

ITALY

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Denise Abbey	1944-1945	Information Officer, USIS, Naples
Alan Fisher	1944-1945	Information Officer, USIS
Harlan Cleveland	1944-1947	Deputy to Brigadier General William O'Dwyer, Rome
William L. Blue	1944-1948	Consular Officer, Naples
Joseph N. Greene, Jr.	1944-1945 1945-1946 1946-1949 1949-1952	Administrative Officer, Naples Political Advisor, Trieste Analyst, Office of Strategic Services, Rome Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Leonard Unger	1946-1947 1947-1950 1950-1952 1952-1953 1954	Boundary Commission, Paris, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European Affairs, Washington, DC Political Advisor, Trieste Political Advisor, Naples Trieste Peace Negotiations, Trieste
James McCargar	1947-1948	Consular Officer, Genoa

William E. Knight	1947-1950 1951-1955	Political Officer, Rome Italian Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Claiborne Pell	1948-1949	Consular Officer, Genoa
Charles F. Baldwin	1948-1950	Economic Officer, Trieste
Louise Schaffner Armstrong	1949-1950	Consular Officer, Palermo
Chester H. Opal	1949-1950 1950-1952	Information Officer, USIS, Rome, Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Naples
Mary Chiavarini	1949-1954	Secretary to Political/Military Advisor
Parke D. Massey	1950-1952 1952	Economic and Political Reporting Officer, Genoa Economic and Political Reporting Officer, Rome
Robert C. Tetro	1950-1953 1962-1969	Agricultural Attaché, Rome Agricultural Attaché, Rome
Paul D. McCusker	1950-1955	Legal Affairs Officer, Rome
Jean Mary Wilkowski	1950-1951 1963-1966 1969-1973	Commercial Officer, Milan Economic Officer, Rome Economic Minister, Rome
Peter J. Skoufis	1951-1952	Veteran Affairs/Administrative Officer, Rome
Robert J. Martens	1951-1953	Consular Officer, Naples
James B. Engle	1951-1953 1953-1955	Political Officer, Naples Political Officer, Rome
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Jack A. Sulser	1952-1953	Information Officer, Bologna

Henry L. Heymann	1953-1955	Consular Officer, Naples
Thomas Stern	1953-1955	Budget and Fiscal Officer, Rome
Clare Boothe Luce	1953-1956	Ambassador
Lewis D. Junior	1953-1956 1974-1977	Government Expert, Palermo Political Officer, Rome
Wells Stabler	1953-1957 1966-1969 1969-1973	Political Officer, Rome Country Director, Washington, DC Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome
Norman W. Getsinger	1954-1956	Assistant Personnel/ Economic Officer, Rome
Eileen R. Donovan	1954-1956 1954	Economic Officer, Milan Acting Consul General, Milan
William J. Crockett	1954-1958	Counselor for Administration, Rome
H. Freeman Mathews, Jr.	1954-1955	Vice Consul, Palermo
William C. Harrop	1954-1955 1955-1958	Consular Officer, Palermo Assistant Commercial Officer/Economic Officer, Rome
Robert L. Nichols	1954-1956	Information Officer, USIS, Milan
Paul K. Stahnke	1954 1954 1955-1956	Special Officer, Refugee Relief Program, Palermo Vice Consul, Italian Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs, Washington, DC Consular Officer, Venice
Betty Jane Jones	1954-1957 1962-1964	Vice Consul, Venice Consular Officer, Palermo
Samuel R. Gammon, III	1954-1958 1967-1970	Junior Officer, Rome Political Counselor, Rome
Samuel W. Lewis	1954-1955 1955-1959 1959-1963	Consular Officer, Naples Political Officer, Florence Italian Desk, Washington, DC

John P. Owens	1955-1956	Vice Consul, Naples
Samuel G. Wise, Jr.	1955-1956 1963-1966 1971-1974	Visa Officer, Palermo Deputy Principle Officer, Trieste Political Officer, Rome
William G. Bradford	1955-1958	Visa Officer, Naples
Nicholas A. Veliotos	1955-1957 1957-1960	Consular Officer, Naples Commercial Attaché, Rome
August Velletri	1955-1960	Political Officer, Rome
Theresa Healy	1956-195? 1950s-1960	Refugee Relief Officer/Visa Officer, Naples Consular Officer/Administrative Officer, Milan
Max W. Kraus	1956-1957 1957-1961	Program/Policy Officer, USIS, Rome Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Milan
Niles W. Bond	1956-1958	Political Counselor, Rome
Virginia Hamill Biddle	1956-1959	Visa Clerk, Palermo
Daniel A. O'Donohue	1957-1959	Consular Officer, Genoa
Roger Kirk	1957-1959	Political Officer, Rome
Gerald B. Helman	1958-1960	Consular Officer, Milan
Charles E. Rushing	1958-1960	Consular Officer, Naples
Horace G. Torbert	1958-1961	Political Counselor, Rome
Mary Chiavarini	1958-1963	Consular Officer, Palermo, Sicily
Robert C. Amerson	1959-1960 1960-1961 1961-1963 1973	Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Milan Bologna Press Attaché, USIS, Rome Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Rome
Sarah Horsey- Barr	1959-1963 1968-1969	Student; Daughter of U.S. Ambassador to Italy, Rome Student, Loyola University, Rome

George G.B. Griffin	1960-1962 1995-1998	Naples Milan
John A. Baker, Jr.	1960-1963 1977-1979	Political Officer, Rome U.S. Representative, World Food Program, Rome
Thomas W. Fina	1960-1961 1973-1979	European Integration Trainee, Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Consul General, Milan
Ernest V. Siracusa	1960-1962	Advisor on Mutual Defense Affairs (NATO), Rome
Robert W. Duemling	1960-1963	Political Officer, Rome
Philip W. Pillsbury, Jr.	1960-1962 1976-1980	Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, Florence Chief, USIS, Turin
William C. Sherman	1960-1965	Political Section, Rome
John W. Shirley	1960-1963 1963-1965 1976-1980	Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Trieste Press Attaché, USIS, Rome Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Rome
Roger A. Sorenson	1960-1962 1979-1983	Consular Officer, Genoa Permanent Representative to United Nations Agencies, Rome
Samuel E. Fry, Jr.	1961-1963	Consular/Administrative Officer, Trieste
John W. Holmes	1961-1964 1979-1982 1982-1985 1985-1990	Vice Consul, Naples Economic Minister, Rome Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome Rome
Carl A. Bastiani	1962-1964	Rotation Officer, Naples
Stephen J. Ledogar	1962-1964	Administrative Officer, Milan
Henry Precht	1962-1964	General Officer, Rome
Rozanne L. Ridgway	1962-1964	Vice Consul, Palermo

William B. Whitman	1962-1964 1975-1978 1982-1987	Consular Officer, Palermo Director, U.S. Trade Center, Milan Economic Minister, Rome
Irwin Pernick	1963-1965	Rotation Officer, Rome
Henry Allen Holmes	1963-1967 1977-1979	Staff Assistant/Political-Military Officer, Rome Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome
Alan Hardy	1964-1965	Consular/Commercial Officer, Milan
Alfred Joseph White	1964-1966 1984-1987	Deputy Principle Officer, Turin Economic Counselor, Rome
Douglas G. Hartley	1964-1967 1967-1968	Consular/Economic Officer, Milan Aide to Ambassador, Rome
Clarke N. Ellis	1964-1967 1994-1997	Consular Officer, Naples Consular General, Naples
Theodore E. Russell	1965-1967 1971-1973 1973-1976	Consular/Political Officer, Naples Principal Officer, Trieste Political Officer, Rome
Charles K. Johnson	1965-1968 1970s	Deputy Principle Officer, Milan Consul General, Milan
Mary A. Ryan	1966-1969	Consular Officer, Naples
William W. Lehfeldt	1966-1969	Deputy Principal Officer, Naples
Peter S. Bridges	1966-1971 1981-1984	Political Officer, Rome Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome
Howard Imbrey	1967-1968 1972-1976	Worldwide Information Services, Rome Worldwide Information Services, Rome
Manuel Abrams	1967-1969	Economic Minister, Rome
Peter K. Murphy	1967-1971 1981-1984	Consular Officer, Milan Consul General, Genoa
Robert E. Barbour	1967-1972	Rome

Alexander A.L. Klieforth	1967-1973	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Rome
Mary Chiavarini	1968-1973	Consul General, Palermo, Sicily
Isabel Cumming	1968-1973	Secretary, USIS, Rome
Raymond C. Ewing	1970-1973	Financial Economist, Rome
Harry Coburn	1970-1974 1974-1976 1992-1995	Political/Economic Officer, Rome Political/Economic Officer, Florence Political Counselor, Rome
Michael A. Boorstein	1971-1973	Administrative Officer, Palermo, Sicily
Carl A. Bastiani	1971-1974	Deputy Consul General, Genoa
Victor Skiles	1972	Representative to International Food and Agricultural Programs, Rome
Michael E.C. Ely	1972-1975	Economic Treasury Officer, Rome
Robert C.F. Gordon	1972-1978	Consul General, Florence
William Lenderking	1973-1974 1974-1976	Johns Hopkins, Bologna Press Attaché, Rome
Herman J. Rossi III	1973-1976	Commercial Officer, Rome
Robert M. Beaudry	1973-1977	Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome
Robert Rackmales	1973-1976 1980-1983	Principal Officer, Trieste Political Officer, Rome
Carl A. Bastiani	1974-1976	Political Officer, Rome
Robert Hopper	1974-1976	Political/Military Officer, Rome
George F. Ward, Jr.	1974-1976 1976-1979	Consular Officer, Genoa Political Officer, Rome
Michael G. Anderson	1974-1976 1986-1987 1987-1990	Consular Officer/Staff Assistant to Ambassador, Rome Political/Economic Officer, Genoa Political Officer, Rome
Walter J. Silva	1974-1978	Political-Military Affairs Officer, Rome

	1981-1985	Naples
Stanton H. Burnett	1974-1978 1980-1983	Counselor for Public Affairs, USIS, Rome Rome
Charles Higginson	1975-1978	Deputy US Representative, Food and Agricultural Organization, Rome
Jonathan D. Stoddart	1975-1979	Political Advisor, Naples
Lacy A. Wright, Jr.	1976-1978 1978-1980	Deputy Consul General, Milan Italy Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Joseph R. McGhee	1976-1978 1983-1987 1995-1997	Aide to Ambassador, Rome Political Officer, Rome Political-Military Counselor, Rome
R. Barry Fulton	1977-1982	Deputy Public Affairs Officer, USIA, Rome
Gilbert R. Callaway	1977-1978 1978-1982 1988-1992	SAIS, Bologna Press/Information Attaché, Rome Cultural Attaché, Rome
G. Clay Nettles	1978-1979	NATO Defense College, Rome
Charles Stuart Kennedy	1979-1981	Consul General, Naples
Anthony G. Freeman	1980-1983	Labor Counselor, Rome
J. Phillip McLean	1980-1983	Deputy Principle Officer, Milan
Dale M. Povenmire	1980-1983	Counselor for Labor Affairs, Rome
Frederick G. Mason	1981	Deputy Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS, Rome
Herman Rebhan	1981	General Secretary, International metalworkers Federation, Washington, DC
John Hurd Willett	1981-1984	Political Officer, Rome
Maxwell M. Rabb	1981-1989	Ambassador
William Jeffras Dieterich	1982-1983	Public Affairs Officer, Rome
Sue Patterson	1982-1986	Consul General, Milan

Carl Bastiani	1983-1987	Principal Officer, Torino
Donald A. Kruse	1984-1985	Political Advisor to Commander-in Chief, Allied Forces South, Naples
Michael A. Boorstein	1985	Temporary Duty, Rome
Robert K. Geis	1985-1987	USIS, Florence
Harold W. Geisel	1985-1986 1986-1987	NATO Defense College, Rome Counselor for Administration, Rome
Leslie M. Alexander	1986-1989	Economic Counselor, Rome
Thomas Macklin, Jr.	1986-1989	General Services Officer, Rome
Stephen Low	1987-1992	Director, SAIS, Bologna
Gerald J. Monroe	1989-1992	U.S. Representative to FAO, Rome
Peter F. Secchia	1989-1992	Ambassador
Thomas P. Melady	1989-1993	Ambassador, Holy See
William Harrison Marsh	1992-1994	Food and Agricultural Organization, Rome
Michael M. Mahoney	1993-1995	Consul General, Rome
Howard K. Walker	1994-1997	Deputy Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome
James W. Chamberlin	1995	Science Counselor, Rome
William P. Pope	1999-2000	Deputy Chief of Mission, Rome
Alphonse F. La Porta	2000-2003	Political Adviser to Commander of NATO, Naples

CONSTANCE RAY HARVEY
Consul General
Milan (1931-1938)

Constance Ray Harvey was born in Buffalo, New York in December 16, 1904. She

received a bachelor's degree from Smith College in 1927. Her career in the Foreign Service included positions in Italy, Switzerland, France, Greece, Germany, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Austria, and Washington, DC. Following World War II, Ms. Harvey received the Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian award. This interview was conducted by Dr. Milton Colvin, Washington and Lee University on July 11, 1988.

HARVEY: I went out to Milan in August of 1931. I was there seven years during practically most of fascism. But I had been in Italy before, in the fall of 1923, with my parents, when I saw Mussolini enter Florence for the first time. Of course, the march on Rome had occurred before that, but he had not gone officially to Florence. What I remembered was that the crowds in the street were cowed and silent as he stood up in his open car in the procession. They acted afraid of him, quite different from their subsequent admiration.

By 1931, there certainly was affection for Mussolini. He had become very popular. Things began to seem to get better, and the Italians seemed to like his taking a firm hand. The trains ran on time; that was the one thing that everybody said was good. Everyone admitted, even I and other Americans, that there were very good things about fascism, that the country needed to be better organized, and attempts were made to do so.

I think that like all Latins, the Italians believe that once a subject or a program has been outlined, it is almost the same as if it had been accomplished. Actually, it took me about two and a half years after I had been in Italy and had been studying the corporate state earnestly to discover that during all the existence of fascism, only one corporation actually started to function. I had been going to meetings of the Italian Chamber of Commerce, where I would see gentlemen with perspiring, fat necks sitting in front of me, trying to understand what the corporate state was really going to be and do. There was the corporation of the professors, there was the corporation of the manufacturers, of workers, and the industrialists. The corporation of the theater is the only thing that ever got off the ground and really operated.

In 1935, there was the Ethiopian crisis and the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy. That did not immediately change the ebullient mood of the Italians to a more somber mood. The war wasn't exactly popular, but it had its points, and people were rather proud that this was going to be a part of the new empire all around the whole of the Mediterranean, *Mare Nostrum* ("Our Sea", from Roman antiquity). A lot of people felt they would get jobs in Ethiopia, and a good many did. The Italians are very good colonizers, and they probably wouldn't have done badly in Ethiopia, despite the brutal way they overran the country in the beginning.

But what really developed -- and this I saw even then -- what really turned the tide in the awful sense, not necessarily against Mussolini, but to show how wrong he was, was his getting into the Spanish Civil War. Many people, when they were called up, thought they were going out to Ethiopia, and they found themselves on ships headed for Barcelona. That was quite a different story. I think it was the turning point of Italy's capitulation to Hitler. Everyone in Italy was afraid of Hitler. The Italians are not, in the ordinary sense, brave people; they are too intelligent to be so. They could see what was coming and they were really afraid.

The German influence, the Hitler influence, was really beginning to enter Italy. Jews, for instance, in Italy, were never particularly noticed as Jews. There were very important, wealthy Jews in Milan, who had done a great deal of marvelous work for the city and had founded wonderful organizations, and nobody ever particularly thought of them as Jews; they were just people like anybody else, living the life of the country, and were Italians.

I must comment on the delicious way the Italians often react: I will illustrate my point with a story. A Jewish gentleman from Germany had a lot of business connections with Italy, and one day he came down to Milan; I got to know him, and a few weeks later he said, "You know, I am pretty sure I am going to be arrested. I think I won't stay in Milan. I will go up to Lake Como, where I know a whole lot of people, and I think maybe if I am arrested, that would be a better place to be arrested." He did so. He was exactly right, because this was just before Hitler's first journey to Italy, when everybody who had any doubts about Italian-German relations, especially Jews, were going to be pushed out of the way and perhaps locked up.

This gentleman was told one day by the police in the little village on Lake Como, "We are very sorry. We have to come to arrest you and put you in prison for a few days." And he said, "Oh, yes, yes, I understand."

They said, "You know, the beds in our jail are very, very poor. We suggest perhaps with our help, we could move your bed from your hotel over for you. And the meals aren't good either. You had better perhaps have them send you some meals while you are there, and wine, too. Then that would be better."

He said, "Oh, yes, I will do that. I will arrange it. I am sure the hotel will arrange it for me." And that is what happened. He said, "My jailers came in and drank some of the wine every day, and we played trick-track and various things together, and had quite an amiable time." After Hitler went home, those arrested were released.

During the latter part of the 1930s, there had been this growing fear and admiration in Italy for the Germans. The Italians were very impressed by the Germans. They were the great master race for a large number of Italians, which meant both respect and fear. I remember that quite a few Italians spoke about them as supermen, and I said, "Well, that is one thing, but how would you like some super women?" No, no, they didn't want any superior women. That was out of the question!!!

For instance, when the Berlin Opera came to the La Scala and gave the whole of the Nibelnungen series, it was very, very popular. But the German audiences were exhausted because they had never sat through things like that. They were apt to consider their boxes in La Scala as a place to receive people and have a really good time, and it was rather different.

We began to realize that Americans were being watched. There were always a number of Italians who disapproved of Mussolini from the beginning and who were very anti-fascist, but they were scattered. Of course, the government always wanted to know who these people might be, and it believed that the Americans obviously would know. We did know somewhat.

After the beginning of the Ethiopian war, the government sent to various towns and cities, young Italian women who were, of course, devoted Italian fascists -- all for the new regime -- they became sort of informal spies at cocktail parties. We began to realize what was going on. Then it became rather apparent, because the government couldn't reimburse these young women, they couldn't pay them because they were all from noble families and it would have been insulting. They had to do something to show their appreciation, so each one was gradually issued by the government a lovely new leopard-skin coat which came from Ethiopia. In no time at all, we realized what our spotted friends were up to!

I am sure that the King just had to put up with fascism, so to speak. The social position in society of Italians affected their reaction. The nobility, of course, even the provincial nobility, almost certainly had reservations about Mussolini, but the people throughout the country felt that he had been doing great things for them. They didn't yet realize what was really beginning to occur. There was, of course, a great devotion to the House of Savoy, and they still had a lot of influence.

I should mention an interesting aside. My mother was desperately ill for many, many months before we were transferred, and I tried to find nurses in Italy for her around the clock after she came back from the hospital -- for months and months. It was very, very difficult to find nurses in Italy, unless one were lucky enough to have a nun. I had a little German nun as a night nurse for months, but for the daytime, I was fortunate in having someone who was half-English, half-Italian. I learned from her, because she had had her English training in London, but was an Italian citizen, that it was the tradition -- age old in Italy -- that no one except nuns would become nurses. It was just about the same thing as being a prostitute. But after the war actually broke, Princess Helena, who later was Queen, became a member of the Italian Red Cross and turned the tide, and a whole era of superstitious disdain about nurses just completely changed. It showed that nurses were people of moral influence in the country.

The Italians were very conscious, indeed, that Germany was a strong power in Europe; no doubt about that. That had been evident in many respects for quite a while. For instance, in all the years I lived in Italy, beginning in 1931, Toscanini had a house in Milan, and had been the conductor at the La Scala when he was not traveling, never conducted a single opera at La Scala in the seven years I lived in Italy. The reason was that he absolutely refused to begin any kind of musical evening by the playing of *Giovanezza*, the fascist anthem, which he said was not music, and he wouldn't play it. So he was prohibited from directing at La Scala.

My very last assignment in Italy, after my mother was already in Switzerland and I was to leave within a couple of hours by train with my two maids and my cat for my next post in Switzerland, came when my chief sent me a note and said, "Just take a taxi, Constance." (I always knew that this meant something awful was going to happen.) "And find out why Toscanini's passport has just been taken away from him."

Well, I wondered, how was I going to find that out. However, I did go to the area where he lived, and I talked with the concierge there. I talked with someone who lived in the area, whom I knew and knew about. I found out not why it had been taken away, but that it was going to be restored. That was the best that I could do.

Then I went to my new post at Basel, in Switzerland. Within a few weeks, I learned the reason why his passport had been taken away. The wife of one the Busch brothers of the Busch Quartet, who lived mostly in Basel, had telephoned across the border to a sister or a friend of hers living in nearby Germany, and had talked to her on the international telephone about what had happened to Toscanini and how he had made some remarks about the Fascist regime when he was in, I think, Vienna. In any case, this was obviously what had happened. His passport was immediately taken up, because the line had been tapped; the message had gone from Basel to Germany to Rome very rapidly. Toscanini had been saying unkind things about the regime!

