in Missouri and was a schoolteacher for several years before she met my grandfather.

Q: Did your grandparents, I mean, your paternal grandmother was of course no longer there. How about the rest of the grandparents, they were sort of there in the picture?

PATTERSON: My paternal grandfather remarried some years after his first wife died, and yes, I was fortunate to know her and my other grandparents throughout my childhood and teen years. My paternal grandfather died during the winter before I joined the Foreign Service, and I took to Copenhagen, my first post, some of my grandfather's furniture, which I still have. That part of the family legacy has traveled the world with me.

Q: Great. What about in growing up in, where did you live in Kansas City? What kind of a neighborhood was it?

PATTERSON: Kansas City has a neighborhood somewhat like Spring Valley here in Washington, D.C., with large homes and beautiful gardens. My family lived in that neighborhood near a large park called Loose Park, just south of what is called the Country Club Plaza, one of the first outdoor shopping malls in the United States.

Q: This is the one that is sort of a Spanish style?

PATTERSON: Yes. Exactly.

Q: Yes, I was there a couple of years ago. My wife was born in Kansas City.

PATTERSON: Oh really?

Q: But then they moved away back to New England. No, it's a very attractive place.

PATTERSON: I went first to an all girls Catholic school through sixth grade and then to an all girls private school from seventh to twelfth grades, a college preparatory school.

Q: Was your family Catholic?

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: Did Catholicism play much of a role?

PATTERSON: My parents were not active in the church. They did see to it that we had a religious upbringing. We went to church on Sundays, but in the social circles that they traveled in, Catholicism was somewhat looked down on so they downplayed that aspect of their life. Also, they considered religion a private matter.

Q: What about the, you say you went to an all girl Catholic school. Was this run by nuns at the time?

PATTERSON: It was. It was run by an order of French nuns, the Sisters of Sion, and the name of the school was Notre Dame de Sion. I was exposed to French from preschool onward with some very fierce, when I think back on it, some very fierce personalities among those nuns. We sang lots of songs in French, said prayers in French, and had regular French classes. Knowing French served me well all the way through my Foreign Service career.

Q: Oh, yes. You were very fortunate, but one hears stories about the nuns. Were these pretty strict nuns?

PATTERSON: Most were kind, excellent teachers and many were Americans by birth. However, I remember vividly my 4th grade teacher, Mere Ida, who was an older nun from France, and who clearly came from an older and stricter teaching tradition. The verbal abuse she meted out to the children who were less able academically and the belittling and shouting were awful. Parents today would never permit such an approach to their children. I was a good student and therefore escaped that, but nevertheless I recall sitting in her class and just kind of quaking as she would go after somebody who was not understanding whatever lesson it was.

Q: Did you find what were your interests, as you were still young, but what were your interests? Reading, sports?

PATTERSON: I loved to read and I have many memories of summertime. Kansas City is hot and humid like Washington is. My mother would take my sisters and me to the library and we would bring home the maximum number of books we were allowed to check out and then for the next several days I would sit on the porch and read. I played sports, especially in middle school and high school where I played field hockey and basketball. I liked to ice skate. I think those were the main things.

Q: Any books that stick out in your mind that particularly sort of?

PATTERSON: As a child I read all of the books by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Q: Oh, yes, the Little House on the Prairie.

PATTERSON: All of those. My grandparents had a series of books called The Little Colonel and they were about a little girl growing up in the South and the books then as I read them were so old they were falling apart in my hands. When I think about them now they would not be considered politically correct at all, because they talked very openly about the slaves on the family plantation. I remember reading those as a child, as well as the Nancy Drew books and other those series books.

Q: I tell you my mother who was born in 1896, her father was a mid-westerner from Wisconsin and he was an officer in Sherman's army. I was horrified to find that she was reading The Little Colonel series and wouldn't allow her to read them. Of course she read them on the side, but, this is. Shirley Temple did a movie of this.

PATTERSON: Oh did she?

Q: Yes. I think called The Little Colonel.

PATTERSON: The Little Colonel.

Q: Did you get a feel from the nuns about France or the outside world or from your family? I'm talking about when you were a little girl.

PATTERSON: Absolutely. One of the nuns had a particular interest in Uganda. I don't remember whether she had come from working in Uganda or was going to Uganda, but I remember hearing a lot about the country. All of my life I've retained an idea of Uganda being a physically beautiful country. I knew vaguely that Notre Dame de Sion had a school in Istanbul, Turkey and that became of interest to me later when we served in Turkey. The motherhouse was in France. The order was founded by two Jewish brothers, who had a vision that converted them to Catholicism, and there was always an emphasis at the school about tolerance for other people and welcoming the Jews. There were a number of Jewish girls in my class. In addition to being a day school, it was also a boarding school and there was one family, for example, who lived in Tonganoxie, Kansas, which was too far away for their daughters to go back and forth, so those girls would board during the week.

Q: Well, did you get much of a feel for the history of Missouri while you were there?

PATTERSON: None at all. Not at all.

Q: I was just wondering.

PATTERSON: I have a daughter now who is a fifth grader in the Arlington schools, and in fourth grade there was a huge emphasis on Virginia and on Virginia history. We had

nothing either in elementary school or middle and high school that emphasized Missouri history at all.

Q: How about Harry Truman? Politically, how did your family fall?

PATTERSON: My father was an ardent Republican, my mother an equally devoted Democrat, but quiet about it. They canceled their votes out always. I have two sisters and as young children my father would take us with him to hand out voting literature at the polls. My mother was always very good about it. I remember my dad was a big fan of Richard Nixon in the early days and I remember wearing a Nixon button during the election. It was not until I was in high school that I woke up and realized that my mother was on the opposite side politically from my father.

Q: How about at home through the time you were living at home. In the first place you have brothers and sisters?

PATTERSON: I have two younger sisters.

Q: I mean would meals be a time of discussion and things like this?

PATTERSON: We always ate dinner as a family. I do remember going through a period when my parents would ask how the school day went and all of us would answer in monosyllables, but yes, there would be some family discussion. There would be large family parties and I can remember being interested in the adults' conversation and gossip. My paternal grandfather, although a Republican, was very opposed to the Vietnam War. I remember vividly his criticizing the war. In addition to other family gatherings, we always saw him on Sundays, when my sisters and I would go and see him or he would come to see us, and the adults' conversations inevitably turned to the war.

Q: When you went to girls' middle school would you call that?

PATTERSON: Yes, seventh through twelfth grade.

Q: Well, it was really high school.

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: That was where?

PATTERSON: It's now called the Pembroke Hill School. It was then called Sunset Hill School. It subsequently merged with the all boys private school and is now coed .

Q: At your time it was all girls school?

PATTERSON: All girls.

Q: How did you find the school in the education and all?

PATTERSON: I had an excellent education in all areas except math. The math teaching was poor. Otherwise I had very exciting teachers. My favorite teacher my sophomore year taught ancient history. My favorite teacher junior year taught American history. She was also the headmistress of the school, a very dynamic woman from New York. Our graduating class was only 26 girls. My closest friends are still those from my high school years.

Q: You know, you were born in 1951, so things have changed. Had the school would you say, the school's attitude, this is no longer a matter as some were to turn out young ladies with an "Mrs. degree," to get married?

PATTERSON: It was very definitely college preparation. It had a tradition of sending its girls to the top Eastern girls schools and my graduating year was the first year that Princeton and Yale took women. Several of us were definitely encouraged to apply. You know, Radcliffe was already...

Q: Merged with Harvard.

PATTERSON: Yes. One of my friends went to Radcliffe. The entire class was encouraged to go to college and did, and those of us who were good students were certainly encouraged to go to the top schools in the United States.

Q: How did the social life work in an all girls' school? Was there an all boys' school nearby or something? How did this work out?

PATTERSON: There was an all boys school nearby and of course the very pretty girls who seemed to grow up with a knack of how to talk to boys were very popular. My group didn't date much really, but we went to the movies and had good times together. College was the beginning of any kind of real social life for my close friends and me.

Q: Let's see, how about the Kennedy Nixon election, did that intrude I mean, did you get involved in that? I mean you were a kid, but still did that seem to attract you?

PATTERSON: No, my mother was a big Kennedy fan, but no, other than standing at the polls handing out leaflets with my father, the election had little impact on me. I was only nine.

Q: You graduated from high school?

PATTERSON: 1969.

Q: 1969.

PATTERSON: Now, 1968 and 1969 of course were rather big years in American social history with the civil rights protests and rioting and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Some of the boys from the all boys school who were a year ahead of us were prominent in the demonstrations at Columbia and Harvard in 1969. We entered college in the fall of 1969 with protests about the Vietnam War increasing. I marched in one or two peace demonstrations, but I was always more of an observer of what was going on.

Q*: Yes, I can empathize with that. How about the Civil Rights Movement? You were pretty young, but Missouri of course you know is a border state and all that. Did this intrude or make itself felt at all?*

PATTERSON: M school began to actively seek minority students about that time, because there were none. We had American Field Service (AFS) students, foreign students, but we didn't have minority students in my school. Throughout my high school years they began to seek more minority students, offer more opportunities, offer scholarships. I guess by my junior and senior year certainly we were all aware of what we perceived as the rightness of the cause, but not otherwise actively engaged in it ourselves.

Q: Was there much of an African American population in St. Louis, I mean Kansas City?

PATTERSON: Yes, there was, there is.

Q: I mean was this just another world almost?

PATTERSON: Totally.

Q: Where did you look to go to college? Did you feel mid-Westerner; did you want to get away?

PATTERSON: I always wanted to go east to college. My mother went to Smith College. My father wanted me to go to the University of Missouri, but it seemed too big to me and I wanted to be someplace different. I was accepted at Stanford and I did go out to see Stanford. I will always remember that I visited a friend who was a freshman at Stanford and I went with her to her Western Civilization class and just loved it. But, when I looked around at Stanford, everybody looked like me. Everybody looked like they came from white upper class families. I saw the same kind of yellow convertibles that the particularly wealthy girls in my schools had. I ended up going to the University of Pennsylvania, which was my first choice and which seemed to be more diverse. They had a very strong history department, which I thought I wanted to study as well as a strong English department. It was coed; it was on the East Coast. So, that's where I went.

Q: You were at the University of Pennsylvania from what '69?

PATTERSON: To '73.

Q: '69 to '73. Where is it?

PATTERSON: It's in Philadelphia.

Q: It's right in Philadelphia. That's what I thought.

PATTERSON: Yes. It's the University founded by Benjamin Franklin.

Q: How would you describe the University of Pennsylvania when you went there?

PATTERSON: At that time there were about 6000 undergraduates, mostly from the east coast. It had a fairly big population of foreign students. It had and still has the Wharton School of Business, a medical school, school of architecture, law school, veterinary school, so you had the lively atmosphere of a large university. Looking back on it, it was maybe too big for me. I had come from a class of 26 girls and they were four hard years in a way. I can remember early in my freshman year walking from one class at one end of campus all the way to my next class at the opposite end and not seeing anybody I knew and resolving to myself that over the course of the four years I would know a lot of people, but it was too big to know a lot of people. Yet, I enjoyed my courses. I enjoyed the professors. There were wonderful professors who taught Russian history. I just took every course they taught. Also, Alan Kors, a prominent intellectual historian, was a stimulating professor. So, I enjoyed it all intellectually, but it was harder to find friends, because the university was so large. Let me just add that I arrived at Penn in the fall of 1969 when it still had sororities. My father begged me to investigate the sororities. He had loved his fraternity life in Missouri and he thought I would like that too, so I promised that I would. Sororities folded, all of them, within the first two months of my freshman year, but I did meet three girls, three women, one of whom, Joann Artz, was responsible later for my joining the Foreign Service. I met her my freshman year when she was a sophomore and we knew each other casually throughout my time in college. During the spring of my junior year I ran into her after not seeing her for a long time. When I asked her what she was planning to do next, she said, "I'm joining the Foreign Service. I'm going to Paris." "Paris?" I said, "What is the Foreign Service?" That conversation led me eventually to take the Foreign Service Exam.

Q: Well, why was that, what was happening to sororities? Was it just gone out of?

PATTERSON: They just went completely out of style. They were, I guess, looking back on it, from an era that promoted that Mrs. degree that you mentioned earlier and in the late '60s no longer considered socially relevant, at least on an east coast university campus like Penn. I suppose they were also considered by many to be exclusive and discriminatory.

Q: I went to a smaller college. I went to Williams and I think about that time I'm not sure when, but fraternities which were sort of the backbone of the system, just went with no

great regret from most, you know, even alumni. I thought it was time, they were discriminatory and I think it was just a period a lot of the, particularly these schools that sort of were ivy league and all that sort of looked hard at them and felt well, these don't really add anything.

PATTERSON: A core group of fraternities continued at Penn during my years and have continued since, but the sororities deflated.

Q: Well, the courses, I take it history was still your thing? Had anybody asked you what are you going to do with history or something like that?

PATTERSON: I used to get asked that all the time and of course everybody I knew was either going to medical school, which I knew I didn't want to do, or law school. I used to tell people just so they wouldn't ask me further that I was going to go to law school. Then I took the law boards, which proved to be the hardest test I ever took in my life, and I knew within a half an hour of beginning to write that test that I wasn't going to law school. So, it was just serendipity that I even heard of the Foreign Service and it sounded perfect for someone like me. I wanted to travel. I didn't have the independent means to do that on my own. Someone else was going to have to pay me and so it just sounded like the ideal thing.

Q: Did you find sort of world events intruding on, this was, well this was during the '69 to '73 period, you got there just in time for Nixon and Kissinger to come in and moving on to Vietnam and opening to China. Did these things?

PATTERSON: Vietnam intruded. China certainly didn't have any impact on my consciousness at all then.

Q: While you were doing your history and all were you looking at any particularly area?

PATTERSON: European history mostly, but I ended up trying to take courses from the great professors rather than in one particular area. I took classes in 18th and 19th Century English and Russian history along with the literature of those centuries. I basically majored in the teachers who inspired me day after day.

Q: When you graduated in '73, had you started to look at the Foreign Service at what it was?

PATTERSON: I did. I took the exam my senior year for the first time. I remember going to West Philadelphia to a public high school one cold Saturday morning in December to take the written exam. I thought it was something that I wanted to do. I failed the written exam the first time by one point. After getting the results in the spring, I made plans to go to Europe for the next year. While in Paris I took the Foreign Service exam again, this time on a December Saturday at the American Embassy in Paris. The second time I passed the exam. I then spent six more months in Europe, working as an au pair and

going to cooking school. I also worked as a bilingual secretary and then I ran out of money and finally had to come home. That fall I was called to come to Washington for the oral interview.

Q: How did you find France? I mean what were your impressions of France?

PATTERSON: Well, I loved it and I think my experience shaped forever my definitions of good taste and bad taste. I lived in a kind of boarding house arrangement that was run by a woman of the lower aristocracy who had fallen on harder times who made ends meet by taking in foreign students. We were not all young students. There was a Turkish gentleman who was an economist who was working at the OECD prior to Turkey's joining the OECD. There were several businessmen who would come from Germany or from Scandinavia and who would stay three or four weeks, and there was a Japanese art student who stayed nearly as long as I did that year. We would all gather around the dinner table at a set hour each evening. Madame de Manet spoke French and a little bit of German, but no English. We all had to speak French and when I first arrived I was tongue tied, but as the days wore on I began to gather courage to speak. Madame de Manet did her best to have a general conversation that all could participate in, but it would depend on the various levels of French around the table how well the evening's topic would go. For me it was a fascinating education just to watch Madame de Manet, a formidable grande dame, in action.

There were times when I was between activities during my year, for example, after I finished cooking school and before I found a job as a bilingual secretary. On the days I had no schedule, I took my green Michelin guide and did one of the walks through a Paris neighborhood. I would go to the departure point designated in the book and look at everything. Then I would walk back to Madame de Manet's apartment, which often meant I was walking between five and seven miles a day all over Paris. One of the results was that I really learned my way around Paris. Because I was trying to stay in Paris as long as I could, I was really husbanding my money. I would spend a franc and a half on the International Herald Tribune everyday, which I read religiously because I was trying to prepare myself for the oral portion of the Foreign Service exam, and another franc and a half on the largest apple that the fruit vendor would sell me for my lunch. One way or another I managed to stay for an entire year.

Q: Did you get any feel for French politics at the time? Did you get involved in any manifestations or anything like that?

PATTERSON: Not in any demonstrations. There was an election while I was there and I don't even remember what for. They needed help at the polling place. So, Madame de Manet took me with her as a volunteer. I don't even remember what I did, whether I passed out literature that showed people how to vote or what, but I do remember being at a polling place and I think it was maybe some small election. It wasn't a national election. I got a micro view of political activities in France, not a macro view.

Q: Of course, you spoke French, which made quite a difference. Did you find coming up against the French, I think it's changed over the time, but at that time, the French had a reputation of being rather disdainful of foreigners. Did you find this at all true?

PATTERSON: I did. My language did help, but I'm tall and don't look French, so I was always spotted as a foreigner. Other foreigners would inevitably ask me for directions and because I was walking all over the city, generally I was able to help them, but yes, I frequently encountered French people who were none too friendly.

Q: Then where did you take the oral exam?

PATTERSON: At the American Embassy in Paris. Oh, where I took the oral exam? Back here in Washington in the fall of 1974.

Q: In Washington?

PATTERSON: In Washington, I came to Washington.

Q: Can you recall how the exam went, some of the questions, things like that?

