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INTERVIEW

Biographic Outline; Early Years in Yugoslavia And Hungary During WWII - Nazi Occupation

Q: Jock, I'm not going to talk much. I just want you to give us a few remarks about your background and your education, how it was that you got into the Service in the first place, and what motivated you to do so. From that point, we'll simply go sequentially into your various assignments and we'll cover various points there. So will you pick up from here and start out with your background and your reasons for getting into USIA work?

SHIRLEY: I will preface talking about my background by telling the listener that Lew Schmidt, who is interviewing me today, presided over the panel which determined whether or not I was to enter the Foreign Service. Since he presumably voted in favor of allowing me in he is responsible in part for any subsequent mischief I may have done.

To tell you how I first became interested in the Service I have to go back to 1939. I was a boy of eight, and my father and I sailed on his boat up the Adriatic, eventually ending up in Split. We were there at the beginning of World War II. I lived in Yugoslavia for two years, went to a boarding school in Zagreb, and got my first taste of life in Eastern Europe. When the Germans occupied Yugoslavia in 1941, my father and I attempted to return to the United States. For a series of complicated reasons we got no further than Hungary, where we still were at the outbreak of the U.S.-Japanese war.

You'll remember that Japan attacked us on December 7, and four days later, on December 11, 1941, Germany declared war on the United States. After that, we were no longer able to leave Hungary, so I spent the entire war there, mostly in a very good boarding school. I experienced the German occupation of Hungary -- a vicious period in Hungarian history - - and experienced also the siege of Budapest, the Soviet conquest of Budapest, and about nine months of the Soviet occupation of Hungary.

I witnessed things during the last months of the war and particularly during the Soviet occupation, which marked me for life. By the age of 14 I was determined to spend my life doing whatever little I could to reverse the process which the Russians launched in 1944. That is shorthand for wanting to fight communism.

There followed another year of Eastern European life in Czechoslovakia.

In 1946 I returned to the United States and went to military academy, as most of my family had done before me. By then I had already decided that I wanted to go into the Foreign Service or become a professional soldier.

Towards the end of my last year at military school, I decided that the Foreign Service was it. I went to the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, subsequently entered the Air Force, and served for four years in Germany and Austria in an intelligence unit where most of my work was directed at Hungary--I'm almost bilingual in Hungarian--and East Germany.

Entry Into USIA, 1957-1958--Almost Immediately Assigned To Zagreb
As Junior Officer Trainee (JOT)

Toward the end of my Air Force years I met Jack Stewart who at that time was with the Munich Radio Center. Jack, to whom I used to take illegal border crossers to be interviewed for the Voice, wrote a letter to Barry Zorthian. When I returned to Washington, Barry passed me on to Henry Loomis who hired me as a GS-7 in IRI, the acronym for our Research Office at the time. Shortly thereafter I took the Foreign Service exam and, thanks to Lew Schmidt, came on board as a JOT in March 1958.

I'll back up to say that I initially came into IRI as a contract employee immediately after the Hungarian uprising of October - November 1956, and that my first duty was to

translate all of the tapes of the Hungarian Service of the VOA for an investigation which was being conducted by a congressional committee to see whether VOA had in any way encouraged the Hungarian freedom fighters to believe that we were going to support them. The committee found the Hungarian Service innocent of the charge.

Q: This was either late in 1956 or early '57.

SHIRLEY: We are now in '57. I took the Foreign Service exam in November, 1957, and I was sworn in on March 15, 1958.

Q: At that time, USIA had come into existence as USIA, so you were sworn into the U.S. Information Agency at that point.

SHIRLEY: Yes, I was. I was in the eleventh JOT class, and I requested an assignment to Eastern Europe, specifically to Zagreb. I received the assignment and reported to my post in July, 1958. I remained in Zagreb for one year.

It was a very satisfying year. I was thrilled with my responsibilities, anxious, as I suppose everyone is, to do as well as I possibly could. And I had an exceptional opportunity to do so because the gentleman who was BPAO was not notably active and frequently ill. More often than not, I was in charge of the post.

Q: Who was your RAO at the time? Or do you prefer not to put that on tape?

SHIRLEY: Is the recorder on or off?

Q: It's on now.

SHIRLEY: Please switch it off. [Tape recorder turned off]

No, he wasn't a terribly active man, so I was often in charge, but even when I wasn't, I was able to do a lot more than most JOTs are allowed to do.

I remember one particular incident which I'll tell you about. Louis Armstrong came to Yugoslavia in late 1958 or early 1959. It was the first time that any American jazz musician had been anywhere in Eastern Europe. Armstrong was flying from Le Bourget to Zagreb for a concert in Ljubljana that evening. His plane was delayed. There was something wrong with the runway lights at the Zagreb airport and they weren't going to let the plane land. I then spent an hour or more persuading the Zagreb department of roads to provide those little smudge pots they put on roads at night. We lined the runway with the smudge pots, and Louis Armstrong landed. At the end of that long day I felt that I had earned my salary!

1959: Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer (CAO) Belgrade

When my JOT year in Zagreb was over, Heath Bowman, who was Country PAO, asked me to come down to Belgrade to replace Phil Arnold, as Assistant CAO and an Exhibits Officer. I happily accepted because I had already come to have enormous respect for Heath, who, in many ways, was the most professional PAO I ever worked for, but also with some feeling of trepidation, because I knew nothing about exhibits. I felt ready to make foreign policy decisions, but I wasn't quite ready to build exhibits!

My year in Belgrade -- mid-1959 to September of 1960 -- was a happy one. It was a splendidly exciting time to be in Yugoslavia. Everything we did, from a small window exhibit to a pavilion-sized show was seen by tens of thousands of people. We were a window on America, a window on the world.

Q: I'd like to ask a couple of questions now, partly going back to Zagreb, but also getting into Yugoslavia. First of all, what was the nature of your effort in Zagreb? Was there something in particular that you were aiming at, or were you just taking events as they came along, running a standard USIS program?

SHIRLEY: I arrived in Zagreb thinking that I was going to be trained, but I didn't get much of that. I was initially assigned specific projects. Fairly soon, perhaps after two or three months, I was engaged mainly in picking up the pieces dropped by the BPAO and in running the post. Towards the end, things got awkward, particularly when Heath Bowman began communicating with me directly instead of going through the BPAO.

I remember that the first thing I was required to do was to write a report on Zagreb's English-teaching program, which ten years later I would have considered an excruciatingly boring task, but which at the time I thought was splendidly stimulating. No, Zagreb was a good time.

Being Exhibits Officer in Belgrade was intimidating. The only talent I brought to the job was good taste, which Heath said I had. Did I find it satisfying? Yes, I did, for the reason I mentioned to you before. People were so hungry for anything Western, and particularly American. Attendance at exhibits was huge and perhaps with the exception of the Voice of America, the tool through which we could reach the largest number of Yugoslavs. Money spent on exhibits in Yugoslavia was money well spent.

Q: This, of course, was some years after Tito had broken with the Soviet Union. And I wondered what kind of experience you had in Yugoslavia with reference to the attitude of the people toward America. You said they were extremely interested in learning things about the United States. Was there any overcast or overtone of antipathy toward the U.S., or was it basically an open feeling about the Americans?

SHIRLEY: People who have experienced communism like Americans, because to them Americans are the antithesis of communism. Yugoslavs had certainly experienced communism in an extreme form between 1944 and the break with the Cominform in 1948. Tito gradually loosened the screws, and by the time I got there in 1958, ten years

after the break with the Cominform, things had eased considerably, but the system was still communist, indeed it still is today, 35 years later.

Almost everybody in Yugoslavia had an uncle or a cousin or an aunt in the United States. People were conspicuously friendly to Americans. It's always easy to be an American in a communist country because the population looked to us as their only real source of hope.

Q: I gather, however, that the government still had its suspicions, and I base this on a very limited experience. When I was in the War College, since I had never been to Europe, I elected to take the European trip. They always broke the War College into four or five groups and visited different regions. I chose Europe, and that was the one year we went both to Soviet Union and to Yugoslavia.