Before we move away from Italy, I want to tell you that I knew from my own eyes how things were going badly with fascism. During the last year I was there, *pellagra* had begun to come back all over northern Italy. Of course, this had been an endemic situation there but had got much better during the first years of fascism, because people were perhaps reimbursed better for their crops and were able to get meat to eat. Usually in Lombardy, which is the wealthiest farming country in Italy, and one of the best in Europe, people mostly ate chickens and perhaps killed a pig for Christmas, and that was about all the real meat they ate. Then that improved very much for quite a while during the first years of fascism, and then it all began to go downhill. This was after Ethiopia and after they were getting mixed up in Spain, but it had begun. We knew that the disease of *pellagra* was rampant all across northern Italy. The whole thing was beginning to disintegrate before I left in 1938.

JOHN WESLEY JONES

Vice Consul

Rome (1935-1941)

Italian Desk

Washington, DC (1941-1945)

Political Officer

Rome (1945-1948)

Ambassador John Wesley Jones was born in Sioux City, Iowa in 1911. After graduating from George Washington University in 1930, he entered the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Mexico, India, Italy, and Washington, DC, and ambassadorships to Libya and Peru. Ambassador Jones was interviewed by Horace Torbert in 1988.

JONES: It was while I was in Sioux City that I learned that the Department needed a Vice Consul in Rome, Italy. And since I was still on my own, I had to pay my way to Washington to pick up my official orders. Only from Washington was my travel paid to New York to board an American Export Line ship to Naples.

I arrived in Rome 1935, June. And I remember taking a taxi from the railroad station up the Via

Veneto to the Consulate in the building next to the Palazzo Margherita, which at the time, was not yet the US Chancery. You couldn't believe the beauty of the city. After three years in Calcutta, to arrive in a place like Rome was like going from Hades to Paradise. In Rome the Principal Officer was Graham Kemper and his assistant was Gilson Blake. I was the Vice Consul in charge of immigration for Italians going to the United States, passports for Americans, and registration of the large American colony living in Rome.

The Consulate was where it is today. The large building back of it, which is the USIA building now on the other side of the garden was the chancery of the American Embassy. The Ambassador was William Phillips. Harold Tittmann was the Counselor of the Embassy and Sam Reber was one of the Second or Third Secretaries at the Embassy. I was a Vice Consul; I did Vice Consular work, registration of Americans living in Rome, etc. The Consular Service and the Diplomatic Service were united by law, but there was still somewhat of a separation in attitude between the people who did consular work and people who did, quote, pure diplomat work. Most of the people in the Consular Service, including my boss, had come up through the Consular cone. I fully expected that that would where I would continue in my career. But I became a very good friend of Sam Reber, who was in the Embassy across the garden.

There were some very attractive young women in the American colony in Rome, some of them half Italian, half American, so we had a very pleasant and agreeable social life. It was in Rome during this period that I met my wife, who was the daughter of the Assistant Naval Attaché at that time.

Trying to remember, now -- I was entitled to home leave during this period but I think while payment of home leave travel had gone into effect, those stationed in Europe were the last to benefit from this limited allotment so that those of us stationed in Europe still had to pay our own home leave back and forth. I went home in 1938 and there Kitty and I were married in Annapolis at St. Ann's. We came back to Rome in the summer of 1938 and continued living in my charming apartment on the Via Nomentana, corner of Via Massawa, across from the great house, the Villa Blanc where Alexander Kirk had lived as the Minister Counselor of our Embassy.

During this whole period, of course, Mussolini was the virtual dictator, Prime Minister, of Italy; King Victor Emmanuel II was the monarch. I was still in Rome in 1938, when Neville Chamberlain made his famous trip to Munich and came out with the famous statement, "Peace in our time." And I must confess that we were all relieved -- those of us stationed abroad. We had seen war pressing down, or the threats of war, with Hitler's continued move first into Austria and then in other parts of Europe. So we were all very reassured by this; that we would indeed have peace in our time.

A lot of Jewish Italians and refugees applied for visas at our Consulate. There was a great deal of work and a great deal of research that had to be done. I remember Enrico Fermi. He was one of the Italians of the Jewish faith who came and applied for a visa to go to the United States. I gave it to him and of course Enrico Fermi meant nothing to me in those days. It has only been since, as I saw what prominence he played as a scientist in this country and the important role he has played in the development of atomic energy, that I really realized that I did indeed perform a useful service in giving a visa to Enrico Fermi. And I am sure there were many others who came

to this country and who have made a great contribution.

We were in Rome in 1940 when Mussolini declared war on France. The gesture that Winston Churchill described as a “stab in the back” of their poor ally, France. In 1940 our first child was born in Rome. In 1941 I had been in Italy almost six years.

Sam Reber had left the Embassy and gone back to the State Department and had become the Italian Desk Officer. Because of the war and because of the refugees and because of Mussolini's increasing association with Hitler, the Vatican and Italian Desk needed an assistant. So with eternal thanks to Sam Reber, he asked for me to be transferred from Rome and from the Consular Service to the diplomatic service as his assistant on the Italian Desk. The British had blockaded the Mediterranean, so it was impossible for us to sail from an Italian port to Gibraltar to get a ship to the United States. So we took a train north through northern Italy and across southern France, which was then Vichy France.

Finally when we got into Spain, which was neutral, for the first time we had real bread and real coffee, after living on *ersatz* (very scarce and strange-looking bread) in Italy ever since 1940 when the war had started.

Then eventually we traveled by train across Spain and across Portugal where the bread and the coffee were even better. When we got to Lisbon we boarded an American ship on which we sailed to the United States. On this long train trip through Italy and across southern France and across Spain and across into Portugal, which I think took all together 10 days or two weeks, we had a child who was less than a year old. So my wife had very thoughtfully had a crib of straw made which we put in the train compartment on the seat on the other side of us and the baby lived and slept and ate for ten days. I can remember when we got to Portugal and some of our colleagues said, “Oh, that poor baby, how did he survive the trip?” I am afraid my reaction was not very paternal. I said, “Poor baby, hell, how did we survive?” Because we had to fix the baby food and heat the milk on little Sterno stoves and all kinds of things. The baby never had it so good.

Anyway, that was the end of my first Roman tour. During that period, of course, while I was in the Consulate and had nothing to do with the diplomatic side of our relations, William Phillips continued to be the Ambassador. But I did leave before Pearl Harbor so that I got out on my own free will and was not interned, as were William Phillips and the other members of the Embassy following December 7, 1941.

I think I was given a month's leave. So I took my wife and child out to Sioux City, Iowa to introduce them to my family and then came back and we found a house in the blueprint stage in Alexandria, Virginia -- a three-story row-house in Yates Gardens. I had no money and we were still living on a rather meager Vice Consul's salary -- or perhaps by this time I had been promoted to the rank of Consul, and I was no longer unclassified, I think I was FSO-8 -- but my wife had a dowry of \$1,000 from her grandmother in Puerto Rico, so I used that as a down-payment on the house. The cost of the house was \$7,500. Within a few months we moved into

this house and lived there. I commuted from Alexandria to the State Department for the next four years.

In the State Department I helped Sam on the Italian Desk and then we established a Vatican Desk, because Harold Tittmann was stationed there as the assistant to the first U.S. representative to the Vatican, Myron Taylor. Myron Taylor would go there occasionally as President Roosevelt's Representative, but the Resident Representative there was Harold Tittmann, a career Foreign Service Officer, who had formerly been in the American Embassy in Rome. We needed a Desk Officer for the Vatican so I assisted Sam as the Assistant Desk Officer for the Vatican and Italy. Then eventually Sam moved over to be Desk Officer for France and Belgium, etc. So I then became the Desk Officer for Italy and the Vatican, in which positions I served until the end of the war, 1945.

But during that period there was a reorganization in the Department and something called Southern European Affairs was established with a Director and it was separated from Western European Affairs. Cavendish Cannon was the Director of that new Division.. Because Italy was in South Europe, Italy came under the Office for Southern European Affairs which included the Balkans. So Cavendish Cannon was my boss up until my reassignment to Italy in 1945 -- after I had completed four years in the State Department.

We went over on a troop ship to Italy because there was no regular passenger ship service. There was great doubt whether or not my wife should accompany me since she was pregnant, but I finally persuaded the Department medical staff to let her. She did not want to stay in Alexandria (Virginia) with two children, awaiting a third without me; so we all sailed off together and arrived in Naples in early July 1945. Of course the war in the Far East was still going on and the war in Europe had been over a very short time -- only since May. We arrived back in Rome to find it really quite a shattered and unfamiliar city.

I was assigned to Rome as First Secretary of the Embassy in charge of the Political Section. By that time the Embassy was in the Palazzo Margherita. We moved in right after the war. When I went back, the Political Section was on the second floor of the Palazzo Margherita, facing the building off to the left, looking out over the old Consular building. The Ambassador was Alexander Kirk. David Key was the Chargé d'Affaires. And I was head of the Political Section as First Secretary.

The Italians had a plebiscite on the monarchy after I arrived back. We were very much in favor of having a plebiscite on the future form of government. When I first got there, there was an election for Prime Minister. King Umberto was still the King. Togliatti was head of the Italian Communist Party. There was great concern indeed that because of the strong influence of the Soviet Union in Europe in those days, the Communist Party might win. To the great joy and satisfaction of all of us, Alcide de Gasperi won the elections with the Christian Democrats and became the first Prime Minister under the King.

Then it was during that period of de Gasperi's premiership that a plebiscite was held on whether

or not the Italians wanted to have a republic or continue with the monarchy. There was a resounding vote in favor of a republic and against to the monarchy. So King Umberto and the Queen left with good grace and proceeded, I think, to Switzerland.

The first presidential elections were held and Luigi Einaudi was elected the first President of the new Republic of Italy and moved into the Palazzo Quirinale. By the way, as an aside. One of his sons is a professor. I have seen him at George Washington a couple of times and have told him about my experience in Italy during the time that his father was elected.

Well, those were obviously very exciting days. They are all well recorded in history so I don't know that there's anything that I can particularly add to that. Jimmy Dunn succeeded Alexander Kirk as Ambassador in Rome and was there during all of the rest of the period that I was stationed in the Embassy in Rome.

In 1948 after three years in Rome I was transferred to Nanking, China. This of course came as a great surprise to me and to most of the old China hands. But I learned when I got back to the Department that some of my old friends in EUR felt that Johnny Jones had been in Italy long enough, practically since 1935 - from 1935 to 1941 - then four years on the Italian Desk in the Department, and then back in Italy again for another three years, so all together it was about 13 years of unbroken Italian service. So they decided that I should have a change. Also, there was an effort in China to resist a Communist takeover with the increasing Communist influence there. It was felt that someone who had lived through the defeat of Togliatti in the elections in Italy in the 1940s might be a useful member of the staff to point out all the dangers and difficulties of permitting China to become another Communist power.

Later Clare Boothe Luce was named as Ambassador. I had grave doubts at the time about sending a woman to a country like Italy which was so male-dominated and oriented that I couldn't imagine them accepting a female Ambassador from a great power in good grace. But it turned out that she did do a good job and that she was accepted by the Italians and, eventually they not only accepted her but began to admire her. Of course there was the unfortunate episode of the ceiling paint and the possible poisoning and her illness. But she recovered from that.

It is true that some political appointees who are close to a President can play a much more effective role as an American Ambassador but I think it is true on the whole that many of the political Ambassadors are appointed because they have made substantial contributions to a Presidential campaign or because they are close friends of important Senators or people in the administration who the President thinks are important to him. So very often, many of these people go abroad and the President doesn't even know them. And I am not sure that they do indeed have the kind of access that is useful -- or anymore access than a career Ambassador would have. Lincoln MacVeagh was my Ambassador in Spain after Stanton Griffis. He was a political appointee but very close to the Democratic administration, having been appointed first by Franklin Roosevelt, I believe as Ambassador to Greece and later became Ambassador to Portugal. So he came with considerable background and in a sense, if I remember now, he had been an American Ambassador for 19 years when President Eisenhower was elected and ended a long, long period of Democratic administrations. As all Ambassadors had to do, Mr. MacVeagh submitted his resignation and to his great chagrin, and to my surprise, it was one of the very first

resignations that President Eisenhower accepted. I think the Ambassador was very upset and discouraged, because if he had stayed in another year he would have completed 20 years and that might have given him right to a government pension. I am not sure about that. But in any event, he was disappointed and left with some bitterness. But in a sense, it was a Godsend because then Jimmy Dunn was appointed Ambassador -- a career Ambassador -- to succeed him and he came at a very important time when we were just completing the negotiations for our bases in Spain.

So I must say that in most of my experience, the career Ambassadors have been the most effective.

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, II
Consular Officer
Naples (1937-1939)

Ambassador Douglas MacArthur, II entered the Foreign Service in 1935. His career included positions in Canada, Italy, and France, and ambassadorships to Japan, Belgium, and Austria. Ambassador MacArthur was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1986.

MACARTHUR: My next post was Naples Italy. I did not choose that assignment. Then, we went where we were told to go; there was always that tension on the eve before the posts were going to be dished out; nobody knew where they were going. The Department was not quite the sieve it is today. Nobody knew who was going where. Naples was, to me, a very interesting place to go to. It was in Europe, where things were happening. This was 1937. It was in Italy, a country that was under fascist rule.

I was assigned to the Consulate General in Naples, where the major work was citizenship, visas, and shipping. I replaced a man in charge of the citizenship section, and had a very interesting time, because at that time, there were passport fraud gangs in Naples. One gang was selling stolen American passports, and another was actually printing American passports. Now I had an extraordinarily able Neopolitan lady secretary, Miss Miliaccio, who could be charming on the one hand, but tough as nails when she dealt with people that she thought were shady in one way or another. Through Miss Miliaccio, I learned about a man named "Don Antonio". Don Antonio was an ex-member of the underworld, who had been betrayed and done five years in jail on the island. He was quite bitter about this. I hired him. There were no government funds. I paid him \$25 every time he came with a list of people who had left Italy on false passports if we picked them up. So Don Antonio would come late at night. We had a nice house on the Via Posilippo. He would slide into the garden, knock discreetly, and come in, and give me a list of the names that were on the passports and passport numbers. We would send out telegrams to all the major ports in Europe -- Marseille, Cherbourg, Le Havre, Southampton, where they could be picked up en route to the United States. We had almost 100% record in pick-ups.

But one facet of my work with Don Antonio was a failure -- an expensive failure. I could never get him to tell me where these things were produced or who the people were who were

producing. All he pretended to know was the names and the numbers of the passports. If he told me, I would be killing the goose that laid that golden egg. At the time, I was making \$2,750 less 5%, and \$25 was a hell of a lot of money in those days. There was never any offer, when we reported to the Department to reimburse or do anything about this business. It was up to me.

A. DAVID FRITZLAN
Consular Officer
Naples (1938-1939)

A. David Fritzlan was born in India in 1914 to American missionary parents. He received a bachelor's degree from Northwest Nazarene College in 1934 and a master's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1936. He joined the Foreign Service in 1938. Mr. Fritzlan's career included positions in Naples, Baghdad, Tehran, Basra, Tangier, Barcelona, Alexandria, Salonika, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 29, 1990.

FRITZLAN: At the beginning of 1938 I had passed my oral exam for the Foreign Service and was on the list of those eligible for appointment as a Foreign Service Officer. That appointment I received in July, and my first post was Naples where I spent a year. I came in with the class of 1938. We were a group all together of about 20 or 21. We didn't meet until we came back from our first probationary posts, and then we met in 1939 having been at a post abroad for a year. Then we attended the Foreign Service Officers training school for four or five months -- September 1939 to January 1940.

It happened that my appointment was not one of the very first. I was, for one thing, still at graduate school. And I am not sure that I was sufficiently high on the list because these appointments were made in order of merit. The first appointments I think were made in April and May, and there were limited funds available for travel, the fiscal year ending June 30; so they sent the first group to border posts nearby; e.g. Vancouver, Windsor, Mexico, and so on, mainly because they felt this would save money. By the time my appointment came in July it was a new fiscal year, so they could afford then to send people to posts that were farther afield. And that is how essentially I got to Naples, which was very lucky for me.

The atmosphere in Naples was very unfriendly toward Americans. This was the period when the Berlin-Rome Axis was being formed. I was there at the time of the Munich crisis, and we could see that war was definitely in the offing. As this became the case, our own attitude -- that is the American attitude towards this possibility -- began to emerge in such a way as to make plain to the world that, while we were not about to get into the war, we made no secret of our feelings in favor of Britain, France, etc. This put us at odds with the Axis and in Naples I found myself in an atmosphere that was hostile. We had Italian friends but, generally, they were afraid to be too friendly with us.

As far as my work was concerned, Naples was the office in Italy -- the only office -- that granted immigration visas. So we were very largely a visa mill. And, of course, this was a period when

many refugees were seeking asylum, a place to go -- lots of Jews forced to leave central Europe. In some ways it was an onerous kind of work, because it frequently involved one's emotions deeply. One saw these people coming who had really no place to go. They would hope for the United States with its record, its history of hospitality to refugees. We were very much circumscribed by the quota system, and in many cases simply couldn't issue visas to people who seemed to have all the qualifications and we felt would have made good citizens in this country. But they were born in the wrong place, for example, and place of birth determined the quota under which they registered. There were other visa cases, of course, which were quite different -- the Italians wanting to come to America seeking better economic opportunities and many of them poor, and some of them were barely literate. So I spent most of my time working on visa matters, immigration matters, and quite a bit of time on passport matters because we had a lot of Italians who had come to America to find work, to make money, leaving their families in Italy and in the process they had become naturalized American citizens. Under the laws prevailing at that time, if within five years of naturalization they could be shown to have abandoned their ties in America, and many of them did that, they were in danger of losing their U.S. citizenship. They had made enough money, they wanted to come back to Italy, bring their families and had no immediate plans to return. They had American passports. The question was, how long could they do this without raising the matter of their naturalization and whether, under the law, it was fraudulent or not. We did a lot of work in this field and, frankly, I found it went against the grain since, in many cases, the person concerned simply could not be expected to understand the intricacies of U.S. law. For example, they often signed documents waiving their right to U.S. citizenship, hardly if at all understanding what they were doing. I didn't like it a bit, and I frankly was very loath to use this procedure.

There was an emphasis from say the State Department to push these cases. There was considerable emphasis to push these matters to the extent the law permitted, and in such ways that I thought were unfair to a lot of these people. I won't say that I didn't participate in it; I had to. But I was never what you might call an eager beaver in this field. I was loath to do it because I thought in most cases it was unfair; they didn't understand what was happening. I am glad that not too many years after the war, this whole system of denationalizing people, taking away their citizenship, and so on, was declared unconstitutional by the courts. So that this is totally in the past. We don't do this sort of thing anymore.

I didn't have any feeling that there was any campaign to keep Jews out of the US, or that there was any active anti-Semitism in the Department. I know there were people who expressed ambivalent feelings towards certain classes of Jews. The Polish Jews came in for the most of what you might call opprobrium. But I never encountered a situation where Jews as such were discriminated against. The problem was the law; it was the quota system. The quota of nationalities depended entirely on place of birth, and the quota was so many for one year and it couldn't be exceeded. That was all. And it was small for certain countries. The quotas were arrived at based on the percentage of population from a certain country in the year 1890, or thereabout. The year was picked arbitrarily in order clearly to keep out certain people.

In other words the great wave of migration came at a certain point and we tried to make it as Anglo-Saxon as possible. But that was the law, and we had no control over it.

EDWARD R. PIERCE
Visa Clerk
Genoa (1940)

Edward R. Pierce was born in Lexington, Mississippi on September 25, 1911. He attended George Washington University. His career has included positions in countries including the USSR, Italy, and the Bahamas. Mr. Pierce was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 12, 1997.

Q: I want to return...you got out in May. You went through Italy. Italy was not yet in the war, it got in the war of June 1940.

PIERCE: Italy [declared] war while I was still there. I traveled with another fellow, Vice Consul Ed McKee, his picture is around here somewhere. We left Moscow, he was being transferred, too. McKee had been there about three years, he was a vice consul, non-career vice consul and he was more of a career man than just clerks. But even so, he was glad to get out. We got aboard the train, went down through Kiev, all the way, Bucharest, Budapest, across to Milan, then down to Genoa. When we got to Genoa we had our tickets in our hand that we'd purchased through Intourist in Moscow. We were going to get reimbursed, that's the way it was going then. I think it was the *Rex* or the *Count of Savoy*, one of the big Italian ships, was going to sail very shortly. We would have been back in the States, and I would have gone back to the Department and gotten assigned to something else, which I did, eventually.

However, here was all this tremendous hoard of American expatriates who had been living the easy life on the Riviera for years, some of them. They suddenly panicked, because the Maginot Line had been broken, and this, that and the other thing. They were converging on every consulate and on the embassy in Rome, Naples, up and down the line. The Department authorized the American consulate general in Genoa, I think it was Hugh Ramsey at that time, to grab any help he could get, State personnel transiting Genoa, and use them as long as they needed to cope with this tremendous crowd. That's what happened. McKee and I got grabbed and assigned to Genoa and we stayed there until July 1st, or so, 1940. Then we went down to Naples and got aboard the last Export Line ship that was sailing.