PATTERSON: I remember only one question. I was in a room with three examiners and there was only one question I can really remember. I didn't actually know anything about how an embassy was organized, but they explained a little bit and then they gave me the problem, which was that we had to cut the budget, and I had to get rid of one of two employees. The two choices were a very senior employee, a senior Foreign Service National employee who was no longer performing in his job as he should be or a brand new employee very recently hired. Which one would I get rid of? I can remember still thinking, "oh my gosh, I wonder what the right answer is?" and not realizing there's really no right or wrong answer. I went ahead and said I would get rid of the senior employee and they pressed me on that, "what if his colleagues came to you and said this is terrible", and I remember saying, "well, I hope I would stand firm and keep the younger one." But I can remember thinking to myself, "I bet I wouldn't do that. I bet I would keep the employee who had been there for so many years."

Q: Just about this time, about a year or two later I was giving the oral exam. We would put people in that dilemma. This is how this is constituted, let's see how you react.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: There isn't a right answer.

PATTERSON: Right. I also remember twice being asked questions I didn't know the answers to, but I also remember that I had said to myself before I went into the interview, that it would be better to just to say I didn't know than to make up an answer. So I know that for two questions on the oral I simply replied that I didn't know.

Q: Well, it really is because if they catch you floundering.

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: By this time when you were going and you were in Paris and also at the university had you been able to talk to people who had been in the Foreign Service?

PATTERSON: No. I just went into it blind, completely blind. The year that I was in Paris, Joann Artz, my acquaintance from Penn who had told me she was joining the Foreign Service, was in fact there and I can remember she was a vice consul. I remember seeing the consular section and I remember meeting a couple of her friends, one of whom I later worked with in the Operations Center. I got a glimpse, but I got less a glimpse of work than of what looked to me as a great way to live in Paris.

Q: What did your family think about the Foreign Service?

PATTERSON: Well, my father was horrified that I was going to work for the U.S. Government. He thought I was going on the dole and just thought it was awful. My mother didn't think it was awful politically, but she was worried that I would be so far away from home.

Q: Was there at point, things were beginning to change, were you hearing from people or anybody as you got ready to get in saying well, what kind of a career is this for a woman. If you get married, what do you do about the husband that sort of thing?

PATTERSON: No, later, once I was in the Service, an inspector said that to me. No, Kansas City being where it is, in the middle of the country, if you're going to see something, you have to go away. So, people in Kansas City are used to traveling and have traveled a lot and most thought it was exciting that I would be seeing the world.

Q: Well, then you came in after you passed the oral. When did you?

PATTERSON: I was given an offer to join the Foreign Service rapidly, but at that point I was working in Kansas City for a travel agency. One way or another I was determined to travel. However, there were a number of personal things going on such as a friend's wedding and she had invited me to be in her wedding. So, in the end I delayed joining the Foreign Service and I actually went through a huge period of indecision about it to the point where I even went and consulted a vocational counselor about whether I should join the Foreign Service. Believe it or not, thanks to a timely Ann Landers article, I concluded that I would be disappointed if I never tried, that I needed to try, so I moved to Washington.

Q: I was thinking the Foreign Service would be very foreign to a vocational counselor in a way because I mean this is so almost beyond the depth of somebody's experience in that

particular field. Did you find that?

PATTERSON: Yes. He didn't really know much about the Foreign Service at all, but we were kind of trying to work through what was I good at, what else could I do, what were my other options.

Q: You mentioned that law wasn't for you. This is so often the parking place for people who don't know, a bright good education and they say, well I'll get a law degree, which means three years of very hard work, very expensive, but this never attracted you?

PATTERSON: No, by the end of my senior year in college I was tired of school. I wanted to do something different. The Foreign Service is a great place for those of us with liberal arts degrees.

Q: Oh, yes.

PATTERSON: I didn't want to be in a structured academic environment anymore.

Q: Academia as a profession never appealed to you?

PATTERSON: It didn't. I never saw myself as a teacher.

Q: Then you came in '75.

PATTERSON: 1976.

Q: '76.

PATTERSON: In June of 1976.

Q: Yes. That's just when I started on the board of examiners I think. No, actually I just went up to Korea at that time, I had just finished that, maybe missed you by a year or two. So, your class, your A100 class, what was it like?

PATTERSON: There were 60 of us, of whom 45 were State officers and 15 USIA officers. I was one of the undereducated. All I had was a bachelor's degree. Most had their Masters. There were one or two Ph.D.s. The two Ph.D.s washed out early.

Q: Did they wash out or it just wasn't their thing?

PATTERSON: I don't know. It's my observation that Ph.D.s don't always do so well in the Foreign Service. By the time they have their advanced degree, their training and interests have narrowed to the point where the hurly burly of operational activity typical of the Foreign Service usually doesn't interest them much.

Q: It's one of the things I've found out. I've tried to engage the academic world in what I'm doing. I know the people use it, but I've tried to get them to interview and all this and they're so narrow that they can't. I mean they don't seem for the most part to be interested in sitting down and talking to someone over a whole spectrum of time and issues and countries. How about males and females in your class?

PATTERSON: Mostly male. I don't actually remember the number of males, but mostly males.

Q: Was there any, by the time you came in things had changed so that, but not that long ago that women could be married and still carry on and all that?

PATTERSON: Right, and although I think our class wasn't particularly aware of that change, certainly there was a whole cohort of officers ahead of us whose wives had been subject to the EER process. I did encounter some bias at my first post from some of the senior officers. Once or twice one of them would say, "How did you get in? Did you get in through the real exam?", implying that I had not gone through the same rigorous examination that they had. That kind of thing.

Q: How about minorities in your class?

PATTERSON: There were only two: one African American woman and one African American man. The African American woman stayed through two tours. The African American man left before the A-100 course was finished.

Q: Well, were you picking up any feeling about what came in about what type of work you wanted to do within the Foreign Service? I mean were you coned when you came in?

PATTERSON: I think I was. I think I was coned consular. I picked up immediately and maybe I even had it before, that it was more prestigious to be a political officer. I think that in the early literature that had been sent to me it sounded like you had more interaction with people if you were a consular officer, so that's how I ended in that cone I believe. My first post was Denmark where I worked in several sections trying out the different specialties.

Q: As you went through the FSI A100 training did it change your feelings about or enlighten you about what the Foreign Service did?

PATTERSON: The A100 course was pretty good, but it didn't put very much in context. I can remember an emphasis on writing skills, going to see various agencies, and being dreadfully bored by the people at both the Labor Department and the Commerce Department who spoke to us.

Q: That really hasn't changed. I went there in the '50s.

PATTERSON: I spent my entire first tour with very little context of how what I was doing in the consular section in Copenhagen fit with anything in Washington. I ended my first tour thinking that I had really better go to Washington and see what that side was about because otherwise I wasn't sure that I liked the career enough. After the A-100 course I took the old consular course, which was terrible. It was being given for the last time before consular training switched to the ConGen Rosslyn format.

Q: As I sort of as a professional consular officer, I was concerned along with many of my colleagues that this course was poisoning the well, that young people would go there and it would be taught by almost by too many talking heads and it didn't capture the sort of the fun of consul work. It was very, very dull.

PATTERSON: It was dreadful, totally dreadful. I joined the Foreign Service the 3rd of June 1976 and I arrived in Copenhagen the 1st of September 1976 really without a clue as to what I was going to do and how that fit with anything.

Q: You were in Copenhagen from '76 to?

PATTERSON: '78. To December of 1978.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

PATTERSON: John Gunther Dean was the first ambassador and then he was succeeded by a political appointee whose name was Walter Manschel.

Q: Well, now did you have any contact with John Gunther Dean?

PATTERSON: All the time. Copenhagen was a small embassy. There were only three junior officers. A junior admin officer and another vice consul. We attended the country team meetings because all of the officers did. He was quite an active, energetic and intimidating ambassador. I invited him and Mrs. Dean to dinner once and it was the hardest dinner party I've ever given, because I was so nervous, but it worked out fine and all of my guests seemed to enjoy themselves that evening. All dinner parties since have been easier than that one.

Q: I've interviewed John Gunther Dean

PATTERSON: Have you?

Q: But he's a name to conjure within the Foreign Service. He's bigger than life size. He needs a country at war. The thought of him sitting in Copenhagen.

PATTERSON: He had a hard time staying busy. He took Danish everyday. He made a very big point of the importance of knowing the language. He wanted everybody in his mission to speak Danish. I did not get language training before going to Denmark. The

very first thing he told me in the first country team meeting was that I needed to get a Danish boyfriend immediately so that I would learn the language! Ambassador Dean traveled all over that country. He was in the newspaper constantly. He was quite a first ambassador to encounter. Once I joined the political section, he took me with him occasionally to meetings at the foreign ministry for me to learn to take notes. He had very strong views on how all of us officers should conduct ourselves at his receptions and especially at the Fourth of July reception. We had strict instructions about taking people away from the receiving line after they had greeted the Deans and about making sure that no foreigner was standing by him or herself. As you said, he was a figure who was larger than life. I grew quite fond of him.

Q: Yes, he was one of a sort of our imperial ambassadors.

PATTERSON: Very much so.

Q: But unlike so many of them, people who worked under him appreciated it. I mean he was not dismissive of people at least that's what I get. Well, maybe, okay, I appreciate your.

PATTERSON: He was good to us junior officers. He was very dismissive of his DCM and very tough with the military attaches. If you stood up to him he backed off, but if you were cowed, he went after you further. I stayed in contact with Ambassador Dean after they left Denmark, though I haven't seen him now in some years.

Q: Well, he went from there to Lebanon, didn't he I think where it was?

PATTERSON: He went from there to Lebanon, yes.

Q: Yes, which was in the middle of a war.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: Civil war, which is where he belonged.

PATTERSON: He was in his element.

Q: How did you find Denmark as a first post?

PATTERSON: Denmark was hard financially as a first post because it was then one of the most expensive places in the world. I was making $11,780 and that was at Foreign Service Grade Eight, step two. I had been given a step increase because I had gotten off language probation with my French, which gave me an extra $500 a year. I had to borrow money from my parents actually in order to make it those first two years. I had a charming apartment on one of the Danish canals in an area called Nyhavn, which is one of the famous streets just down from the Royal Theater. I think the apartment measured

only 1,000 square feet. I didn't have a car. Luckily, the secretaries in the embassy befriended me and took me with them on some short week-end trips so that I saw a little bit of Denmark thanks to them. To get to work I either walked or took a bus. The Danes were not all that interested in meeting foreigners.

Q: This was, there's a reputation for really not being that friendly of a country.

PATTERSON: The FSNs were wonderful. I think embassies attract FSNs who are interested in foreigners or maybe just Americans, but a number of the FSNs were foreigners married to Danes and so I got to meet some Danes through them. In the end, outside of the Danish staff at the Embassy, most of the people I knew were other foreigners in Denmark. My downstairs neighbor in my apartment was an American who continues to live there, a photographer; he works for SAS and other airline companies taking pictures of airplanes all over the world.

Q: Weren't you assigned a Danish boyfriend?

PATTERSON: I wasn't! I was on my own on that score. To learn the language, I went to a wonderful language program. This was a program that was originally modeled on a language program that taught American soldiers during and after the Marshall Plan the language of the country wherever they were assigned. The system was based on learning full sentences in the language from the very beginning. You started with short ones and worked into long patterns and learned how to substitute different words in the sentence structure. It was extremely effective. My fellow classmates were mostly refugees in Denmark. There were Vietnamese refugees and Polish refugees and I remember being in a class with a number of them as well as with a couple of Russian diplomats, who always made me a little nervous, because I didn't like their personal questions. The learning environment was a funny combination of very structured, competitive classes requiring a tremendous amount of memorization yet taught by a very nice group of leftist Danish hippies. The system worked very well for me and by the end of nine months I really could speak Danish. It was a three hour session three times a week kind of commitment, and basically I did nothing else for those first nine months in Copenhagen, but I did come out speaking the language. When I tested at FSI after my tour, I got a 4/4 in Danish, which pleased me as you can imagine.

Q: What sort of work were you doing?

PATTERSON: I was a consular officer for the first year that I was there, then for about five months I was in the political section, and for the last six months I was the assistant cultural attache.

Q: Consular work. What sort of work were you doing in Denmark?

PATTERSON: Visa interviews, both non-immigrant visas and immigrant visas. All of the FSNs in the consular section had started in the consular section many years before I was

born, so that there was no teaching them anything, they taught me. There was a fair amount of interesting passport and citizenship work. We had a number of American soldiers stationed in Germany who would come to Denmark to marry their German girlfriends, because it was easier in Denmark to get married. We had some American prisoners to visit, and a lot of Norwegian sailors to interview. They would fly from Tromso to join a ship in Copenhagen and, usually drunk, would stagger into the consular section to apply for their visas for the United States. We did the full range of consular work.

Q: Was there having to refuse a good number of visas or not?

PATTERSON: The refusal percentage was very low, very low. There were a fair number of good old fashioned Danish communists that we'd either refuse or get a waiver for and some cases of moral turpitude, elderly felons who, years later, having led upright lives, would want to visit the U.S.

Q: Many immigrant visas?

PATTERSON: Oh, I think probably a case a day, so that would have left us in the 250 or so range annually.

Q: What were they mainly, were these mainly wives of Americans?

PATTERSON: A mix of wives of American or Danish businessmen and families going to the United States who either had been working already for multinational companies or who were going to start their companies. There were also some Vietnamese applicants joining families in the United States.

Q: In the political section, what sort of work were you doing?

PATTERSON: Well, I was the junior of the section, but it was an interesting period because it was the first time Denmark had the presidency of the then European Council of the European Community. The political counselor was Charlie Rushing. There was a lot of reporting to do simply because the Danes were chairing many committees and meetings.

Q: How did your writing skills I mean Foreign Serve wise go? Did this help polish those?

PATTERSON: I had to learn the Foreign Service style, to write shorter sentences and to write a summary. You always needed a summary. I needed to learn that kind of skill, but they didn't edit much of the flow of the report. I can remember some funny discussions when the Political Counselor and I were trying to do a think piece after the Danish chairmanship was over, an analysis about Denmark in the future. I can remember writing about Danish cooperation with the Nordic countries and discussing basic issues such as trade, fishing, and shipping . The DCM, who was a lovely economic officer named Jim

White, questioned my term "bread and butter issues". He kept asking, "What exactly does that mean?" I can remember several conversations when Charlie Rushing and I were pressed to be more specific and precise. It was very good experience.

Q: You know, from your lofty post as a junior officer in a political section, but how did they look upon Denmark? I mean Denmark sorts of sits there as a thumb on Europe. Was it sort of in step with the rest of Europe or was it sort of looking I mean were its interests different do you think?

PATTERSON: Denmark was the most connected to Europe of any of the Nordic countries at that time. It was in more of the institutions. It felt possibly the need of the NATO umbrella more and was just generally interested in playing a role in those institutions. The Danes will constantly will tell you that Denmark is a very small country, and they take pride in that and yet wish it were bigger all at the same time. They were constantly trying to expand their role, but not as an individual player, always within the NATO context, within the EC context, within the OECD context.

Q: Did you get any feel about Danish German relations? I mean they've had their problems.

PATTERSON: On an individual level, the Danes at that time didn't particularly like the Germans. They hated it that the Germans called their city Copenhagen with a long "ah" sound like the Danny Kaye song and not Copenhagen with a long "a" as in "ache". The Danes on the street could be quite cool to German tourists. The official bilateral relationship was quite correct, however.

The Danes were not shy about criticizing the United States. They would hold up to us at any point Vietnam and Chile. Any time we were with younger people, we were asked why we had overthrown the Chilean government. The Danes, like other Scandinavians, had a sort of arrogant view of the rightness of their policies as opposed to those of the corrupted, power-wielding Americans.

Q: How did you feel about well Vietnam was sort of over, but this was still in the midst of the aftermath of?

PATTERSON: They were constantly throwing Vietnam at us. And what was also going on in Europe was the controversy over the neutron bomb.

Q: Yes.

PATTERSON: So, we were constantly talking about that.

Q: The capitalist weapon.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: Destroy people and not property.

PATTERSON: And not property, right.

Q: How did you feel about the, what were you picking up from Dean and others about the Carter administration because this was more, it was a different type of administration than most. The emphasis on human rights and trying to look for an opening in the Soviet Union and all. I mean did you find that, how did the ambassador and others, did you have the feeling there was a problem getting the right fit there with them?

PATTERSON: I don't think I did. John Gunther Dean was a big believer in human rights. I think he saw himself, because of his history in Cambodia, as having been on the right side of the people. Charlie Rushing, the Political Counselor, had served in what was then Rhodesia, later Zimbabwe, as had a number of the other officers in the embassy. They were pleased to support the human rights agenda and I don't think they thought it was too prominent. In Denmark it was easy, like pushing on an open door. I was so new to diplomatic discourse that I think I just probably failed to pick up nuances.

Q: Well, I'm not sure you would have picked them up. I happened to be at that time in Korea and we were sitting with divisions 30 miles away from us and human rights ranked kind of down the line, I mean with reason. Things worked out, but at that time I mean it was a hard fit with the Carter administration there. At that time you wanted to come back then to Washington?

PATTERSON: I did. I still felt I was floating in a little world that had no context. I had joined the Foreign Service in June of 1976 and arrived in Denmark three months later. I simply had no sense of how what I was doing in Denmark fit in with the work of the greater State Department.

Q: I forgot the cultural side. What were you doing cultural wise?