Although the people seemed friendly enough, and the army seemed especially friendly and very critical of the Soviet Union; nevertheless, we were watched. We were stopping with a group of about 30 or 35 of us as part of a War College group, and we were there at the official invitation of the Yugoslav government. Nevertheless, I could see the gumshoes sitting across from me in the hotel lobby and watching me. There were several instances indicating that we were being watched. So I just wondered. That apparently was a governmental activity and had nothing to do with the general feeling.

SHIRLEY: Yes. But in the late 1950s, I cannot say that I ever felt that I was under personal surveillance, certainly not constant surveillance.

Q: I think this was occasional, but . . .

SHIRLEY: I did not experience constant surveillance, as I did during periods of service in Poland much later on. If I had had an affair with a Yugoslav girl, or if I had been drinking too much, something of that kind, they probably would have come at me to see whether I could be blackmailed. But I had no such experience.

Q: I know that you speak a great number of languages, an unusually large number. Did you pick up your Serbo-Croatian initially during your period of residence in the country, or did you study it and gain most of it thereafter?

SHIRLEY: By the time I came into the Foreign Service, I spoke French, German, Hungarian, and Serbo-Croatian. I had lost a lot of my Serbo-Croatian, but it came back to me fairly fast. Within about 90 days, 120 days, I was probably speaking at the three-plus, three-plus level. I subsequently learned Italian and Polish, so I guess that makes a total of six. But McKinney Russell is the Agency's great linguist. I was merely a polyglot.

Q: I'm curious, and if you don't mind, what was your father doing in Eastern Europe at the time that the war began?

SHIRLEY: My father was and, thank goodness, remains, an eccentric American who was living on his boat in Split. He fell in love with the Czech wife of a White Russian emigre at the beginning of the war.

Q: That's an interesting reason and no doubt a very satisfying one for one individual, at least.

SHIRLEY: No. It was a disaster. He caught up with the lady after the war, married her, spent a perfectly miserable six or seven years with her, and then divorced her.

I would like to add that I have worked for PAOs whom I have greatly admired, and I don't want to pick out a single one as the best. But Heath Bowman, who was never appreciated in the Service as he should have been, was an extraordinarily effective officer and to have worked for him was an immensely valuable experience. He was intelligent, methodical, strict and sometimes irascible. I learned much from Heath. Most of all high standards. He was exacting and he expected people to work at their best all the time. That spirit I subsequently tried to adopt myself, and to inculcate in others who have worked for me.

Q: You said you had this one final comment to make.

SHIRLEY: That was it.

Q: My question was that you were in Belgrade handling the exhibits program. Did you ever have the Atoms for Peace exhibit?

SHIRLEY: No.

Q: Well, it would have been that time, because that was the period from about '55 to '58 that the Atoms for Peace exhibit was being shown very widely around the world.

Well, were did you go then from there? Is that when you went to Trieste?

1960: Trieste, As Assistant Branch PAO, Ultimately To Branch PAO. Creates Binational Centers In Several Posts Otherwise Slated For Closing

SHIRLEY: Yes. I went to Trieste in September, 1960. Eddie Pancoast was PAO and I reported to him as his Assistant PAO. I was with Eddie for about a year when he was replaced by another person who stayed for less than a year. I was promoted Branch PAO on the second officer's departure.

Trieste was my first independent command. Even if I was only the skipper of a torpedo boat instead of a destroyer or a cruiser, it was a very good feeling, being skipper. For the first time in my career I had the opportunity to put some of my own ideas to work.

Toward the end of my tour in Trieste, Joe Phillips, the CPAO, called me up and said that the Agency was going through one of its periodic cutting exercises and that one of the posts to be closed was Trieste. I told him that I would like time to reflect for a day or two about what might be done. I called back to say that I thought that I could put together an Italo-American Association which would be self-funding, and I recommended that the senior national employee in Trieste be kept on the payroll. Joe liked the idea and asked me to create a formula that could be used country-wide since Turin, Genoa, Florence and Palermo were destined for the same fate as Trieste. I came up both with a plan for Trieste and with a proposal on how to save the other posts as well.

The experience of putting together a binational association and setting up a series of English courses to fund the activity was great. The Association still exists, 30-some years later.

In general, the Trieste PAO experience was a good one. It gave me an opportunity to plumb my depths. It put me in a position to learn a great deal about Italy. I was Acting Principal Officer from time to time, so I also learned something about that end of the business. And I wasn't just PAO for the Trieste Consular District, I had the Venice Consular District as well. Apart from the pleasure of working in Venice, I also gained an insight into Venetian society, Venetian culture, and that of the surrounding cities.

1963: Rome As Press Attaché

In 1963, after I had completed three years in Trieste, Ambassador Reinhardt came for a visit. I wrote some speeches for him and ran his schedule. He asked that I come down to Rome in some capacity or other. Joe Phillips arranged this with the Agency, and I went to Rome as Assistant Press and Publications Officer.

Six weeks or so after my arrival in Rome, Bob Amerson, the Press Attaché, was transferred to Bogota as PAO. The Agency was going to send in somebody else as press attaché, but Joe and the Ambassador decided that I should take the job, and they prevailed.

In that Press Attaché job I felt that I was riding a whirl- wind because it was a senior job and I had been precipitated into it very early in my career. At that point I was an FSR 5 or 6, two grades below the established rank for the assignment. But it worked out, and of my USIA experiences, I think the two most satisfying were being press attaché in Rome, and later in New Delhi.

Q: As the press attaché, you were the Embassy spokesman then?

A. Italian Reaction To Kennedy Assassination

SHIRLEY: Yes. I was the Embassy spokesman. I was the Ambassador's speech writer. When the Ambassador's aide was not there, I was often asked to fill in.

Let me tell you a story. Everyone remembers where he was when he learned that President Kennedy had been assassinated. On the day the President was killed, the Ambassador had to fly to Padua to make a speech. His aide was out of town, so I was doubling in brass. We flew up to Padua in a military plane. He made his speech, and we were flying back when the radio in the cockpit -- about two feet from our seats -- crackled. The copilot turned around and waived me forward. I put on the earphones and the Minister, Francis Williamson, said, "Please tell the Ambassador that the President has been shot and is dying." I turned, but before I could say anything the radio came on again. I put the earphones back on, and Francis Williamson said, "Say that the President has been assassinated. He is dead."

We landed at the military airport in Rome in the midst of a crowd; half the Embassy was there. I stayed up all night writing my first full-length speech for Ambassador Reinhardt. It was a eulogy to President Kennedy.

Q: I presume, as in most countries it was true, that the Italians were emotionally overcome, also, and expressed great feelings about the death of the president. Or was it not so?

SHIRLEY: You know, Lew, it was the most extraordinary outpouring of grief that I have ever seen. President Kennedy was loved by the Italian people, perhaps for some of the wrong reasons. They loved him because he was young and good-looking, because he was virile and had a pretty wife. The Kennedy myth persists in Italy. Only a couple of years ago, people would ask me when Senator Edward Kennedy would become president. When I explained that he had no chance at all, Italians were unbelieving.

But back to your question. The day after the President was assassinated, I was sitting in my office working the telephones. A man called and my secretary said: "You must talk to this person." Hundreds of people were calling, and one couldn't talk to them all, but this one she said, I had to. The man came on the line and said, "I want to tell you how sorry I am about the assassination of your president." I thanked him and wondered why his call had got through. But he continued: "There is something else I want to tell you. I have never seen President Kennedy because I am blind, but I stood on the street when President Kennedy passed by in his motorcade when he visited Rome, and I felt him." By then I could hardly speak.

Q: While you were still in Italy, did the film "Years of Lightning, Day of Drums" come to Italy for showing?

SHIRLEY: I can't remember.

Q: Because that was a film which reduced practically every foreign audience that I was with when they saw it to tears.

SHIRLEY: Yes. I saw the film a couple years later, in New Delhi with an Indian audience, and you're absolutely right. It was the most moving film the Agency ever made, perhaps the best film the Agency ever made.

Q: Do you know who made it?

SHIRLEY: Yes. Wasn't it Bruce--

Q: Bruce Herschensohn.