Q: American Export.

PIERCE: American Export, yes. *Mexicorda*, I think it was, and went home. I was in Genoa from about May 15 to say, July 1. Looking back, that's a period when Kent was arrested in London and disappeared for five years. When Antheil was killed in the Baltic, and covered up. I knew nothing of it, McKee, of course, knew nothing of it. Guess who showed up in Genoa? Ambassador Steinhardt. What he was doing...I don't know what other purpose he may have had. He had a daughter, she lives over in Chevy Chase today. Dulcie Steinhardt, she was about 14-15 years old. He brought her down from Moscow personally to put her aboard one of the ships for America. McKee and I...now he looked us up in the consulate, heard we were there. Steinhardt was a pretty decent guy. He invited us out to drinks with him.

I recall now that he mentioned Henry Antheil, but he mentioned him in this way. He said, "You guys hear about Henry Antheil?" Of course, we had been doing traveling and everything. He says, "You know, he got transferred to Helsinki." We knew that because he was going in September. He said, "Poor guy got killed in an air crash up in Estonia." So that was that. Do you know something? I think I'm right about this. I never thought of Henry Antheil, heard his name, for 50 years or more. Why should I? I had many things to do. Serving in the Army, getting married, having a big family and so on and so forth. That's why this Estonian thing really shocked me. It indicates that to this very day...and I've been in touch with the Baltic Desk at State and they don't know exactly what I'm after and what I know and I don't give a damn.

MERRITT N. COOTES

**Staff Assistant
Rome (1940-1942)**

**Public Affairs Officer
Trieste (1951-1953)**

**Consul General
Florence (1958-1966)**

**Flood Relief
Florence (1967)**

Merritt N. Cootes was born in Norfolk, Virginia in 1909. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and entered the Foreign Service in 1932. His career included positions in Port-au-Prince, Rome, Lisbon, Moscow, Lahore, Karachi, Lahore, Trieste, Algiers, Florence, and San Marino. Mr. Cootes was interviewed by Lillian Peters Mullin in September 1991.

COOTES: I was still in Port-au-Prince, Haiti; by that time, it was a free and independent country, with its own armed forces, under the leadership of a Colonel, because our instructors had insisted that they not go back to the old days, when the Haitian Army consisted of all generals and three privates. So I was there in 1939 when we learned that war had broken out in Europe. I was due for home leave, but my Minister, Freddy Mayer, told me to stay away from Personnel because he wanted me to come back to Haiti. But I ran into Sam Reber in the Department. Sam said: "I am glad to see you because I am assigning you to Rome."

This was the spring of 1940. So I got on an American ship bound for Naples, which sailed from New York on May 8, 1940. On the ship the Captain called three of us passengers who were in the Foreign Service and said: "Gentlemen, I have a radio in my cabin and have just learned that the Germans have invaded the Lowlands [Belgium and Holland]. I thought that you people ought to know." Well, one of the Foreign Service Officers had been assigned to Rotterdam; so he was naturally quite concerned. I landed in Naples on May 12, 1940, and proceeded to the Embassy in

Rome, where the junior man on the totem pole was Red Dowling. I displaced him as bottom man and took over his office, which was next door to the office of Ambassador William Phillips.

One of my first duties was to usher into the Ambassador's office the then French Ambassador, Francois Poncet, and later on the British Ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell. They had been asked by Ambassador Phillips to come in to be told that Count Ciano [Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs] had informed Ambassador Phillips on that same day that, despite the urgings of Sumner Welles [Under Secretary of State] that Italy stay out of the war, Mussolini had decided that he was going to throw in his lot with Hitler. On June 10 Italy declared war against Great Britain and France. One of my duties then was to see off my colleagues in the French and British Embassies at the railroad station, as they were supposed to be repatriated, as part of a diplomatic exchange.

Later on in 1941 the Italians decided to restrict our activities in Italy and closed all of our Consulates. Our people from the Consulates were assembled in Rome and then put on a train, taken to Lisbon, and sent on to the U.S. We in the Embassy remained in Rome. The Italians closed our posts in Milan, Naples, and the Consulates in Turin, Venice, Palermo, and Florence.

In Rome, on the Piazza Ungheria, we had an apartment which was known as the Casa Triple Sec, with three Third Secretaries: David Key, Elbridge Durbrow, and Merritt Cootes. After June, 1940, when the British were kicked out of Italy and contact with Malta was severed, there was very little whisky available in Rome. The Casa Triple Sec became very, very popular. We got to know a lot of young people in the theatrical world. Alida Valli, who was featured in "The Third Man" was one of our regular guests at the Casa Triple Sec. After a time David Key left, and Durbrow and I had this apartment together. Incidentally, later on, during the days of Senator Joseph McCarthy, I was interviewed by an FBI agent who asked me questions about the time I lived with Elbridge Durbrow in Naples and with Jack Poole when I was in Hong Kong. Imagine that. At that time also "Chip" [Charles E.] Bohlen was questioned by an FBI agent regarding what were called his "unclear" activities. If there ever was anybody that was "clear," it was Chip Bohlen, for goodness sake.

Anyhow, to return to Rome, Durbrow and I had gotten wind of the fact that the Germans were not happy with the way that the Italian Air Force was controlling the Mediterranean. They had decided that they were going to establish a headquarters of the Luftwaffe [German Air Force] in Rome. But Rome was too crowded, so they were going to be up in Frascati. Pretty good wine up there. We had heard or read about that, so Durby and I decided to take my little Ford roadster for a Sunday drive on December 7, 1941. For the sake of appearances we decided to invite two Embassy wives to accompany us, as neither Durby nor I was married. Their husbands were on duty on that Sunday. So we went up to Frascati to see what we could find out. We got our picnic baskets out and had ourselves a drink there. We observed German personnel doing things with telephone wires. At the end of the day we had traced where the wires went and where the military headquarters was going to be. Then we followed the telephone lines to outlying villas -- that was where the generals were going to live. So we thought, "Well, when we get back and write this thing up, the Military Attaché is going to give us the Croix de Guerre, or something." This would be wonderful, because we had located where the headquarters of the Luftwaffe was going to be. So, we got back home and gave the "girls" a drink. Durby said to me, "You take the girls home while I straighten things up here." When I returned after taking the girls home, Durby

said, "Don't sit down. We are going down to the Embassy." I said, "Why?" He said, "Wadsworth (the Chargé d'Affaires) has just telephoned me that Pearl Harbor has been bombed." We were to go down to the Embassy and start implementing "Plan A" [close down the Embassy].

So, we never got to write our despatch on the Luftwaffe headquarters because we couldn't have gotten it out by telegram, which had to go through the Italian Foreign Ministry or by pouch. We had a courier stuck at the Embassy in Rome, but the Italians wouldn't let him out. So we didn't get the Croix de Guerre after all.

For three days Durby and I spent our time down at the Foreign Ministry because we knew everybody there at the Cerimoniale, the section of the Italian Foreign Ministry which dealt with foreign embassies. We were trying to find out what was going to happen. It was nip and tuck for a while as to whether the Italians were really going to follow the Japanese and the Germans, but in the end Mussolini decided that he was going to stay with his Axis allies. On December 11, 1941, the United States declared war on Italy and the rest of the Axis, following their declaration of war against the United States. Chargé d'Affaires Wadsworth had made a very convenient arrangement with Cilesio, then the head of the Cerimoniale. Cilesio's American wife was killed when she was riding on a bicycle in Forte de Marme. He had a natural affinity for things American. He and Wadsworth worked out an arrangement that when war came, we were not going to be shoved off into an ice-cold hotel -- the way our Embassy people in Berlin were. We stayed where we were, on the Piazza Ungheria, in our flat. Finally, it was agreed that we would move to the Grand Hotel, where Wadsworth was living also.

Our landlord had said to us, "Hell, you and Durby are here, and I can't rent this place while you are here. When are you going to get out?" We asked if he had a tenant in mind. He said, "Yes, I have somebody who is very anxious to move in." I had an Italian guard with me. So I went back to the flat and learned that it was to be rented by the Duke of Spoleto's mistress. So I got some hot information there, too. But we couldn't send that out, either because it had been agreed that anything we had to communicate to the State Department we would give to the Cerimoniale. They would give it to the Swiss Embassy in Rome. From there it would be sent to the Swiss Embassy in Washington and turned over to the State Department. So we had an "in" which the British, the French, and other countries did not have in 1940. We were sort of the key in arranging the diplomatic exchange of our personnel and those of allied countries. No sooner would we get the exchange arranged than another Latin American country would decide to follow Under Secretary Welles' advice and declare war on the Axis. Then we would have to start all over again.

I got to Italy on May 12, 1940, and I left in the diplomatic exchange on May 12, 1942, five months after war was declared against us. The Latin Americans who were in Rome got out on the same diplomatic exchange. We were sent out to Lisbon on four different trains on four different nights. Naturally, we Americans left on the last train. The other countries wanted to be sure that their people got out. The Italians wanted to hold us as long as they could. I think that there probably were about 25 of us, plus a few wives who were still there. We had been paring down pretty much. We were pretty much down to skin and bones. We had been allowed to send certain people back home after the consuls were kicked out in June, 1941?

We had no trouble leaving. We had to leave through southern France, unoccupied France, because the Germans by that time had the northern part of France. We would go through the southern part of France, Spain, and Portugal and then take a ship home from there. By that time, of course, Pan American had its "clipper ships" [flying boats] landing in the Tagus River. They were Sikorsky flying boats -- seaplanes. W. Walton Butterworth [later Ambassador to Sweden] was on one of those -- the one that cracked up in the Tagus River in Lisbon.

When the Italians closed the Consulates in June, 1941, before the declaration of war, there was no trouble about getting them out. Once war was declared, we didn't get anybody out until the diplomatic exchange took place in May, 1942.

The Germans were all over the lot. They had not told the Italians, in so many words, "Look, you can't control the Mediterranean. We are going to establish our own units down there." But they set up their Air Force headquarters at Frascati, which amounted to the same thing. German planes were flying out of air bases down in southern Italy. German officers were all over Italy. And after war was declared in December, 1941, I couldn't move anywhere without having an Italian guard with me, one pace to the right and rear.

I remember one time when I was stopped by a well-dressed German officer. He was very obviously not Italian. He spoke to me in German. I pretended that I did not understand him. In halting Italian he asked me for directions to the Forum, which I gave him. Then he moved off. My Italian guard said to me, "But, sir, that is not the way to the Forum." I said, "I know."

It took that long to arrange the diplomatic exchange from Rome. By that time the Italians said that all of the Western Embassies that were opposed to the Axis would be exchanged for all of their personnel in Lisbon. All of those in Europe would be moved to Lisbon. Freddy Lyon was the intelligence officer on the DROTTNINGHOLM, the Swedish ship which took our people home. After war was declared, there was never any question of our moving separately. It had to be part of the diplomatic exchange. As I said, the British and French were out of town in 24-48 hours in 1940. But with us there were delays in completing the arrangements. Every time we would get it all arranged, there were further delays. We made the arrangements on behalf of several friendly countries, because we had this way of communicating with the State Department through the Swiss Embassy, thanks to Wadsworth and Cilesio, the head of the Cerimoniale. The formal means of communications would have to go through the Swiss. They were representing our diplomatic interests there. So we would send a signed despatch through the Swiss, who would send it to Switzerland, and it would be sent to their Embassy in Washington. Meantime, we had done it by telegram, through this connection which we had with the Italian Government and the Swiss Embassy in Rome. So that is why we were arranging things, because we could do it much better, for example, than the Peruvians or the Mexicans could.

This connection was established after Pearl Harbor -- after the declaration of war on December 11, 1941. We would send a telegram to the Swiss Embassy in Rome through the Cerimoniale. The Swiss Embassy would then send a telegram to the Swiss Embassy in Washington. Meanwhile, we would turn over a despatch containing a copy of what we had sent to the Swiss Embassy in Rome, which would transmit it to the Swiss Embassy in Washington, via the Swiss Government in Switzerland. But we had this expedited means of communication, which made it

possible to speed things up. Otherwise, it would have taken a year to get us out of there.

During the first part of the war, it was said that Churchill was asked what he thought about the idea of the Italians going over to the German side this time, whereas during much of World War I they had been on the Allied side. He said, "Oh, it is only fair. We had them last time." The journalists asked Churchill questions, although they said that this is a hypothetical question. They asked, "If you had to be one or the other, would you rather be Hitler or Mussolini?" Churchill thought that over for a few moments and remembered the fact that his daughter had married someone that he had absolutely no use for. Finally, he said, "Well, I think I would rather be Mussolini. At least he had guts enough to shoot his son-in-law [Galeazzo Ciano, former Italian Foreign Minister]."

I had a fascinating experience in Lisbon regarding Italy because, as I said, I had been in Rome for two years. I spoke Italian and knew many of the officials in the Italian Foreign Office, especially those concerned with political affairs.

In September, 1943, just after Mussolini had been kicked out of the Italian Government, he was living up in the hills of northern Italy. He had been assigned to house arrest at a mountain resort by the Allies but was rescued by the Germans and taken up to Salo, where he established the so-called "Salò Republic." Dino Grandi, a great Italian who had helped to overthrow Mussolini, was living more or less under cover in Rome, because the Germans were still in central and northern Italy, but Grandi had access to friends in the Italian Foreign Office. There was an Italian Embassy in Lisbon, but we couldn't speak to the officials in it, although some of them were old acquaintances from my time in Rome. When Dino Grandi was preparing to make a trip to Venezuela, he told some of his friends in the Italian Foreign Office, "Look, I would like to talk to the Americans in Lisbon and explain what happened, because it has not been well understood." They said, "Well, look, there is an American in the American Embassy in Lisbon who used to be in the American Embassy in Rome and who speaks Italian well." So when Dino Grandi arrived in Lisbon, he called me up, and said, "I was told by mutual friends to look you up. I don't need anything, I don't need any money, I don't need a visa. Everything is all set, but I just want to tell the story of Mussolini's overthrow, as I think your government ought to know about it."

I had a two-hour meeting with him. He explained all that had gone on. Recently, I tried to get my hands on the despatch which I wrote after the meeting with Dino Grandi, but it couldn't be found.

I remember that I was very much impressed with the caliber of this man, Dino Grandi. He had been under Mussolini and then had had sense enough to realize that they were fighting a losing battle on the side of the Germans and that they had better get rid of Mussolini, as they couldn't convert him.

COOTES: My assignment to Trieste -- to the Allied Military Government -- was interesting because there was a great demand for the development of the port in Trieste. I stayed in Trieste for two years and then I was transferred back to Washington.

Trieste and its neighbor, Fiume [now Rijeka], had been the outlet to the Mediterranean for the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Then, when the area surrounding these two ports was given to Italy, the Italians didn't need those ports, because they had Genoa, Venice, and other ports. So that Rijeka was no longer an opening onto the Mediterranean. However, Trieste remained important as an outlet to the Mediterranean as a Free Territory. The American and British Governments tried to develop it and make it self-sufficient, establishing industries and factories there. There was an American who established a shoe factory there. He could manufacture his shoes there and export them everywhere without identifying them as either Italian or Yugoslav products. Trieste was a free territory, and there was a lot of help available for it. Cottage industry was important up in the hills, where the people had nothing much to do. So the American and British Governments built up industry in Trieste to make it a viable, self-sufficient, and self-sustaining entity. That was President Truman's aim and that of the British in setting this thing up. Actually, Trieste prospered, and we helped a lot in developing these industries

We set a military government in Italy at the end of the war. Fiorello H. LaGuardia, the former mayor of New York, was one of the military occupation authorities in Italy. But that was very quickly liquidated, because we had already been allies of the Italians after they got rid of Mussolini. You see, Mussolini was kicked out of the government in September, 1943. The allied troops marched on and tried to push the Germans out of Italy. The Italian Government was then headed by Marshal Badoglio. King Victor Emmanuel had abdicated in favor of his son. However, the new Italian Government did not fully control the country. They couldn't throw the Germans out. It wasn't until the landings in Sicily, led by Generals Patton [U. S.] and Montgomery [British], that allied troops began to move up through Italy to Germany. So all of that was far from over.

Most of the military government in Italy had been liquidated by 1951. We had an Ambassador in Rome at that time. The civilian Italian Government had taken over control of the country, and we had diplomatic relations with them. But did we have this little special arrangement in Trieste because President Truman wanted to create the Free Territory of Trieste. It was a little like Danzig after World War I. So there we were. I was loaned by the State Department to the Allied Military Government in Trieste. There was a British general at the top and an American deputy. Down the line the Chief of Police was British, and he had an American deputy. It was agreed that we were better at public affairs than the British, so there was an American in charge of that, with a British deputy. So I was in charge of public affairs, and I had a British deputy. We still had American troops there -- the 88th Infantry Division was in Trieste, under the Allied Military Government which was administering this territory. The British general was the mayor, the prime minister, and the whole works. The rest of us were just part of his staff.

The people of Trieste were fine. They liked us. But toward the end of my time in Trieste, the people wanted to become part of Italy once again, when it became apparent that the Yugoslavs were not going to give up the territory they occupied, known as "Zone B," and allow the creation of the Free Territory of Trieste. We said, "Fine. The Yugoslavs won't play ball, so we will give our occupation zone back to the Italians." A declaration to this effect was made in 1948, and I believe that it was actually in 1952 that the British and the Americans turned "Zone A" -- our occupation zone -- back to the Italians. By that time I was already back in Washington. I wasn't there for the end of that.

We had two radio stations -- one broadcasting in Italian and one in Slovene. Radio trucks had been set up, and we put more equipment in them. The personnel of these two stations were worried about what was going to happen when the Italians took over. The Slovenes, working for the Slovene Radio, knew darned well that they weren't going to be kept on by the Italians. So I made a deal with RAI [Italian Radio Service]. I said, "Look, all of this equipment will be turned over to Italy on the day the Allied Military Government leaves Trieste. I will turn it over to you right now," and I signed all the documents involved. This involved the radio stations, the building, and all of the equipment. I said, "In return for this, you will take on both the Italian and the Slovene personnel. I will pay them until the day of the turnover, and then you pay them." Well, I have a parchment up there, signed by 50 of my employees, who wanted to express their gratitude to me for having ensured their future -- at least for a while. As a matter of fact, one of the people who signed it later came to Florence, where Gina and I were stationed, as superintendent of the musical theater. I had him up for dinner and showed him the parchment document. He said, "Good Lord, Mr. Cootes. I was 23 years old when I signed that."

I have kept up with a couple of the employees who did stay on. A lot of the Slovenes left Trieste, and one or two of them are now artists and musicians. They came over to the United States after they had worked with the Americans in the Allied Military Government. One or two of them have done very well. One of them, a Croatian Yugoslav, painted several, perfectly beautiful murals in Union Station in New York. They went into business of one kind or another. A lot of them are musicians. They loved music, and many of them are musicians in orchestras in this country.

The Yugoslavs had a Mission, not a Consulate, with us in "Zone A" in Trieste. We had a Mission over in "Zone B" -- something like a Consulate. We would see the Yugoslavs, but they represented another country. We were on the Italian side of the Allied Military Government. The Yugoslavs were administering "Zone B" under the Allied Military Government. We occupied "Zone A." The Soviets weren't down there. We didn't have anything to do with the Soviets in Trieste. At that time, in 1950, the Yugoslavs had long since occupied "Zone B."

The Yugoslav authorities in Trieste were very much under the Tito Government. The area in "Zone B" is very beautiful and includes the famous Postumia Caves of Croatia, near Rijeka, formerly known as Fiume. A lovely area and very prosperous. That is part of Croatia now. And this business of Serbian attacks on Dubrovnik is one of the most terrifying things. I forget who it was -- way back when -- who said, "There were Dubrovnik, Venice, and Florence as cultural centers." Dubrovnik is a beautiful place. It is a surprise to me that people in this day and age would shoot at a fortified town to destroy it, just because of differences of race or ethnic origins or the rest of it. Well, of course, we can go back to the religious wars in the old days.....But it is hard to believe that people today would shoot each other up for something silly like that. It is reminiscent of the American Civil War. What am I saying? I mean the War Between the States.

COOTES: Finally, I arrived in Florence on December 23, 1958. My wife said that this was not a good time to arrive there, as everybody had made plans for Christmas. I knew the number two

man in the Consulate, Sam Lewis, who later became our Ambassador to Israel. We had written to him and said that we didn't want to interfere in any way but asked him to book us a place outside of Florence, where we would stay until after New Year's, when we would come back to Florence and get started. So that is what we did. A reception was held so that we could meet the staff of the Consulate and USIS -- the U. S. Information Service. Then we left Florence and came back after New Year.