PATTERSON: In my six months in the cultural section, we put on several seminars for teachers of English, hosted International Visitors, tried to program Fulbrighters, etc. I learned from my USIA bosses that really, if America is going to have a long-term impact on the people of a country, we must influence positively the teachers who will teach others about us. So our target audiences were teachers of English or of English/American literature, and the press. We did a lot of work with them. I was also the escort for a number of speakers who came from the United States to give lectures and seminars on a variety of cultural topics.

Q: Well, then back to Washington in '79?

PATTERSON: John Gunther Dean helped me by recommending me for an assignment in the Operations Center. Peter Tarnoff, who was then the Executive Secretary of the

Department, came to Denmark on a visit and interviewed me, and so I got an assignment in the Operations Center and started there in January of '79.

Q: Well, this is quite a feather in your cap. I mean particularly because this is a sought after assignment for a young officer and in a way it's remarkable coming out of Denmark which is, Foreign Service-wise, the back of the beyond because it's not a place where you can sort of strut your stuff particularly.

PATTERSON: I was very lucky. I was lucky that Ambassador Dean thought enough of me to push me. I think I was very lucky that Peter Tarnoff happened to come to Copenhagen at the crucial point when they were choosing the next group of Operations Center officers.

Q: With the Op Center did you realize how good, I mean it's a very hard job, but how good a job it is Foreign Service wise?

PATTERSON: I did. When I was in the A100 course, they took us on a tour through there, and while we were touring around I knew I wanted to work there. I can remember telling my counselor that I wanted to work there. "Oh, no" he said, "you could never work there." Well, that just made me more determined to get an assignment there. That was my first choice, my top bid upon leaving Denmark.

Q: You were there what '78 to?

PATTERSON: I was there really from January of '79 to June of 1980.

Q: The Op Center changes all the time. How did it operate when you went there?

PATTERSON: Well, at that point, there was a senior watch officer who, I guess, was an FSO-4. I was an FS-7. This was right before they changed the grade system. Each Op Center team was comprised of a senior watch officer, a watch officer, and an editor. The watch officer and the editor were the same grade and we would switch responsibilities every few months. The editor wrote the Op Center's portion of the Secretary's Morning Summary. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research contributed the other half of the Morning Summary. I was a member of the first all female senior watch officer, watch officer team. My senior watch officer was Jane Becker. There were other women watch officers, but Jane was the first SWO, as we called them. It was a wonderful tour. I loved that tour, because I loved knowing what was going on all over the world. Unfortunately, usually the news was serious and often sad or tragic. Ambassador Dubs was kidnaped and assassinated in Kabul in February of 1979 and we had the first demonstrations inspired by Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran at the same time. Then came events such as the Shah of Iran's departure from his country, the taking of the Embassy Tehran hostages in November of 1979 and then in December of 1979 our Embassy in Tripoli was overrun. I was on the watch that night. If you were still in Korea, there was something, there was a major dust up in Korea around that time as well.

Q: Oh, that was, yes, I had left. I'm just trying to think. When the Korean troops fired on their own people.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: Yes. The name escapes me right now.

PATTERSON: We got in trouble because one of the editors titled the item in the Morning Summary "Shoot Out at the ROK Corral," and the 7th Floor did not think that was funny.

Q: Wow. Yes.

PATTERSON: Yes, so among other things, the Op Center teaches you that Washington has no sense of humor. It was a great tour. You learned how the Department worked and how overseas and the building fit together. Who was who. You learned who were the great bosses, who were great people, who couldn't manage their way out of paper bags, which assistant secretaries needed messages pinned to their briefcases to be sure that they saw them, because otherwise we couldn't be sure. We learned who was sleeping with whom. We just knew everything and we kept our mouths shut about what we knew.

Q: Did you find that.

PATTERSON: Secretary Vance then. Vance was the Secretary.

Q: Vance. Well, did you find that the hostage crisis in Iran was casting a pall over everything or not?

PATTERSON: It affected absolutely everything going on in the Operations Center for a number of reasons. One was that there was a massive working group in one of the crisis rooms just outside the Op Center with most of the Near East Bureau camped there. We knew everyone, from Assistant Secretary Saunders to Peter Constable, the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, to Henry Precht, the country director, and all the great officers such as Mark Johnson, who were trying to run the working group. Peter Constable's hair turn white during that time. In the early days, we in the Op Center were monitoring three groups of hostages in Tehran. The first was the large group of Embassy staff held by thugs, the second was Charge Bruce Laingen and his two colleagues stuck at the Foreign Ministry, and then there were the six staff members who were being hidden by the Canadians. In the beginning of the crisis we were logging, as you do in the Op Center, everything, phone calls, Flash cables, things like that. So we were writing updates on the status of the hidden six. Then suddenly, news of the six mysteriously disappeared from the logs and we were told not to write anything more on them. Those of us who knew about them continued to worry about them. They disappeared and we were basically told, "don't ask". Fortunately, I happened to be on the Watch some months later when the Canadian Foreign Minister, who I think was Mrs. McDonald, called asking to talk to

Secretary Vance. I didn't actually believe that it was she until the voice on the other end of the phone said cryptically, "It's about the six." As I connected the call to the Secretary's office, I looked around the room and realized that I was the only one on the Watch that day who could possibly have known what that meant. About 24 hours later the story broke that the six had been exfiltrated safely from their hiding place with the Canadians. So, my one tiny contribution to assisting any of the hostages was understanding the urgency in connecting Secretary Vance to his counterpart in Ottawa. Later I worked with one of the six, Mark Lijek. Unfortunately, I never could get him to talk about how the exfiltration from Iran had actually worked.

Q: I've interviewed Bruce Laingen and Mike Metrinko and Ann Swift and some others.

PATTERSON: Mark Lijek is unfortunately no longer in the Foreign Service. Have you ever interviewed the translator, the interpreter, Stephanie Von Reigersberg?

Q: No.

PATTERSON: She would have some really interesting things to say, I think. There were some individuals working as intermediaries in the hostage crisis for whom she interpreted. She was frequently in the Op Center helping the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary and Assistant Secretary Saunders with their conversations with them. I've always thought that she must have a story to tell.

Q: Well, let's get her name later. When the embassy in Tripoli was overrun, how did that play out in your office?

PATTERSON: It was a midnight shift so that meant I had arrived at 11:15 pm. Early into the shift, I suppose around 1:00 am or so, we got a call from Embassy Tripoli saying that there were demonstrators outside and that they weren't sure that the Libyan police were going to be able to keep them out of the Embassy. In fact, the police didn't. We made all the alerts and Secretary Vance himself came in to the Department and into the Operations Center, as did all of NEA's senior leadership. I remember it not only because of the drama of the moment, but because it was the one midnight shift where I had come to work dressed unusually casually and not in clothes suitable for meeting the Secretary. Mostly I remember hours of frantically trying to connect people together on the telephone and trying to keep the line to Tripoli open and tracking log entries. I don't actually now remember how the Department got everyone out safely.

Q: I'd like to cover that, it's really something I have to do. Did you run across sort of the in crises and of course you had crises after crises, did you run into I guess the various types of officers some who get so uptight that you don't want to be around them because they're just so wound up and other ones who can deal with a crises and yet remain calm?

PATTERSON: Absolutely, and you wonder that about yourself when you're working in the Op Center. Before you face a big crisis like that, you wonder how you're going to deal

with it. Tripoli was my big test and other than regretting that I was in a pair of not very nice dungarees, I can remember, and I know I wrote it in an EER later, that I had been proud that I had stayed cool. There were several senior officers from NEA, not the NEA Front Office, but office directors, who were always in the Op Center for one reason or another because 1979 was filled with crises involving the NEA posts. Those office directors would do fine once the immediate crisis was over, but they couldn't function at the height of the moment and they would just dither. I remember seeing one literally wring his hands. They just couldn't give cool guidance to anybody right when the crisis was upon them.

Q: Were you there when our embassy in Islamabad was set on fire?

PATTERSON: I came in two shifts later. I was not there as it happened.

Q: No, I was thinking NEA is something other than, it always has crises.

PATTERSON: It does and it has always had, I think, a stellar cast of FSOs. Arnie Raphel, Peter Constable, Beth Jones and so many others. They were a smart, hard-working, wonderful group of people.

Q*: Well, as you were doing this, were you looking as a good view of the Department as you say, who does what to whom and how it operates. What did this tell you? What did you want to do?*

PATTERSON: I was encouraged to then become a staffer on the seventh floor so I did a small stint on the Secretariat Staff for a couple of months as training, a job I disliked very much. The Operations Center to me was a positive job. Perhaps we were not conveying good news, but we were bringing information to somebody who needed it. With the Secretariat Staff job – we called it "the line" - we were forever admonishing somebody because a memo's format wasn't right or there was a comma missing and I just felt that that was very negative. I then moved on to be a staffer in the office of the Under Secretary for Political affairs. That was Ambassador David Newsom. Six months later we had an election and the administration changed and Walter Stoessel became the Under Secretary.

Q: Well with David Newsom now, there was a series of articles about his time there in the New Yorker. Did you ever see those?

PATTERSON: No.

Q: June 2nd, 9th and 16th of 1980 called The Eye of the Storm. You'll have to get a hold of that. Anyway, how did you?

PATTERSON: Well, I must have been there. I was just arriving.

Q: Well, you did this from 1980 to?

PATTERSON: 1981.

Q: '81.

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: How did you find that job?

PATTERSON: That was a job that turned out to be my least favorite in my entire career. I learned a lot from the perspective it gave me, but it wasn't fun. I was the junior of the special assistants, which meant that I was the one who came in at 5:00 in the morning and went through all the memos, distributed the cables, and arranged what the Under Secretary would see first on his desk. My other responsibilities were ambiguous, and I learned that I don't do so well in ambiguity. I do better when I understand what everybody else is doing and I understand what my role is, too. Also, my tour crossed two administrations and although Ambassador Stoessel was a career diplomat, as was Ambassador Newsom, those of us who had worked for Ambassador Newsom in the previous administration were a little suspect. Had I realized that even the incoming career officer, not to mention the new Secretary and Deputy Secretary, would see the holdover staff as suspect, I would have departed when Ambassador Newsom left and gone to FSI for language training or done something else. That second six months in P was awkward.

Q: How about the difference in personalities between Newsom and Stoessel?

PATTERSON: Both were very gentlemanly, courtly senior officers with huge amounts of experience. I think Under Secretary Newsom knew better how to use his staff than Ambassador Stoessel did. Mr. Newsom of course had been in his job awhile when I arrived whereas Ambassador Stoessel was new. He was still trying to find where he fit with his own new Secretary and Deputy Secretary.

Q: Did you get any feel for the tension between the White House in the Reagan administration between Alexander Haig in the White House and the NSC, well, with the White House and the State Department. I mean that was a battle that was fought and eventually Haig lost.

PATTERSON: Indeed. Yes, you felt that the White House was just going through the motions in terms of dealing with us.

Q: Yes, it was close to a hostile takeover in the Reagan administration in many ways. You know this happens from time to time and this was coming from a rather quite a liberal administration to quite a conservative administration. They all end up about the same place after a period of time. The first year or two are always.

PATTERSON: It was very difficult. The personality of the transition team that came to

the Department after the election was hostile. It made the whole building uneasy.

Q: Well, I understand they were, when it came time and they were all, the transition team sort of was thanked very nicely and said, there's the door. I mean, it was not as happens. It was not a happy or a very productive time of the transition people.

PATTERSON: No, and like many administrations, the new Seventh Floor promised all kinds of things, more access to the Secretary by lower level officers, more willingness to listen, etc. Of course that's standard lip service for the first two days of any new Department administration. Then the pressure of business and the reality of dealing with the world and with Washington politics force a new Secretary to start to make choices among his or her priorities and those kinds of pledges disappear. It's very understandable.

Q: Well, you, the whole time you were there, you said your least favorite thing, but you were still the sort of the subordinate, so there wasn't any sense on having the new kid on the block coming in and then you could then pass on your knowledge and let them do the.

PATTERSON: No, because of the way Foreign Service assignments change, there weren't any new kids coming in January as there would be six months later in June. So, Ambassador Stoessel just kept us all.

Q: This probably a good place to stop for this session and we'll put here where we come at the, when we pick it up. So, we'll pick this up in 1981. Where did you go after you left the under secretary office?

PATTERSON: I became the desk officer for Hungary and the Baltic States.

Q: Okay, well, that should be very interesting. We'll pick that up then. Great.

***

This is the 22nd of May, 2003. All right. We're off to Hungary and when you saw the Balkans, on the desk officer, what were the Baltics?

PATTERSON: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which were in 1981 occupied countries.

Q: This had been a traditional desk which for well 50 years or more had been sort of languished. It was sort of a name, wasn't it?

PATTERSON: It was actually a very active portfolio. Let me explain. The Hungarian desk workload was not 100% and the Baltics weren't either, so the European Bureau put them together, which made for about 120%. Also, there was a policy decision behind it. The Department did not have the Baltics desk in what was then EUR/SOV as one of many small ways of showing that the U.S. considered them separate countries and did not recognize the Soviet occupation of the three countries.

To start with the Baltics. The Baltics were an active portfolio from the point of view of U.S. domestic policy and U.S. domestic pressure on American foreign policy. The Baltic Americans were an active group with lots of influence on various congressmen and also on the White House so that there would be every year a White House proclamation in support of the occupied countries and a Baltic Freedom Day proclaimed by the Congress. The Baltic Americans watched vigilantly over the non-recognition policy. Also, the three countries had representatives here. Estonia was represented by a Consul General in New York and Latvia and Lithuania each by a Charge. All three men had been here during World War II as young diplomats and then when their respective countries were overrun, they stayed and represented the idea of the free countries. By the time that I came to the desk all three were elderly, but still very engaged. One was Ernst Jaakson, who was the Consul General in New York. He would come down to Washington often. Charge Anatol Dinbergs was the Latvian representative and the Lithuanian Charge was Stasys Backis. The one thing I should say about the Lithuanian Charge was that he had a son who was a Catholic priest and serving at that time in the Vatican. Pope John Paul II was unlikely to forget about the three countries anyway given his own background, but I'm sure that Charge Backis' son's presence in the Vatican was a constant reminder of the plight of the three nations.

Q: Other than making the proper noises, what did you do? We'll stick to the Baltic side.

PATTERSON: Well, the actual missions of the three countries, meaning the buildings they occupied and the respective staffs' salaries were funded by money frozen by the United States when the Soviets invaded. Part of my job involved helping the three Baltic diplomats go through the procedures that allowed them to get access to the money. Every year we had to make a request to the Treasury Department to unblock a certain amount of money to allow for the running of these three legations. As I recall, one of them had had less gold than the others when the money was frozen and it had run out, so one of the other countries was loaning the "gold-less" country money until the time would come when the latter would be in a position to pay it back. I must add here that between 1981 and 1983 while I was on the desk, no one, including the three Baltic diplomats themselves, ever thought that the gold would ever be repaid. Unfortunately, I cannot remember which of the two countries still had gold and which was the one that didn't.

Q: Was it accruing interest?

PATTERSON: Yes. I think I remember it was. The three representatives and I had serious discussions each year over their budgets. Also, they would each hold a National Day. They had no government to turn and report to, but they were included in the Washington diplomatic corps events and so I had a normal desk officer's role, vis-à-vis the three heads of mission as far as they were concerned. In fact they and the then Soviet Ambassador became the most senior diplomats in Washington, which sometimes made for some protocollary sleights of hand when the entire diplomatic corps was invited to some event. I should put in a personal note here, which is that all three gentlemen came to

my wedding, which occurred in the middle of that tour.

Q: Well, what about the, how did we handle it from the Moscow end?

PATTERSON: As I said, I was not in the Soviet Affairs Office, what was then EUR/SOV, but in EUR/EE, which was the Office of Eastern European Affairs, so the State Department separated it bureaucratically. EUR/SOV would clear my papers and I would clear theirs when we were talking about these countries in our respective contexts. I don't remember much reporting from Embassy Moscow about the Baltic states, first because there was already a heavy agenda with the Soviets, but also because our non-recognition policy precluded senior U.S. diplomats from traveling to the Baltic countries.

Q: As I recall, there was something that the consul general when we had one in Leningrad wouldn't go, but junior officers would go to those countries.

PATTERSON: Yes, there would be times when they could. Unfortunately I never got to go. I was supposed to go with a congressional delegation, but in the end the Soviets refused to give us all visas. We never knew why.

Q: On the political side, I guess not much was happening, I mean outside domestic politics there was no one to deal with?

PATTERSON: There was no one to deal with and I'll tell you, when I held the portfolio from 1981 to 1983, there was absolutely no thought that ten years later those three countries would be free. Absolutely none. There was no intelligence. There was no one speculating anywhere. The three Baltic diplomats themselves were pessimistic on that score and were sure they would not see their respective countries regain their independence during their lifetimes.

Q: Where was the political force behind this recognition or non-recognition or whatever you want to call it, dealing with the Baltic States? Were there some states in the United States or was it coming from some particular places?

PATTERSON: There's a large Lithuanian-American community outside of Chicago. Quite a large one, and then large Estonian-American and Lithuanian-American communities in New Jersey as I recall. There's quite a large community in the Washington area as well. They were politically savvy and extremely energetic and well-connected. There were newsletters, active youth groups and youth camps that taught the three languages.

Q: In a way, you know, when someone looks at this, somehow those Baltic States maintain their identity under very difficult circumstances.

PATTERSON: Indeed.

Q: Did we get at all involved in intelligence activity or something that you'd be involved in or something like that?

PATTERSON: I would have to assume so, but that was something that wouldn't have reached down to my level I'd have to say.