SHIRLEY: Bruce Herschensohn made it, yes.

Q: What would you say were the major accomplishments during your period in Italy of the USIS program? Or don't any of them stand out as particular highlights?

B. Doubts About Continuation Of Some Long Standing USIS Activities In Italy

SHIRLEY: I had some doubts then, as I did subsequently when I was CPAO in Rome, about the effectiveness of a number of our programs. I thought that even then, and I'm taking you back to 1963, there were programs which should already have been eliminated and which were pretty expensive. We were not as bureaucratic then as I think we have become in the intervening years, but it still took a while to stop doing the things that were undoubtedly useful in the '40s, and perhaps in the early '50s, when a magazine produced by us was a rare treasure. By the mid-1960s, the people we were sending our publications to were already suffering from information overload and hardly looked at what we sent.

Q: You said that Joe Phillips was the PAO when you went to Rome. Did he stay during all the time you were there, or did you get a new PAO?

SHIRLEY: The PAOs during my tenure were Mickey Boerner, then Joe Phillips for most of my tenure in Rome, and finally Gordon Ewing.

If I look back over a more than 30-year career in USIA, and if you asked me to name of the person for whom I had the greatest personal affection, it would be Joe Phillips; because of his grace, because of his manners, because of his style, and because of his substance. Gordon Ewing and I also became close friends, but Joe was much older than I and something of a father figure. He was also a very comprehending, experienced and sympathetic chief.

Q: And who were the Deputy PAOs when you were in Italy, particularly when you were in Rome?

SHIRLEY: Ed Schechter was the Deputy PAO for a good part of the time, a man whose Central European origins -- he is Viennese, as you perhaps remember -- made him particularly good company to me. I listened carefully to what he said, and minded not at all taking direction from him.

I forget the next person to come along, perhaps because he was so forgettable.

Q: Was that by any chance Dick Salvatierra?

SHIRLEY: Yes, it was.

Q: Dick felt he was out of place in Rome. He was essentially a Latino by persuasion and experience, and I don't think he ever felt at home in the Roman situation.

SHIRLEY: I would have to agree with your judgment that he was not comfortable in Rome. I don't think he particularly liked Italians. I don't think he liked being in a huge embassy, and I don't think he liked me. He didn't like the way I spoke, and there was something about me and my manner he found off-putting. The period between Joe's departure and Gordon's arrival was not a happy one for me. Come to think of it, he gave me the only negative efficiency report I ever had. Perhaps that's another reason why my memory of him is not so hot. [Laughter]

C. Role Of USIS (Through Ed Schechter) In The 1963 Effort To Promote An Opening To The Left

Q: I don't think we fully covered the question of whether you thought there was any outstanding accomplishment or program in USIS during your period in Italy. If you don't, or whether you do or not, I'd also like to ask you a question. Ed Schechter is very proud of the role that he played in the attempts of the embassy to further the opening to the left in Italy. Did you have any part in that, or what was your opinion of that effort?

SHIRLEY: No, I did not. I did not because I was too junior and because nobody was asking my opinion about the opening to the left. I had an opinion which was, and is, immaterial in terms of what happened. Ed was very sophisticated about Italian politics. He had a wide-ranging group of contacts--to use one of our favorite words--among important people. His Italian was excellent, even though he spoke it with a heavy German accent through a pipe.

He was very effective in carrying the Embassy's message to the press, and to a lot of Italian political figures, as well. So if it is his judgment that he had an influence, I would take him at his word and I would certainly concur in that judgement.

Q: Do you, at this point, have any further comments and suggestions or observations about your experience in the Italian program?

SHIRLEY: Not really. I probably will have some things to say when I get to my tenure in Rome as Country PAO, but you're about 12 years away from that, I'm afraid.

Press Attaché, New Delhi 1965

Q: Okay. Well, let's go on to your next assignment then. Was that your New Delhi assignment?

SHIRLEY: Yes, it was.

Q: What year was that?

SHIRLEY: We're now in the summer of 1965, the early summer of 1965. I was already assigned to the Armed Forces Staff College, but Ambassador Bowles wanted an experienced press attaché, and there were not that many in the Agency at the time. So instead of Norfolk, I went to New Delhi.

I came back to Washington in July of 1965. Ambassador Bowles happened to be in town and I called on him to be looked over. He was a person whose name I had known for many years. He had been Deputy Secretary of State, or Under Secretary as it then was called, in the first year of the Kennedy Administration, and then Ambassador-at-Large, and then he went back to India as ambassador for a second time.

He was an awesome figure for a young officer suddenly to be confronted with, and I arrived at Ambassador Bowles' house in Washington--a friend's house, actually--to find the Ambassador and Mrs. Bowles there, Mrs. Bowles wearing a sari, as she almost always did. Bowles said: "We'll try you out. We have six or seven Indian journalists arriving in a few minutes, and I'd like you to run the press conference."

A: Baptism Of Fire: Outbreak Of Indo-Pakistan War

I apparently passed the test and was told to get to Delhi as quickly as I could. I arrived in Delhi, and I remember being met by my colleague, Merrill Miller. Merrill took us to our hotel, which was the Delhi Claridge, not London Claridge, I'm sorry to say. I went to bed at about 4:00 in the morning -- planes in Delhi always arrive at that time. Two hours later, I got a call to report to the Embassy. A car fetched me, and off I went. When I arrived, I was told to report to the Ambassador's office where we learned that Indian and Pakistani forces had clashed in the Punjab and that there was a war on. Would I please get to work?

I had a glimmering of where the Punjab was, and I knew that Indians and Pakistanis did not get on particularly well. Happily, my grandfather -- I have an English mother and her father was a career officer in the British Army -- had spent 20 years in India, and I had been brought up by him until I was six. I was steeped in the lore of British India, but it was Mr. Kipling's India, not Mr. Nehru's. Still it got me by the first weeks, and I did know quite a lot about the military situation which fascinated me.

Within 24 hours we had 50 American correspondents on the ground, and within 48 hours perhaps 75 or 80. I did a morning briefing and afternoon briefing, always after consulting with the Defense Attaché, with the Ambassador, with the DCM, and with the Political Counselor, trying quickly to learn what was going on and working out how to say it without getting the Embassy creamed by the Indians who weren't telling anyone anything. I worked harder and with greater pleasure and more enthusiasm than I ever had in my life before. It was a glorious week or ten days of really being engaged and very quickly getting to know my way around.

B: Happy Relationship With Ambassador Chester Bowles

If you should ask me--which you haven't--which tour I considered my best tour professionally, at which stage I performed the most efficiently, at which stage I found my work the most satisfying, and at which stage in my life I had the greatest chief, I would pick those three years in India with Chester Bowles.

It's curious in life how one sometimes has chemistry with a person, even if one has very different views of the world. Chester Bowles was a liberal's liberal, and I was a prototypical Tory, but we got on famously.

There were some interesting people on Ambassador Bowles' personal staff. Dick Celeste, who is now Governor of Ohio, was his aide. Doug Bennet, who is now president of National Public Radio, formerly Director of AID, formerly Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, was his principal speechwriter, although Doug left shortly after I arrived when I took on that responsibility.

You know, press attachés do not, as a rule, make their careers by disagreeing with the chief of mission, or by arguing in a senior staff meeting, arguing against something which an ambassador proposes. But Chester Bowles always encouraged me to do just that, and always listened, even when I was speaking nonsense. He also taught me whatever I know about writing. You'll remember that Chester Bowles and Bill Benton were the founders of Benton and Bowles, and that they practically invented market research. And Ambassador Bowles knew how to write. Initially, it was a terrifying experience to write for him, but I learned how to let myself into his mind. By the middle of my three-year tour, I was able to write for him things which he changed very little. What he changed always made it more felicitous, but in the main he let stand what I put before him. I also had the opportunity in Delhi to be Staff Aide for quite long periods when I would be both Staff Aide and Press Attaché. It was a fine opportunity to get an overview of the work of an embassy, to understand the responsibilities of an ambassador, and to learn what a diplomatic mission could and could not do. The experience served me extremely well in later years.