So there I was, assigned to Florence. Florence has the most wonderful location for the Consulate. It is on the Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci, an avenue along the Arno River. It was one of the last houses built by a man called Poggi, a famous Florentine architect of the late 19th century. It was sort of a "hotel de ville," to use the French word, which we later acquired and used for our Consulate General. It was an enormous building, by the way, with a big entrance and a courtyard, stables, and the rooms above it where the servants lived in the old days. We had three people living there, with offices for the U.S. Information Service on the ground floor. We had a three-car garage. The ground floor was used for offices. The "piano nobile," [second floor], as it was known, was where we lived. We had no children, and there was plenty of room for us up there. The third floor was where Ruth Wagner, in charge of consular affairs, lived. We had the stables on the other side, and there is where my deputy, Sam Lewis, lived. I also trained another Ambassador, David Newsom, who later became Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political.

We had four officers. There were myself, my deputy, the consular officer, and the head of the U. S. Information Service. So there were just four of us, and two American secretaries -- six Americans assigned. Now, there are three Americans assigned to the Consulate General in Florence. The Consul General and the number two are both women.

We were still using the old code systems for our communications. You used strips of paper and one thing or another, known as Brown Code. Of course, that has been replaced by the typewriter, or computer. You don't fuss around with codes any more. I remember one time -- in Haiti -- they called up the Consul General and said that a message, an incoming cable, had been received. He called me up and asked me to go down to the office and see what it was all about. I didn't know the code, and the message didn't seem to make any sense, so I didn't know what was going on there. Finally, it dawned on me, this was the time when Sumner Welles had been in South America, urging them to declare war on the Axis. I suddenly realized that the message wasn't in English. It was in Spanish! The State Department had sent this message all over the world so that the text would be the same in Spanish for all of the Latin American countries. Some dumbbell didn't realize that they didn't speak Spanish in Haiti. They speak French -- or Creole!

It was particularly interesting time to be in Florence because a cleavage was beginning to develop between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Up to that time, the two parties had worked closely together. That was the period called "the opening to the Left." The Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy in Rome was Outerbridge Horsey. He was very much interested in this development in Italian politics, which meant moving away from the coalition led by the Christian Democratic Party. There was a possibility of the Socialist Party splitting away from the Communist Party. It seemed possible to get them to work with the Christian Democrats, which, in fact, did take place. Our relations with Italy at that time were greatly improved. I remember that Horsey came up to Florence several times.

Florence was a very interesting place because Tuscany had always been pretty much independent. The Milanese, the people of Milan, couldn't stand the Tuscans, and vice versa. Then, off to the East, was the Emilia Romagna, which was strongly Communist in orientation. This area had been the Papal States, administered by the Vatican, prior to 1870. Opposition to the religious domination of the Vatican had built up. That is why this area supported the Communists.

The University of Bologna was politically very active. At that time, also, Johns Hopkins University had opened a branch in Bologna. I remember that one of my first jobs in Florence was to entertain a gentleman, a professor whose name escapes me for the moment. He said that he had just been authorized by Johns Hopkins University to set up a branch in Italy. He was interested in two areas: one in Trieste, because Docsa, which had started up the Gallup Poll in Italy, was from Trieste, and the other was Bologna, which, of course, was in my consular district. Having known Trieste fairly well, I said to this professor, "Forget Trieste and set yourself up in Bologna," which they did. Thank goodness they did, because they have a continuing influence there. The interesting thing about Tuscany at the time was that there were, I think, 33 different American institutions that had extension courses there, including Stanford, Mt. Holyoke, Harvard, and Yale. Princeton did not, but there were "tie-ins" there. One of the things that Sam Lewis had tried to do was to get them all together and plug American ideas and one thing or another, instead of trying to do it individually. That effort materialized into an organization which still continues on, based in the Stanford Library, which has a very nice building in Florence. But there always has been interest in Tuscany, apart from the Johns Hopkins effort up in Bologna. So higher education is very much a part of the scene in northern Italy -- much more so than in southern Italy. More so than in Milan which, after all, is the financial and economic center of Italy.

American academic institutions focused on Tuscany because it was a nice place to live, and the Tuscans are a delightful people. And, of course, the Renaissance began in Florence. That had a lot to do with the fact that these various institutions went there. The Renaissance had left its mark, and the Tuscans are much more amenable to education and thought than the Milanese. Now I am speaking as a good Tuscan.

We got along perfectly fine with the American academic institutions. The only trouble with all of these extension courses is that the students went to class Monday through Thursday, and then they would go off to visit Rome, Pisa, Lucca, or something or other. So the American Church in Florence didn't get as much patronage from the various American academic institutions as might have been anticipated. The students were always out of town on the weekends, so that, while we knew them, and we had closer relations with the faculty, the students were in class work from Monday through Thursday and then were out of town. Usually, they had at least one or two professors from the American institution there -- at least one, who sort of ran the program. They didn't to have permission for the Italian government. They didn't have to have work permits. The Italians opened things up. If you came in for six months, you didn't need a visa. Later on, the Italian authorities insisted that they have a work permit. That is why Emilio Pucci had lots of very stylish young ladies working there, because they didn't have work permits and were working, you know, "black market" style for him and for a lot of the other institutions in

Florence. Emilio Pucci died not long ago. In a well-known film of the Renaissance there is a picture of Emilio Pucci, riding his horse in front of a church, dressed in naval costume, over to the square in front of the City Hall on the Piazza della Signoria, where they still have football games -- Italian style -- with no holds barred. I think that there are something like 15 on a side and no holds barred. It really is something to see. They were playing football there when Charles of Spain, or, rather France, was around the walls of Florence. He wanted to take it over. The good Florentines thumbed their noses at him by having that football game right there.

As I said, the Communists were quite active, but there had been a rift. One group which had been connected with them branched off and became the Independent Socialist Party. At that time the Communists were developing the idea of "Eurocommunism," which did not go down too well with the French Communists, who always maintained that nothing counts unless it is French. So much so that when the United Nations wanted to create a University of Europe, then the question was where the university was going to be located. The consensus was Florence -- Tuscany -- which had been the center of the Renaissance. But, of course, that didn't go down well with the French because if you are going to have a University of Europe, in their view it had to be in France. Otherwise, it didn't count. So that to this day this institution is not the University of Europe. It is the Institution for the University of Europe, located in Florence. The French can go along with that, because it is not called "The University of Europe."

The idea of "Eurocommunism" didn't go very far. The Communists got a very high percentage of the vote -- next to the Christian Democrats. For a long, long time the Communist Party of Italy was the second largest in the country. Then the Socialists began to make inroads on the Communists. Craxi, the leader of the Socialist Party, attracted votes away from the Communists, so that they were never able to take over the nation or the government. But they did make inroads to the point where the Christian Democrats, in later years, had to have a coalition to form a government. At one point the little Republican Party -- with only six members in the Italian Parliament -- was a member of the coalition. One of the six members was Spadolini, who was a very potent influence, even though his party's numbers were small. He was Prime Minister of Italy for two terms of office. He is a bachelor. His brother lives in Florence. His mother lived there. He had a very extensive library. He was what was sometimes called, a "Mama's boy," that is, he was very close to his mother. He lived in her house, where the library was located, until she died. He has kept the house in Florence.

Spadolini is practically a Florentine, although at one point he was the editor of the Bologna paper, the "RESTA DEL CARLINO." That is a very interesting point. A "carlo" is a coin. You give this coin to a merchant in Bologna, and he immediately gives you your merchandise and a copy of the paper. The paper thus became known as the "left over," your change from what amounted to a quarter. They gave you a newspaper instead of change. So Spadolini was the editor of that paper for a while. And then later on he was the editor of the "CORRIERE DELLA SERA", the big Milan newspaper. That was before he got so mixed up in politics that he had to give up editing these newspapers. He was quite a man. We knew him quite well. One evening we invited him and an Italian who had gotten his degree from the University of Yale and who teaches at New York University now. Spadolini and this brilliant professor. We had two equally bright young women, and there were six of us. At the end of the evening I told my wife that I was mentally exhausted, trying to keep up with the conversation, which was going so fast. These

young women were just as bright as the men. They went into everything. But the professor and Spadolini -- one was a convinced Christian Democrat, and the other one was leaning toward the Republican Party. One of the two young women was the daughter of a naval officer. The mother of the other young woman was an American. Her mother had gone over to France with her husband. They liked it so much that they settled down there. They had three daughters -- all married very well. They founded the hospital which is still in Florence. It is known as the Hospital of the "Blue Sisters," because the nuns belong to a community of Irish nuns. Their veil is blue. So to all of the Florentines, those are the "Blue Sisters." Their convent is near the church of Santa Maria Novella.

I didn't go to the Embassy in Rome very often. We were quite independent up there in Tuscany, the center of the Renaissance and a law unto itself. I had Tuscany in my consular district, and I also had Emilia Romagna, the Bologna area. Of course, Bologna was anything but a center of Christian Democratic influence, because it had been the Papal States until 1870, and, as I suggested earlier, the proletariat, the workers, were against the Catholic Church. As a result of this reaction, they were strong Communists. So my consular district included Bologna, Florence, and San Marino.

When I would go down to Rome for meetings which we would have from time to time, I would walk into the Embassy, and people would say, "Oh, here comes the Red Consul."

Tuscany always had a life and system of thought of its own. That was one of the interesting things about being in Florence. The reporting from there did not cover all of Italy. It was Tuscany and its influence on the central government, which was rather extensive.

The mayor of Florence was a very fine figure, by the name of Bargelini. And I remember that when the flood occurred in Florence on November 4, 1966, I had completed about 34 years in the Foreign Service. I was getting close to retirement. While the Department was trying to get me to move out of Florence, the Ambassador in Rome was a great friend of mine, and every time the Department proposed moving Merritt Cootes out of Florence, the Ambassador would say, "Oh, no. That is the most comfortable guestroom I have in Italy. You leave him alone." So when I left there in 1966, I decided that rather than go to another post and incur all of the expense of settling down elsewhere, I would just retire early from Florence.

So that was decided. We booked our passage to go back to the United States. My wife found a ship that left from the Mediterranean, straight back to the United States, so there was room for my wife and me, my car, my dog, my cat, and 23 pieces of baggage. Fortunately, we found that the ship was leaving from Livorno, which is near where the Breda Works are located. The Breda Works had just completed three cars for the subway in Washington, D. C. So instead of the ship sailing from the Mediterranean to Gulfport, New Orleans, etc., it went to Baltimore. Since we were going to Princeton, that was much better for us. So we and the three cars for Washington got on the ship in Livorno and all got off in Baltimore.

During my tour, the Department was already beginning to pare down the staff. As a matter of fact, they wanted to close the Consulate in Turin, but Giovanni Agnelli [the director of FIAT] got hold of his friend, Mr. Kennedy, and said, "Look, you can't do that to me. That is my hometown.

You had better keep the Consulate open there." So that was decided. But the Department was cutting down consulate staffs. It actually closed the Consulate in Venice in 1953, which I thought was a terrible mistake. So many American tourists go through Venice in the course of the summertime, and they have to go either to the Consulates in Trieste or Milan for consular services. This was a very stupid idea.

They were cutting down. By the time I left Florence, instead of having nine Americans, as it was when I got there (six in the Consulate and three in the United States Information Service), there was one person in the Information Service. They had eliminated their American clerical help and replaced them with Italians, which was just as well. When you are involved in propaganda, you want to speak the language of the country. The Consulate was cut down from six, all told, to four: myself, my number two (the consular officer), an administrative officer, and one American clerk, who handled the codes, which were done by hand in those days before we had computers to do the work.

Toward the end, I was doing all of political and economic reporting. As I said, I had a deputy who filled in when I wasn't there, which was frequent. Having a deputy gave me a good excuse to get away. The political "opening to the Left" had developed, and by that time the head of the Communist Party of Italy was a man by the name of Berlinguer. He was from a titled family in Sardinia. It seems rather incongruous to have somebody who was known to his friends as "Il Marchese" [The Marquis] as the head of the Communist Party in the whole of Italy. He was a very intelligent man who was really behind this idea of "Eurocommunism." He wanted to have all of the communist parties, including the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, adopt a common stance on Marxism, socialism, and all the rest. His brother was not at all involved in the Communist Party. He was a friend of mine.

Since this was happening, it made it a lot easier for us to follow developments on the Italian political scene, as observed from the Tuscan viewpoint. It didn't vary the monotony of the situation in Emilia Romagna around Bologna. They were anti-Catholic Church to begin with because the Church had ruled the area, so there was no change. They were against anybody who was in power, although there were some very capable people in Bologna in the Communist Party, right next door to the Johns Hopkins extension program. During my time this program was flourishing. There were about 50 American students there, I think, plus two or three professors from Johns Hopkins. It is a going concern and has a very definite role to play in relations between the United States and Italy. It had greatly improved since the days when I first got there -- not that I had much to do with the improvement. It was certainly my observation that that was the way things were going.

I was very happy to turn over the Consulate to [William J.] Barnsdale, who had been sent up from Rome to replace me. He had previously served in the Consulate in Florence and knew something about it. So things were in very good hands during his tenure.

The Consulate was very centrally located, about two blocks away from two of the largest hotels. We had a lot of visitors who would stop by -- not so many CODELs. They tended to go to Venice or Rome. Not many of our Congressional visitors were fundamentally interested in the Renaissance, which, of course, was the big item in Florence. We didn't have too many

Congressional delegations. We did have lots of American tourists. I was always very grateful to President Kennedy because, in the old days, an American Consulate always had a party on July 4. In the old, old days, any Americans in the neighborhood would want to go to "their" Consulate for the reception on July 4. Of course, things had gotten a bit out of hand in that regard. I remember one time in Florence -- just as our reception was about to break up -- a bus drove up, and I heard a man announce, "Now, everybody is going to the American Consulate. They are having a reception on July 4." And out they all came from the bus and ate us out of house and home.

The next year we did not have a July 4 reception because President Kennedy had decided that the reason for expecting the American representative in a given area to have a sort of "at home" reception for Americans who happened to be around there was not really a very good way to spend official funds. American visitors couldn't expect me to do it, because I did not have a large enough entertainment allowance to handle it. So the July 4 reception was eliminated. What I did was to have a reception on Washington's Birthday. This was much better because the people in the Italian Government in whom I was interested in doing something for were all in town, whereas on July 4 most of them were on vacation, down at the beach. It made no sense. I had no officials attend the reception on July 4 but had all of those American tourists. Kennedy eliminated that. I held an official party for the authorities in the town and the leaders in the academic world on Washington's Birthday. Now they've changed the date of Washington's birthday. In the old days it was February 22.

I was in Florence at the time of the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. On that day the Public Affairs Officer, a very nice lady named Coughlin, was giving a reception for the people with whom she had been in contact. Of course, she invited me as Consul General. She took me aside and said that her mother had been listening to the radio and had heard that President Kennedy had been shot. I said, "Don't say anything about it now. We don't want to disturb your party. We will see what happens." About five minutes later she came back in and told me that her mother had just heard that the President had died. I said that I had better get back to the Consulate.

When I got to the Consulate, Mr. La Pira, who had been Mayor of Florence for many years, an outstanding and well motivated gentleman who did not always follow the party line of the Christian Democrats, was at the door, saying that he had come over to sign the book. He had already heard about the President's assassination. The first thing he did was to think, "Well, I must go to the Consulate to sign the condolences book," because that is what is done in Italy. You go and register your condolences by signing the book. But I didn't have a book. I had to go upstairs and get a leather bound book. And the first name signed in it was that of the former Mayor, La Pira. Then, shortly thereafter, the then Mayor of Florence, Bargellini, came over. So the assassination of our President in the United States did have an impact on Florence. We had manifestations of good will outside of the Consulate for the next couple of days, because President Kennedy evidently had captured the imagination of the Florentines. They are very volatile people. They express what they feel.

Our Ambassador in Rome was Freddy Reinhardt. He was Ambassador in Rome for something like six years. He was a great friend of mine. I had known him since long before he entered the

Foreign Service. As a matter of fact, he used to court my sister. So we were very close friends. That is why I stayed in Florence for almost eight years, which is very unusual.

In Princeton I stayed at the house where we now live, because Mrs. Lowrey was an old friend of ours. Her husband had been the Director of the American Episcopal Church in Rome for 20 years, including the time when my wife and I were in Florence. We came to know the Lowrey's quite well. Therefore, when we left Florence after the flood, Mrs. Lowrey asked us to spend some time with her, which we did. I was listening to the radio, the BBC in the morning, and heard that Florence was cut off. So I asked Mrs. Lowrey if I could have a copy of the Sunday issue of the "NEW YORK TIMES." She said that she didn't take the "NEW YORK TIMES" on Sunday -- it was too heavy. So I went downtown in Princeton and got the copy of the "NEW YORK TIMES" and found out about the flood in Florence.

Then I went down to Washington the next day. We still had some wags in the State Department. One of them saw me coming and said, "Ah ha! Merritt le Quinze" [Merritt XV], recalling the fact that Louis XV had said, "Après moi, le deluge" [After me, the flood.] So that was kind of fun there. Well, I jumped over my last time there, because then I retired from the Foreign Service.

I was asked by Senator Pell to go to Florence . He said that I would have a certain amount of money for administrative expenses. But since I had lived in Florence all of this time, I knew all of the people on the committees that had been organized to help in one way or another on relief for the Florentines. Iris Origo was an American lady from Boston who organized a group to buy sewing machines and typewriters for people who needed them. She had her group of committees. I just took them over because I had the money and she didn't. I never will forget that when I arrived in Florence in January, 1967 -- the flood had taken place at the beginning of November, 1966. They had just reestablished, the night before, electricity in certain parts of the city. I arrived in Florence after dark, having flown over from the U. S. It was really horrendous and to see this town that I knew so well, with not a light on in it.

Anyhow, I worked with these volunteer committees, and when I made my final report on FLORECO [The Florence Committee], as Senator Pell had named it, I think that we had given away something like \$750,000. I had not had to draw on my administrative expenses. As a matter of fact, my administrative expenses were less than half of one percent! When I told my Italian friends that, they said, "Oh, Merritt, that is remarkable. But usually it is the other way around. The recipients get less than one half of one percent. The rest goes for administration."

So that was my post-retirement association with Florence, thanks to Senator Pell.

While we were still in Florence on regular assignment, before the flood of 1966, we had bought an old farmhouse there. After living in Florence for eight years and as we had no children whose education had to be seen to, we had decided that, when we retired, we would fix up this farmhouse. In fact, that is what we did. We got so used to Florence after eight years at the Consulate that we stayed on for the next 20 years after that.

DENISE ABBEY
Information Officer, USIS
Naples (1944-1945)

Denise Abbey was hired in 1944 by the Office of War Information to work as an Executive Secretary for the War Information Program (WIP). Her career included positions in Italy, Austria, Germany, and France. Ms. Abbey assisted with radio broadcasts and cultural programs for the successor to the WIP, the USIS. She was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1988.

ABBEY: We arrived in Naples for one of the most extraordinary events I have ever experienced. The Harbor of Naples had been rendered almost impassible by German bombing and was absolutely a nest of nothing but wrecks. It took us five hours from the entrance of the harbor to wind our way through the wrecks and come to the "docking area." I phrase it that way because the Maritima at that time was a wreck. And beside it there was an overturned Italian cruiser. The Americans had built a catwalk on her and we landed and came ashore on the catwalk on the overturned Italian cruiser! And I set foot in Europe below the castle.

We were taken up to the headquarters which was in the Singer Building. There is something attractive about the Singer Building because again and again that was our headquarters in different cities of Europe. At the Singer Building I was taken to the office of George Edmund with two other women. He said: "I have three jobs. One calls for a knowledge of Italian". One of the girls, Mary Burke, said, "I have had a year of Italian". He said, "Good. You go work for Albert Spaulding in "Italia Combata." Spaulding, of course, was the famous violinist, who had been with Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. They both had been in Italy in the first World War. And he was in charge of "Italia Combata" which was the recipient of information from people behind the line -- the partisans and others.

Mr. Edmund then said, "I have a job that calls for somebody who, if you can't speak Italian, should know French". I said, "Well, I have French." He said, "All right. You are assigned to the "D" Section. You will go across the street and report to Captain Manley." Did you ever try to cross the main street in Naples without traffic lights and with war traffic? I made it feeling simply harried.

I went into a tall apartment house building and was looking for a staircase, since obviously there was no elevator, when a man came up behind me. He said, "Is this Miss. Abbey?" And I said, "Yes". He said, "Well, I am Captain Greenlees, Ian Greenlees. Captain Manley has gone up to Rome but he asked me to take care of you."

So I was taken up to the top floor which was held by "D"Section. The "D," I thought at first, meant Diplomatic. It turned out it was simply A, B, C, D and meant general intelligence. That particular section had two assignments. One, it handled information that came in from behind the lines and prepared a secret report of over 300 copies which was distributed all over the world to different military and diplomatic sources.

The second section of which I became a member recorded the reactions of the Italian people to the armies of occupation. We also prepared a 300 copy secret report which went out to the same divisions all over the world.