Q: Yes. I'm just trying to get a feel for how our mindset was at the time. You already answered part of it, but was there anybody wandering around the halls of the Department of State or something saying, "Hey, let's give the Soviet Union a rough time. Why don't we go around and start playing with the nationalities and stir things up?"

PATTERSON: No. Not to my knowledge. At least not using the Baltics.

Q: Yes. Well, I think this is true across the board, but I wanted to get it on the record because it can come out to be the nationalities that dismembered the Soviet Union. The Baltic States played really a key role in that.

PATTERSON: Sure.

Q: Then, all right, well let's go to Hungary. What was happening in Hungary?

PATTERSON: Hungary was a wonderful desk and a wonderful job. My tour coincided with the events surrounding Lech Walesa's Solidarity Movement in Poland, and the sixth floor, in other words the Office of the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, and the seventh floor were consumed with Poland. Hungary, as far as the senior levels of the Department were concerned, kind of marched along. Janos Kadar was the leader of Hungary and this was the time when our policies were always pairing Hungary and Romania. We were always saying that Hungary was allowing its people a certain amount of internal freedom whereas the Romanians, under Ceausescu, were being allowed or were carving out for themselves a certain amount of external foreign policy freedom. As the desk officer I was really for the most part left alone to do my job as I thought best. Yes I had bosses and of course I would ask for guidance, so I wasn't completely freelancing, but I did not have either the sixth or the seventh floors or really the entire Washington government telling me what to do everyday, which my colleagues on the Polish desk absolutely did. It was really mine to manage. It was absolutely terrific. Harry Bergold was the Ambassador and Roland Kuchel was the DCM. John Tefft was the political counselor the first year of my tour. It was a wonderful group to work for, and I considered myself their advocate in Washington. Larry Eagleburger was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs at the beginning of that time, but later moved to the seventh floor to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs. We were trying to encourage more U.S. trade with the Hungarians and the Hungarians wanted more American investment. Richard Perle was at that time in the Defense Department and completely opposed to trade with the Eastern European countries. I can remember emerging from a contentious meeting with him about exports to Hungary that had a potential dual use and thinking that if State and Commerce had wanted to sell the Hungarians rolling pins he

would have opposed it because those could be used as weapons against the United States.

We had, as I recall, six human rights cases that were always on our agenda. These involved children who had been abducted by one or the other parent and the left-behind parent was trying to get the child back. The cases were resolved during my tour, even the hardest case, which involved the son of a Hungarian military pilot who had flown his jet out of Hungary and had defected. That was the case that the Hungarians just didn't want to resolve. The father was a traitor in their view and even after years of pressure by U.S. administrations and U.S. Congressmen, they didn't see why they should reward him. Eventually, they did let the son leave Hungary to join his father.

I had what I felt was an extraordinary relationship with my counterpart in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. I took an early orientation trip in November of 1981, and the Americas desk in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry at that time consisted of four up and coming young diplomats. The senior of the four probably wasn't so young, but I was young and I thought he was, too. His name was Miklos Revesz. He and I had a really special rapport and we were able to get a lot of work done easily and informally. It makes communication easier.

Q: It does.

PATTERSON: I can remember learning a fascinating thing. I remember walking into their office and the four of them were all kind of squashed together in a tiny room. They had the Hungarian newspapers out and clearly had been going through them. One of them was the party rag, the official newspaper of the country, but the one that they were huddled over was the sports paper. One of them revealed that it was actually in the sports newspaper that the most active political dialogue was going on. You just had to know the codes to understand it, but that within discussions of teams and points and goals there was other dialogue happening.

Q: Fascinating.

PATTERSON: It was. It was. That was an important visit for me and an example of why Foreign Service officers have got to take orientation trips, not only because face to face encounters can do so much in building relationships, but also because it's so important to see things with your own eyes. I can remember that already in early November it was cold and dark in Budapest. One of the reasons it was dark was the cloud of coal dust that hung over the city, and I would have had no idea that people at my post were struggling to breathe every day. They were used to it. There were a lot of other small details, such as having to watch what I said in my conversations with the Ambassador at his residence because the residence was bugged, that added importantly to my understanding of our dealings with the Hungarians.

Q: Yes. I spent five years in Belgrade and I kind of forgot about it. I probably am still spitting coal dust, but.

PATTERSON: Right, right.

Q: How did we view Kadar at that time?

PATTERSON: Well, although we never forgot his background and his early years as leader in Hungary, by 1981, we were treating him warily but fairly benignly. He was viewed as having made his deal with the Soviet devil. He was viewed as someone who, where he could, was trying to carve out more internal freedoms for his citizens, and he was seen as a crafty, old, wily leader who had been able to bring to his country the small measure of economic well being that they had.

Q: Were there stirrings within the presidium of whatever was the viewing thing? Was this different than the old hardliners in East Germany or somewhere else? Was there something maybe in the Hungarian soul that was not as tough or something like that?

PATTERSON: Yes, I think that we felt on a personal basis in all the relationships, but on a political, on a policy basis, too that the Hungarians were seeking U.S. support, but they didn't want us to be heavy handed about it because that would get them in trouble with the masters in Moscow, but that at every turn where we could possibly support them they were open to that support.

Q: Did you find yourself, as you say you were given a certain, people weren't breathing down your neck because they were all looking at Poland which is always a delightful thing you know, to get the powers that be looking somewhere else. Were you looking for ways in which to show that we know you're having a rough time, but we still love you, that sort of thing?

PATTERSON: Always. I was always looking for ways that where we could show some support and stick it to the Russians at the same time, but yet not, as I said be too heavy handed about it. We had a lot of visitors and we were trying to step up the pace and the level of official Hungarian visitors. The visit of Deputy Prime Minister Marjai, the third-ranking official in the Hungarian Government, was an important event. Visits, as you know well, are so often a useful tool of foreign policy because somebody has to be able to show something for it. So, we were always seeking visitors to move the bilateral agenda forward.

Q: Were you working I would think this would be a great playground for USIS, you know, cultural things and all because this is something we can do and do very well and I would think the Hungarians would be quite receptive.

PATTERSON: They were. I didn't have a lot of contact with my USIS counterparts, who ran their own programs, but the speakers and cultural groups they sent to Hungary were well received.

Q: What about the '56rs, these were the people who left in 1956 and all? How did that stand?

PATTERSON: They were very active and I heard from them frequently as did Ambassador Bergold in Budapest. One gentleman made it his great cause to have 1956 remembered and my tenure as desk officer coincided with the 25th anniversary of those events. He did a lot on Capitol Hill to organize recognition of the anniversary and was active in trying to get a statement from the White House and to get senior Administration officials to participate in the various commemorative events. He was on my case all the time. We were trying to encourage Hungarian visitors and trade with the U.S., but he and his group were very opposed. They saw that as rewarding the Hungarian government for its continuing repression of the Hungarian people. It *was* a repressive state, they were not free, but U.S. policy was to encourage more links with Hungary in order to support the easing of such repression.

Q: In a way it's the classic replay except with a different result with our policy in Cuba. I mean, so many of the people fled Cuba in 1960 or around there or after and you know wanted nothing, completely cut off and they've been quite successful and Cuba is still sitting there and a communist regime. Well, were the Hungarians encouraging the '56rs to come back and visit at this point?

PATTERSON: No.

Q: It happened later on.

PATTERSON: It did happen later on.

Q: But this was not in the cards at that time?

PATTERSON: No, there was still a blacklist and they were on it.

Q: What was the feeling about you might say the spread of communism? There was concern a little before you took over about the Soviets moving into Afghanistan and all. Were we looking upon Hungary as being part of an expansive empire or did we, this stuff wasn't part of our thought?

PATTERSON: We were always watching what the Soviets were doing in the various Eastern European countries, and as I said earlier, events in Poland were very much a focus across the U.S. Government.

Q: Did you get involved in any of the multitude of border problems, you know, Hungary like all those central European countries were sliced up in 1919. I'm sure there's Romanians and Yugoslavs and I mean the whole thing. Did they crop up at all?

PATTERSON: Very little. There was the issue of the plight of the Hungarian minority in

Romania, which had Hungarian Americans in the United States aroused and had the Hungarians aroused, too, albeit cautiously. We always watched with interest the dialogue between Hungary and Romania over that minority. There were no discussions of redrawing maps or that kind of thing. Again, Kadar and Ceausescu, we presumed, were watching Moscow carefully or being dictated to from Moscow so there was at that time, to my recollection, no moves by either country to try and change that border.

Q: Well, then you did this for what, two years?

PATTERSON: Two years.

Q: '83. Then what?

PATTERSON: Yes, in 1983 by this time I had married my husband, who was also a Foreign Service officer.

Q: I don't think we covered that the last time, could you explain where you met and all that?

PATTERSON: Yes, well, we'll start with his name, which is Marc Grossman. We met in 1979 in the Operations Center. I was in the Operations Center as I previously explained and Marc had become one of the staff assistants in the Middle East bureau during the summer of 1979. He asked me out for the first time on November 3rd, 1979 and on November 4th, 1979 our hostages in Iran were taken. Walter Cronkite proceeded to count for the next 444 days how long Marc and I had been seeing each other while the hostages were held.

Q: You might explain who Walter Cronkite was.

PATTERSON: Walter Cronkite was the famous TV reporter and news anchor. He would report every night on the fate of or on what had happened in the world concerning the American hostages taken at the embassy in Tehran, and he would end his broadcast saying something like "this is the 139th day of captivity for the American hostages in Iran."

Marc and I dated several years and we were married in May of 1982. He was the Jordan desk officer in 1981 to 1983 while I was the Hungarian desk officer. Then we were both looking for an onward assignment together and Bob Blackwill, who was then one of the deputy assistant secretaries in EUR, helped us get two assignments in Brussels. I became the chief of the consular section at the bilateral mission in Brussels. Marc went first to the political section at the U.S. Mission to NATO.

Q: This is still in the relatively early days of the tandem couple, wasn't it?

PATTERSON: I think at that point tandem couples made up about 10% of the Foreign

Service.

Q: So, it was a significant number?

PATTERSON: It was becoming more, yes.

Q: Just to sort of a social note, it has to be a certain amount of calculation on both your parts on how this thing is going to work.

PATTERSON: Well, the personnel assignments people were saying that one or the other of us had to have the lead. That is to say, we had to specify whose assignment was more important than the other's. I don't remember in that case which one of us we designated, but anyway, we ended up with two very good assignments in Brussels and we arrived in Brussels in August of 1983. I should add here that the alternative assignment offered was Kinshasa, and that was actually where we thought we were going for quite a while, but then the AF Bureau and the Ambassador in Kinshasa decided that there was another tandem couple they preferred to send. The wife in that case was a Foreign Service nurse and AF concluded that Embassy Kinshasa needed a nurse and her economic officer spouse more than they needed a consular officer and her political officer spouse.

Q: So, you were in Brussels from '83 until when?

PATTERSON: '86.

Q: '86. In the first place, you were where, I mean Brussels has so many missions. What was your?

PATTERSON: I was at the embassy, the bilateral embassy.

Q: This is the embassy to the Belgians.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: What was the situation in Belgium at that time although you weren't dealing with political affairs, you were part of the team and all that.

PATTERSON: Well, the political situation was pretty boring. Their system allows for many, many small parties and so as I recall there were five or six French speaking parties, and five or six Dutch speaking parties. The relations between the two language groups and the various political parties were uneasy. French is the language of Brussels. I remember that for the Ambassador, the DCM, and the political counselor it was often frustrating, because dealing with the government, which worked very cautiously within the context of so many parties, was difficult. This was still when we had a consulate in Antwerp, which closed in 1987 or so. We were still represented in Antwerp at the time and the officers there covered the Dutch-speaking parties based there.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

PATTERSON: When I arrived the Ambassador was Charles Price, a political appointee from Kansas City, which is where I'm from. My parents and the Prices knew each other. My mother and Ambassador Price attended the same elementary school. The DCM was Charles Thomas. Soon after I got to Brussels, President Reagan named Ambassador Price to the Court of St. James. At Ambassador Price's request, the Department's Office of Protocol gave permission for me to swear him in as Ambassador to the UK, and he and Mrs. Price moved on to London. They were succeed by Geoffrey Swaebe, who was also a political appointee, and the former head of the May Department stores in California. He and his wife, Mary, came from Geneva where he had been the U.S. Representative to the UN.

Q: How did these two ambassadors operate from your perspective?

PATTERSON: I enjoyed working for them both. Charlie Price had tremendous confidence in Charlie Thomas and really had learned to seek Charlie Thomas' views on things before he, Charlie Price, would make a decision. At country team meetings, Charlie Price would turn to Charlie Thomas and say, "what do you think?" It was a wonderful example of how the Foreign Service can support a political appointee ambassador. The ambassador was always in charge, there was no question of that, but it was really a terrific partnership and it made it easier for the rest of us on the country team to pursue the mission's goals because the two men made them so clear. The same was true for Ambassador Swaebe and I enjoyed working for him, too. I liked working for businessmen. They tend to be active, they don't like to be passive. They were interested in getting things done. They were always glad to have me report if there was something that I needed to report on, but otherwise they had confidence in me and let me run my little section. Actually, my first year, Charlie Thomas, who was a wonderful guy, but a very taciturn man, gave me no inkling of what to expect in my evaluation report. He never had an EER counseling session with me. I had absolutely no idea what words were going to go down on that EER. For all I knew he thought I had done a terrible job. As it turned out, I got a very nice report from him, but it was a complete surprise. I had no idea what to expect, but I certainly liked the independence I had to run my section.

Q: What was consular work like there?

PATTERSON: We had the gamut of problems. It was a lot of fun. I had an excellent staff. I'd say we interviewed, oh a third, we did about 30,000 visas a year so we interviewed maybe a third of them, mostly non-Belgians. We saw quite a number of Iranians, because this was still in the wake of our closing and shutting down relations with the Iranians and therefore there were Iranians trying to get to any country where they could apply for a visa. We had a lot of Iranian applicants, a fair number of Haitians, because so many Haitians studied in Belgium, and a fair number of Africans because of Belgium's relationships with various countries in Africa, particularly Zaire. We had the

gamut of visa problems, visa issues.

We certainly saw a range of crazy Americans who would get on an airplane in New York with not a penny to their name and sometimes barely a stitch on them, arrive in Brussels and show up at our gates destitute and frequently unstable. We had destitute backpackers as well, whose cases were easily solved with calls home for money. We had a fair number of prisoners, one of whom to this day would do me in. Most were in for drugs or kind of petty offenses, theft. The one who I think is forever my mortal enemy was picked up because he had committed murder in the United States and had escaped from prison in Massachusetts and had fled to Morocco. He had doctored his passport so that it looked like it had been extended for a longer period than it had. He made the mistake of coming into our consular section to try and get a new passport. We found a lookout on him and we immediately called Washington to find out if the lookout was still valid. This was towards the end of our afternoon. The Consular Affairs Bureau told us to stall for time by saying the computers were down while they checked with the Justice Department and the State of Massachusetts to see if he was still wanted, which he was. The man came back unsuspecting the next day and two Belgian policemen arrested him up. Then of course, having gotten him arrested, I had to go and visit him in jail. We had the gamut also of American citizens services cases. We had a grandmother who abducted her twin grandchildren. Both the Foreign Service National who was the passport assistant and I remember that case to this day, because we still can't believe how that grandmother hoodwinked us. She made it sound like it was perfectly reasonable that she had the two girls in her care. She was taking them to Israel to see their parents, which proved to be a complete lie, and we were completely taken in by her. It's amazing how the one case that you handle badly stays with you instead of the hundreds of cases that you handle well. All in all, it was a busy three years.

Q: Tell me, you got these Iranians, I mean, the revolution is on and Iran is not a place to go back to. Iranians asking for visas to visit the United States, there's a huge chance that they're not going to come back. How did you deal with that?

PATTERSON: I was a liberal visa issuer, to my vice consul's chagrin. He was tougher. I gave them the benefit of the doubt, especially if I thought that they would be good students in the United States. There was one boy whom I'll never forget. He was 12, had been educated throughout his elementary school years at the Tehran American School, and spoke English like any American kid, including with an American accent. He was Jewish, a fact that he volunteered as we began the interview. He had an extremely engaging personality for one so young and his interest in studying seemed very genuine. I figured he was going to be a great American citizen and I gave him a visa.

Q: Well, we did have a policy that we were granting Iranians of Jewish extraction more leeway because the idea being that they would be in trouble in Iran.

PATTERSON: Right. Those guidelines were helpful, but there were plenty of Iranian visa applicants who did not necessarily match the human rights profiles to whom I issued

visas who probably still live in California. They were students who were horrified at what was happening in their country.

Q: As an old consular officer, how at this point were you dealing with Americans who were just to show up, I mean how did you get them back?

PATTERSON: Well, we were lucky because there was a direct flight on TWA between Brussels and New York, which at least made it easier to send them back to the U.S. Sometimes we were able to get money from families. More often than not the cases we saw were deadbeats whose families had long given up on them and weren't interested any longer. We did have a couple of American organizations who would contribute funds and help us send them back and then sometimes, even though we knew that they would never repay it, we'd have to get a repatriation loan from the Department to send them back. Some of those Americans were wonders at foiling all of the safeguards put in place to prevent repatriated Americans from getting a new passport until they had repaid the debt, and it was amazing how fast they would be back on our doorstep. The repatriation loan system is so helpful, though. There truly are times when a consular officer just has to get a derelict American out of the country or his or her presence becomes an issue with the host country.

Q: I know. What about people who were mentally disturbed, had the sort of the regulations you had to observe all of the, I'm showing my prejudices, but the niceties of taking care of because in my day you'd get a doctor maybe give a nice shot and get somebody to go back with them and then when they woke up they'd find they were in New York airport.