When I was a chief of mission myself, I thought back on those early years in the Foreign Service and on the lessons learned from Chester Bowles. We became close personal

friends. Our house in Connecticut is only a 20-minute drive from his, so I continued to see him after he retired. When he retired, he asked me to leave the Service and do a column with him, but I couldn't afford it. I'm sorry we didn't have that experience together. There was so much more that I could have learned from him, but he was already in bad health and perhaps it would not have worked.

I might add about my Delhi experience that Bill Miller was PAO. There are so many Bill Millers, but I refer to Delhi Bill Miller.

Q: One of them has died. Bombay Bill Miller died.

SHIRLEY: Yes, I heard that. Delhi Bill Miller was a good PAO. He understood that it was valuable for him to have a press attaché who was close to the ambassador, as I think I was. I kept him abreast of everything that went on in the chancery, and we saw each other at least once a day. A lesser man might not have enjoyed the fact that one of his subordinates spent more time with the ambassador than he did.

C: Indian Tendency To Moralize And Criticize America Was And Is Maddening

Q: At this time, of course, Henry Kissinger made his famous statement that, "I guess we're leaning toward Pakistan." Did that happen while you were there, and did you have to put up with the reaction to that statement?

SHIRLEY: I don't remember that Kissinger said it, but there was a general feeling in India that we had a pro-Pakistani bias. I think it was probably right that we did, and I think we had a pro-Pakistani bias for good reasons, the most public of which was that the Indians constantly gave us a bad time.

Indians have a tendency to moralize, which at best is irritating and, at worst, maddening. I remember an incident, and I was very much involved in this, which illustrates the point.

In 1967, the crop had been catastrophic and about 40 million people in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were threatened with famine. A congressional delegation came: Congressman Pogue, who was then Chairman of the House Agricultural Committee; Congressman--now Senator--Dole; and then-Senator Miller of Iowa. Ambassador Bowles sent Herb Spivack, the Political Counselor, and me with the delegation to tour the famine-struck areas. The group returned to the U.S. persuaded that help was needed. After a long travail, Lyndon Johnson signed off on an agreement to give India ten million tons of grain. And on that day Indira Gandhi sent a birthday cable to Ho Chi Minh. Lyndon hit the roof, and justifiably so. Ambassador Bowles had to use every bit of his considerable political influence in Washington not to have us go back on the agreement.

But it was that kind of thing which made Indians difficult to deal with and which no doubt contributed to our pro-Pakistan "tilt."

Effectiveness And Value Of USIS Indian Program

Q: Yes. I must confess that my own contact with the Indians has been very limited, and yet it's been enough so that I have almost automatically been irritated with Indian contacts. I've had a few very good Indian friends, but of all the people's I've encountered, they probably irritate me more than any other foreign people I know. Do you have any other observations about your tour in India, or any observations on the general efficacy of the USIA program there?

SHIRLEY: Yes, much more so than in Italy. Virtually everything the post did in India was worthwhile.

Q: "Span".

SHIRLEY: Yes. "Span," for instance, was an excellent, widely read magazine. We also had a good twice-monthly news- paper. The cultural program, at least exhibits and cultural presentations, that sort of thing, was rather less important, and money spent on such things was probably wasted. On the other hand, funds for the exchange program were well handled and yielded good returns.

The USIS post in India had an impact in both the long and short term. We certainly did everything we could to make known our views through the press, tried to insure that our views were accurately reflected, and spent a good deal of time working with the Indian intellectual community.

Q: Well, of course, first of all, the program in India cannot be a mass program in the usual sense of the word because there is such a vast difference in educational opportunities for the very low classes in India and the poor, as compared with the more or less elite. But you really feel that the program that USIS carried out in India did, then, have a substantial effect upon those people who were in the educated and knowledgeable class?

SHIRLEY: Yes. I think that it had the effect of bringing to a limited number of people information and views they otherwise would not have had, or would not have considered. The role of Ambassador Bowles in the USIS context was critical, of course. He was an excellent PAO. The combination of the USIS program, bolstered by the work of an exceptional ambassador, made a difference.

I might tell you an anecdote.

Stalin's Daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, Defects To U.S. Embassy

One evening I was at the German Embassy at a dinner. One of the house servants came and called me to the phone. Dick Celeste was on the line and he said that I was to drop

my knife and fork and come to the Embassy. I made my excuses and left. I walked into the Ambassador's office and was told that we had "a walk-in," which was the term we used to describe a defector. I asked who it was, and was told: "Stalin's daughter."

That was the evening that Svetlana Alliluyeva walked into the Embassy and made a little bit of history.

We managed to get her out of India the same night, on a Qantas flight to Rome. There the story broke. I started getting telephone calls from every news organization in the United States, but I couldn't say anything as we were deep in talks with the Swiss about obtaining asylum for her there. I could not even say, "no comment," or "I really don't have anything for you on that," since that would have been tantamount to an admission. For hours I just had to fake it. I couldn't lie to the press, but I could dissimulate: "What? Can't hear you. Bad connection," and so on.

Q: I had forgotten. When the story finally broke, was the Swiss connection then disconnected? Did she go immediately to the United States?

SHIRLEY: No. She stayed in Rome only a few hours, after about twelve hours in the air from Delhi to Rome. The USG used those hours to negotiate with the Swiss.

A small parenthesis here about good diplomacy. Bowles did not want to put Secretary Rusk in the position of having to decide what to do with her, so he made the decision for him. He sent a flash cable to Rusk, but timed it so that he would receive it when Svetlana was already on the way from the Embassy to the airport. We knew, of course, that from the arrival of the cable in the Operations Center until the time somebody with sufficient authority to wake up the Secretary of State could be found, it would be too late for Rusk to involve himself in the decision. Bowles gave Rusk deniability which he needed since he was involved at the time in a sensitive negotiation with the Soviets.

Q: How long was she in Switzerland?

SHIRLEY: Six or seven weeks. Then she came to the United States. Since then, she's been bouncing around.

Q: Well, do you think that pretty well covers your experience in Delhi, then? Do you want to go on to subsequent activities?

SHIRLEY: I think exhaustively for the unfortunate person who has to listen to this tape.

1969: Return To Washington. Various Positions In Near East, South Asia Area Office
Then (1970) PAO Poland

Q: No, it's all very interesting, and I think it's well to get it on tape. Where did you go from Delhi, then?

SHIRLEY: From Delhi, I went back to Washington, first as Desk Officer for India, Ceylon, and Nepal, an experience I found not very stimulating. Being a desk officer was okay, but India had been so exciting, so pleasurable, and I had been so close to Ambassador Bowles. I had felt that I was doing things that mattered. To then suddenly find myself writing tedious letters to the PAO about the budget was pretty grim.

Henry Stevens was the Policy Officer in the Near East South Asia area office. Alan Carter was Area Director, and a very good one. David Nalle was his Deputy. Two very different people who made a good team. When Henry died -- about four months or so into my assignment -- I was asked to take on the Policy Officer job. It was preferable to being a desk officer, but I didn't much enjoy it.

But salvation was at hand. Frank Shakespeare, -- we're now in early 1969 -- went on a trip in Eastern Europe, and returned unhappy. He wanted changes. He felt that only the Agency's "best" should serve in that part of the world. At about the same time John Reinhardt asked whether I wanted to be PAO in South Africa. I was on the verge of saying yes, when Pic Littell, who was East Europe Soviet Union Area Director, offered me PAO Warsaw. I plunged into Polish language training for a year, and in July of 1970 went to Poland. Life suddenly became exciting again.

Q: You were there at the beginning of the Solidarity movement then?

SHIRLEY: Oh, no. I arrived in Warsaw in mid-1970. Solidarity didn't really get going until '78, eight years later. But about six months after we arrived, just a few days before Christmas 1970, there was an uprising on the Baltic coast. It ended with the defenestration of Mr. Gomulka and his replacement by Mr. Gierek.

My ambassador was Walter Stoessel, a man whom I greatly admired. Indeed, we remained great friends until his death. You remember that he was the only Foreign Service Officer ever to become Deputy Secretary of State.