I was in Naples only a couple of weeks when Rome fell. I had a rather strange experience then. Two men and I were waiting for transport to get to the Circolo Vesuviana Railroad to go out to Pompeii on a Sunday morning when a helmeted and leather clad messenger dropped his motorcycle and rushed through the entrance. As he went through, he threw over his shoulder, "Rome fell," and went upstairs. We found out later in the day that it was true -- that Rome was now liberated. And I was immediately assigned forward though not given any departure date.

I came to the office one morning at eleven o'clock after some outside duties. The phone rang, I lifted it and they said your office is moving at one o'clock. So I hollered until one of the officers came -- Captain John Vernon, a British officer. It was a mixed English and American unit. It was called then PWB -- Psychological Warfare Branch. It was, of course, OWI on the American side. The British side contributed information people from their side.

The Captain took the message. He said we have two hours to get the office packed and ourselves packed from our billet and we were going up to Rome today. We shoved together everything that we could find to put the truck that would enable us, once in Rome, to put out the report. One other woman, a British girl, Rowena Vining, who was the one who usually edited the report and I then were raced back to our billet to collect our belongings. By 1:30 we were in an open truck on our way to Rome.

It was the 14th of June. It was one of the more extraordinary adventures I think I ever had. Because we followed the armies and we went through the armies -- armies of every country on earth. The roads were marked "do not go more than three feet beyond the borders" -- bombs. It said, "shoulders cleared only three feet." We should have taken the hill road and we didn't. We took the coast road which the Nazis and the Fascisti had flooded by turning out the Pontine Marshes's ditches. So sometimes we were hubcap deep in water, sometimes we were on the road. We went up along under the over hanging bluffs, and above I saw the cities of Norma and others. Those actually were Etruscan cities and some of the oldest cities in Italy.

Then finally our driver turned up the mountain; we went up. We had one glimpse down on Lake Nemi which is called Diana's Mirror -- just a flashing glance. Then we went by Lago Albano and we saw the papal summer villa, the papal palace of Albano. Then we came out on the ridge, and down before us lay the Appian Way. You could see it clearly going right straight across the plain. And on the horizon was Rome! It was one of the most extraordinary sights I ever saw.

But to me the tremendous thing was that we, and all those armies, were rolling up to the gates of Rome and they would open for us. The gates of Rome had always held against the enemy. We weren't the enemy, but still we were armies. We came down the mountain and sped along the Appian way and went through the gates by St. John in Jerusalem and across town to our billet.

The billet was an ex-hotel. The accent is on the ex. I do not know exactly why but the Office of War Information always seemed to get the most lousy hotels. We were very far down the line

evidently. But it was located at the top of the stairs that went down to the annex of the Ambassador Hotel. My chief captain who had just become Major Manley had taken that building to be our headquarters and had gone through and selected the top, the eighth floor, to be ours, because we were classified and nothing could get at us there if he guarded the staircases.

I met him the next morning and he handed me a key. He said, "I grabbed every typewriter in the place. (Because it had been the Ministry of Information for Italy.) And I put them all in that room. Go and take the typewriter you want". So I went over, located our place on the eighth floor which you walk up to of course, and then went in the room in the main floor. There were perhaps 100 typewriters there. Of course, they all had Italian keyboards; well, European keyboards. One was Russian which did me no good.

I looked at them all. And I said, "Well, it is war and I can't argue. Let us find the one with the best action." So I tried all the typewriters and I picked an Olivetti. Then I found some soldier to get it up to the top floor and went to work.

Major Ivor Manley came in. He was a tall man; had been a Welsh Guard. He had been raised in Wales, of course. But his family had been closely associated with Italy for over a century. So he spoke perfect Italian, which led to a very entertaining situation. He was in uniform. The Italian cleaning woman said, "People in uniform do not understand Italian." So whatever Major Manley said to her she didn't understand because he was in uniform. But if he took his uniform off they had wonderful conversations because some civilians could speak Italian.

I knew no Italian at that time but I did learn some. The office was immediately engaged in putting out the reports on the reactions of the Italian to the allied occupation. Neither report went to the Italian people. As I said, one was on "Italia Combata." That was material gathered from behind the lines which was highly classified because it would have been very dangerous if the names of the partisans were given, if it had been known. The second was the analysis of the reaction of the Italian people, and they might not like our reaction to that. So it was entirely for classified use which of course prevented it going in Italian. It went all over the world to diplomatic and military and naval or air force people.

I stayed in Rome for that year and we put out the report all the time. When I came in I was the only American woman there. Shortly after that others came. And we had a very complete staff of American and British. In Naples I had known only one American in our division. And that was Lieutenant Domingos. He had charge of something that had to do with the radio but I wasn't certain. But I do know that he had a very complete file of all of the people. He kept a very meticulous file.

Major Manley's personal interest was in political parties. Since Italy had not had any political parties in 20 years, they went simply wild. If an Italian wanted to put forth an idea he didn't look for somebody else who had the same idea; he just started a new political party. Within the year that I served there Major Manley had a record of over 6,000 different political parties of which am sure 5,999 duplicated. However, they all had individual names.

At the end of March of 1945 I was approached by the secretary to the commanding general who

was General MacCrystal. He had been a PR man in America and had gotten his military title from that work. He was primarily a PR man. His secretary was a close personal friend of mine, Violet Dupont. She asked me was I interested in going home when the war was over and my eyes kind of popped. I hadn't even thought of the war ending. Or did I wish to stay on and serve? I said I had joined for the duration or two years. And it had been only one year. So,"Yes, I was interested in staying on."

So she told me that I could be on either the German or the Austrian team. My mother was French. I grew up believing "Sal Boche" (Dirty German) was one word, like Southern "Damnyankee." I thought I could not do a peace time job very effectively in that frame of mind. I had better choose Austria which at that time I could not have told you where it was. So I was put on the Austrian team.

In April I had a week's leave down in Capri with Miss. Dupont. She had been ill. We were there on the island absolutely cut off -- no communication of course. We were sitting on the hill side above the marina when we heard this most extraordinary sound. Somebody was yelling, screaming, yelling, screaming. And it was coming nearer and nearer and we watched. And this little man came leaping, jumping, running down the hill. He would fall. He would turn a somersault. He would get up and he would scream in joy and laugh again. And we watched him. And as he came by he said, "Mussolini e muerto" (Mussolini is dead). And we looked at each other. "Do you suppose it was true?" Well, it was though we don't know how he got the word. And we didn't find out officially until we got back to the mainland. But somehow he had heard that Mussolini was dead.

When we got back to the mainland -- there was only one boat a day that went from Capri over to Sorrento--we spent the night in the Victoria Hotel and there was a message waiting for Vi Dupont. She called her headquarters. It was at Caserta, GHQ. Colonel Robert Shin who was assistant aide to General MacCrystal said, "Vi, come home." She said, "Well, I will have to find a way." He repeated, "Come home." So she got up early and got the bread truck and went to Caserta. I had to spend the day until I got transport.

The next morning I did get transport into Naples where I had to spend a day or so until I could get transport to Rome. I went to the OWI headquarters there, the PWB as we called it, and waited. I went out to look at Naples and came back about six o'clock. And they said," Miss. Dupont has been trying to reach you every hour. She said it is most important." Well, I couldn't reach her so I waited. We were just sitting down to dinner when the phone rang. It was Vi. She said, "Denise, I want you to be the first to know the Germans have surrendered." That was why she had been called back. The Germans were coming in and they had signed the surrender at Caserta that day. She had been present of course.

Well, within five minutes of her talking with me on the phone, they began to ring the bells of Naples. The bells hadn't rung since the war began. It was a mad house. The bells everywhere cracked, banged, anything else. They rang and they rang for hours.

The next day I did get transport and I went up to Rome, signed in and was told I was to go on up to Florence as soon as transport could be found. I worked in the office, got myself ready, and

finally I was put in -- well, it was a station wagon. That is it was actually a truck chassis with a station wagon top. And we drove up to Florence. When we came into Florence it was in the early afternoon. It was siesta time. It was dead silence. Now, although the Germans had surrendered there had been no public announcement of it. We came through the streets, absolutely silent streets.

We came to the headquarters which was in a newspaper building because they always took over a newspaper building. As we drove up and parked, suddenly the whole city erupted. It began with every window in the neighborhood, everybody leaning out, screaming, yelling, shrieking, everything else. We sat and we looked and we wondered what in heavens name happened. Well, word was out. The Germans had surrendered.

At that moment three people came out of the office building. One was George Edwards who had signed me the first time. One was his secretary, Nina Cook, who had been the third of our three women and had not known either language, so she had been employed there. And the third was Don Minifie.

Don Minifie (James MacDonald Minifie) was actually a Canadian. But he had been assigned with the British and then with us. He had been a very famous reporter, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and had been a reporter from England at the time of the Blitz -- lost an eye in the Blitz as a matter of fact. He had come down with an assignment in Africa and now in Italy and was seconded as a civilian to MacCrystal. He had been assigned to be in charge of the group going up to Austria. That I did not know at the time. But that places him.

These three people came out of the building. They stopped and they pointed their fingers at me. They said, "You." "Me?" "Yes. You will have to prepare the victory party." I knew why. I am allergic to alcohol. I would be the only sober person in Italy. They said, "You have carte blanche. But get the party ready." Well, I said "When and where?" They said, "Well, this is our party and our headquarters for tomorrow night"

They said, "There is just one catch. The word is not out officially to the world. It won't know until the British Broadcasting, until BBC broadcasts tomorrow night. But you have got to have everything ready. If a voice comes on and says, "My lords, ladies and gentlemen, his Majesty the King: the war is over. We have the party. If it is just BBC calling we don't until they bring it up the next night."

So I had the job of preparing the party that would or wouldn't take place. I went with a couple of sergeants the next day and I got an 8th Army British captain with a wonderful handlebar mustache to give me a punch recipe from the Eighth Army. Because I figured that there wouldn't be enough bottles, but wash-tubs full of punch might go. So we were all ready. We were in the hotel Stella d'Italia lobby which was an upstairs lobby because downstairs was a Singer office and other offices. And we waited. And everybody, of course, had glass in hand. Was it or wasn't it a party? BBC came on and a very well known voice said, "My lords, ladies and gentlemen, his Majesty the King." And there wasn't a sound in that place through George's short speech. He managed his stutter, his difficulty, very well. He spoke slowly and clearly. But when he stopped all hell broke loose.

Well, I saw the party underway and at about eleven o'clock I went up and locked my door. The South Africans had moved in and I was not having anything further to do with the party..

That was in Florence. I was in Florence for about a week. And then I was sent up to Milan because I was to go up to Austria. I spent a week in Milan and saw the place where Mussolini and his mistress' bodies had been found. The place was streaming with partisans. It was a fascinating sight to see because they had the Alpine leather shorts on. The shortest shorts I have ever seen. I suppose they had been worn off all through the years. And every last one of them with a machine gun. The week in Milan went by and then I was sent back to Florence since the travel party would start from there.

There I had an experience too which I will report. In Rome one of our employees was a man named Hans Cohrssen. He was an economist and had come over with OWI and he was always working on the Italian economy. He was a very short man with very bushy hair and a temper like nobody's business. He could not stand chicanery and the rest of it. So he was always in trouble. We crossed swords right at the beginning. I had only to see him and I would go up in smoke too.

He came into -- well, we had an opportunity to change some offices. I had been in this cold, cold office. I knew there was one with sun in it just emptied. I grabbed everything I could and I rushed down and put things around and sat down. He came right in behind me. But I was already seated. He was furious, but I stayed. A few weeks after that he came in and said, "I have a problem. I have found that one of the embassy officers has taken a villa for his lady friend. And this house happens to be sheltering a lot of orphans. I have written him and told him that he should get another house and he hasn't answered. I have written him again and now I am going to go to the Ambassador."

I said, "Well, of course, that is your privilege. Are you sure he got the letters?" "No, I can't be sure." I said, "If you put in that ultimatum the Ambassador has no choice but to take some action and there is no way of going back. I suggest that you write him again and tell him the situation and say "I have written you twice. This is the third time. If I do not hear from you in three days I shall have to go to the Ambassador."

He came back the next day. He said, "It worked. He is taking another house and the orphans stay there. That was good."

But when I was in Florence, he came into my office again. I was ready for a fight. He said, "I want to ask a favor of you. Would you go with me to Austria as my assistant? You have your ideas and I have mine. I will never ask you to change your mind." I said, "On that basis I will go with you." From that moment on we clicked. We made a team. I think it had a very great effect on some of the things that happened. But I had to wait my chance to go to Austria until a group of women was going. So he had gone up ahead.

HARLAN CLEVELAND

**Deputy to Brigadier General William O' Dwyer
Rome (1944-1947)**

Ambassador Cleveland was born in New York City and raised in the United States and Switzerland. He was educated at Princeton and Oxford Universities. During World War II he served on the Board of Economic Warfare, after which he held a number of senior positions dealing with Italian economic recovery, US and UNRRA assistance programs in China and Taiwan and NATO issues. He also served as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations and as US Ambassador to NATO. Ambassador Harlan was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: The Belgian Congo uranium.

CLEVELAND: Yes, although I never learned much about uranium until the atom bomb surfaced. It was a lively time and I was still quite young, 23, 24, 25 during that period. I was a staff assistant so whenever they had some administrative emergency mess in some division, I would be sent in to be in charge of that division temporarily while they would turn things around and build a new directory. So, for awhile, I was in charge of economic intelligence for the Board of Economic Warfare.

Eventually I was put in charge of the Italian division of the Board of Economic Warfare, which became the Italian division of the Foreign Economic Administration when the entire agency shifted to beginning to think about what it was going to do in the post war period. The Italian division consisted mostly of enemy aliens, that is Italian refugees who had come over. Italy had become a co-belligerent by the time I took that over, so we were actually helping Italy, but for the first few months, the Germans still had most of Italy, and we were helping the air force figure out what to bomb. We felt it was part of our job to tell them also what not to bomb. So we made sure they knew where the cathedrals were and the like. Then we had one of the men on the staff become a very good friend of ours.

He had run a group of aluminum factories in Italy before, but they were Jewish. Mussolini decided rather late in the game that in order to curry favor with Hitler, they really had to be more anti-Semitic. So, they really started to make life difficult for Jews and a lot of those people came over. One of them was a first rate professor of law at the University of Rome. The other was a man whose father owned a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. There was another man who was already a finance expert, so we had wonderful talent. They mostly spoke English quite well but with varying degrees of Italian accents. So, I was younger than any of them and I was the only person who could go up to Congress and testify about any of that and not sound like a foreigner.

As the allies decided to invade Italy in '43, our function was switched from advising about warlike things to advising about how much food people in Sicily would need. As soon as we occupied it we would have to worry about that. So, we developed a whole passel of post war plans for Italy. That led rather naturally to my going to Italy in 1944 about three months after the fall of Rome.

Q: That was October or November. The fall of Rome was June 1944.

CLEVELAND: I got there in September of '44. The background of that was I was, of course, subject to being drafted all this time. I was kept out of the draft at first because we had one child, a so called pre-Pearl Harbor baby, conceived before and born after. Then they kept drafting me and I would go up for the physical exam. The eye doctors for some reason were always last in the maze of procedures I faced. They would reject me because I have one eye that doesn't work, a childhood accident. It made a big scar on the retina of my right eye, so I can really only see with the left eye. I have peripheral vision in that eye, but no direct vision. I never realized what an advantage that would be because I was one of the few young white male civilians around. So there were good opportunities for being promoted in the government during that time.

When the draft boards finally decided they didn't want any more 1-Bs, which were the limited service people -- people who would become a soldier and sort shoes or something like that because they couldn't shoot -- I was told by the draft board on a Friday that my card would be the next card to come up so I had better get ready. Sunday morning there was a big headline in the Washington Post that the Army decided not to have any more 1-Bs. Lois came rushing in from the front stoop with this headline I immediately set about trying to arrange to go overseas, because I had been disappointed that I wasn't in it, you know. The obvious place for me to go was Italy since I was working on it. A job was arranged for me to go in as a staff assistant to the political brigadier general, William O'Dwyer. He later became mayor of New York city, and that was part of the story, too, because I was signed up to work for him. The day I arrived happened to be the day that he announced publicly that he was going to come home and run for mayor of New York which he, of course, successfully did several times. So there was great confusion for several weeks. It was an emergency time. About the first thing I was asked to do was develop, for congressional presentation purposes, a balance of payments estimate and internal accounts reconciled with the balance of payments. This was regarded as an impossible assignment in Washington by the people who were supposed to be doing it. Because I had just arrived they said, what are we going to do about this? I thought it would be duck soup because that was just the kind of numbers we were always inventing in Washington. That was a normal thing for a young bureaucrat to be doing. So, I assembled a couple of even younger men, and we holed up for a weekend and produced the first post war balance of payments calculations for Italy. This was regarded as a major miracle. It wasn't, given the background I had doing that kind of work in Washington.

It brought me suddenly to the notice of everybody in the Allied Control Commission. The executive director was an Italian American named Tony Antolini, who was a Macy's buyer before the war and was promoted to be the vice president of the Allied Control Commission in charge of the economic section. This was the job O'Dwyer had. Then they kind of looked around and said who are we going to put into this number two job which was called the executive director. Everybody were specialists. There were port experts and experts on everything, but there weren't any generalists. I was enough of a generalist and I had just done this apparently miraculous piece of staff work, so to my surprise and to the great surprise of most of the staff, I was catapulted into this job, 1400 people supposedly working for me. The next echelon below me were American full colonels and British brigadiers. I had a uniform. Of course, I didn't have

anything on my shoulder.

Q: Which was handy.

CLEVELAND: Indeed. It was very good to not have anything on my shoulder. I guess I was self confident enough about the substance of what I was doing. I was assigned an assistant, an American army regular full colonel who was an absolute godsend because he was the kind of a person who knew where all the bodies were buried and what would motivate all the senior people. He knew how to get medals for the senior officers and do all the things that lubricated the bureaucratic machinery. So Colonel Dinsmore and I succeeded because of his skill and working about 16 hours a day on my part.

Q: How did you find the Italians you were dealing with? I assume that they knew they were co-belligerents at this time, but you were dealing with members of what passed for the Italian government.

CLEVELAND: Well the Italian government was just sort of starting up. In fact, we were in a way bringing it into being. It consisted of a coalition of the six *Partisani* parties, the partisan parties who had mostly been up conducting guerrilla warfare in the mountains in the north, but also in the area around Rome. They came together eventually under the leadership of De Gasperi, who was a great leader I think, in a coalition government. When they first made the deal to work together, we were encouraging them and feeding them information about what the allies wanted, and so on. They were having difficulty deciding where the first meeting of the new government would be held.

Tony Antolini and I shared a huge suite with an enormous sitting room in the Grand Hotel, right in the middle of town. So we said why don't you come and meet in our living room. It's a neutral zone. So the first meeting of the first cabinet in the new Italian government was held in our living room. I was a fly on the wall. I had not known Italian before I had moved there, but I spent so much time in meetings with Italians, many of whom didn't speak English, that I rapidly picked it up. I never had any lessons, but by the end of the two and a half years I spent in Italy, I could make an extemporaneous speech in Italian. It was a very tough, demanding but very exciting job. I was in effect responsible for the Italian economy.

Q: Well, how were things working? My last job overseas was as consul general in Naples. Naples was the center, it had the largest number of glove factories in the world, yet didn't have a single registered glove factory. The Italians by that time, were very good at working in the grey market, you might say, to arrange things as the Italians say. Did you find this ability was in full flower while you were doing your work?

CLEVELAND: Yes, and of course, the Mafia was in full flower too. Sicily had been reoccupied first. We would lose whole trucks of supplies. They would just disappear on their way from Naples to Rome. But we also had a lot of contacts with people. For example, Naples was a major port with major damage. One of the Allied Control commission's activities was to fix up the port of Naples and we put a lot of investment in there. We had a number of people who worked at the port and were well known to all of the Italians. So, for example, when I went down to Naples to

meet Lois and our very young children when they came over, I had no difficulty negotiating myself a spot on the pilot boat going out. Most of the people waiting for their families didn't have that opportunity.

It is hard to imagine a situation where you are importing rather more than a third of a big country's GNP. Everything was imported. We were importing from the United States, wheat and coal. The idea of importing coal all the way across the Atlantic to a European country seems ridiculous, but that is what we were doing. The Ruhr wasn't yet available. The Italian farming areas were still recovering from being battlefields. We had responsibility for this huge importation of food. We therefore had got all involved in issues of what the ration would be. For a time once the Germans were chased out of northern Italy in early 1945, some of our people had to get into the reoccupied areas before our troops got there in order to paste up signs saying don't tear down the frescoes and so on, all the monuments.

I visited Florence just a few weeks after the Germans were chased out of there. The Germans were out of the Po valley but the Italian government didn't yet have a government up there, so it was still military government area. So for about four months I had the absolutely ridiculous job, a because I was nearly 28 by then, of being named the economic commissioner for northern Italy, which meant that every week I decided what the ration was going to be, how many grams of pasta a day and that sort of thing. Which industries would get how much power. Anywhere there was a shortage, we had to make rationing decisions. I have thought since that if I had that same job today, I would probably surround myself with consultants and be immobilized, but I was young and the situation was so emergency that you had to make decisions, so you just made them.