PATTERSON: We couldn't do that, no, we had to have them voluntarily walk into a doctor's office, but we did not discourage offers from the Belgian authorities to pick them up. The Belgians would then deport them.

Q: How about the Belgians themselves? There really wasn't much immigration from Belgium was there?

PATTERSON: Very little. We did the equivalent of one immigrant visa a day. We did about 300 immigrant visas a year and they were by and large Vietnamese joining families in the United States. There would be a couple of Belgian investors every year, the dreaded "E" visa cases. As a consular officer, if you didn't see an investor visa or treaty trader case very often, it was hard to adjudicate them and it generally required seeking guidance from Washington.

Q: Quickly run to that book and say, just a minute, you go in the back office and figure out what to do.

PATTERSON: That's right. Depending on the nature of the case I would sometimes call Paris or London, because both of those Embassies did many "E" visa cases. On Iranian

visas I would call Germany. Bill Ryerson was the Consul General in Bonn and his consular section had developed a useful second form that would help when adjudicating an Iranian visa. So, I would call around to my colleagues. At the same time, the consular section staffs in Luxembourg and Amsterdam would often call us for help.

Q: Did you also serve as the consular officer for the other missions in Brussels?

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: Well, I was wondering about military visas and things like that.

PATTERSON: Well, we did a lot of NATO visas.

Q: Yes, I was going to say.

PATTERSON: Yes. Brussels is probably the only mission in the world that issues NATO visas in any significant number. Yes, we were the one place that people had to come if they needed a consular service of some kind.

Q: Was this a fairly calm time? I guess it usually is calm, but in Belgium in this period, were there any big incidents or anything like that?

PATTERSON: Belgium had some odd terrorist incidents, explosions, hold-ups, people escaping from prison, and city halls being broken into and blank Belgian passports stolen. The Belgian passport system was decentralized and the blank books would sit in some drawer in some little prefecture and so many were stolen it seemed like the Belgians never even locked those drawers. There was always concern that Belgian passports could be used by bad guys to get into the United States.

Q: Was terrorism a word that you were concerned with in those days?

PATTERSON: A little bit yes because of the anarchist groups blowing up supermarkets and other places.

Q: Then in '86, whither?

PATTERSON: In 1986 I came back to the Department and became the assignments officer in what's now the Bureau of Human Resources, then called the Bureau of Personnel. I became the deputy in the European assignments office. The second year I was the chief of the office.

Q: You were there from '86 to when?

PATTERSON: To '88.

Q: What happened to Marc?

PATTERSON: Marc in 1986 became Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State, John Whitehead.

Q: Well, we'll leave him out. He's not part of the story. When he retires I'll pick it up. European assignments in the Foreign Service is a world of its own. I mean, sort of once in the European circuit people want to stay and people want to come in from outside. They've had enough of sitting in the bush in Africa and they want to come in and the European bureau has normally not been terribly forthcoming. How did you find this?

PATTERSON: Ambassador Ridgeway, Roz Ridgeway, was the Assistant Secretary at that time and she actively tried to bring in new blood to the European bureau. So I had some success in helping those who felt that they'd served long enough in hardship posts and wanted a turn in the European bureau. I had a lot of fun representing EUR. I should explain I was not their assignments officer within the EUR Bureau itself, but rather I was their representative within the personnel system. I represented them at the assignments panels where I was an advocate for their choice for a job. We assignments officers sat around a huge big table with everybody representing the different bureaus and competing interests. I can remember trying to make what were some pretty outlandish arguments on behalf of some officers. I felt I succeeded when I should. There were a couple of times when I had the thinnest of cases to make and I was appropriately defeated.

Q: What would be a thin case for example?

PATTERSON: Oh, someone who was trying to get a fifth year in Rome. Someone who was trying to go from four years in London to a tour in Paris and had never served a hardship tour, things like that.

Q: I had a friend who never wanted to get more than 500 miles from the Paris Opera I think. She was rather successful.

PATTERSON: People were able to do that more successfully in earlier years than they are now. I enjoyed that personnel job tremendously because, as with my earlier tour in the Operations Center, I liked working horizontally. I had lots of colleagues and they were all basically peers no matter if they were more senior to me in rank. I really enjoyed that.

Q: What was your impression of the personnel system at that time because the assignments really are the depths of the personnel system because although there is a separate promotion panel, the promotions depend on the job.

PATTERSON: True. I do remember that I was amazed in the beginning at how much care and thought went into assignments and at the huge attempts to be fair, to take into account all of the competing equities in making an assignment. Everybody on the assignments panel represented different entities. You either represented several bureaus

or, if you were a career development officer, you represented the individual officer. We on the assignments panel also represented in ourselves various groups or interests in the Department. For example, all cones were represented among the assignments officers, some of us were members of tandems, some were minority officers, some had spouses who never worked, some had spouses who worked in other agencies, etc. My point is that the assignments panel succeeded in being a varied mix of foreign service employees and this bolstered the fairness of the process. There would be times when an assignment would be highly charged. I can remember the case of someone who was currently then serving at the National Security Council. She wanted a stretch assignment in Moscow. There was an hour's heated discussion around the table where everything from concerns about what her tandem spouse would do in Moscow to where they had served before, to the caliber of the officer, the nature of the job, why she was the perfect fit for the job, were all discussed in exhaustive detail. As with all assignments, when there was no more to be said and all the arguments were finished, the panel chairman called for a vote and the assignment would be voted up or down. As I remember in this particular case, the panel voted not to assign the officer, a decision that was later overturned by the Director General.

Q: Yes, I think often it is felt that there is an awful lot of manipulation within the system, but I've served as a personnel officer, too. There are some people who I've interviewed some people who in any system they seem too often to become staff assistants or something and this is often the way to rise to the top. They have friends in high places and I'm not putting this in a negative term, I mean they have served well as a staff assistant, but which is quite different from you know, running something. Yet, this particular class seems to move almost beyond the regular personnel system. Did you run across this?

PATTERSON: Well, you have to remember that I had been a staffer on the seventh floor so I had run across both the view that you just expressed, but I shared the complete other view, which is that you learn things as a staffer that serve you so well that it's an education and you become a better officer, so that as you rise there's good reason to rise because you are showing all of this competence, this experience and the wider experience of understanding the greater context in which the Foreign Service is working. Yes, I'm familiar with the general resentment of staffers.

Q: Well, no, but I mean some never serve their time in the consular section or something like that nature. How about somebody who is of relatively farthest rank up to medium or something and ambassador so and so wants him or her or something like that. Would you be presented with sort of, they'd say well, we've got somebody, but we really, the ambassador or the assistant secretary is insisting.

PATTERSON: Sure. There were always some cases like that. I always thought that the assignment system worked very well for 90% of the Foreign Service. It worked poorly for those who were not such good officers and who were at the bottom of the rankings. It didn't work particularly well for those at the very top because it simply dragged them

down by trying to tie them down with rules that were rarely going to apply to them. I have always thought that in every generation of Foreign Service officers there are two or three or four people who are so brilliant that the system shouldn't even bother with the hours of discussion about how outrageous an assignment is, because those individuals are always going to be exempt from the rules. They are always going to be chosen for great jobs at grades higher than their personal rank, and that's just how life is. I'm talking about the Arnie Raphels, the Jerry Bremers, the Tom Pickerings, that caliber of FSO.

Q: There's no point of standing in the way of the wind on that.

PATTERSON: Right. By and large, to go back to your original question, I did think that the system was fair. It was much fairer than I had anticipated it would be and I enjoyed being part of it.

Q: You weren't counseling officers, were you?

PATTERSON: Only in terms of trying to help them understand whom to lobby if they were trying to get a job somewhere in EUR, whether in Washington or overseas. They would come to me to find out information such as whether EUR was backing one candidate so strongly that there was no point in anyone else trying for the same job or for which jobs they should go and talk to someone. I really was not giving mainstream career advice.

Q: One of the things I noticed in personnel was that people who understood that it was a system would go talk to people and find out how the system worked. There were some people who sort of said, well, it will take care of it and it doesn't. I mean they may have unrealistic aspirations.

PATTERSON: Absolutely. Those who didn't take active steps to try to figure it out for themselves often found themselves in a completely hopeless situation, facing an onward assignment they truly didn't want.

Q: Well, you did this for how long?

PATTERSON: I did that for two years.

Q: This would be '80?

PATTERSON: 1986 to 1988.

Q: To '88.

PATTERSON: Then in August of 1988 I went to the National War College, which I loved. It was a wonderful year.

Q: You went from '88 to '89?

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: How did you find it?

PATTERSON: Stimulating and exciting and challenging. It was a terrific education for me. I went with a prejudice that I was so smart, that I was a Foreign Service Officer, and military guys used all that jargon and didn't seem to be able to write, and I was proved wrong within the first day that I was there. By and large we Foreign Service Officers, there were about 15 of us or so in our class, we Foreign Service Officers did know how to write better than our military colleagues, but we were sure not any smarter than they were.

Q: What sort of, did you come away from that with a different appreciation for the military and how the military both operates and the situations it has to deal with?

PATTERSON: Yes to both questions. I came away with a huge admiration for what they do, for what it means to command, what it means to lead in the military context. My classmates, mostly male officers, were men who had led hundreds of people. My claim to leadership was that in Brussels I had nine FSNs who worked for me and coming out of Personnel I had had five people who worked for me and I was nevertheless at the same rank, the equivalent rank of these military guys. That simply didn't stack up against what they knew about leadership and management.

Throughout the year we had excellent speakers and we also took some trips that gave us a lot of insights. They took us to Nellis Air Force Base where we watched an Air Force exercise and you could see what it meant for the pilots to fly those exercises and by extrapolation fly during real combat. We went to Fort Benning where we saw the infantry and the rangers and got a real understanding of the equipment, the places, the demands based on those guys.

Q: Did you find yourself as a resource at all for what the Foreign Service does?

PATTERSON: We had great dialogues because they would turn and ask me, "Well, why does the State Department do X or Y?" And often I would ask a similar question of a Navy colleague or a Marine colleague. We were divided into groups called seminars and I can remember one day in a class at ICAF having quite a heated discussion with an Army officer and I just couldn't understand why he thought the way he did. I remember walking back into the seminar fuming, because the Army officer had been so outrageous and this amused my Army seminar mates immensely, who then confided that that particular officer's prejudices drove them nuts, too. Often my military classmates would help me with context. They would explain why one kind of a military officer with a certain background and experience or specialty would think the way he did. I would then try and explain what I thought. What I ended up seeing was that as Foreign Service Officers,

diplomats, we deal in the world of ambiguity. We want as much ambiguity in a situation as possible, because you want the other side to be able to interpret the words the way they want and we want to be able to interpret them the way we want them. The military only wants clarity. They want a clear instruction that says "Take that bridge." They don't want any ambiguity about which bridge and where. All 60 of us learned from the communication differences among the military and civilian cultures represented in the class. It was a great year.

Q: I found myself and it took me a long time to realize it, but when I have young officers that I'd be talking to explain that you know every once in a while you're getting orders, you don't know you're getting orders. Somebody will say, well, it would be kind of nice if you did this or something like that. Well, that's an order.

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: It's built into our system and if you don't do that well you're going to be suffering, you probably don't even know that both of you were given a test and you failed it because you thought you had a choice.

PATTERSON: Exactly, absolutely right.

Q: It's this ambiguity that's and I'm sure that it drives some people up the wall. It seems to work, but and some don't play that game, but I think it's just sort of built into the system.

PATTERSON: The other interesting insight into the different cultures that I found was that the military wants to plan. They want a lot of time and they want time to plan, whereas the State Department tends to plan at the last minute if the need arises. This drives the military crazy, because they want to be ready for whatever contingency it is and we kind of make it up as we go along.

Q: Well, I know, too one of the things that used to shock me when I was in Vietnam would be these canned presentations. After a while I was told these briefings, the lieutenants do it for the captains, the captains do it for the, I mean, it moves all the way up. It's rehearsed and everything and so you would sit down and you'd get this briefing which was not, well, it was a performance where as normally sort of Foreign Service Officers get up and say, well, it's just off the top of their head and it's just different.

PATTERSON: Very much so.

Q: Anyway.

PATTERSON: Actually the War College tended to make us civilians who didn't know how to give those briefings feel a little bit inadequate, and we felt we needed to learn that skill. Although you didn't want to give those canned briefings all the time, at times it

would be useful to put a presentation together like they could.

Q: To have, yes, well, I think.

PATTERSON: We don't do it enough, they of course do it too much.

Q: Well, I think to my mind it's, I never went to the War College, I went to the senior seminar, but it seems like a very valuable experience for both sides. It's an interaction, too.

PATTERSON: It was. It was terrific. My class at the War College still gets together. We have a standing meeting the first Thursday of every month at the Fort Myer Officers Club. We've been meeting now for 12 years and if you're in town and can come, you come. Our class also celebrated its tenth year anniversary in 1999 with a tour of the renovated War College building and a party.

Q: Well, it's great and it plays very well now and for the appreciation of both sides and the other's point of view. It means too that often you end by being able to if you're in a situation you can call somebody who is in your class and settle something over the phone because you can talk as friends.

PATTERSON: Absolutely. Not only that. It is a credential that gives the Foreign Service Officer some status with military people that counts always. I was able to use it. My next assignment was in Turkey. It was a huge advantage to the U.S. government that I had that credential and I could go to classmates and get something done for the Embassy or our government. There were several serious issues I worked on when the War College network helped me out a lot. There was also one time when a War College relationship was advantageous for cultural contacts. During my next assignment, the commander of a small military facility on the tiny little peninsula that juts into the Black Sea called Sinop was a War College classmate of mine.

Q: Oh, yes.

PATTERSON: The commander of Sinop was then Colonel, later General, Chuck Thomas. Chuck occasionally had business in Ankara and would stay with us when he came to the city. One evening he told us that a few of his soldiers had formed a rock band and he said they were really pretty good. Some time later Marc and I invited the Sinop band to play at a big party that we gave, a big representation party. Well, this was a huge success. All of the guests and we the hosts had a great time. The USIA officers at the party liked the music so much that the cultural affairs officer scheduled the band from Sinop all around Turkey and had them play at four or five Turkish universities. So, a connection from the War College ended up serving U.S. representation interests and USIA program interests for nearly a year until the band members' assignments were finished.

Q: Well, then you were in from '89 to?

PATTERSON: '92.

Q: '92. What was the situation politically and all in Turkey when you arrived?

PATTERSON: We went to Turkey in the fall of 1989. That was a surprise. We were supposed to be going to Paris where I was going to be the deputy in the consular section and Marc should have been the political counselor, but in late spring of 1989, Ambassador Morton Abramowitz asked Marc to come to Turkey to be his deputy chief of mission. For awhile it looked like I was going to go on leave without pay, but in the end I took the general services course and went to Turkey as the number three general services officer. I took a two grade downstretch to do that. After training, I arrived in Turkey in November of 1989.

When I first arrived bilateral relations were quite cool, because the U.S. Congress was involved at that point in passing a very tough anti-Turkish resolution having to do with the Armenian genocide that had occurred in the early 1900s. The Turks were furious about it. Ambassador Abramowitz flew back to Washington to try to persuade the Congress not to pass the resolution. When I first arrived the Abramowitzs had been there since August and Marc had gotten there in September, and we were all kind of frozen out. Senior Turkish government wives that Mrs. Abramowitz had expected to call on were not available and the Ambassador and Marc were also having quite a time in getting in to see Turkish officials. By the spring of 1990, relations were slightly warmer, but still not what they should have been. Turkish Government representatives boycotted that year's July 4th reception, because no senior U.S. officials had attended the Turkish National Day reception in Washington the previous October. Then with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President Ozal jumped right in to support President Bush, and the nature of the relationship changed and warmed up immediately.

Q: Were you, during the time you were there was there a problem with terrorists? I mean you had the Kurds, was it the Kurdish Liberation I mean it was a Marxist group. What was it called?

PATTERSON: Right. The PKK.

Q: The PKK and then the... But were there other groups coming out of the university?

PATTERSON: There were, yes, they were called Dev Sol. They were extremely dangerous and murdered several Americans and others in Turkey at that time.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

PATTERSON: I was the number three general services officer although I rather rapidly became the de facto number one, because the person I was supposed to work for had a

heart attack and died just before I got to post. Unlike an assignment to a consular section where you would have a general idea of what was going on politically because you'd attend the country team meetings, that's not necessarily the case for a general services officer. I knew about what was going on in trying to keep the Embassy running in terms of customs and shipping, the motor pool, transportation, peoples' plumbing, etc, but unfortunately didn't get much political context for all of that. I had a staff of about 100 Turkish employees, of whom 30 or so were white collar employees and the other 70 a variety of porters and plumbers, electricians, chauffeurs, and carpenters.

Q: How did you find as a working force, how was this?

PATTERSON: The Turks are extremely hardworking and productive. An inspector who was doing a follow up inspection came from inspecting London and Ireland. He kept comparing the Turkish employees very favorably to the Irish and the British FSNs. He just couldn't believe how hard the Turkish employees worked. They took few breaks and were very efficient.

Q: How did you find this with this tandem couple? Here you were running the area that kept the embassy working. I mean you were essentially in the bowels of the ship making the engine run, but all of a sudden you're the DCM's wife. You went from one or did you play the DCM's wife?