We had an extraordinarily good Embassy, beginning with the Ambassador. It was also my first time as CPAO, and I had a good staff. Mike Eisenstadt was my CAO. Ed Harper, a kind of talented madman, was IO. There were also solid junior officers. Eastern Europe had always been my primary area of interest, although I also bounced around other parts of the world. Once in Warsaw, I felt that I was back in an environment in which I could be more useful than in any previous assignment.

Great Value Of USIS/VOA Work In Poland And Eastern Europe/USSR Generally

Let me generalize for a moment.

I think that the Agency's work in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union -- and I very much include the work of the Voice of America -- was in every respect more important than

anything we did anywhere else in the world. Throughout the 40 years of Soviet domination it was we -- "we," USIA; "we," VOA and Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, the BBC, and Deutsche Welle -- who kept alive in the peoples of those countries the hope that someday things would change and that the West cared.

Not only was it a matter of providing information, but also of sustaining their hope by letting them know that we cared enough to broadcast to them, to have exchange programs with them, to show them exhibits, to talk to them as individuals, to send professors to their universities, to open libraries in which they could spend happy and profitable hours. A dollar spent in Eastern Europe was worth a thousand dollars. A dollar spent in many other parts of the world was worth \$10.00 or \$1.00, and sometimes only 50 cents.

You asked me earlier how Yugoslavs felt about Americans, and what I said about Yugoslavs is doubly true of Poles. They are a splendid people, a brave people. The Poles and Hungarians are cavalry peoples. They have cultures of honor. An ordinary Pole -- if there are any "ordinary" Poles -- constantly thinks of his honor, of his personal honor, his national honor, the honor of his wife and the honor of his relatives. And to live among people who were able so well and so clearly to articulate their hatred for the system which had been imposed upon them, and who took such extraordinary risks saying things and doing things that were anathema to the regime, was a constant stimulant. One had to admire them and one had to believe that what one was doing among them made a difference.

Q: My brief exposure to them seems to impress me with the fact that they almost don't give a damn about what they say. If they don't like what they were subjected to within their own country, they have absolutely no tendency to hold back -- they say it. I don't know to what extent they do that in Poland, but outside of Poland, they certainly do.

SHIRLEY: They were the same inside Poland. Every Pole understands, viscerally perhaps, what Mr. Jefferson told us about the need to water the tree of liberty with the blood of patriots. And Poland, to survive as a nation and as a people, to survive as a culture, jammed in there as they are between the Russians in the east and the Germans in the west, has had to sacrifice on the field of battle one generation in every two or three.

And however unreasonable they may sometimes seem, however un-Anglo-Saxon, they make wise, if desperate, choices. When someone is invading your country with tanks, it may be foolhardy to charge those tanks with horse cavalry. But if that's all you've got to charge them with, the Pole feels it's better to do that than to do nothing at all.

Q: My remarks and my question was provoked by the fact that a couple of years ago I was at a reception in Tokyo at which the Polish ambassador was present. And it was an experience for me, because the man simply opened up completely about not only the Soviet Union, which he thoroughly detested, but about his regime within his own country.

Here is a man representing his country in a very important other country in the world, and he had no compunction whatsoever exposing himself to me, as an American, and giving his opinion of what was happening.

SHIRLEY: This interview is taking place at a time when Eastern Europe, as we have known it in the post-war era, is coming unraveled. It's important to remember that in Eastern Europe there were never more but a handful of Marxists and hardly any communists at all. There were plenty of opportunists, of course, people who went along just to survive. But they shouldn't be judged harshly.

Q: There were a lot of fascist sympathizers, weren't there?

SHIRLEY: Yes. There were plenty of convinced fascists, not as many as you think, but too many, to be sure. But of convinced Communists and convinced Marxists, there were few. The only countries in the world where I have never had arguments or even conversations, about Marxism, was in Poland and the other Eastern European countries. They knew that Marxism was nonsense from the moment it was imposed upon them, or at least a moment or two after it was imposed on them. Indian intellectuals would blather endlessly about Marxism, but very few Polish intellectuals would risk their dignity talking about rubbish.

Q: So, again, you feel that when you spoke about what we were able to do, you were talking about such activities as the exchange program and the exhibit program and all the three radio stations broadcasting into Eastern Europe; had you then exhausted a discussion of what you were able to do? Were you able to do anything in the press field or the publication field in Poland, or was that pretty well restricted?

SHIRLEY: Well, it was much harder than elsewhere, but I had a large circle of press contacts. I must have seen at least once a month 25 to 35 of the most important Polish journalists. I seldom saw them in my office. It was almost always in a social situation created by me.

While we certainly did not influence what the party press wrote, we had a substantial influence on the way journalists thought, and to some extent, what they thought was reflected in what they wrote.

To give you an example: There was and is a Catholic weekly in Krakow which throughout the worst of times was always able to publish, although it was censored. I saw the editor every few weeks. We provided him with dozens of subscriptions to American magazines and books for his library. We were fighting the same battle, and fighting it pretty effectively, as it turned out.

We made a difference in Poland, as I think we did everywhere in Eastern Europe throughout the Cold War. The people who were in that program can look back -- should look back -- with the feeling that they did their part and that without them, and others like

them in other parts of our government and in Allied governments, things would not have gone the way they have gone.

1971: Poland Assignment Cut Short At End Of Two Years;
Return To Washington And Deputy Area Director For Eastern Europe,
Then Area Director (1973) and Director Of Recombined East And West Europe (1975)

Q: Do you think now you have covered what you did in Poland, or do you have any further remarks to make about the Polish situation?

SHIRLEY: No. I probably covered it at too great a length. My tour in Poland was supposed to have been four years, but at the end of my second year I was asked to come back to Washington to be Deputy Area Director for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. I did that job for a year and then succeeded Kempton Jenkins as Area Director. I remained in that job from 1973 until 1975. In 1975, Jim Keogh, the Director to whom I was personally closest, asked me to put Western Europe and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union back together, and asked also that I become Area Director for the whole shooting match.

Q: You may remember, I came to see you one time about a question concerning the consulting firm I was working through, and I thought I remembered at that time that you were head of EUR, but I had forgotten that that was at a time when they had already recombined the two.

SHIRLEY: It was, yes. I do remember you came, and, yes, it was 1975.

Q: It may be difficult for you to answer now, since you weren't there at the creation, but what do you think about the validity of having established a separate European entity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, say, about the time we did, which was around about 1963, '62 or '63, as I recall?

SHIRLEY: I think it was a sound idea. Operations in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were sufficiently sui generis to justify a separate area office. It was further justified by the fact that as an independent office it had greater claim on resources and prevented the big Western European programs from siphoning off funds from where they were the most needed.

Putting it back together again in 1975 was also right. There was no question in Jim Keogh's mind that I was going to short change Eastern Europe, because my focus had been on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Also, somebody needed to take a very close look at the still badly over-staffed and over-funded Western European Area, and Jim knew I would do this for him, and do it with gusto.

My first task was to look very closely at the Western European program. As I recall, I reduced by hundreds our foreign national positions, 80% to 90% of whom we retired. We

tried not to perpetrate cruelties on people who had served us well and loyally, many since 1945, but too many things were being done just because they had always been done. And it was clear that for so long as there were people to do them, things would go on as before. Virtually the only way to reduce the size of the programs was to reduce the size of the staffs.

Q: I'll ask you, then, do you have some further comments on the four or five years you spent within the agency on various stages of the European program direction?

SHIRLEY: My four years as an Area Director coincided with Jim Keogh's tenure as Director of the Agency, and with Gene Chop's as Deputy Director. I found them very agreeable to work for; both are highly intelligent, both are excellent managers, and both are gentlemen to the core.

You could go to Jim Keogh for a decision and get it on the spot. Both he and Gene had affection for the Foreign Service, genuine affection. They liked us and we felt it, and I think we responded to that affection and to that trust by doing our utmost to merit them. I think that both of them -- each of them slightly differently -- understood the role of USIA and neither overvalued nor undervalued our role. They did not allow themselves to believe, as some directors have believed, that they were mini secretaries of state, but they knew that we had a role to play, and they helped us play it efficiently.