Q: When you were in Rome and when you were up in northern Italy, where were our priorities? I mean outside of obviously getting the people fed, were we looking at any particular industry or economic sectors that had to be done to get things going?

CLEVELAND: Well essentially, of course, southern Italy was sort of an underdeveloped area, but Italy as a whole was a major industrial country. The task from an economic point of view was to get it working again pretty much on the pattern that had been working before, with a different style of government obviously. It wasn't as difficult a thing, it didn't raise the kind of policy issues that the occupation of Germany raised where you had the Soviets coming in on the other side, and you had chunks of Germany allocated to the British and the French and the Americans. It didn't have the same uncertainty as the occupation of Japan later had, where the place was really being run by the Americans.

Q: MacArthur was El Supremo.

CLEVELAND: Yes. As to Italy, Churchill and Roosevelt had gotten together in one of their frequent consultations at Hyde Park. Over a meal of barbecued hot dogs apparently in some outdoor setting there, they had decided what the occupation policy was going to be for Italy. That policy was very simple: get Italy back in the hands of the Italians. It had already been a co-belligerent for quite awhile so that wasn't as shocking as it would have been in Germany or Japan. So we had a clear mandate to build the Italian government, get it competent enough to

take over the functions that we were performing, and then we could get out of there. That was the policy, and that was essentially what we did.

Q: How about Alcide De Gasperi? What was your impression of how he responded to the economic challenge, or was he pretty much on the political side?

CLEVELAND: Well, he had to handle everything during the frequent times that he was prime minister, but he was basically an active and skillful coalition builder. Although he was a Christian Democrat, they never had a clear majority in anything. There were all these other parties, so he had to keep moving people around and trying to inspire the general population with the good future for Italy. I think what we did on the economy was to provide an enormous blood transfusion and to build the industrial and economic and to some extent the currency stabilization environment for what came to be called after the war, the "Miracolo economico Italiano." Italy took off much faster than Germany or Japan, and a lot of that really was the result of a lot of little wise decisions made by the occupiers and the industrialists and the local political leaders.

Q: Were you ever called upon by the Italian government to say we have got, for political reasons, to make sure this coalition hangs together? We have to support the sewing machine industry as opposed to something else. In other words, some adjustments were for political reasons to keep things together.

CLEVELAND: There was some of that, but the industrialists were not closely linked to the party. Their general idea was just keep the government out of our hair, and we'll make it happen. People like the Agnelli family that was running Fiat...

Q: In Turin, yes.

CLEVELAND: And Aurelio Pachelli and so on. They were very competent top business leaders. They didn't want to be in politics because politics was too complicated. There were too many parties.

Q: Did you have problems with the Fascists? I mean fascism had been tied to big business to some extent at least in theory.

CLEVELAND: The corporative state.

Q: The corporative state, yes. Did you have a problem equivalent to as we did in German denazification. Did you have "defascistification" or anything of that nature?

CLEVELAND: No, there was never a thing of that kind. Maybe it was because the Italians were never willing to take that seriously, the sort of ideological fascism of Mussolini. I think that a lot of the corporative life of the country was theoretically run by the government. My office was actually an enormous office as executive director.

Q: A true Mussolini style.

CLEVELAND: My office was the office that had been the minister of corporations, and on a clear day, I could almost see all the way across the room.

Q: The Italians, particularly in that period, went for grandiose edifices.

CLEVELAND: Very heavy architecture. I think the top business people that I came to know had a general orientation like the top business people in this country. That is, they regarded the government as an inconvenient necessity. They had their own strategies and mostly their own links with America and other European countries.

Q: Was it pretty much American assistance that was doing things? I was wondering whether you had the British and the French. Were they involved at all?

CLEVELAND: The British, yes. The French were not. The Allied Control Commission was a U.S.-U.K. thing completely. The British Eighth Army kind of came up the west coast, and the American forces, Fifth Army mostly, took care of the east coast and through Cassino, the Anzio landings, and that whole history. The American air force which was still an army thing at that time, and the Royal Air Force were working very closely together. There was a joint headquarters down at Caserta not far from Naples.

Q: I called it a miniature Versailles.

CLEVELAND: It was a huge place. We were of course G-5. We were the civil affairs part of the thing, but we were quite different and separate. We were set up right in the middle of Rome, in requisitioned government buildings and living in requisitioned houses. While Caserta was kind of our regional headquarters, most of our real dealings were with Washington and London directly by cable. People in Caserta didn't know very much about the Italian economy and didn't try to second guess us on that. Our second guessing was done in Washington, not in Caserta.

Q: What about the communists? I mean they were a major partisan movement, and when they came in during this early period, how did you work with them?

CLEVELAND: They were one of the six parties that formed the original government under a fellow named Buonomi. In fact, in that first cabinet meeting held in our living room, the minister of finance in the first Italian government was a communist. So they were not beyond the pale at all. In a way, it was a huge party. I mean they probably had more members than any party except maybe the Christian Democrats.

Q: They always had a disciplined party as opposed to some of the other ones that were sort of little tribal parties.

CLEVELAND: They were more disciplined than the Italian parties, but they weren't nearly as disciplined as the French or some of the other European communist parties. They were more of a membership organization than political parties often are. There was a time there in the early days when they were pulling down something like a third of the vote in Italy. In the 1948 elections which was sort of a crucial moment, they were only narrowly defeated.

Q: You left there when?

CLEVELAND: Well, I think, I didn't leave there until the spring of 1947, as the war was winding down. We were looking forward to what came to be called VE day and then VJ day.

Q: VE day was April, '45 and VJ day was August, '45.

CLEVELAND: Yes, and by that time, the U.S. and British governments had decided that the function we were performing, particularly in the economic side, should be taken over by UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which was already operating a small welfare-oriented relief program, and which also had sizable operations starting in Greece and Yugoslavia, and the Ukraine, China and elsewhere. So, I was appointed a member of the U.S. delegation to the meeting of the UNRRA council, which was the governing body of all the governments which met in London in August of 1945. I was the first to sort of write and politic about the resolution we needed from that governing body, saying that UNRRA would take over what we now call the AID program from the Allied Control Commission.

So we put through a U.S.-U.K. initiative. The U.S. had most of the clout in UNRRA, but the resolution said that the burden would be shared by the other countries too. That meant that there would be a large UNRRA mission, and the people who were running the UNRRA organization as a whole. Former governor Herbert Lehman of New York was the director general. The number two was a wonderful guy named Commander R.G.A. Jackson, Robert Jackson, known to all of his friends as Jacko, whose wife was Barbara Ward.

Q: The British economist.

CLEVELAND: He didn't appreciate being known as Mr. Barbara Ward. People sometimes called him that behind his back. They propositioned me in London. In one dramatic moment VJ day happened, so there were huge celebrations in Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square and so on. We went down and it was just mobs of people. So it was just at that point in world history that this decision was being made. They asked me if I would stay in Italy and essentially do what I was doing, run the AID program, run the importation of assistance and all the complications that required in the way of arrangements for the Italians. I made two conditions which I didn't think they would accept. One that I felt they probably would accept was that I would be able to bring Lois and the children over. That turned out to be feasible. The second was I said the best way to build a new mission would be for me to just take the hundred best people out of my 1400 and give them all their first post war job. Every one of them is going to need a new job. Many of them were military; some were not. So I was able to pull together an absolutely first rate staff, much smaller but on the average more competent than we had in the Allied Control Commission even. I accepted then when they agreed it would be done this way. For a period of two or three months I actually had both jobs. I was both deputy chief of mission for UNRRA, because there already was a chief of mission there, a man named Sam Keeny. Tony Antolini had gone home, so I was made acting vice president, a job O'Dwyer had before, of the Allied Control Commission for it may have been as much as three or four months. Concurrently I was also deputy chief of the UNRRA mission making all these arrangements about people transferring,

and also complicated arrangements about where the supplies were going to come from and who was going to pay for them and all that. It was very demanding and professionally a lot of fun. It was just an extraordinarily interesting job. I stayed there for a year conducting the AID program for UNRRA.

Q: Did you run across Fiorello LaGuardia at this time?

CLEVELAND: Oh I ran across him. He became the director general of UNRRA after Lehman. He made a kind of a state visit to Italy.

Q: He actually at one point had been consular agent in Trieste, way back.

CLEVELAND: I don't remember that.

Q: This was 1912, something like that.

CLEVELAND: Everybody assumed that he came from New York. He actually came from Texas.

Q: His father was an army bandmaster there.

CLEVELAND: He came over on a visit for the best part of a week. We programmed it very carefully. He was said to be unpredictable, and he turned out to be extremely unpredictable. There were some wild stories of that period.

Q: Could you tell any?

CLEVELAND: Well, one day, which was fortunately not my day for organizing, my colleague handled all the welfare and social programs, They took him out to, where was it? I can't remember, but outside of Rome. A sizable town outside. Everybody was mobilized. The Archbishop was there; schoolchildren were there; everybody was there to greet the great man. He was already very well known because he had this radio program during the war. As they get to the edge of this huge crowd, Fiorello LaGuardia says to the driver, "Drive on." Well what could he do. You were a driver and the great man says drive on, you drive on. He drove all the way through this crowd and out the other side. There was this long line of cars all of them marked "UNRRA Frascati." So they went through Frascati and into the next little town, which I think was Grottaferrata, I'm not sure. So, he tells the driver to stop. The driver stops and all the other cars stop. He gets out and sort of turns to the public affairs officer of UNRRA, who was traveling with him and says, "Why isn't there anybody here to meet me?"

The next day we all had to troop out to Frascati and apologize to the Archbishop and mayor and everybody for this behavior. Also on my day, he was very busy. We took him up to Bologna and Milan by charter plane, military plane. We visited a great steel mill. I can't remember the name, but it was a major industry. As we were touring the place, he noticed there was a big gathering of people in the cafeteria. So he goes into the cafeteria, and everybody greets him. I'm standing next to Mr. Falk, I think his name was, owner of this great establishment. He starts haranguing the

workers saying they shouldn't take any nonsense from management. They should be sure and stand up for their rights. That is what he was there to tell them and so forth. With an industrialist standing next to me sort of not knowing what to do, obviously disagreeing very much but not wanting to say so and so on. It was just very embarrassing.

Then there was another incident in Rome toward the end of his visit. His Italian was reasonably fluent but with a very poor accent and a lot of sort of foul ups on vocabulary. He is visiting Capitoline Hill, where there is a statue of Romulus and Remus and the wolf. He places his hand on the wolf and he is talking Italian to the crowd and he says, "Mister Volpe." Of course, people don't want to laugh at the great man but he had said "this fox" and not "this wolf." It was just sort of one thing after another like that. We'd breathe a sigh of relief after he left.

Q: It sounds like he was playing more of the American politician than your UNRRA administrator.

CLEVELAND: Very much. He made several speeches to the general effect that you have got to understand where all this aid is coming from. It is coming from the American people. He forgot about the British and other allies.

Q: Irrespective of a certain New York politician, how did you find the UNRRA operation worked in Italy?

CLEVELAND: It worked very well, actually. It was in fact an enormous success. It was part of the post war economic miracle. We focused not just on the relief, but we focused on building industries, transportation, ports, airports and so on. We were really laying down the infrastructure for their post war recovery in a quite systematic way. We had very good support from our bosses in Washington, particularly this fellow Commander Jackson who became a very good friend. We were on the telephone with him all the time. We had very competent people because we had brought in this wonderful corps of people at the beginning. The chief of the mission, who was primarily interested in the social side of the mission, gave me a very free hand to work on the economic stuff, which of course, was the biggest part of it. with the biggest amount of money involved. There was a very generous ration of funds we were being given by the organization, so I think that it was really an outstanding success. It was by far the largest. I mean you can take UNRRA as a whole, including China. It was by far the largest operational thing the UN has ever done.

People talk now about how the UN couldn't fight its way out of a paper bag, and so on. But the fact is, there were many advantages in being able to operate as an international organization in such a situation. We didn't have to explain away what our government was doing about nuclear weapons or anything like that. We could act more professionally than it was possible for an AID mission to act.

Q: How about the Catholic Church? What was your relation with the church during this period?

CLEVELAND: Well, we didn't have a lot of relationship with it. At one point, a meeting of all the UNRRA missions was held in Rome. We arranged an audience with the Pope which is one of

the first things he did, one of the first general audiences he held after the war.

Some of the group had a very late party the night before, Saturday night, so on a Sunday we came in and went to the Vatican. The man who was sort of our spokesman on behalf of all the UNRRA people who were there started off somewhat in a fog. He said, "We want to thank your Holiness for this audition."

But apart from formal occasions like that, we didn't have very much to do with the church as such. We dealt a lot, of course, with the Christian Democratic Party. They had a lot of interaction with the hierarchy, but we really didn't get to know them during the UNRRA period. I went to the first big public ceremony, laying on of hands of a lot of new cardinals. The most vivid comment I remember about it was my chauffeur who was a semi communist from Yugoslavia, married to an Italian. I said to him something like you know there are 40 new cardinals. He shook his head sadly.

Q: Well, you left there in 1947?

CLEVELAND: In the spring, in late April or early May.

Q: Now the crucial time as you mentioned before was the election of 1948. We went all out and the Soviets went all out to see if the communists could take over the government. Was the cold war apparent by the time you had left, and were we sort of seeing that this was going to be as critical as it was, or was it still the honeymoon post war period?

CLEVELAND: The honeymoon didn't last very long. Of course, Stalin's actions were clear early on. They were obviously trying to use the western European communist parties as agents. That was I think more difficult in Italy than it was in France. The Italians were somewhat less disciplined and they had this big party which appealed to large numbers of people. They were hard to bring into a disciplined cadre. But that was obviously going on and they kept trying. The '48 thing was kind of the watershed.

Q: Were you and others doing everything we can to support the Christian Democrats? This is going to be critical. Was that apparent at the time? Were we doing anything within your competence to bolster one side or the other?

CLEVELAND: There were several sides. We were trying to get a sort of center government. It obviously had to be built around De Gasperi and the Christian Democrats. We saw a lot of young politicians just a little older than I. One was named La Malfa. Ugo La Malfa, who later became a minister in various governments. That was the action party, and they were mostly in every government. The socialists were split. Nenni was the head of the socialists, but there was sort of a split off right wing of the socialist party that often participated in governments. Nenni could never quite decide whether he was going to be part of the left with the communists or if he wasn't. As a result, he never really played the role in post war Italian politics that he might have.

Q: It is interesting that Italian socialists never became the party that the German socialists or the labor party in France. These were major parties. The socialists in Italy were sort of undercut

by the communists.

CLEVELAND: And it was undercut by their own unwillingness to divorce themselves from the communists. If they had planted their flag as the non-communists of the left, I think they would have become the kind of socialist party that France and Germany had. It didn't work out that way.

Q: While you were with the UN, was there any feeling as things were moving on of throwing support in one way or another to the non-communist side? I mean were we getting kind of interested in making sure that we were supporting the non-communists?

CLEVELAND: Yes, in effect. That was true all through the UNRRA thing. It was mostly run by the western countries; most of the money was coming from the western countries. We had a program of relief and rehabilitation in the Ukraine, part of the Soviet Union. But the Soviets were not a very important part of the governments because they weren't making much of a contribution. On the other hand, on some issues they made a big noise. For example, at one of the UNRRA council meetings, there was a big issue about refugees and whether they would be pushed to go home, home meaning the Soviet Union. There was a deep split, basically a cold war split among the countries, and it came out right that the refugee that was seeking freedom shouldn't be prevented from getting freedom.

Q: Was it apparent that the Soviets were exerting control and calling some of the shots among the Italian communists while you were there?

CLEVELAND: It was clear that they were trying, but it was also clear that the communist leadership, Togliatti, was wise enough to fend off the Soviets a good deal, and to keep sort of at arms length. Increasingly as they saw the cold war developing and saw that Italy was clearly going to be on the western side of that line, there was no future in their being the agents of the Soviet Union, so they had to be Italian nationalist communists, sort of. They still took in a big vote, like a quarter of the vote for quite awhile.

Q: Well, even in my time, which was '79-'81, they were still picking up 23-24 % of the vote. This is a family matter, almost. Were events in Yugoslavia with Trieste and all that, was that a complication or not?

CLEVELAND: Not really. We sort of watched the politics of that. I went up to Trieste once. My concern was which part of the territory we were going to be responsible for providing...

Q: Zone A, Zone B and all that sort of stuff.

CLEVELAND: And there were negotiations about the future of Trieste going on during some of that period early, which went on for years and years afterward. But I was never very much involved in all of that.

WILLIAM L. BLUE
Consular Officer
Naples (1944-1948)

William L. Blue was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee in 1914. He attended Southwestern College, Vanderbilt University, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Mr. Blue entered the Foreign Service in 1941 and has served in Niagara Falls, Ciudad Bolivar, Naples, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, Paris, Bern, and Lisbon. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 11, 1991.

BLUE: Naples was the first consulate to be opened in previously occupied Europe. It was fascinating, of course. The war was still on. I arrived in Naples in May, 1944 after the Salerno invasion. To give you some idea, the front was still at the famous Monte Cassino. We could still hear the guns from Monte Cassino. Rome was freed in June of that year.

When I arrived there were no street lights, no street cars, no taxis and a blackout of course. The German planes used to come over. We had air raid warnings but there were no bombers, or at least they weren't going to waste bombs on Naples. People would go down into the air raid shelters but I got so that I didn't go down. We had people like Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Madeleine Carroll and Marlene Dietrich. Just imagine Marlene Dietrich in an air raid shelter at 3 in the morning looking like a million dollars. It was fascinating; as soon as the war was over things very quickly started to improve.

I was doing purely consular work. I was doing American citizenship. American citizens were coming through the lines from northern Italy; many of them were American wives who had stayed with their Italian husbands. I can remember one lady who stayed with her husband. They owned a hotel near Sorrento and she wanted to go back to the U.S. We had to document these people.

A lot of them were in refugee camps. They were really peasants who had stayed but who wanted to visit relatives in the States and who thought they had a legitimate claim to citizenship. However, we had to take their applications and determine whether their claim was legitimate. I would say that in those days the American citizenship section was larger than the visa section. We repatriated people on the "Gripsholm", for example. The Gripsholm was a neutral Swedish ship that used to ply around and exchange diplomats and others. The only time I was on board was when the Consul General had a party.

The Consul General at the time was George Brandt. He was a real character. He tended to be very gruff, but he was really a teddy bear. Quite a decent fellow and I liked him very much. Most people liked him, although one of my colleagues trembled at the thought of even having to go to see him. I tried to tell him that this was all a front, and that Brandt was really a very decent fellow.

I had considerable contact with the American military. Actually I was certifying all civilians to go on aircraft flying in and out of Naples. We had a lot of contact with the military. We had to get a lot of material from them -- had to get food from them. I lived for quite a while in the

Parker Hotel which was a field officers' mess. I suppose all civilians were there. I remember the entertainers, like Douglas Fairbanks and Madeleine Carroll, used to have breakfast with us so they must have been accommodating almost all civilians there.

All municipal authority was with the US military command. We had a Tammany Hall politician from New York City who was in charge. There was an Italian mayor because I remember John Cabot Lodge, who was married to an Italian, called on the mayor when he visited Naples. The mayor's office was near our office. It was full of people, I don't know what they were doing.

We had interesting times because the Communists were very active. I remember on one occasion, Tony Cuomo, who was an Italian-American, and I went down to watch. There was a crowd of people around the Communist headquarters and they were about to burn the place down. The crowd got out of hand and, the police -- they may have been former Italian military police who were under American officers -- fired over the heads of the crowd. I am telling you this crowd moved. I thought Tony and I were going to get flattened.

But there was very little danger being there at that point. I moved out of the Parker Hotel to a little -- they were still requisitioned quarters -- place out in Posilippo.

When the war was ended in the spring of '45, things changed pretty fast. You had night clubs opening; the city was beginning to function as an Italian city. Street cars running. I was amazed at how quickly things began to return to normal. Even the tennis club opened. For example, when I first got there Eisenhower and Bob Murphy were still at Caserta where the Allied Headquarters were -- about 50 miles to the north, a big Bourbon palace. A beautiful place.

In Naples, the Consulate General was right on the Via Roma, originally. Actually, originally in the Galleria Umberto. But there was no glass in the Galleria Umberto. The rain just poured in. It was near the San Carlo Opera House. Later, the Consulate General moved to Banco del Lavoro which was further up the Via Roma. Behind us was the Peninsular Base Command. Later, they moved north so that the military was less and less important in Naples even before the end of the war -- particularly after Rome fell. By the time I left I would say Naples was functioning pretty much as a normal city -- as normal as you can get having just gone through such a traumatic experience as they had.

I left Naples in March, 1948 before the famous elections when the Napolitanians voted for a monarchy. They were monarchists there. I watched Victor Emmanuel and his wife leave -- they were staying out in the Villa Roseberry -- and I watched them get on a British destroyer and they went off to Egypt. Then Umberto was king for a very short time.