PATTERSON: Oh, sure, I did. Mrs. Abramowitz was a very active ambassador's wife. She enjoyed and was wonderful at being the ambassador's wife and did most of the representational things that the spouse would do. We split responsibilities so I served on the board of the American Turkish Library, while she was on the board of the Turkish-American Womens Club. I did the things I could manage within my work responsibilities. I did my share of entertaining within the Mission wearing my spouse's hat. For example, the Embassy Christmas party moved to our house rather than being held at the Ambassador's. The Easter Egg hunt took place at the Ambassador's. It all worked it out.

Q: How did the embassy family work in Ankara, Ankara being sort of stuck in the middle of not the most beautiful place in the world? I'd think it would be a little difficult.

PATTERSON: Well, one difficulty the first year we were there was the terrible air pollution that came from the burning of soft coal. By our second year Ankara was converting to natural gas to heat the buildings and that made a huge difference. Because Ankara is located so far from Turkey's great cultural or historical sites, many Embassy employees actively sought to get out to see things. There was an outstanding organization in Ankara called the American Research Institute in Turkey, which provided an intellectual underpinning for a lot of us who enjoyed lectures on the archeological ruins. The archeologists themselves would come and talk about their digs and lead tours to their sites. People who liked music went regularly to the Ankara Symphony. In other words, there were things to do, but you had to actively seek them out. Many of us loved going to Istanbul. Istanbul is a world class city and that's where the Turkish art world was

happening.

Q: How did you find relations between the embassy and the consul general in Istanbul?

PATTERSON: Consulates usually complain that an Embassy neglects them and I think that's generally true, not just of Turkey, but of all other big Missions as well. My relationships with the admin officers in the consulates were very good and I tried to help them all. We had had three consulates at that time, Istanbul, Izmir and Adana. So, I did my best to make things go well. The consulates felt that the Embassy held the purse strings a little too tightly. They would have liked to control their money more than they did, but I tried to stay out of the conversations between the consulates and the budget officer.

Q: Now did the Gulf War and the British participation and all that, did that have much effect on the embassy?

PATTERSON: It had a tremendous effect on everything the Embassy did. My personal involvement occurred when Saddam Hussein began threatening to take foreign diplomats hostage in Baghdad. I was sent to Diyarbakir to find a place to shelter people coming out of Iraq. For some days we thought many Americans and other foreigners were going to come north from Baghdad and Kuwait, but in fact only some Americans did. We had a group of about 30 Embassy Kuwait and Embassy Baghdad women and children with their pets cross into Turkey. A day or so later Saddam Hussein let foreigners fly out of Iraq.

Q: You're talking about refugees, I mean, people who had been hostages or working there and all of a sudden they were caught, both in Kuwait and in Iraq.

PATTERSON: Right. Washington had forced many of the surrounding posts to evacuate and they tried to force Marc and the Ambassador to send people out of Turkey. They resisted and I always thought that that was a good decision. I thought it was great that we didn't have to evacuate because in the end they needed all of us doing our jobs in Turkey.

Q: Did you get involved in the Kurdish refugee problem?

PATTERSON: Yes, for a short time. That was a year later, in the spring of 1991.

Q: Because you know we had that enclave there. I think Secretary Baker came and took one look and said we've got to do something about this.

PATTERSON: Right. You know, again because I was the GSO, I was involved in the support structure of all those Secretary Baker's visits, but not in the political substance of the visits. He came four or five times.

Q: This was, how about contacts with other than the work force, with the Turks? I mean had this opened up?

PATTERSON: It did. Over time we had begun to make a lot of friends in Turkey. Often at other diplomats' dinner parties we would Turks whom we hadn't met before whom we enjoyed knowing. We met a lot of nice people through our fellow DCMs in Turkey. Also, we had so many Washington visitors to Turkey so that almost all of the entertaining we did was connected to a visit and that brought us into contact with yet more Turks.

Then in July of 1991 we had the big visit of President Bush to Turkey, which was the first visit of an American President to Turkey since Lyndon Johnson. This was a huge undertaking both politically as well as from the point of view of the general services officer. Seven hundred people came to Ankara and another 700 people accompanied the President to Istanbul.

Q: Why don't you I mean actually of course the archives usually talk about the Lyndon Johnson visits because he's a legend, you know, meeting this and that. From your perspective which was of course very much the management perspective, how did these go, the visit go?

PATTERSON: Well, as with all White House visits the planning started months in advance. We had a pre-pre-advance team, then a pre-advance team, and then the advance team came and changed the previous groups' instructions. Most of them were nice people. The advance team people I had encountered when President Bush had been Vice President and he visited Belgium were a less friendly and less cooperative group of people to work with and did some serious damage to working relations with the Belgians. As President, however, he had an extremely professional, though demanding, advance team. We rented every car in Ankara that there was to rent and we rented every Xerox machine that we could find. We had to put special fittings on the Embassy's pick-up trucks so that the TV cameramen had the right support as they took their pictures. We booked every hotel room in town because a traveling group of 700 people exhausted the resources of the two major hotels, the Sheraton and the Hilton. I can't remember how many military planes brought in how many tons of communications and other equipment. Among other things the planes brought in three different limousines.

Q: Who the hell are these 700 people?

PATTERSON: I think it was about 150 journalists and another 100 White House communications people. There was the official delegation, which included businessmen and others, and they probably added up to another 75 or so. We didn't have any congressmen as I recall on the visit. Somehow the numbers mounted. What I thought was amazing was that it was 700 in Ankara and then another 700 different people in Istanbul. The President and Mrs. Bush were in each city for a day. President Bush and President Ozal had developed a strong relationship during the Gulf War and liked each other. The visit was considered a huge success by both sides.

Q: It drew some of the venom out of this Armenian thing. It's something that keeps

surfacing and it never goes away.

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: Somewhere along the way, maybe we haven't come to that, you produced a child?

PATTERSON: We adopted a child.

Q: Well, adopted a child.

PATTERSON: It was at the very end of that first tour in Turkey. She was born in Giresun, which is a town on the Black Sea. Friends of ours in Turkey, an American married to a Turk, helped us find her and in June of 1992 when she was three months old, we went to court in Giresun and the judge approved the adoption.

Q: Oh, how wonderful. Well, then you left there in '92 along with the daughter?

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: Whither?

PATTERSON: We came back to the United States and I became the director of what was then the Emergency Center in the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which was a job that I did for a year. This was the part of the Consular Bureau that worries about private Americans traveling overseas. We handled the Washington end of prisoners, deceased Americans, lost Americans. I was the director of the office for a year. Then, really because of the baby and not wanting to be on call 24 hours a day, I curtailed and moved to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research for a year where I shared a job with a civil service colleague as the analyst for Armenia and Georgia.

Q: All right. I think this is probably a good place to stop and so we'll pick this up in 1992 when you've come back to Washington and we'll talk about consular affairs dealing with emergencies. Great.

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Today is the 16th of June, 2003. You mentioned that we had forgotten to cover your involvement with the Kurdish refugee affairs. This happened when in '91?

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: Well, anyway, it probably would have been '91. This is during the aftermath of the war in Iran, I mean Iraq.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: You want to talk about what your involvement was?

PATTERSON: Yes. In the spring of 1991 I was sent to Istanbul to be the acting chief of the consular section and I was there worrying about the usual kinds of summertime consular problems. We had a few Mormon missionaries who were being thrown out of Turkey for evangelizing and who would just get on a ferryboat and go to Greece and turn around and come back again. There was a continuing terrorist threat from some anarchist groups who murdered some private Americans and a number of American companies were quite concerned about their Turkish and their American employees. I was dealing with those kinds of issues when a call came from the Embassy in Ankara to come back immediately to Ankara because the Ambassador wanted me to take on a different assignment. I left Istanbul very hurriedly and went back to Ankara where Ambassador Abramowitz said that I needed to go to the Air Force Base at Incirlik because we were going to start a food drop to the Kurdish refugees who were attempting to drive north over the mountains into Turkey. My very first task was to deal with the actual contents of the food drops, because the Air Force was going to drop "meals ready to eat", otherwise known as MREs, and in each box of six or eight MREs there was always one that had pork products in it. The Ambassador wanted me to go to Incirlik to see if there was any way that we could extract those pork meals from the boxes so that we would not be offending the Kurds.

I got to Incirlik and the General in charge at the time, General Jamerson, and the others who were involved in the relief supply drops were extremely concerned because they had been telling the Ambassador that it was impossible to separate out those meals. Indeed, when I saw what the parachute riggers were doing and how the relief bundles were prepared, I saw immediately that there was no way that you could open up individual cardboard cases of MREs, subtract the pork one, repackage and then put it on these bundles. Now, a bundle was actually an enormous wooden platform piled high with cases of MREs and then wrapped in plastic sheeting and then wrapped in a plastic tarpaulin. The bundle weighed about 600 pounds. So, the idea that we all had from the movies of parachutes with something underneath floating gently to the earth was complete nonsense, because what these were going to do was just hurtle down to earth. Indeed, before the Kurdish refugees understood how fast they dropped and how heavy they were, there would be people who would run toward them and wait under them. There were a number of Kurdish refugees killed by the force of a 600 pound bundle coming down on them. As I made the decision that we were definitely not extracting the pork MRE from the cases, the civil affairs and the psychological operations experts proceeded to put together leaflets that were dropped out of the airplanes explaining first how to eat, how to use the MREs. They had to do this because many of the Kurdish refugees were illiterate, though not all. Many of them had come from the Northern Iraqi cities, Mosul, Kirkuk and there were pharmacists, doctors and other very well educated people among them, but there were uneducated Iraqis as well, so the explanations had pictographs in addition to written instructions. There were also leaflets that reminded the Kurds that Allah had said that in an emergency the rules could be bent in order to stay alive. The U.S. was trying to

help them not starve to death.

My other job then was to act as a liaison between the American generals who had come from EUCOM and the Turks and the Embassy in Ankara. It was fascinating to me to see how our military came in to deal with this crisis, how well organized they were, how they used the psychological operations unit and the civil affairs unit, how they restored order, built latrines and laid out tent cities for the refugees. Some important generals took part in this whole operation beginning with Air Force Major General Jim Jamerson and Marine Corps Brigadier General Anthony Zinni, who later became the head of CENTCOM. Then as the effort grew larger and they needed to bring in French and British forces as well, the military doctrine required that once forces were internationalized, a three star general had to be put in charge. So General John Shalikashvili arrived. He later became the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The whole effort in Turkey ended up involving people whose careers continued to be connected to Turkey and northern Iraq and the Middle East for some years afterwards.

Q: Were you called into this after Secretary of State Baker had made his famous took one look at the refugees, flew down to the border and saw what was going on and turned around and said we've got to do something about this?

PATTERSON: Yes.

Q: Were you there when we lost a helicopter with our consul general and others who were accidentally shot down by an American plane? Do you recall that?

PATTERSON: That happened later. My tenure lasted about a month at Incirlik before I was called back to Ankara.

Q: Were you able to pick up any vibes from the Turkish military and all who were involved in this about this mass of Kurds on their border?

PATTERSON: There had been previous refugee influxes to Turkey and they had a huge Kurdish refugee population surrounding the city of Diyarbakir and they were still dealing with that. So, the Turks were determined that this next influx was not going to actually cross the border. Because of their own interests they supported the United States and the other countries in trying to keep the Kurds on the Iraqi side of the border.

Relations between the U.S. military and the Turkish military at Incirlik were always prickly. So, there was a little bit of mediation that needed to go on between the two military staffs. The Turks assigned a very diplomatic, charming Turkish general to be the liaison to General Jamerson and the two men worked out a professional and congenial relationship that helped things so that Operation Provide Comfort could go forward fairly easily. There were always things to work out that Turks were sensitive about, sovereignty issues, etc, but by and large the Turks certainly supported what we were trying to do. They did not want more refugees in their country.

Q: Did you feel an engagement of our troops in this Turkish relief effort above and beyond the normal this is a job and this is what we do?

PATTERSON: Very much so. First because of the humanitarian crisis and then because it was the beginning of creating the no-fly zone in northern Iraq. The Kurds had fled their cities and in many cases had gotten in their cars and driven north as far as the cars would go until they ran out of gas and then they had gotten out and walked further. It was cold, muddy, in those mountains and they had no food. In the beginning American troops who were there were very involved in trying to help the crisis. (End of tape)

Q: Looking at this, were there recommendations made to make MRE meals ready to eat Islamic pack, in other words.

PATTERSON: That's a good question and I don't know the answer to that.

Q: I was thinking this would come up and I would think it could be done.

PATTERSON: Sure. I want to say one other thing about someone involved in helping to save the Kurds. A person well known in refugee circles who arrived to help was Fred Cuny. Fred was an expert in organizing camps and figuring out solutions to refugee crises. Later he went on to other crises in Eastern Europe and most notably Chechnya, where he was taken hostage and then killed.

Q: Well, then were you picking up any sort of frustration from the military about how the Gulf War ended? Probably not. This is when you go back to Washington?

PATTERSON: That was the summer of 1991. We were in Turkey for another year, until 1992 and then in August of 1992 I took up my position as director of the emergency services office in the Consular Affairs Bureau.

Q: Who was in charge of consular affairs?

PATTERSON: Right then it was Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Tamposi, but she departed the scene after about two months because of the incident of getting into the passport files.

Q: Well, that was one of those serious little things. You might, since you were sort of in the office, could you explain what that was?

PATTERSON: My memory is hazy, but she asked someone in the Passport Services Directorate to retrieve the passport applications and files belonging to some Democrats and particularly those of Bill Clinton, the Democratic nominee for President of the United States. The point was to discover whether he had renounced his citizenship while he was in England as a student during the Vietnam War.

Q: Yes, because of the draft. He was overseas and the rumor was that there was a letter asking to renounce his American citizenship and of course this is just too attractive for a political person not to go after.

PATTERSON: Tamposi was a Republican appointee. When news of this passport file search came out in the press, she left and was succeeded by Mary Ryan, a career Foreign Service Officer who had been her principal deputy sometime earlier and whom Tamposi had fired and who now came roaring back, to the great delight of the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Q: How long were you doing this emergency services?

PATTERSON: I did the job for a year.

Q: What, so this would be '92 to '93?

PATTERSON: '93.

Q: When you say emergency services, what do you mean?

PATTERSON: This is the part of the State Department that worries about the welfare of private citizens who reside or travel abroad. There were about 45 employees, a mix of Foreign Service and Civil Service, who handled the Washington end of the cases of Americans who were arrested abroad, who were ill, who were lost, all those backpacking kids who really generally aren't lost, but who forget to call home and whose parents then panic and think that they are lost, deceased Americans and then crises such as civil war in a country where we then have to evacuate a population of Americans. There were no evacuations the year that I was the director of the emergency services, which set a record, but we had the gamut of sad and awful death cases, such as college kids on spring vacations who fell overboard from their cruise ship because they'd been drinking too much.

Generally there are about 2,000 Americans in jail at any one time, and I remember at that time we had many Americans in prison in Jamaica. Jamaica was a place where a lot of drug dealers were recruiting young people from the New York area. They were called "mules". They would be recruited by drug dealers to go to Jamaica and pick up a stash of drugs and try to slip them into the U.S. As those young people began to fit a profile, Customs and DEA picked up more and more at the U.S. ports of entry, and the Jamaicans arrested them before they could even leave Jamaica, so that we had over 70 Americans in jail just in Jamaica alone.

Q: Can you recount, in other words, tell young people who were going to Jamaica, don't mess with us?

PATTERSON: We did. We started some very targeted campaigns. As I recall we were

working closely with some of the congressmen from the New York area because in many cases the "mules" were young African American New Yorkers and there were several congressmen from New York who caught on to that. CA put a special brochure together warning of the risks of smuggling illegal drugs and the likelihood of incarceration and there was a press campaign and radio ads. We also made a real effort to target students before spring break in order to remind them that they were subject to the laws of whatever country they were in. We tried very hard to put accurate information in the consular information sheets so that travelers would have a realistic picture of a country they had chosen to visit. Mexico was a popular destination for college students and the Mexican consular information sheet even at that time was quite long and detailed, especially the section on the consequences of getting involved with illegal drugs.

Q: How was the prisoner exchange program? What was your impression of how it worked?

PATTERSON: With Mexico it worked reasonably well depending on whether the Americans in jail in Mexico had abided by Mexico's rules. We had some prisoners in Bangkok that had a harder time and then for years we have worked on a prisoner exchange agreement with Japan that is only now finally coming into fruition.

Q: What was the problem with Japan?

PATTERSON: I can't tell you specifically because the last couple of years I've been away from the American citizens services side of consular work and I just don't know the ins and outs. I do know that the Japanese had legal point after legal point that they wanted to negotiate and then the treaty needed to go through their various bureaucracies and authority. It's really been a long struggle with Japan.

Q: I've seen people, I can think of sort of two cases that pop up from time to time. One was somebody hiking in the Andes and never showed up. Another one was I think maybe two people in Indonesia or something like that. It must have been some of these cases with people, they just disappeared.

PATTERSON: Absolutely. Now, really one of the longest standing cases involved some Americans who disappeared, but we knew some of what had happened to them. There were three young men who were New Tribes missionaries who were kidnaped in Panama by guerrillas from Colombia and taken across the border into Colombia. They were taken in January of '93 and have never been found.

Q: At this point consular work has changed over the years, but at this point, great emphasis was there on going to prisons, seeing the prisoners quite frequently?

PATTERSON: Yes, we were requiring consular visits between two and four times a year and a report each time, a quite detailed report on the condition of the prisoners, what they were eating and how they were being treated.

Q: What about, let's say the conditions were poor in a country, but everybody else is being treated the same way in that country. What could we do?