I record my feeling that Jim Keogh was a first-rate director of USIA, and that perhaps because he is a quiet man, and in some respects a self-effacing man -- he is too proud to be the other way -- that he is sometimes underestimated. And I would say different, but equally complimentary things, about Gene Kopp. And I will go on record also to say that the Agency is extra-ordinarily fortunate to have him back as Deputy Director in this administration.

Q: So then from the European area . . .

1976: Return To Italy, This Time As PAO

SHIRLEY: From the European area, off I went--or returned, really--for my third tour in Italy, this time as Country PAO. This was at the beginning of the Carter Administration.

Until this point in my career I had always worked for people whom I respected professionally, and for many of whom I also had affection. That now changed. Ambassador Gardner and I did not get along, and the next three years were a miserable struggle to be loyal to a person for whom I had scant respect. To be fair, I must have been as much of a trial to him as he was to me.

Curiously enough, some of my better work came in the early stages of that assignment.

A. USIS Role In Blocking U.S. Support For Italian Communist Participation In Italian Government

When the Carter Administration came to office, "Euro- Communism" was fashionable in Washington. There was a notion, which I thought was deeply wrong, and which I think events have proved deeply wrong, that if we only cooperated with the European communists, we would change them, and they would eventually become socialists.

I passionately disagreed with this point of view and thought it terribly dangerous. I thought that communism in Europe was already receding, including in Italy. I thought that if we lifted our "veto" for their entry into the government we would have strengthened them at the very moment they were weakening. I believed that our anathema against them should continue. I argued fiercely against lifting the anathema.

At this point, the possibility that the communists would enter the government suddenly loomed large, and Washington finally focused.

The Ambassador suddenly changed his mind, probably because he did not want to be the person who "lost Italy."

At this point it became easier to fight for a statement which, in effect, would reimpose the anathema. I drafted a cable to the Department and the NSC which succeeded in persuading Washington that something needed to be said. On January 12, 1978, a statement was issued.

It served to block the entry of the communists into the government, which, had they done so at the time, would have breathed new life into them, and which would have done untold damage to our interest in Italy.

B. Argument For Giving PAO A Political Counselor Role

Just a couple more quick thoughts about my tour as PAO in Rome. I didn't discover this in Rome, but certainly the experience there strengthened my view that PAOs, to really do their jobs well, should also be political counselors with a slightly different mission. The traditional political counselor's constituencies are the Foreign Ministry in the political world. The PAO's constituencies are the Fourth Estate and the intellectual world. Each should relate to those constituencies in essentially the same way.

In most European countries, in most societies in fact, the intellectual world is not what it is in the United States. I'm talking about how the politicized intelligentsia, has as much, and in some cases, more influence on the direction in which a given country is going to go politically than does the political establishment. Thus the PAO's constituency is every bit as political, in some countries and at some historical moments more so, than the political counselor's. And what the politicized intelligentsia thinks should be reported on.

One of the reasons why departmental officers tend often to regard USIA Foreign Service officers as second-class citizens is because the USIA officer seldom ever reports on anything. It's not that he can't. When our people enter our service as young men and women, they are man for man, woman for woman, every bit as good as State FSOs. But subsequently they are not asked to use their minds as much, or their skills as much. This has been a strong trend in recent years when there's been far too much emphasis in USIA on management, and far too little on substance. Seldom are our people asked to write anything beyond largely useless reports to Agency administrators.

I have one additional observation, and a final one, because after this, I don't do any more PAOing: Even though we had looked at the Western European programs carefully, and in the mid-'70s eliminated many functions which had lingered on from the '40s and the '50s, there was and there remains a good deal of fat in our West European operations. Which is not to say that people don't work hard. They do. But many of them are working hard doing things that are a waste of time and money.

1980: Shirley Called Back To Washington To Be Associate Director For Programs,
But Suddenly Becomes Acting Director Of USIA

But to turn to myself: I was promoted Career Minister in the summer of 1980, and shortly thereafter John Reinhardt asked whether I wanted to come back to Washington as Associate Director for Programs to succeed Hal Schneidman, a distinguished USIA officer who had been the first incumbent in that newly created job in USIA's rather sad, but happily brief, incarnation as USICA. I was delighted to get out of Rome, and delighted with the job offer.

My period as Associate Director for Programs was short. Had I remained in that job for a longer period, I could have done some good. But I had only just begun to work on trying to understand how to make the organization mesh, how to properly coordinate the tremendously varied instruments I had in hand when, with the election of Ronald Reagan, I became Acting Director of USIA.

The six months of being Acting Director was pretty exhilarating. I was the first career officer to have been formally named Acting Director by a President, and the only one, I think, who had ever been Acting Director for more than a few days at a time.

I recognized, of course, that as an Acting Director, there were a limited number of initiatives I could take. I remember -- something I was proud of at the time -- that I introduced training programs in Marxism for outgoing officers because I felt that most of our people knew very little about the theoretical side of Marxism, and if they didn't know anything about Marxism, how were they going to persuade people that it was wrong? I also set up a course on Western values to try to get our people to think methodically about our own system.

And many other initiatives as well.

Q: I think you said earlier when we were off the record that these were not set up at FSI, that they were set up and given within the agency. I'm curious. Who was teaching them? Who did you acquire to impart this knowledge?

SHIRLEY: I don't remember names, but I remember that we went out and got some of the better people in the country to run them. But I'm certain that we did not do them in the FSI framework.

1981: Advent Of Charles Wick As USIA Director And Creation Of Position Of Counselor Of The Agency

Charlie Wick, who was to be the next Director, started coming to his office in April, about four months into my temporary incumbency.

I found him an interesting, complex and difficult man. He was hard to work for; the hardest I had ever experienced. For the first year and a half or so of his tenure, he was extremely suspicious of the "bureaucracy." He was predisposed to believe that whatever we did was going to be inefficient and resistant of the things that he wanted to do, and resistant also to the ideas of the new administration. As time went by, he not only became easier to work with, but he began to rely increasingly on the professional Foreign Service, although heaven knows he brought far too many political appointees into the Agency.

Looking back on his incumbency, I think it was a mixed blessing. He worked terribly hard. He believed very strongly in the things he was doing, and about some of them he was right. He certainly got the Agency larger budgets than it otherwise would have had, which was mostly good, but not altogether good.

After he came on board, Wick asked me to create a job for myself. I looked at the job description of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs at State. Around it I wrote a job description for a Counselor of Agency with responsibility for the work of the Area Directors to assume that the field would get professional supervision, and included some pretty broad additional authority. About seven or eight months later Mr. Wick decided that things were not going as he wanted and he asked me to take on additional responsibility as "Chief of Staff." At that point all of the paper that went to the Director began to flow through me. Wick generated a flood of memos, but somehow we managed. I ended up having an Executive Assistant, three Special Assistants, and three secretaries. I didn't want all that staff, but had to let the office grow to handle the paper flow along with my other work.

Politicization Of USIA Has Left No Honorable Career Place For A Senior Officer To Go After Holding Major Agency Assignment; Agency Needs Restructuring

Looking back after many years away from the Agency, and certainly quite a few years away from 1981 when this job was created, I believe it was the right thing to do. It is my

view, and it's a strongly held view, that the officer who becomes Counselor of the Agency should always be a Career Minister, and should always be at the tail end of his career in USIA. I believe also that after he ends his tour of duty as Counselor he should not have another tour in the Agency, and that if he wants to stay in the Foreign Service, it should be as a chief of mission.

For two reasons. One, because I think Agency officers ought to have at least one job at the senior-most level to which they can aspire, and which they know will almost certainly lead to an assignment as chief of mission at the end of their careers. And, two, because I think that the person in the Counselor's job should be in a position to give his best advice to the Director of the Agency without in any way feeling that he needs to trim his sails. My successor as Counselor was Jack Hedges, who, as you know, died before he got his Mission. Stan Burnett retired out of the job and John Kordek went on to be Ambassador to Botswana. The present incumbent, Mike Pistor, is still relatively new in the assignment, but I hope he gets his Mission and refuses another PAOship if that is all he is offered.