ALAN FISHER
Information Officer, USIS
Rome (1944-1945)

Alan Fisher was born in Brooklyn, NY in 1913. He was a professional

photographer for the USIS. His career included coverage throughout Latin America, Italy, France, and Vietnam. Mr. Fisher was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1989.

FISHER: But just at that time, then, I was asked to come back to the Agency, this time as a CAF-12, which was an information publicist. I did, and went over to Italy as a war correspondent, as a government employee working for the Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs which was the Latin American completely separate operation -- still under the Rockefeller program. We went through several name changes. We at one time became the Office of Information and Culture, and one or two other names that were just short-lived. But it was the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs still under Nelson Rockefeller's office. Nelson would make periodic visits to Latin America, and he was treated as an Assistant Secretary of State would be now, very popular there.

But we had some very interesting people who worked there. Frank Jamison, who was an old AP man, was in charge of the press operation of the coordinator's office. Bill Cody was cultural officer in Asuncion, Paraguay, when I went to Brazil. I was supposed to see Bill. The funny thing about that was that when I was in New York on the "*World Telegram*", I was writing an occasional Saturday column about photography, and I got a call from a Bill Cody, who at that time was editing, among other things, a Knott Hotel publication for the Knott Hotel chain, and asked me if I would do a monthly column for them on what to photograph in New York. I arranged to do it, and Bill hadn't paid me for the last column I did. It was ten bucks. So when I was given a list of people that I was to contact, as I was to go around Latin America, Bill Cody's name showed up. I wrote him and I said, "Are you the guy who owes me ten bucks?"

And he said, "I am the guy who knows you, but I don't owe you ten bucks." I never got the ten bucks, by the way.

But later on, I worked for Bill when he was PAO in Paris, when I was transferred to Paris. It was interesting to see how the old CIAA guys became part of the Agency, because in 1947 we were all taken in, and then it became one big agency with a lot of OWI guys.

But I am getting ahead of myself, because I went over to Italy as a war correspondent for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, again to show the United States and Brazil what one of our South American allies was doing in the war. I spent a year with them. I was strictly photographing at that time, and there were four foreign correspondents with the expeditionary force. There was Frank Norall, who was Coordinators Office type, along with me, and Henry Bagley of the Associated Press, and Chico Hallowell of the BBC, who was really an Anglo-Brazilian. He was doing recording. So the four of us lived together for a year.

Chico Hallowell was a very nice Englishman who later became an employee of Met Vickers in Brazil. His first name is Francis, but among the Brazilian troops, he was Chico. He identified himself as, "This is Chico Hallowell of the BBC."

In those days, the BBC had developed a small battery-operated portable disk recorder. It weighed about 15 or 20 pounds, and was very reliable. Frank Norall was trying to do tape recordings with

an old GE wire recorder, and I was his technician for that. I tell you, working with a wire recorder -- the wire would break and the whole thing would spin out.

JOSEPH N. GREENE, JR.
Administrative Officer
Naples (1944-1945)

Political Advisor
Trieste (1945-1946)

Analyst, Office of Strategic Services
Rome (1946-1949)

Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1949-1952)

Joseph N. Greene, Jr. was born in New York, New York in 1920. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1941 and immediately entered the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Canada, Italy, Singapore, Nigeria, India, and Germany. Mr. Greene was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

GREENE: I spent only a short time in Algiers before I leaving to join Ambassador Kirk's neo-mission, then in Naples. Since I was the most junior on the staff, I was the administrative officer. That meant dealing mostly with the U.S. Army and the people who had requisitioned the villa we were in. We had our own mess in the villa up on a hill out of harm's way. There were anti-aircraft batteries on either side of us.

At some point, the Allied Military Government Headquarters in Naples, which was a subordinate command to Allied Forces Headquarters in Caserta, told the Ambassador they needed someone to help them with daily political issues. I was assigned to the office of Samuel Reber, the Political Adviser to General Jumbo Wilson of the British 8th Army. Caserta was a place about 30 miles northeast of Naples; a huge palace put up by the Neapolitan Bourbons and it was used as the Allied Headquarters.

General Wilson asked the Political Advisers what to do about the Benedictine Monastery: should it be blown up? Ambassador Kirk said we had better first find out about the Benedictine Monks there. That was hard to do without going there. But, as a political officer, I wrote something that saved the Monastery, at least initially. Eventually, we went after it with the Air Force and it turned out that the Germans had not been using it.

Anyway, we stayed in Naples until there was somewhere to go in Rome. Rome was liberated almost the same day as D-day. The same day they were landing on Omaha Beach, the American troops were arriving in Rome. Not long thereafter the Ambassador okayed our moving to Rome.

He arranged with the Army to requisition Palazzo Margherita on Via Veneto which had been the Queen Mother's residence. In the gardens adjoining it there were two small villas which had been the American Embassy and the American Consulate when Ambassador Kirk had been counselor there before Pearl Harbor. (He was back in Italy in 1944 because he knew his way around the country.) He knew his way around Germany too; he had been in Berlin until Pearl Harbor.

Ambassador Kirk was eccentric to a degree. He affected to not be able to stand the sight of glass. Anywhere he lived, his aide Alfred Horn's first task was to buy up all the white wallpaper in town and have it applied to the inside of all the windows where he was.

Kirk was tall, thin and lanky and carried a long cigarette holder. He wore all grey clothes. He had a mind like a steel trap. He was really quick, smart and clever. So one didn't dwell on his eccentricities.

When we had to move, he told me that I was reverting to administrative officer status. It was my job to fix it with the Army for us to have offices in the Palazzo Margherita. One of the first things I did in Rome was to seek out an Italian teacher. I had been studying Italian in Naples. Signora Marchi, who was to go on and teach a whole generation of Foreign Service officers including Ambassador Reinhardt, taught me grammar while she taught the Ambassador about Dante. She came every morning to the Embassy.

Walter Cecil Dowling replaced Johnny Jones in Rome. Walter, through contacts he had made in earlier, happier days in Rome, was able to wangle a flat in the Palazzo Colonna down near the Piazza Venezia. That was really the center of old Rome. Beautiful. He invited me to share the flat and I happily accepted. We commuted; we had Embassy cars to get us around town and back up to Via Veneto.

Not long after we got there in August or September, came a message from the draft board. I had been drafted and was to report to the training depot at U.S. Army Headquarters, Naples for enlistment in the Army and assignment to basic training in southern Italy. I didn't think much of that idea and didn't want to be in the Army. Somehow I wangled a ride home with the Navy. An airplane took me to Rabat and there I wangled another ride on an old four propeller seaplane. We went to Ireland and eventually got home. I reported to the draft board and eventually wound up in Navy boot camp.

On my way through Washington, I went to see my old history professor from Yale, Sherman Kent. He was then with William Langer in the Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Division. I told him I was on my way back to boot camp and asked if there were any openings in OSS. There weren't. So I went off to boot camp and there was a delay, I got sick for a couple of weeks and fell back one class. I was coming out of boot camp in January, 1945 with orders to report as Seaman 2nd Class to a battleship in Norfolk when a young ensign said he had orders for me. I was sworn in as an ensign and told I was going to the OSS in Washington to the Office of Research and Analysis. I said fine, got suited up in my ensign suit, turned in my Seaman II Class suit, and met my wife in Washington. I went around to see Sherman Kent to thank him and to ask what had happened. The Germans got one of our guys, so now there was a vacancy.

In order for me to be assigned to the OSS, Kent had to say I was an expert on Italy and spoke good Italian. They wanted me to make my way around Italy doing more research and analysis than special operations, but they wanted me to spend a little time in Washington getting ready. I went to language school and was told what the U.S. priorities and targets were.

I was in my Berlitz Italian lesson on that April day when FDR died. We all wondered what was going to happen. Then one day I got a notice from General Donovan's office -- he was the commanding general of the Office of Strategic Services. He said he was going to London and he would be glad to give me a lift as far as London. He was the kind of general who wanted to talk to all the troops. I can't remember what we talked about but I came away thinking what a great outfit OSS was.

Eventually I made my way back to Italy, just about V-E Day, in May, 1945. They still had a lot of lines out they wanted to pursue but I was able to pick up some political reporting wearing a navy suit. I lived in the BOQ, I wasn't part of the Embassy although that was where all my buddies were. Eventually I moved into an OSS compound with a guy named Charlie Hughes, a brilliant scholar who went back to Harvard. Martin Gibson was there, and Phil Mangano. Our job was overt political reporting, nothing covert. I resumed my study of Italian.

By May, the American 5th Army and the British 8th Army had gotten as far as Trieste. The British Commander was General John Harding of the 13th Corps. Mark Clark was Commander of the 5th Army. Both armies had parts of the real estate in Trieste at their disposal for offices and billets. I had been to Trieste once from Rome. Hans Lansburgh who later got into difficulty because his loyalty was questioned, I think unfairly, but he and I made an exploratory visit to Trieste. On the basis of that one outing, I went back to Rome and wrote up my assessment of who was who and what was what.

Then in June, the Army said they needed a political adviser in Trieste. This young Naval Officer who had nothing much in the OSS left to do -- we had won the war, or we had won that part of the war -- was sent back to Trieste as a political adviser. The British political adviser was William John Sullivan, a merry round little fellow. The commander of the military government was an American, Colonel Al Bowman, who was a rough and ready type. One of his rough and ready officers from the Treasury Department was Lane Timmons was a brilliant financier who joined the Foreign Service after he got out of uniform. In the 1960's he was Minister in New Delhi and then Ambassador in Haiti. One thing I had to do to be on an even footing with the British political adviser in a British Corps Command Headquarters was to get out of my navy suit. You can't have an ensign sitting in with four-star generals telling them what you think ought to be done. I don't know to this day whether John Harding understood my true status. I was attached to a navy outpost in Rome for pay and administrative purposes. We had an understanding, except for when I was in Rome, that I wouldn't wear my uniform. I decided then I would never make a good undercover agent. Later, someone I worked for said I was too literal minded because I argued about the way something was expressed in a position or speech. In those days I was too literal minded to be a spy or to appear to be something that I really wasn't. I knew I was in the navy and hoped no one else knew.

Most of my job was to keep Al Bowman, Military Governor, and General John Harding aware of what was going on. Tito's people were trying to make trouble and get Trieste for Yugoslavia. The 88th Division had the frontier with Slovenia and Croatia, but General Moore (American) had his headquarters in Udine; I had to go out there often. They had their own military intelligence sources, but because I wasn't in uniform, I could mingle with the civilian population and in particular the press. The local press was very hostile. All those years under fascism, they were accustomed to doing what they were told. Suddenly the allies were advertising democracy and free press.

There was a joint Allied Information Service, British and American. Everything was joint; we were co-equals. The American in charge was Charlie Moffly, a very astute, low-key journalist. He was well connected and we were able to find out things others couldn't. I reported to the Political Advisor Homer Morrison Byington, Jr. in Caserta which was where Allied Headquarters was. Since I was still in the navy, that was my chain of command. Then, Byington reported to the Embassy what they wanted to know.

One day General John Harding felt the press had gone too far: maligning Allied Military Government, inciting sedition and rioting and misbehavior. And sure enough, we had a riot and the military police had a hard time. He called a meeting at his headquarters in Duino Castle which he had requisitioned from a well-to-do Austrian family. We sat around discussing what to do with these rags to which accuracy didn't matter. General Harding was very indignant and felt the best thing was for the Allied Military Government to close them down. It seemed most people sitting around that circle agreed we should close them down. But when they got to this 26 year old, I said it would be a big mistake to shut them down. It would leave a bunch of reporters with nothing to do but brood -- not to mention, that this was the opposite of democracy and the free press. My advice was ignored and the press was shut down. Naturally, once they were again allowed to print, it was worse. The lesson there was if you think you have it right, say so. If you are a minority of one, tough luck.

I don't remember that Sullivan or us civilians picked up much of anything about Tito and the Yugoslavs except for what their local minions put out through their newspapers. They had a very strong communist party organization and the organized political voices in Trieste were monopolized by Tito's partisans. It was clear he wasn't about to concede that Trieste belonged to anyone but him. We were a holding operation at that time, trying to hold Trieste for the Italians. Since we won the war, we felt neither Yugoslavia or Italy was going to run that place, until we, the Allied Military Government, decided what was going to happen to it. Tito said he thought he had been on our side. The Ustashi (Croatian Fascists) who had been on the Nazi side were a lot closer physically to Trieste in some ways than the Serbian partisans. The Ustashi were really nasty. The Chetniks were just as nasty; they were the Serbian Nationalists. The Triestines just wished it would all stop so they could get on with their lives.

We didn't let the partisans nor the Italians into the government. It didn't solve the question that went back to the time Trieste had been the Adriatic port of Austrian-Hungarian empire. That was the historical circumstance to Tito's logic of why we should give it to him. After all, he had been on the winning side of the war. But we didn't want to just give it to him because there was a lot of Italian business, ship building and insurance, and it was still an entrepot for the Austrian

hinterland. It was hard to get there; the roads had all been destroyed in the war. The Italians were very insistent on reclaiming Trieste and the job of the British and American military was to keep them out. The Italians were certainly not in a position to try and take it physically, but the Serbo-Croatians were in a position to try and grab it and later did try. For a long time in my working life, I couldn't shake the time I spent there in Trieste, during which Harry Truman abolished the OSS. Obviously, the war was over and we didn't need a secret intelligence service any longer. That was in August or September. But I was still in the navy and they told me to just sit tight for awhile.

I was living in the army hotel but my family was still in the States. As the Peace Conference in Paris got underway in early 1946, Trieste came up. The Foreign Ministers agreed to have a Commission of Inquiry to go out there and see what was going on. Philip Mosley, a distinguished professor at Columbia before and after the war, was part of the U.S. Delegation to the Peace Conference, and headed the Commission of Inquiry. He was a linguist and could do things I couldn't or hadn't thought to do. The Commission went on down to Istria and Pola and talked to people on the street in their own language, whether it was Italian or Serbo-Croatian. They could ask them whether they really wanted to be with their brothers in Serbia-Croatia -- Yugoslavia or with Italy.

By late summer of 1946 I had enough points to get out of the navy. I went to Naples where I was discharged and could again be assigned to the Embassy in Rome. By then, David Key was the Chargé until James Clement Dunn came as Ambassador.

As I said, for a long time I couldn't shake Trieste. I hadn't been in Rome very long in 1946 when they decided neither one was going to get Trieste. They were going to follow the Potsdam example of WWI and make it a free city, like Danzig. I was summoned to Paris to help design that. The way to design a free territory of Trieste was to write their constitution. So I spent a month or so in Paris with the American delegation drafting what came to be called the Statute of the Free Territory of Trieste, the basic constitution which became part of the Italian Peace Treaty. As an aside, years later, when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in International Organizations, the State Department had passed a new language proficiency requirement to qualify for further promotion. I boned up on my Italian and went to take the exam. The examiner handed me something in Italian and told me to read it to him in English. So, I started reading it and the examiner stopped me and asked me whether I had ever seen it before. It was the statute for the Free Territory. I told him, well, I drafted it. That was in 1969 or 1970.

During the wind up process of the military establishment, General Clifford Courthouse Lee was the last Allied Commander. He moved his headquarters to Leghorn, a port through from which everything was leaving. He asked for political advisor and the Ambassador and the DCM naturally thought of me. So, I commuted from Rome. General Lee also had a British political adviser named Peter Scarlet. Scarlet and Greene -- there were a lot of jokes made about the colorful political advisers.

It wasn't all fun, however. One of the residues of the Allied Military Government was the fate of a couple of dozen Ustashi (the Croatian Nazis) that the Allied forces had captured. They were very fierce, unforgiving fighters who had done a lot of unpleasant things to people on all sides.

Tito wanted to get his hands on these guys and they were in an allied prison camp somewhere in Italy. With 20/20 hindsight, Scarlet and Greene were assigned the task of reviewing the files of those really nasty characters to decide what should happen to them -- whether they should be tried by an allied court or turned over to the Yugoslav authorities. All we had to go by were their military dossiers compiled by a lot of intelligence to decide their fate; there was certainly no due process. I don't remember what our decisions were but we did decide them all and in short order. I don't regard that as one of my finest moments. But again, it was a learning experience. If you are asked to do something, don't be stampeded into doing it if you don't feel it is right. General Lee was a good guy in many ways but he was anxious to get the many jobs done.

I was General Lee's American Political Adviser; I was his direct communication to the American Ambassador and he had no desire to cross wires with the Ambassador. To me, he was very helpful. Whenever I had to go anywhere he would call up a plane. He wanted to get the job done and if that meant Greene needed to go somewhere, he wasn't going to argue about it.

Jimmy Dunn was very urbane, very calm, cool and collected. I don't remember ever seeing him lose his cool. I had the greatest regard for him. He expressed himself clearly and knew what questions to ask. He had an inquiring mind, never took anything for granted. Back in Washington, they were tired of hearing about the problems; they wanted answers. He was thoughtful, the soul of care and concern. His compassion was more likely to be aroused than his temper. He didn't suffer fools gladly, but he had a great touch. The Italians trusted him, as did the administration in Washington.

The development of new political parties started long before I got to Italy in the context of the armistice with Italy in 1943. The partisans caught up with Mussolini and strung him up near Milan and then the allies had found a General Badoglio to head up an interim government to take charge of the infrastructure of governing Italy. That was the situation until the Peace Treaty came into effect. We didn't concede that Italy had full sovereignty over its political affairs until late 1946 or early 1947. Meanwhile, we encouraged the revival of democratic parties. After the end of Mussolini and the advent of Badoglio, there was hardly a fascist to be found. There was a small party of a few die-hard fascists called the MSI (Movimento Socialista Italiano). We, the French and the British were trying to do whatever we could to foster the growth of political parties. And from our point of view, the more democratic the better. The Christian Democrats were our party of choice. And then there was the Socialists, and the Communist Party. They captured the trade union, had a loud, noisy, and articulate following and got a lot of support money and rhetorical support from Moscow.

After the Peace Treaty crept up toward the democratic elections in 1948, there was much concern that the communists might get a majority in the Parliament and all us democrats would be stuck with them. So Uncle Sam went to considerable pains to back the Christian Democrats; a lot of money went to them covertly. We denied it, and continue to deny it, particularly to newspapers. We Americans tried to demonstrate we were good friends of the Italian government. The interim government was Christian Democrat.

In March, 1948 the Americans, British and French announced that they thought they had made a big mistake in the Italian Peace Treaty -- taking Trieste away from Italy and establishing it as a

free territory -- and thought Trieste should be returned to Italy. This made the people in Belgrade and Moscow very cross. I am not sure if it did us that much good in the vote, but it vindicated De Gasperi's friendly posture toward Italy's liberators. It was one of the major gestures we made publicly. It turned out to be an albatross politically. But in the end the Christian Democrats won enough seats in the Parliament to form a coalition with the Republican party. Again, in all of that, Jimmy Dunn was so artistic, deft.

There was the Partito d'Azione, as part of the socialists' network. I can remember that a lot of my contacts were with guys in that party as well as Christian Democrats. I can't remember sitting down for a conversation with communists. We had a very adroit labor attaché named John Adams from Syracuse University. We left that part of the beat to him, seeing the trade unionists in the CGIL. The non-communist trade unions had a very hard time even though we were putting a lot of money through the international office in Brussels trying to foster non-communist and hopefully, anti-communist trade unions in Europe. It was called the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU. But it was dangerous. The communist party trade unions were rough necks. It was a trade union there to deliver votes to the party. In the end, the Christian Democrats obtained a majority in the 1948 election and quickly chose a president.

There was a feeling that communists might get, if not a majority, at least a part in a working coalition. The Action Party wasn't all that keen. There were two parties, the PSI and the Partito d'Azione, which was socialists, which did not want to join the PSI because they were too close to the communists. There was real concern and that is why the Americans, French and British put so much effort and resources into forestalling Togliatti's communist party from getting hold of the levers of power in 1948-49 in Italy. And it worked for awhile.

The Italian governments were notably unstable. The coalitions were shaky. Italian politicians are world-class prima donnas and they are much more selfish than I ever thought party politicians ought to be.

Before I got to the Italian Desk -- the seat wasn't vacant yet -- I was assigned to the then new office in the budding CIA, called the Office of Policy Coordination that Frank Wisner headed. The reason for that was because I had spent some time as a junior political officer in the Embassy in Rome on the problems of Albania. What OPC wanted was to see if there were any avenues to de-stabilize Enver Hoxha. So I spent three to four months consulting with others who were in the business of "dirty tricks." We were interested in cooking up schemes of events which would provoke the demise of the communist region in Albania. I really don't remember the particulars of the proposed operation, but it was a political action plan rather than a military action one so that no one would get hurt. It starting with the few Albanians who were still hanging around Italy and the many of them in what was then Yugoslavia. But all of that was communist territory. It was long before the Bay of Pigs.