PATTERSON: We couldn't do much. We had no grounds to protest on their behalf if they were being treated exactly the same as the nationals in that country, but generally the consular officers could try and rally the American community to provide them books. In some countries where we had to feed them using the loan program available to destitute American prisoners, the consular sections would have to find people shop for them. We also supplied them with vitamins. Certainly in Bangkok we were feeding them or we had to arrange that meals were brought to them everyday from the outside.

Q: Where did the money come from?

PATTERSON: You're going to ask me the whole name of it and I can't remember it. It's called an EMDA loan, an emergency dietary loan that comes from appropriated funds specifically for destitute prisoners and the prisoner is supposed to repay the loan once out of jail.

Q: Were there any particular countries where there were particular problems?

PATTERSON: There were always some arrest notification problems. Vietnam, as I recall, was a problem, because most of the Americans who were arrested in Vietnam – there were somewhere between six and twelve of them - were Vietnamese Americans. The Vietnamese did not consider them Americans and therefore didn't feel obliged to let us know that they were there. They could be there for months before we learned that there was an American in prison. Often we first heard about a case from family members in the United States who, after months of trying to be patient and work quietly in Vietnam to get their relative released, would eventually come to us out of frustration.

Q: Did you run across the problem of say with the Mexicans of informing us if our citizen was arrested, where my understanding is that particularly with the Texas authorities often aren't and so many other states bordering on Mexico, aren't particularly forthcoming as far as notifying. Mexican consuls if they've got a Mexican citizen, was this a problem for you?

PATTERSON: That became an issue later in the 1990s. In 1992 we were badgering the Mexicans all the time, but they were not casting back at us that we were not reciprocating nor did they seem particularly interested that their citizens might be in our jails. It was really one sided in 1992.

Q: Well, in '93 where did you go?

PATTERSON: Because of the baby at home and my worries that a crisis in the world would potentially keep me in the office for days at a time, I curtailed my assignment in

CA, so I did the job for only one year instead of the usual two. Starting in August of 1993 I shared a job with a civil service partner in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. For a year I was a part-time analyst for Armenia and Georgia.

Q: Question. How was adoption proceedings, how did you find them in Turkey in those days?

PATTERSON: Unlike, say, Romania or Russia or China or Korea where they have an organized system that allows foreigners to come in and adopt a child, there is no routine way that foreigners adopt children in Turkey. For one thing most Turkish children who are orphaned are taken in by their extended family. Our daughter was born in a maternity hospital and abandoned there. We went to court in Giresun, a town on the Black Sea, and we went through the Turkish adoption procedures as if we were Turks. We were very fortunate, because a Norwegian couple had adopted a baby in Giresun several years before we did and the judge simply followed what had been done for the Norwegians. After the judge made his decision, the case was turned over to a notary, who wrote up the actual adoption document. It was not until the notary's document was signed that actually the baby became ours.

Q: Job sharing. It sounds like all of a sudden, it's hot bedding the desk. Somebody leaves and you take over. How did this work?

PATTERSON: INR was known in those days, and may still be known, for its flexibility in hiring. So, I went first to INR asking what kind of jobs they might have for somebody who didn't want to work the crazy 60 or 80 hour days that you can in other places in the State Department. There was a young mother in INR, Toby Davis, who was also interested in sharing a job at that point and the two of us worked it out between the two of us how we would do it. Her bosses were very supportive and the INR personnel officer was extremely supportive. The trickiest part of the whole thing was getting paid because the timekeeper kept making mistakes.

My partner had worked in INR a number of years and really knew the two countries well and I admired her expertise very much. I was the junior partner in the deal I will certainly have to say and I never made a major judgment about either Armenia or Georgia without checking with Toby first. That kind of analytic work in INR requires putting tiny pieces of information together to form a larger picture. You just had to get a feel for it. I only did the job for a year and that's not nearly enough to develop any kind of significant analytic expertise. The job involves a lot of sifting of information. I did quickly learn to know what we had seen before, what was not going to be of particular interest to anybody although it would be small details that later on might become interesting. INR had excellent computers, a much better computer system than any place else I had worked in the Department and of course it was a classified system. They had all kinds of information being dumped into the system that I just found fascinating in and of itself in terms of how the intelligence world gathers information.

In terms of the actual logistics, Toby worked Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays until about 2:00 pm, and I worked Wednesdays from about 11:00 am until Friday evening. So, we split the week with some overlap on Wednesdays. I had been warned, and it proved to be true, that when you work part time you don't work just the part time hours, you actually end up working more. Although in theory I was only supposed to work 20 hours a week, I actually worked somewhere between 26 and 30. Briefly, the job was to watch what was going on in both countries and write analyses that the INR Assistant Secretary would use either in briefing the Secretary or that would go into the Secretary's Morning Summary.

Q: Well, let's take Armenia first. What was going on when you were there?

PATTERSON: We watched Azerbaijan as well, but our main focus was on Armenia and Georgia. The Armenians were just getting on their feet in terms of being an independent country after the break up of the Soviet Union. We were watching the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and what that meant domestically in Armenia. Another item was the status of Armenia's energy supply and its dependence on one of the old fashioned nuclear reactors of the type that had blown apart in Chernobyl. That reactor sits on a major earthquake fault line. Armenia's dire economic situation was another issue. The Armenians were poor as could be and cold most of the winter and we watched much of the Armenian population go to Moscow and stay with relatives in order to escape the winters.

In Georgia we were watching the civil war between the Abkhaz and the Georgians. We watched the attempts by the Russians to keep their thumbs on Shevardnadze and his efforts to deal with the Russians, the tremendous crime in his country and the bleak economic situation.

Q: Well the breakaway group there, how did we read them? I mean were they, was somebody else prompting them or was this an indigenous thing?

PATTERSON: We were reading them at the time as enjoying huge support from the Russians.

Q: What was the feeling, I mean what did the Russians want to do, retake Georgia essentially?

PATTERSON: Yes, they did not like the idea that it would slip away from its influence and that they wanted its ports.

Q: Were we doing anything in either of these places?

PATTERSON: At that point, no. Now some American troops are there as military trainers, I believe, but in the early '90s all we were doing was watching. We were giving Shevardnadze lots and lots of moral support, but we were giving him very little actual

support.

Q: Was the American community in the United States a factor as you looked at what was going on, I mean the Armenian factor in America?

PATTERSON: Yes, they were a factor because Armenia was getting a tremendous amount of aid from us. Tremendous aid. The Armenian Americans made sure of that.

Q: *At that time was the devastation of the earthquake from some years before still a factor?*

PATTERSON: Yes. They were so poor they hadn't been able to rebuild, and the Embassy and any Washington visitors were still reporting seeing wrecked buildings.

Q: It sounds that what you're saying particularly at that time, but particularly Armenia, but also to a certain extent Georgia were you know, sort of ideals of wouldn't it be nice for the Armenians to have a country, but there wasn't anything to put a country together there.

PATTERSON: They were both basket cases economically. If it weren't for the Armenian Americans and Shevardnadze, the U.S. probably would have paid very little attention to them. But the Deputy Secretary, Strobe Talbot, was an admirer of Shevardnadze, although as I said there was very little that we actually did for them. That was '93 to '94. Then in 1994 my husband was nominated to be Ambassador to Turkey, so I left my job in August of '94 and went to Turkish language training for a semester.

Q: You were in Turkey from when?

PATTERSON: We arrived in Turkey in January of 1995 until June of 1997. This time I went back as the wife of the Ambassador and not as an active duty officer. I was on leave without pay for two and a half years.

Q: How did Marc get to be Ambassador? There's often a political appointment there. I was wondering.

PATTERSON: When he was chosen he was the Executive secretary of the Department and working very closely with Secretary Christopher. I can't tell you how within the inner sanctum of the Department it was decided to put his name forward, nor can I explain particularly why the White House agreed.

Q: I was just wondering if you were aware of any of the normal things that are going on when somebody gets to be an ambassador to a major post, which this was.

PATTERSON: Well, what I do know is that there were discussions between the State Department and the White House over which posts would go to political appointees and

which posts would go to career people in the posts that were coming open. I know that the various posts on the two lists kept changing and I think for a while Turkey probably was on the political appointee list. It's possible that when the White House looked around to see whom they would send to Turkey, maybe they couldn't easily come up with a political appointee.

Q: Sort of as the wife of the chief of mission, how did you find this role?

PATTERSON: It was harder than being an active duty Foreign Service Officer for several reasons. One is that when you are working at the embassy all day you are, by a kind of osmosis, absorbing information all the time, but being at the residence cut me off from information. As hard as Marc tried to bring home as much information as he could, he couldn't replace the things you learn from meeting someone in the corridor or in the cafeteria. I missed that and I immediately had much more sympathy for other spouses who didn't work and who were consequently out of the information loop. I also found it hard because there were a number of officers who basically just thought of me as a potted plant. Each time that we put on an event at the residence for certain sections of the Embassy, I always felt that their respective section chiefs had no idea of the amount of work and organization that was required.

I enjoyed the role in many ways, however, and it's a wonderful privilege to represent your country in that role. At dinner parties I was the lucky one because I would be the one who sitting next to the foreign minister or whichever Turkish minister it was whereas Marc was dealing with their spouses, many of whom were very interesting, but a number of whom didn't speak English. I would often come home from the dinner parties having had a much more interesting evening than Marc. We traveled as much as we could. Marc was on the road more than I, but as much as I could I joined him, and that is a unique way to see a country.

Q: We're talking about sort of the new Foreign Service where there are no longer, almost a practically not a category of Foreign Service wives. You can be what you want to be, but that doesn't take away the work of the wife of the chief of mission. How you slice it, she has a big machine to operate. How did you find dealing with the wives' side of this equation, you know, I mean I'm talking about official business, putting on dinners, receptions and all. Did you find this difficult?

PATTERSON: It depended on which wives. The military wives were wonderful. They would help me at the drop of a hat, the attache wives.

Q: They had been trained.

PATTERSON: They had been trained to and they did it willingly and cheerfully and they were just wonderful. There was a charming wife who had been a florist before she and her husband were assigned overseas and she would come before big parties and at Christmas time to decorate the residence. The residence had an infinite capacity to absorb

flowers, I mean it was so big. The attaché wives were also a huge help with the Fourth of July reception. Many of the wives in Ankara were employed so that meant that the cadre of people available to help was small. What it really meant was that for many things we had to pay to have things done and of course we were always trying to stretch representation funds. That was a challenge always. I always felt like I was putting on a play with the residence as the theater and I simply was changing the scenes all day long. We would put on a breakfast and maybe there would be a press conference in the middle of the morning and then maybe Marc would have two people to lunch. He would have people to tea and then we'd have a dinner. For the kitchen to work well, we couldn't have an enormous dinner and an enormous lunch on the same day. One or the other, but not both. You learned what your kitchen could handle, what your staff could handle, how many extra staff were required for larger functions. I felt that I was in charge of a great logistical operation.

Q: Did you find there you are you're sitting at dinner next to the foreign minister, you know, people are coming, were you putting on your Foreign Service professional hat?

PATTERSON: Yes, always.

Q: With Marc would you sit down and because it's been my experience that often the wives come back with information that the guys don't get. This is the old Foreign Service. They'd say such and such is happening and hell I hadn't heard about this.

PATTERSON: Right, absolutely. The Turks loved to talk politics whether they were at the top of the social structure or at the bottom. I would have fascinating conversations on whatever was the issue of the day, asking what they thought, where it was going. I would try to gather a little bit of biographic information as well. The days when junior officers put biographies together seem to have faded away. It's too bad, because when you're in the position of either ambassador or wife of the ambassador they are very useful to have.

Q: Oh, yes. Well, what was your during this '95 to '97 period, what was your sounding of Turkish American relations?

PATTERSON: They were really were quite good in those years. The Turks were beginning to work more closely with the Israelis and that was bringing a new perspective on Turkey from the American Congress. The fact that the U.S. Government had sent Marc back as Ambassador meant a lot to the Turks. The Turks value friendship and they knew that Marc was coming as a friend. It didn't keep him from blasting them over human rights or from talking about torture and some of the truly hard issues, but they knew that he was coming not as a scolder, but as a friend, saying "come on, you can do better than this. This is beneath you to do this." There were many others in the Embassy who were there for their second or third tour as well, so the Embassy was quite lucky with its team right then. U.S. investment in Turkey was increasing and the Turkish economy was looking a little brighter and that helped, too. Marc worked very hard to try and help Turkey get the pipeline built that would come from Tajikistan to the port that's called

Ceyhan on the Mediterranean.

Q: Was Cyprus an issue that came up all the time?

PATTERSON: Always, but the Turks were a little tired of Cyprus so it wasn't a dominant issue.

Q: Having served, I was consul general in Athens for four years. I'd left in '74 in July just before all hell broke loose, but Cyprus, I mean Turkey dominated Greek thought and I always felt that Greece was sort of a nagging problem to the Turks, but not as up, at a lower priority of Turkey.

PATTERSON: When I say that the Turks love to talk politics, those politics never included Greece. Turks were consumed with the politics going on in their own country and with their own economic problems and rarely would a Turk bring up anything having to do with Greece. Now, the Turkish military was watching Greece constantly because of course they were monitoring each other's airplanes and wandering into each other's waters. Of course those waters are the same, because there is so little distance between some of the Greek islands and Turkey. But the average Turk on the street, the taxi drivers I talked to, for example, never mentioned Greece. They would talk to me about all of the Turkish political parties and who was up and who was down, but they'd never bring up Greece. Turkey is a huge country, 67 million people in those days. Greece was like a little fly that they brushed away.

Q: Yes. What about, how did you find, were congressmen more aware of Turkey, you know for a long time I had the feeling that there were so many Greek Americans involved in American politics that next to the Israeli lobby the Greek lobby was considered the most powerful and of course the one thing that unites sort of the Greeks is beating up the Turks. Did you find though that by this time, I imagine you get lots of congressional representatives there? Did you find that they were more amenable to Turkey?

PATTERSON: We did have many congressional delegations, though not enough. It was a time that the Congress was getting lots of criticism for traveling and so there was less traveling going on. We would have loved to have more Congressional visitors because once Congressmen, anyone comes to Turkey, by and large they leave Turkey as a friend. Especially, if they had any understanding at all of Turkey's strategic position and what that actually means for the United States, the ability to move our ships around in the Mediterranean. Congressmen would at least go away thinking harder about Greece and the United States and Turkey and the United States. So, they would generally leave as friends and we just wished we'd had more of them.

Q: Did you sometimes feel that you were in a dual capital country? I mean I'm thinking of Istanbul and Ankara.

PATTERSON: Very much so. Ankara is the seat of the government, but the commercial

life, the artistic life, the wealth of Turkey is concentrated in Istanbul, so that Marc was in Istanbul at least once a week. Sometimes when we had visitors he would be there three times a week. I would go less frequently, but yes, you definitely have to keep a foot in both places. Then there's a lot of interesting things going on in the smaller cities in Izmir and Adana as well.

Q: Were there any major earthquakes or something like that?

PATTERSON: No, very fortunately there weren't. There were some terrible mining accidents, but nothing like the big earthquakes that they've had now in the last couple of years.

Q: Did the Kurdish problem come up while you were there?

PATTERSON: Yes, all the time. The Turks were still fighting the PKK. This was the great Achilles heel of Turkey in terms of the drag on the economy, in terms of their human rights record and in terms of the way the rest of the world viewed Turkey. The Turks wanted to be part of the European Union and the Europeans kept casting back to them their handling of the Kurds in Turkey and the PKK. So, yes, that was a dominant theme.

Q: What was your impression of the Turkish higher command because in Turkey the pattern has been the politics are certainly going to get out of hand and the troops come out of the barracks, take over for a while and then with luck they'll go back fairly soon. This must have been something everybody was watching.

PATTERSON: We were always watching. The Islamic party was becoming stronger and the Turkish generals at our dinner table began to say this was very bad, but they would also say they didn't want to take over the country. The Turkish generals were quite conscious of the fact that they were not economic experts, that they didn't have the skills needed to put the country back on a more solid economic footing. On the other hand they considered themselves guardians of Ataturk's legacy and of democracy. They wanted Turkey to be a secular country. They would talk openly about not wanting to move in and take over the government.

Q: As a woman were you noticing, it seems with the Turks one of the things that comes up all the time is the head covering issue. What do they call it?

PATTERSON: Head scarf.

Q: Head scarf. Did that play any role at dinner parties, I mean things that you were involved in or just women in discussion because it was in a way a national issue, but it was also obviously a woman's issue.

PATTERSON: Absolutely. The Turkish military wives were often the most heated on the

subject though some of the academic professors, women academic professors, could get pretty hot as well. The Turks genuinely believe that you can control people's thoughts and therefore their actions. As an American I couldn't understand how they thought that by saying "no" to the headscarves they were going to be able to control whether people were religious or not.

Secular Turks were often vehement that the minute headscarves were allowed, it would mean the "Iranization" of Turkey. Very secular women were adamant that this had to stop at the doors to the university, at the door to parliament, that allowing women to wear headscarves at the universities was the beginning of the slippery slope. It continues to be an issue that roils the social fabric. Right now, I think it's the foreign minister's wife who wears a headscarf and she can't enter parliament, because there's a law that says you can't enter parliament's doors with your hair covered.

Q: Did you run across it at dinner parties this issue at all?

PATTERSON: Not at dinner parties, but many other times, for example, in my women's conversation group, which was a mix of military wives and others. We had some lively discussions in those groups.

Q: How did you see Turkish women in their, within Turkish society?