One of the problems USIA has is that the brighter the officer, the more difficult the last 10 to 15 years of his career tend to be. By the time he is 45 or 50, he will have been a country PAO two or three times. And how many times can you go out as a PAO, working with State officers whom you knew when they were your juniors and who are now DCMs and ambassadors? How can you retain your enthusiasm and the will to work in that kind of situation?

Q: I think the increasing politicization of the agency by which it came to a point where more political appointees were placed in the most senior and responsible positions, has left the agency in an untenable position. It's extremely difficult now for a senior USIA officer to aspire to much of anything in Washington that he thinks in his view is equal to his talents once he has had two or three major posts within the agency. I don't know what the answer is. I just don't think it's going to work.

SHIRLEY: The answer has to be that the institution, as it's presently organized, cannot correct the flaw that you have pointed to. The institution needs to be reorganized. In essence, a fifth cone in the Foreign Service, a public affairs cone needs to be created, and interchangeability between that and other cones ought to be considerable. A political cone officer cannot be fully effective at the senior levels unless he has served a tour or two in a public affairs capacity. Similarly, a public affairs cone officer cannot be fully effective in his specialty unless he has served a tour or two as a political officer, an economic officer, or as a DCM. And unless changes are made to allow for that kind of interchangeability, the problem will persist.

Q: I think, also, something that you and I discussed a while back when we unfortunately had the machine turned off, is that I think one of the reasons that Foreign Service officers in the USIA have not continued along the line of reporting is twofold.

One is that there are many ambassadors who are jealous of, and political officers who would strongly resent that kind of reporting. The other thing is that if you report to the Agency, the Agency really doesn't know what to do with it once they've got it. So they don't make it known to State, and if they do, I'm not sure what the reaction of State would be under the present circumstances and organizational patterns.

I agree with you. Some reorganization and some change has got to take place or there isn't going to be a major career in the senior area for USIA officers.

SHIRLEY: I certainly agree with the last thing you said, although I'm not sure that I fully share your view on how ambassadors regard imaginative reporting by USIA officers. When I was a PAO in Eastern Europe I did a great deal of reporting, straight to the Department with copies to USIA, and there was never any problem. Neither was there tension between me and my political officer colleagues, because I was reporting on things they were not reporting on, and did not have either the intention or the time to report on.

Obviously, a USIA officer should not sit down and write analytical telegrams about the state of mind of the politicized intelligentsia of country X and then send them back to his desk at the USIA. The desk officer will merely look at it, perhaps mark it for the Area Director. And the Area Director will put a note on it and say: "Joe has written an interesting report." And that will be the end of it. No, that is absurd. But there has always been a way, in my experience, of reporting to the Department with copies to USIA, or to USIA with copies to the Department.

Nor do I think that ambassadors are resentful of this sort of thing. In my experience, an ambassador's main concern is to do his job well and to look good in Washington. If someone in his Mission is doing reporting which the Department views as valuable, the ambassador doesn't much care who does the drafting, as long as his Mission looks good.

Q: I guess I have my impression because I served under a couple of ambassadors from the old school who were upset by it, and I've now been out of the Service for 17 years. From what you say, things have vastly improved, and I'm glad to hear it.

SHIRLEY: I think they have. Ambassador Stoessel whose PAO I was in 1970-72 in Warsaw, was considered an old-line Foreign Service officer, and he not only did not object, but encouraged me and my officers to report. He was also the first superior to recommend that I one day be a chief of mission. A man of judgement. [Laughter].

1983: Shirley Made Agency Deputy Director Ad Interim

Well, to pick up on my own career, and to say a few things about the next phase: in May of 1983 Director Wick decided to dispense with the services of then-Deputy Director Gilbert Robinson, and asked me to become Deputy Director ad interim until he could find a political appointee replacement. I said that I would, but added that I had no interest in being the permanent Deputy Director. I served as Deputy Director ad interim for about

five months. In the summer of 1983 I asked that I be released by October, as I wished to retire after a year as a diplomat-in-residence.

The experience of being Deputy Director ad interim was not substantially different from having been Counselor and Chief of Staff, although my responsibilities were somewhat enlarged. I became exclusively responsible for personnel decisions, relations with the Union, and so on. To tell you the truth, after those three years as Acting Director, Counselor, and Deputy Director, I was tired. Director Wick fired a tremendous number of people; a revolving door in some of the senior jobs. And, of course, every one of his crises were accompanied by endless meetings, recriminations, bitterness, anger, slamming doors and raised voices. There were times when the job was pretty distasteful.

1983: Diplomat-In-Residence At Wesleyan University; Then Ambassador To Tanzania

In October, I went to Wesleyan University as diplomat-in-residence and there taught, keeping one lecture ahead of my students, a class in the History of Contemporary Eastern Europe, and a seminar on the political intelligentsia in Eastern European societies. I also had several tutorials. I enjoyed being at Wesleyan and enjoyed being with young people. I enjoyed teaching, and I enjoyed the luxury of being able to focus once more on what really interested me; Eastern Europe. It was a happy time.

Just before I left Washington the Department asked me whether I was interested in becoming Ambassador to Tanzania. I said that I was. Both my wife and I had always wanted to serve in Africa, and I had always wanted to have a tour of duty as a chief of mission.

Q: I know you were hoping for it, but weren't you at one time even considered as ambassador to Hungary?

SHIRLEY: I was on my way three times, but each time a political appointee went instead.

Q: Is that the time of the famous story, or one of those times of the famous story, when our bête noire in Congress asked an assistant of his who was a native Hungarian to take you out and see if you really knew Hungarian?

SHIRLEY: No. That happened while I was Area Director for EE and the Soviet Union; in 1974 or '75. Director Keogh had me up in front of Wayne Hayes defending my budget, and defending also that slice of the VOA budget attributable to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Hayes was in the chair, and there was a huge crowd in the room. I don't really know why. There must have been many agency officers, but there were a lot of other people too. Wayne Hayes, as always, was surrounded by a bevy of young women staffers.

Hayes had had me in the hot seat for more than two hours. He was really working me over, putting a lot of pressure on me. As I was addressing the question of VOA broadcasts to Eastern Europe, Hayes said: "Well, Mr. Shirley, I don't understand why you're asking for money for VOA. Everybody knows that nobody listens to VOA in Eastern Europe. It's only the RFE that they listen to." I responded by noting that that was not quite true, that I had recently returned from a trip to the area and had the opportunity to speak to many people who told me how much they enjoyed, and how valuable they considered, VOA broadcasts. "I was in Hungary," I continued, "where I had extensive conversations with Hungarians, and they confirmed this view."

Hayes interrupted me and said that "like all Foreign Service officers," I was claiming to speak a language which I didn't. He would give me a test because he knew that "Hungarian was one of the hardest languages in the world."

There was a lot of scurrying around, and one of the hand- maidens dashed out. She returned with a nice-looking lady in a nurse's uniform who turned out to be a 1956 Hungarian refugee. She hardly had time to get to the desk where I was sitting when Wayne Hayes said: "I want you to test this fellow's Hungarian, because I bet that he doesn't speak a word of it." The lady sat down next to me, and I addressed her in Hungarian. We spoke for perhaps a minute. There was dead silence in the room, and Hayes, with a look of expectant triumph on his face, asked, "Well, does he?," and the lady said: "Mr. Chairman, he not only speaks Hungarian, he speaks it better than I do." [Laughter]

There was a roar in the room and lots of applause.

That's that story. I've heard so many versions told back to me that I thought I had better set the record straight.

Q: I'm glad to hear it, because I've heard so many versions of it, too, that I wasn't quite sure what the situation was.

An Aside: Discussion Of Charles Wick's Actions While Director Of USIA

Although this is a little bit out of the sequence and from the subject matter at the time we were discussing it, I have a question. I hadn't served under Wick because I had gone considerably before he came on duty, but looking at it from the outside, there were a number of incidents in which it seemed that the man was simply incredibly naive, if not incredibly stupid, in what he did.

One of the things that first raised quite a hassle among the alumni and the alumni association was his speech right after the Grenada invasion when he was up at the Edward R. Murrow Center for Study--

SHIRLEY: At Fletcher, yes.