PATTERSON: Well, you know, Turkey has two societies and it's a country that's divided in two. The western part of Turkey is a country of the 21st century and in the eastern part of Turkey it's maybe still in the 18th century in many ways. There are more Turkish tenured professors who are women in Turkey than there are in the United States. They have many doctors and pharmacists so there is a very educated population of women. In the eastern part of Turkey, although education is compulsory through the fifth grade, sometimes the girls are taken out of school after third grade. It depends on which part of Turkey we're talking about. There are parts of Turkey where the men still have several wives because they're all working in the fields and it's a question of extra hands to help.

Q: Extra hands, yes. In sort of discussions groups and all, what elements of the United States seemed to elicit the most interest from the women you associated with?

PATTERSON: Often it was a discussion of democracy and politics and the free-wheeling atmosphere of the United States that they perceived as almost anarchy, because we let people think anything they want to think and write anything they want to write. They were horrified at the way Americans would wear the flag, that our flag would be a t-shirt or a bathing suit or a pair of shorts. That's inconceivable in Turkey. The flag is a revered symbol and you don't wear it as a piece of clothing.

Q: Not too long ago I think the thought would have been the same in the United States.

PATTERSON: Yes. My women friends were also interested always in American culture,

American movies. My Turkish friends went to the movies a lot. Many were also very interested in the evolution of language and of new American slang.

Q: My impression from just on the periphery of Turkish society particularly the ones in the 21st Century are in a way much more dedicated to their country than I think in many Western societies. I mean it's more of a patriotic I'll do it for my country type of thing or something.

PATTERSON: I think that's right. One of the reasons why I love Turkey so much is that intellectually it is fascinating. They're still trying to decide what kind of country they want to be. Do they want to be secular or do they want to be Islamic? That's why talking politics was so interesting and that is why everyone talks politics, because they are keenly interested in what is going to become of their country, what is their role as a citizen, what is the role of the government. When we were there they still had the old, long time leaders of the political parties who had been leaders for 30 years. People called them "the dinosaurs" and talked often about needing a new generation of political leaders.

Q: I think of Demirel there forever.

PATTERSON: Forever. So, to go back to your point, I think that the Turks are very proud of their country and keenly interested in its future.

Q: This is, again a fascinating country. When you left there in '97, whither?

PATTERSON: In June of 1997 Mary Ryan was still the Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs. I was coming off of two and a half years of leave without pay and she asked me to be the director of the Visa Office in the Consular Affairs Bureau. I started in that job in August of '97 and I was the director of VO for three years, from '97 to 2000.

Q: By this time your daughter I guess is more able to.

PATTERSON: She was five when we returned to Washington.

Q: Five, so she's beginning to move into Kindergarten and that sort of thing.

PATTERSON: Exactly. In theory, the visa job was supposed to be quite regular hours. They did turn out to be regular, but they also turned out to be long. I was directing an office of 90 employees, working on the gamut of immigration issues, trying to work with INS, which was becoming harder and harder to work with.

Q: This is that relation with INS. I spent in let's see '81 to '82, I was the only Foreign Service Officer I think ever assigned to the immigration service as a liaison officer. It did not want to liaise. I mean it was, but it.

PATTERSON: We talked often of trying something like that.

Q: It should have worked. This was Diego Asencio's idea, but it didn't and I don't think I often thought that maybe if I'd had a different touch, but looking on it, I just don't think it.

PATTERSON: Institutionally I think they weren't open to cooperation.

Q: Institutionally. How did you find, I mean let's talk about this relationship.

PATTERSON: They were impossible. They were impossible to deal with for a number of reasons. Mary Ryan and Doris Meissner, who was the head of INS, had an excellent relationship. If an issue had to bubble up that high it would finally get resolved. Of course Assistant Secretary Ryan was understandably reluctant to bother Ms. Meissner for things that should be solved in a much more at a lower level. It was just always hard for State at lower levels to get INS to agree on anything. INS, I concluded, had the most impossible job in government, because every day the Congress changed their mission for them so that they never knew which way to go. If they started in on cleaning up petition backlogs, suddenly they would have to switch to something else and then they would never get any traction on the new priority either. Individually the INS officers that I met and worked with were excellent public servants who wanted to do a good job, but their whole organizational structure made it impossible to do that. From the top to the bottom they seemed afraid to make decisions. By the time I got to VO in 1997, they had been sitting on new regulations for B visas, for visitor and business visas for five years. Nothing had happened. It was just remarkable.

Q: When you got to the visa office, this of course used to be a power center. I mean there were the two dragons, what was it, there was Frances Knight and on her roof I can't think of her name, Snyder I think it was. These two since the '30s two women had run that place and run it with very good relationships to congress and the FBI and a dismal relationship with the State Department and although being subordinate technically, nobody dared challenge them. This of course has changed; you were unable to be a dragon lady?

PATTERSON: No.

Q: Thank God in a way, but what did you see your, you know, as you took on this job, what did you see as your main task?

PATTERSON: Well, it's become politically incorrect now, but I saw my main task as giving better service. Better service to the visa applicants around the world and better service to the seventh floor. Since 2001, the State Department has been accused of caring more about service than we were about screening the United States from terrorists entering. That wasn't true. Consular Affairs had been working very hard in the couple of years before I took the job to manage its workload better so that consular officers could make better adjudication decisions. Better service to me meant helping visa officers treat

the applicants more as individuals, which would lead naturally to improved decisions because the cases weren't decided in just a few seconds.

Q: How well were you served by the technical side of things?

PATTERSON: Money had been poured into consular systems by that time so that technically we were in much better shape. Right after the first bombing of the World Trade Center we were given money to completely change the visa lookout system.

Q: This is because of the blind sheik and the first attempt to bomb the World Trade Center.

PATTERSON: Right. I came back into the visa world not having done a consular job, a real consular job since 1986, and here it is 1997, 11 years later, so the consular systems had improved enormously and were really top-notch. That was helping, but we were seeing tremendous visa demand, though it dropped precipitously with the Asian economic crisis that autumn. Then in '99 in certain parts of the world, for example in Pakistan, they had a 100% increase in visas. They went from 150,000 to 300,000 in one year. I was beginning to worry about China, because the Chinese government was loosening controls on who could get a passport, which would have a tremendous impact on numbers of visa applications. As we looked at those numbers we thought no matter if you put the entire State Department into China to give visas you could never keep up with the demand and we knew that no matter how good our systems were, they needed people to operate them.

Q: One of the after the attack on the World Trade Center which destroyed it in 2001, the visa office sort of became the center of congressional wrath which seemed very unfair, but the whole idea would mean that if we had face to face encounters things wouldn't happen. I mean as an old visa hand, I think this is a bunch of nonsense. You can look somebody in the eye and say are you a terrorist and unless they're picked up by a system, they're not going to be, refused, the face to face encounter doesn't pick out the professional terrorist.

PATTERSON: Absolutely right, absolutely right. For the hardcore criminals and terrorists, you have to have the intelligence about them, especially if you've got somebody brand new who has been recruited to come and do a job and about whom we know nothing. Visa work is risk management and you have to build your sieve, build your filter to match the amount of risk that you are able to tolerate.

Q: Even then you know, at a certain point, there are certain people who will always get through unless you stop the whole thing. Did you find that during the time you were there, what were the pressures on you as far as managing this load that came through? Was it almost in the realm of issuing the visas and unclogging the things or were there elements of you should, you're letting too many welfare applicants or too many criminals or this in?

PATTERSON: The Congressional pressure on us was always to issue the visa. We never had a Congressman say you're letting in too many of this kind or that kind. The pressure was always to issue. The other pressure that we got from immigration attorneys, or from the public tended to be for cases in the larger posts where it was clear that our system just hadn't allowed the extra 30 seconds of time needed to take a look at the person's case, because more often than not it was a legitimate case and the vice consul on the line simply had overlooked the extra elements that needed to be looked at. I did some trouble shooting as far as that goes. I would also hear about troubled posts where we didn't have enough people or maybe they had poor leadership and they were simply not making good adjudication decisions. On the other hand we had people out there working like Trojans, in the Indian posts alone they were dealing with thousands of phone calls and thousands of applicants. This was at the top of the technology and dot com bubble when we were bringing all those computer technicians from India and there was the whole issue of the number of H1B visas. The Congress was feeling pressure of its own from American companies to raise the cap on those numbers of workers.

Q: As we both know having been in the business, you have real problems with some consular officers, one unable to make a decision, you know, I mean they just freeze or two they are essentially very hard nosed or very prejudiced or what have you and as far as they're concerned they're not going to let anybody in. I'm exaggerating of course, but these are two of the problem cases. How did you deal with this?

PATTERSON: Often it was just jawboning. Often I would be on the phone trying to talk to the officer to walk him or her through the case. In some cases where the officer was having trouble, they would be sole consular officers in tiny posts and they would be first time officers. I can remember a couple of times doing some long e-mails trying to help a couple of visa officers think through the case. You know, here are the advantages if you think about it this way. Here are the disadvantages if you could look at it one way, but you could try another way. Generally I would be able to get them to see, to say to me "well, that's a different perspective that I hadn't considered before." I did have a Congressman, a Congresswoman actually, on me for an absolutely awful case in Nigeria where it was clear that the consular officer had made the right decision refusing the visa. I called that officer simply to get the facts so that we could defend the officer, and frequently that's what I was also trying to do, just getting the whole story.

Q: How did you find you were in a period of draw down in the State Department. It was a lousy period; personnel wise while you were doing this. I mean quite frankly from the Secretary of State, particularly Christopher and Albright to a certain extent didn't pay that much attention to the personnel side of things.

PATTERSON: No they didn't, although both of those Secretaries of State worked hard to get more resources for the Department.

Q: How did you feel you were served by the, I mean did you feel the consular training and the people coming in, was this a pretty good crew that you were dealing with?

PATTERSON: Yes, I think the junior officers were quite good. I was at that point serving, first as a member of and then later as the chairman of, the Tenure Board. I was reading their files and for the most part was impressed by what the junior officers were doing. On the other hand, there were a number of junior officers at the time for whom the Foreign Service was a second or even a third career and a few of them seemed to suffer from attitude problems. Their EERS would often imply that consular work was beneath them and that they were ready to be an assistant to the Secretary of State and the sooner that they left the consular section behind them the better. None of the Tenure Board members reacted well to that.

Q: Well, I think, too it's a little bit like motherhood, the younger you are the more you can respond to the demands. If you're in your '50s being on the consular line for the first time, it's a little bit taxing. How about the civil servant side of this equation because this is overlooked, but this is a very important element. How did you find it?

PATTERSON: The Visa Office is half Foreign Service and half Civil Service. I had many Civil Service colleagues of high caliber, some outstanding lawyers and others whom had been part of the visa office for a long time who loved their jobs, loved their work and who were just wonderful to work with. We also benefitted from the presence of, you may remember her name, B. J. Harper. She had been a deputy assistant secretary in the late 1970's during the Iran hostage crisis.

Q: She kind of wrote the book and the law.

PATTERSON: Right. Well she was working for a dollar a year essentially, still writing regulations. The Visa Office had a mix of employees, a very talented group. Morale was good.

Q: Did you have a problem trying to fit them together?

PATTERSON: No, not really. The Visa Office was in a newly renovated building, now called State Annex One. It was a much nicer work place than the main State Department. People were happy with their offices, happy with the amount of natural light that came through the windows, and if people like their work surroundings, that makes a difference.

Q: You can look out on the Potomac and all, beautiful.

PATTERSON: Right.

Q: Then in '90?

PATTERSON: In 2000 I became the Deputy Executive Director of the Bureau of Consular Affairs. The acronym was CA/EX.

Q: So, how long did you do that?

PATTERSON: I did that for two years until 2002 when I retired.

Q: You hit there at an interesting time when all hell broke loose after the attack on the World Trade Center and all that.

PATTERSON: Well, my first year in that job was very busy but pretty normal. Mary Ryan was still Assistant Secretary. I worked closely with her because my main focus was on consular officer assignments around the world. Mary and I worked directly and very closely together. Everything changed as of September 11, 2001 and that was the beginning of the end.

Q: After it became apparent that most of these, well, the fact that all of the people who were involved in the airplanes that crashed into the World Trade Center and all that had gotten American visas because they couldn't have gotten on the plane if they didn't have visas. Was that foreseen as a problem initially?

PATTERSON: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I think all of us recognized that the world was now divided into the era before the attack and after the attack. A very able friend and colleague had taken over the visa office in 2000 and so she had been running the visa office.

Q: Who was that?

PATTERSON: Her name is Catherine Barry. Catherine had been in charge in VO since August of 2000 and spent her next year working only on the aftermath of September 11th.

Q: Did the election of 2000 make it change I mean from the consular affairs bureau at all?

PATTERSON: Secretary Powell was impressed by Mary and the wonderful reputation that she brought to the job and offered her the chance to stay, which she accepted. CA's relationship with the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary was quite good that first year. They were very impressed with the whole organization that Mary ran, the way she did it, our budget, the way we managed our money.

Q: Well, after September 11th, what caused sort of the focus to end up on in a way Mary Ryan, but also on the Consular Affairs Bureau. I mean an awful lot of other people were had problems, but you didn't have heads of the FBI or the CIA or anything else rolling.

PATTERSON: That's right. I think a couple of things. One is that we had some support in the Congress for the many improvements made over the years, but not enough support. The district offices were big supporters of Consular Affairs because it was really the district offices that communicated with CA on American citizen and visa cases. The

Congressmen here in Washington didn't deal that often with us and I think the Consular Affairs bureau didn't do a good enough job in years prior to September 11th telling our story on the Hill. There wasn't enough congressional support for CA when this terrible thing happened. Mary said publicly early on that the events of September 11th reflected a failure of intelligence, and both of the FBI and CIA and their supporters resented it terribly that she had named spoken out so bluntly. Then we made a major error in not apologizing. Mary never felt that it was CA's fault, and it wasn't our fault, that those planes were hijacked and so many people were killed. But there was a perception that that if the visas hadn't been issued the tragedy wouldn't have happened. So, CA never said it was sorry, and in my opinion, that turned out to be a huge mistake. When I look back on it, I wish we had immediately hired a great public relations expert to help CA get through it all.

Q: Well, was there an immediate move to say, I mean, take a look and say, okay we've got a real problem in the Islamic world and Saudi Arabia which had been given almost a pass of people getting visas and all, I mean, was there a change in that or did sort of things go on as before?

PATTERSON: The answer to that is both. There were changes made, but on the other hand we didn't stop issuing visas to Saudis. But remember, I was no longer in the Visa Office.

Q: I realize you weren't, but I bet you were sort of sitting in there and watching.

PATTERSON: In the immediate aftermath everyone was asked to look at their procedures. There was also a huge discussion about what to do if we didn't have information about an applicant. In my three years in the Visa Office we were trying constantly to improve the information sharing among the agencies. At one point we convened a huge meeting with all of the agencies where we offered them our visa data. None of them took us up on it. So, in 2001 there was a redoubled, re-tripled attempt to go to all those agencies to say we needed their information. Those agencies are slow and they didn't see it as a high priority. Very little happened in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, because either the other agencies didn't see it as a priority or they didn't have the resources to help.

Q: Well, how about the CIA? How did you find them?

PATTERSON: Well, when I dealt with them in the three years that I was in VO, if they understood the visa process and if they understood how it worked in the overall scheme of things, they were helpful. But the CIA world is so compartmentalized that the cooperation depended on each office individually. The people who were interested in Asian scientists, for example, were really speedy with their information or their clearance, but those who watched the Russians were slow. And if an applicant were a nuclear scientist from anywhere else in the world, it would take forever to get an answer back. There were organizational barriers and obstacles in all of the agencies. Meanwhile there

we were, begging the other agencies to take our data.

Q: So, overall with the advent of Colin Powell making efforts to increase personnel and support, was this sort of a breath of fresh air?

PATTERSON: Absolutely. He himself is a breath of fresh air. He said he was going to try and get more resources and he really did. Yes, that was huge, a great morale boost just in terms of increases in the number of junior officers, and consular managers began to see that eventually there was going to be help. Then, until visa demand plummeted, the machine readable visa revenue meant that we were gradually giving consular managers the resources that they needed.

Q: When the pressure built up on demanding somebody do something they ended up with Mary Ryan being dismissed. How did that hit consular affairs and the feeling towards Colin Powell from your perspective?

PATTERSON: People were devastated that it was Mary who took the hit.

Q: Was there, you know, a certain amount of resentment? I remember talking to one of my old colleagues retired Foreign Service Officer Mike Mahoney who said, "Oh, my, isn't it typical? Nobody gets hit on this whole thing I mean through a whole government except for a consular officer?"

PATTERSON: Right and a female one at that.

Q: And a female one at that, yes, and I mean anybody who knows the state of affairs realizes that this I mean if you're looking for somebody, this isn't the person to go after, somebody following the policy.

PATTERSON: The building mourned. I think that the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary didn't understand the role that Mary played in the whole Department, because the mourning was not confined to consular officers. The entire admin world grieved as well and then there was everyone else in the building Mary had ever helped or known and that was another legion of folks.

Q: Yes.

PATTERSON: It was very, very difficult.

Q: Did your job change? You were doing this until when?

PATTERSON: 2002.

Q: Did your job change any after 9/11?

PATTERSON: My job did not change. I continued to work on consular assignments throughout the winter and into the summer of 2002. Despite the pressures on her in the aftermath of September 11th, Assistant Secretary Ryan continued to be very interested in putting good consular officers in the right jobs.

Q: What about retirement?

PATTERSON: I retired as of November 30, 2002.

Q: I guess this is a good place to stop. Okay. Well, thank you very much.

End of interview