Q: At Fletcher. And he gave a speech. I can't remember the precise occasion, but in it he said that it was perfectly all right for the press to be completely excluded from any coverage of the Grenada invasion because when the national security of the United States Government was at stake, it was perfectly all right for the government to keep the press entirely away from any area where they could report on combat operations. That seemed to me to be slightly out of style for a person who was director of the agency.

There is another case in which he was ridiculed, and I don't know whether the situation was as bad as it was reported in the press. He was about to make a journey to Japan. He apparently sent a message ahead which was let out by the embassy over there in which he asked for a motor escort from Narita Airport into Tokyo. He asked for an armored and bulletproof glass sedan, he asked for permission to carry his own pistol into Japan, and I've forgotten one other very odd request that was made. I think he wanted a personal bodyguard all the time he was there.

SHIRLEY: Wick was neither naive nor stupid. I'm sure he has a very high I.Q. But he knew little about the world beyond our own borders, or foreign policy, and not much about managing a large organization. As I said, he worked extremely hard and did some good things. But he had neither the temperament nor the training, nor the professional background for the job.

Q: You're on the verge now of going to Tanzania, but before we get there, is there, is there anything else you'd like to comment on, either with regard to your time as the ad interim deputy director, or going back even to your period as the diplomat in residence at Wesleyan?

SHIRLEY: Administration after administration sends political appointees to direct USIA, to deputy direct USIA, or to occupy important jobs in USIA. A high percentage have no back-ground to suggest that they will be able to do their jobs. I'm not objecting to political appointees. That's part of our system, and, in the main, it works. But it works only if presidents send to departments of government, and to agencies of government, people who have backgrounds which are a reasonable guarantee that they will be able to handle their responsibilities. And there shouldn't be too many of them.

USIA has a particular problem, because there's a view among all but a very few knowledgeable people that USIA is a kind of a glorified public relations agency for the government, which clearly we are not. USIA was not created to perpetrate acts of social science. USIA was created to perpetrate political acts. And half of the people who have been directors of the agency have not understood that simple fact. I expect that Charlie Wick, for instance, was sent to direct the Agency because it was President Reagan's view that Wick was going to run the government's public relations agency. USIA ought to be run by people profoundly experienced in foreign policy. They should be people who have held senior positions in the foreign policy establishment, people who understand what kind of work USIA actually does.

To criticize Wick for not being a foreign policy expert is unfair, unless one criticizes in the same breath all the people in Washington, including people on the Hill and in government, who think that USIA is a public relations agency. USIA will only rarely be well led because the majority of the people appointed to lead it don't know what they have got hold of, and don't understand what they have got hold of is supposed to do.

Shirley Speaks Of Experiences As Ambassador To Tanzania

Q: I think we've probably pretty well covered now your period of time in USIA, and I guess you'd like to go on now to your experience as an ambassador in Tanzania. When you discuss this, not only would I like you to discuss many of the situations that came up with which you dealt, but also to the extent in which you feel your prior USIA experience was a value to you as an ambassadorial appointee.

SHIRLEY: A lot of people who have been ambassadors will tell you that being one is not everything it is cracked up to be. I differ. I think being ambassador is great fun. I liked being in charge. I liked having all the elements of the embassy working for me, and I enjoyed the fact that I had to think about AID problems, and Peace Corps problems, and other sorts of problems that I had not been asked to confront in the past.

I enjoyed the fact that during my tenure in Dar es Salaam Julius Nyerere was still President of Tanzania. I found him an interesting and extremely intelligent man. And since South Africa was in turmoil at the time, and because Nyerere was, to say the least, not particularly sympathetic to the policy of constructive engagement, my meetings with him were frequent, animated, sometimes sharp, but never acrimonious. It was as intellectually stimulating to deal with him, as it was to deal with Prime Minister Salim Salim.

Did my experience as USIA officer help me be a better chief of mission? Insofar as I was a good chief of mission at all, yes. A USIA Foreign Service officer who has had senior assignments abroad in USIA, and senior assignments in the Agency, is as well prepared to be a chief of mission as a political cone ambassador. If he is an intelligent man, a thoughtful man, a well-read man, if he knows history, and if he is a political animal, the USIA officer is as prepared to be a good chief of mission as the fellow who has spent his entire life in the political cone. In some respects, he is better prepared because he will have managed large amounts of money and large numbers of people, whereas plenty of political cone officers become ambassadors with virtually no management experience at all.

Q: While you were dealing with Nyerere, what language were you dealing with? French?

SHIRLEY: No. Nyerere's English was every bit as good as mine. He had been educated at the University of Edinburgh.

Shirley Outlines Views On How USIA And State Should Be Restructured And Operate In Future

Q: When we started this interview, you indicated that you felt perhaps that USIA had reached a point in history where it ought to be broken up into its constituent parts and put under different jurisdictions. Would you mind giving a few moments on how you feel about this and why you feel that way?

SHIRLEY: I feel that way because I don't think the institution as it is now constituted performs its job as well as it would if it were organized in a different way.

I think the Voice of America ought to be given a status much closer to that of RFE/RL. USIA never has had much control over VOA except in extreme situations. VOA subordination to USIA is really a sham, and that sort of pretense isn't healthy. It would be better to stop pretending, and give VOA a Board and a dotted line to the Secretary of State.

The cultural affairs side of the house ought to stay in a successor agency to USIA. It could be called the U.S. Cultural Agency, or something like that. All of those functions which today are performed in the Educational and Exchanges Bureau, and many of the functions of the Bureau of Programs, should go to the successor agency. The press and information side of the house should in its entirety be moved into the Department.

For this to work efficiently, the Department would have to reorganize itself. It would be necessary to create a position which could be called Under Secretary for Public Affairs, and you would need also an Assistant Secretary for Press and Information Affairs. The Under Secretary for Public Affairs would have some responsibilities for the activities of the Cultural Agency, and it would be to him that the Director of the Cultural Agency reports, not to the Secretary of State.

I would eliminate the position of public affairs officer, and I would have instead press counselors, or press and information counselors, and cultural counselors, each reporting separately and as coequals to the DCM. And I envisage the press counselor's responsibilities very much as I described them earlier -- the PAO as a second political counselor. The cultural counselor's responsibilities would be no different from those of a cultural attaché's today.

Overseas it would be easy to do. Doing it in Washington would be harder, but I think that for the press and information side of the house to be effective, it is imperative that it be closer physically and intellectually to the place where foreign policy is articulated.

Q: Well, I don't want to take up time to argue some of these points on tape. I have some reservation about how the information side might act under the State Department, I suppose because I was in the predecessor agencies of USIA when they were under the

State Department. I think a lot of what we were able to do abroad only became possible when USIA got out from under the strictures of the Department.

Maybe it will be different today. We're 30 years past that time. But that's my own feeling. However, I wanted to get your opinion on tape, and I'll try to get a little (unclear).

SHIRLEY: I don't underestimate the difficulty of doing what I have suggested, and I do not think that it would work unless the Department reformed itself at the same time that USIA was taken apart. The likelihood of any of this happening is very small. Chances are that we're going to continue with the present structure for quite some time.

I do hope that even without institutional reform, the Agency will look at itself carefully. It needs to de-bureaucratize if it is going to be as vital as it once was. This is not a comment on our people, on their training, or on their dedication. But the Agency has tied itself into such knots that it no longer has the flexibility which at one time was its greatest strength. USIA begins to look like any other gray, tired, Washington bureaucracy, and that is saddening.

Q: Yes, I find it very sad. I think that the arrangement as it was under Ed Murrow, when I could call in and be in his office within minutes and discuss anything I wanted to with him is no more. Any officer has to act bureaucratically even to see the director in these days.

Well, thank you very much for the interview, Jock. As we said before, we kind of passed over some of your experiences as the director of the East European and ultimately the combined European program. I hope that when you get the transcript of this interview, you will be able to put back into it some of the things that we happened to pass over. If you think of additional factors that ought to be on there, you can add them when you get the transcript, assuming you have time with this aid to Poland responsibility to manage. Thank you again.

SHIRLEY: It was a pleasure, Lew. Thank you.

End of interview