Once I left that interim assignment and reported to the Italian Desk job, I didn't hear anything more about it until almost 1986 or 1987 when a journalist in Boston who had done a book on a British operative, Fitzroy McLean, had come across something about Albania. My name came up

and the journalist called me. But I pleaded amnesia or a case of mistaken identity.

But back to Italy. In the wake of the 1948 elections in which the communists had been defeated, the thrust of American policy was to sustain both politically and economically the concept of democracy in Italy while completing the Italian Peace Treaty. In that connection, a good deal of my time was spent on making sure the British/American administration of Trieste kept the Italians and Yugoslavs at bay until that almost free territory could run itself. The Yugoslavs made a couple of attempts to move in by force. The Italians never tried to move in by force. They did try to insinuate themselves and their system into the political life. One particular issue crystallized many of the other issues: the jurisdiction of the Italian court of Cassation in Trieste. That is an appeals court in the Italian judicial system and the Italians tried to insinuate into the allied administration of a Free Territory utilizing their control over course of events in the Court of Cassation. For all the reasons that bespoke bucking up De Gasperi, we wanted to help. But they went too far and got caught at it; we could not let them infiltrate through the judicial system what they couldn't accomplish through the political system directly. And although Tito had split with Moscow, Moscow as a communist signatory of the Peace Treaty wasn't going to do us any favors, especially as their party, headed by Palmiro Togliatti, was still a force in Italy and they didn't want to do De Gasperi's supporters any favor doing something that would embarrass Togliatti.

I recall being sent out to Rome and Trieste, where we were represented by Leonard Unger, to try to get a *modus vivendi*, at least *defacto*, on the Court of Cassation issue. Ellsworth Bunker was then the Ambassador. We finally got one acceptable to the British and ourselves.

The other aspect of the Italian Peace Treaty on which I spent some time in both Washington and with the United Nations at Lake Success, was the disposition of the Italian colonies. I spent at least one summer, 1950 probably, negotiating with the British and the Italians a formulation of what to do with Libya and Eritrea. The Italians had a pretty strong delegation in New York that Summer and Fall headed by Leonardo Vitetti. Libya was finally set up as an independent state with all three provinces in it. Eritrea was set up as a province of Ethiopia to the Eritreans' considerable chagrin. Forty years later, they fought their way out, and they are now independent.

On the Trieste issue as well as the Italian colonies, we worked hand in glove with the British. We had to do everything in complete understanding with them.

The economic aid program was a major ingredient of our policy toward Italy. Dunn and then Bunker were very influential ambassadors who managed to keep the political environment positive for giving economic assistance to the struggling Christian Democratic government in Italy. We also had some pretty sophisticated political action programs that the CIA was running to undermine the communists, one of whose major instrumentalities was the CGIL. That was quite a force in organized labor -- the Free Trade Unions who had an international labor organization also. Irving Brown in Brussels was our way to try and get into organized labor. But again I am talking more politics than economics.

My chronology may not be 100%, but at some point, the Italian government, when Truman was still President, announced they wanted to give the U.S. a token of their appreciation for all the

Americans had done from the end of the war when they changed sides, up to the early 1950s. They offered enormous bronze equestrian statues that are now on the northwest end of the Memorial Bridge in Washington. De Gasperi came over for that and Truman attended the dedication ceremony. It was a great show.

President Truman had a great knack for keeping awkward cats off his back by going back to simple basics. Whether he had read all the briefing papers we so laboriously had put together or not, he would simply say we have to keep peace in Europe; we are starting to put NATO together. It was such a simple concept, hard to carry out, but he didn't take his eye off the ball. All of this good friendship was not without its detractors, particularly in Congress. It was recalled that it wasn't all that long ago that these fascists spawned the Nazis and then lined up with them against us.

About the Immigration Act of 1950 or 1951: one of the crosses I had to help carry on the Italian Desk and in the Bureau of European Affairs, was a provision banning visa eligibility, thereby, banning from admission to the U.S. anybody who had ever been a member of the fascist party. This caused great consternation in the Bureau of European Affairs, in our Embassy in Rome and in the body politic in Italy. We were all so literal minded that we took the language that came out in that law and wrote instructions to the Embassy and consulates about what they had to ask people, all of whom had been fascists as a matter of survival or convenience. So we disqualified for admission to the United States most of the adult population of Italy whose friendship we were trying to attract so they wouldn't go communist. I don't think anyone thought of discussing the issue of congressional intent. What did they really intend to do? We should have ascertained that before issuing any instructions on how to carry out the law.

The Trieste part of the Italian Peace Treaty continued to be a problem, especially the concept of a Free Territory that no one really wanted. One of the pressure points was the joint British, French, American declaration of March 1948 seeking to curry favor for our friends in the Italian elections by declaring we thought in the end Trieste should become Italian. That declaration became a monument standing in the path of almost everything we wanted to do. Whenever anything else came up, the Italians would ask us when we were going to make good on it. The Yugoslavs didn't like it at all. I was the note taker when George Perkins (Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs) met with the Yugoslavs in New York during one of the UN General Assembly sessions. The Yugoslav Ambassador several times requested the U.S. government retract the proposition of March, 1948 -- that Trieste be returned to Italy. A technique I learned from George Perkins: he said that would be very difficult for us to do. The Yugoslavs eventually gave up and went away never having heard a flat "no" that they could attack but never hearing what they wanted to hear either.

Against all that background, one more time in the spring of 1952 we had started to devise some kind of formula to get the Italians more involved in the administration of Trieste without having the Yugoslavs blow us out of the water. A three-month conference with the British and Italians in London in the spring of 1952 did not get it done.

But before I move on to Singapore, there is one more thing about my time on the Italian Desk that I think I should touch on, lest it be forgotten.

In addition to other jobs, I was desk officer for the Vatican. Just before General MacArthur was fired in 1951, President Truman nominated General Mark Clark to be Ambassador to the Vatican. I never learned what impelled Mr. Truman to stick his neck out like that and seek to supplant an arrangement whereby previous Presidents had appointed a Personal Representative of the President to His Holiness The Pope. For many years this was Myron Taylor. Taylor's sole assistant in that job had been a Foreign Service Officer named Franklin Gowen who was remarkably inconspicuous in minding the store in Rome. The store was in one of the little villas on the grounds of Villa Margherita where the U.S. Embassy was. The store was two or three rooms and Frank Gowen never talked much about what he did and every once in a while Myron Taylor would come to town and they would go off to see The Holy Father; the whole network of relationships with the clergy through the American College was kept very quiet. Sometime in late 1947, early 1948, J. Graham Parsons replaced Frank Gowen. He had been primed by CIA to try and get a little more out of the position. Mr. Taylor found out about that and Jeff Parsons was on his way to India within the week and Frank Gowen was back in Rome. But in the meantime, Myron Taylor would come to Washington every once in a while and he would take me to lunch. He would do most of the talking. I think he was trying to find out who was doing what to whom in Italian relations and how things were in the bureaucracy. At one point he even suggested I be the one to go back to Rome and take that job when Frank Gowen had to leave. I certainly was not at all interested in pursuing that.

When Mark Clark was nominated to be Ambassador, all hell broke loose on Capitol Hill; it became a highly sectarian, really undignified battle. An awful lot of people in the U.S. felt it was inappropriate for the United States to have a formal diplomatic relationship with the Pope of Rome. The President took a lot of heat. Mark Clark must have known what he was getting into. My job was to draft learned briefings about how and to what extent the Vatican is a sovereign state, with which the U.S. could properly have diplomatic relations.

I remember the Secretary of State Dean Acheson calling me to his office to explain myself on why the Vatican was an independent state and why it was alright to have an American ambassador there. He was very loyal to the President and wanted to get done what the President wanted if he could. We were interrupted when he turned on the radio to hear General MacArthur's farewell speech to Congress. The punch line was: "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." Before that he was pretty hard on the administration, the Secretary of Defense and the President.

Acheson was a very cool customer. For him the worst was over. For the President, the worst was over. The guy was fired, so let him say whatever he wanted. But well into the speech I did comment to the Secretary that it must be pretty tough for him. And he said, "Don't worry, time wounds all heels." Dean Acheson was a very shrewd man.

The Trieste thing came to an end in early 1953. Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson was designated very secretly to go off to London with the British and the Yugoslavs and Italians. Over a long period of time they renegotiated an amendment to the Italian Peace Treaty which everyone was happy with to get that part of the Italian Peace Treaty off the books. Trieste came back to Italy and Istria was partitioned. Most of the hinterland around Trieste went to Slovenia

which was Yugoslavia.

LEONARD UNGER
Boundary Commission
Paris, France (1946-1947)

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European Affairs
Washington, DC (1947-1950)

Political Advisor
Trieste (1950-1952)

Political Advisor
Naples (1952-53)

Trieste Peace Negotiations
Trieste (1954)

Ambassador Leonard Unger was born in California in 1917. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1939. He joined the Department of State in 1941 and later the Foreign Service. In 1945, he was worked with the post-war boundary issues in Europe. Ambassador Unger worked in the late 1940's and early 1950's on the issue of the Free Territory of Trieste. This work led to his appointment as the Assistant Secretary for South East European Affairs. He served in Italy, Thailand (where he later was ambassador), Laos, and Taiwan. Ambassador Unger was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

UNGER: I was sent over to the old State Department building. A group of us were involved in this activity. We were asked to be excused from direct Military Service because it was felt that this was something that was required to be done. Those of us who had been involved in it, by that time for quite a number of months, should continue and get this done against the day when the war was won and people would be sitting down for peace negotiations.

So I was involved in that. The first meetings of the Foreign Ministers took place, first in London and then in Paris, and led in the summer of 1946 to the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris. I was at each one of the negotiations there.

I was pretty much the low man on the totem pole. I was doing research on boundary problems, on economic functioning. In other words, if a new boundary was to be drawn, as it was drawn between Yugoslavia and Italy, between Italy and France, between Italy and Austria -- those happened to be the areas that I was most involved in, as well as some of the Balkan situations -- the question was, what kind of a boundary could be drawn that would do least violence to ethnic situations but at the same time also not be an economic nonsense?

There were certain things that, at least, in my thinking, that had to be avoided. There was a great deal of feeling on the part of people who had studied the Treaty of Versailles and all the related treaties that some very grievous errors that had been committed. Of course, one such case was the economic burden put on Germany but also some of the territorial decisions were considered mistakes. For example, whatever any American may have felt, the Yugoslavs obviously felt bitter that the head of the Adriatic had been lost -- the two good outlets to the sea -- namely, Trieste and Fiume, which had been taken over (illegally in the case of Fiume) after World War I, by Italy. The Yugoslavs felt that this was territory, including the territory going north all the way up into the Alps, that was inhabited by Yugoslav people and it should be ceded to Yugoslavia. They felt the Port of Trieste was a natural for them and that it should be ceded to them as their major outlet. Also they felt that the population in Trieste was either Yugoslav, or Yugoslav converted to Italian after World War I. So these were all the kinds of issues.

Then there were the German-speaking people up at the Italian-Austrian border, like the Alto Adige, "Trento e Trieste" and all of that.

To jump ahead a little bit, when the war in Europe had come to an end, a Four-Power Commission was established (in 1945 or early 1946) -- British, French, American and Soviet -- to visit, in anticipation of a peace conference, the Italian-Yugoslav and Austrian border areas. The task was to consult the population and come to a conclusion as to where the new boundary should be drawn. When everybody on that Commission got to London and then subsequently moved over to Paris for the Peace Conference, needless to say, the Soviets drew a line far to the west, practically out on the Venetian plain. The Americans, on the other extreme, drew a line that was only a little bit west of what had been the post-World War I boundary. The French were closer to the Soviets. The British were closer to the Americans. But there were four lines.

Ultimately, after a great deal of negotiation in Paris, and sending further groups out to investigate specific situations, the decision was made -- as you can read it in the Italian Peace Treaty -- to set up a Free Territory of Trieste which would be an independent entity, neither under Yugoslavia nor under Italy.

I am trying to remember precisely why that solution was never realized. It was to go ahead and a governor was to be appointed, but with the 1948 elections impending in Italy it became a very sensitive political issue. It was the conviction that these were crucial elections that could spell the difference between Italy remaining essentially western oriented and eventually not only a part of the Marshall Plan, but a part of NATO, et cetera; or Italy might go Communist and become essentially a part of the Eastern bloc.

The elections were crucial. One of the political steps taken, in anticipation of the election, was the Tripartite Declaration by United States, France and Britain of March 20 1948, saying that Trieste (without being too specific as to area, etc.) should be returned to Italy; it was said to be basically Italian. In spite of what was provided in the Peace Treaty, namely setting up a Free Territory Trieste, this Italian city "should be returned to Italy". The presumption is that this declaration had considerable impact on the voters in Italy, reduced the pro-Communist vote, and Italy stayed with the west and eventually joined NATO, et cetera.

It was a very practical, almost a tactical, decision because of the immediate situation, the concern that Italy always has had a very strong Communist party. But in 1948, there seemed to be the possibility that it would join the Eastern bloc. The conviction was that once this had taken place, if it did, there was no turning back. The Soviet Union would make very sure that it would remain securely Communist. Now, of course, all the things that subsequently have happened, starting with Yugoslavia, and now much more broadly, none of that had taken place.

In the immediate peace negotiation situation in 1946, I was in London as part of that delegation, having been on delegations that actually visited the area in order "to consult the population". I was on two commissions. One was the commission that was sent prior to the peace treaty negotiations in Paris in the summer. Then once the decision was made for the Peace Treaty with Italy to set up the Free Territory of Trieste, it was recognized that Trieste would be a kind of economic monstrosity. Therefore, a Four-Power Economic Commission was set up to go to Trieste and analyze the whole area, analyze the economic situation, and see what could be done and what kind of outside assistance was going to be required, particularly at an initial period, to get the new F.T.T. on its feet.

I was the U.S. Commissioner on that Four-Power Commission. That was in January, or perhaps early February of 1947. We had general marching orders. One I have already mentioned, namely, that as far as the United States was concerned, for very broad political reasons, Italy must be kept in the western orbit. Trieste was a crucial factor in this. If Trieste were lost to Italy and awarded to Yugoslavia, this would be an impossible situation. The Communist party in Italy would be able to exploit any such decision so that Italy might well join the Eastern bloc. Therefore the Tripartite Declaration I previously discussed.

But in the meantime there was the possibility that the Free Territory would be set up and would face serious economic problems. So there was appointed an Economic Commission to try to decide what kind of help a Free Territory would need, once it was set up. I was the International Secretary of that Commission that went out in February of 1947.

Then, on March 20 of 1948, at the time of the crucial Italian election, a declaration was made recommending the return of Trieste to Italy. Once the declaration was made, it was perfectly clear that whatever happened, a Free Territory of Trieste, as provided for in the Italian Peace Treaty, was not going to be realized. Therefore, the economic study that had been made was more or less irrelevant. But it was, of course, not until many years later, namely in the fall of 1954, that the thing was finally settled and the City of Trieste was in fact reincorporated in Italy. Much of the remainder of the Free Territory was incorporated to Yugoslavia. That was as a result of secret negotiations in London from February to October in 1954, where I took part as assistant to the U.S. negotiator, Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson.

To go back to the 1946 Boundary Commission. There was definitely a mixed feeling on the Commission where to draw some of the boundaries. Professor Philip Mosley of Columbia University was the leader. This was, for me, a new part of the world, in the sense that although I had become familiar with it in Washington, from all the documents and talking to people, et cetera, I had never been out there. So when we went out there, certainly objective number one was to learn as much as possible, to get as objective a view as we could of -- in the first place --

the ethnic situation.

We knew, for example, that once Mussolini had taken over in Italy any kind of study, ethnic survey, census or whatever, would certainly be distorted to suit his purposes. So we had to discount that kind of thing.

We knew at the same time, anything that had been done post-World War II in the area occupied by Yugoslavia, which was most of the area in real terms if not population, that similarly, everybody among the inhabitants would be told pretty well what they were supposed to say in response to any kind of a census. So we had a difficult task. We had a lot of statistics that we had to evaluate, looking wherever possible for legitimate and valid indications of the sentiment of the people in the area. We had all kinds of linguistic and ethnic information which we had to evaluate it as to how valid it was. The idea was to draw a line -- I think that was the instructions of the Boundary Commission -- to draw a line leaving the minimum of the other nationality on the "wrong" side of the boundary.

I think this was an education for me in "real politik". It became clear certainly, that given British, French and American objectives with reference to Italy, namely, to keep Italian politics from going over in the Communist direction, that we were certainly going to be working for a settlement that would be at least acceptable in Italy, and not be exploited by the Communist party in Italy to win a lot of votes for its side.

At the same time, as the Boundary Commission put under way in 1946, Yugoslavia was an ally and Italy was the defeated enemy. And so there were definite limits as to how much and how far our Commission could go. It is almost impossible to draw a fair boundary. The urban areas are predominantly Italian. Even though you know the names of people who profess to be stoutly Italian, you know that in many cases they have to have had Yugoslav origins, remotely, somewhere and sometime.

Anyway, the Peace Treaty ultimately set up the Free Territory of Trieste as a compromise measure. Initially, pending the time when the provisions setting up the Free Territory would come into force, the Allied Military Government continued to govern in the northern part, including the city. The Yugoslav Military government continued to govern in the south.

There was a very, very tense moment right at the very end of the war, well before the Peace Treaty. No decision had been made as to what would be the ultimate fate of this area. As far as the Yugoslavs were concerned, it was going to be part of Yugoslavia. And Tito moved his troops very rapidly, a contingent of them, to arrive in Trieste before the Allied Forces got there. The Allied Forces were working their way up the Italian Adriatic Coast, to Venice and beyond, and eventually they arrived at Trieste. There was a confrontation which, fortunately, never turned into an active battle. But it was a very tense period and initially Trieste was occupied by both Yugoslav and Allied Forces, but the Yugoslavs ultimately agreed to withdraw from the center of the city.

When I went to the Trieste area with the Boundary Commission (sent by the Council of Foreign Ministers) in 1946, the Yugoslavs were still all over the place. And certainly in force up on the

Carso -- the high plateau behind the city -- (the Karst is the way the Yugoslavs would refer to it). So it was still very tense and the Yugoslavs were still determined to remain physically present to support their claim. Of course, where the boundary was ultimately drawn, all of Zone B, the southern part of what had been intended to be the Free Territory of Trieste, was in fact handed over to Yugoslavia.

After that work, I came back and dealt with Southeast Europe. I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe, under Livingston Merchant. The head of the Office of Southern European Affairs was Walworth Barbour and his immediate deputy was Walter Dowling. I was sort of a second deputy with responsibility for the Trieste problem and the Balkans. The Southern European Division at that time included Italy and the Balkans.

I was very much involved in the issue that arose during the 1948 Italian elections. We sought a good answer among some very stark alternatives. Remember this is an era when, after our wartime alliance with the Soviet Union, we became persuaded the Soviet Union was out to get all it could get in Europe, to dominate the European scene and move beyond the areas where it was initially established. Of course, Italy was a prime target. A lot of us had been enthusiastic comrades of the Soviets in the wartime period. When we went to Paris to begin to negotiate the peace treaties and prior to that, in fact, in the operation of some of these Boundary Commissions I was involved in, we were pals with our Soviet counterparts. We had fought the war together; we had defeated the Axis; so then we were in an era of good feeling and peace.

Then we began to find out how they functioned internationally, and that-to them-objective facts were a matter of total indifference. And, of course, it was particularly disturbing because some of the people that they sent -- they obviously had to be chosen at random, often including people who had very little experience abroad -- were perfectly decent, honest types. They knew what they were saying was a lot of "baloney"! But their orders, of course, were very strict. Every once in a while, over quite a number of vodkas in a hotel bar somewhere, one of these guys would take his hair down and even cry. They were realizing what it was they were being ordered to do, and we were realizing the true nature of the Soviet government, in terms of its international functioning and its policies and objectives.

This, as I say, came as a gross disappointment. But, of course, once the pattern was set, it was only many, many years later that those of us who had been through this experience were ready to begin to think about a more reasonable and constructive relationship with the Soviet Union.

In 1950, after the Peace Treaty had been settled, I went to Trieste as political advisor. I was Political Advisor because at that time -- and I think it still is true -- where we had a Military government or a NATO Command, we usually had attached to them a political advisor.

My job, in the first place, was being the channel for relaying State Department opinions and instructions. Also, I was the channel for keeping the State Department informed of what was taking place in Trieste. I was a Political Advisor, in that case, to a British Commanding General. He had an American deputy. He also had an American general who was in charge of civil affairs. This was all under Allied Military government. I served as a political advisor, in effect, to all of them; I was the person who was supposed to convey to them State Department instructions. To

be sure, they weren't being instructed by the State Department; so my instructions were to tell them our point of view, to discuss with them steps that we felt should be taken, or changes that should be made in some of their decisions, or the way they were administering the area.

I also had responsibility for being in touch with as many good sources as possible, to gain a feeling for the local political and economic situations. Were there crises building up? How was Military government accepted and seen by the local leaders and people? What was it doing that was damaging to our collective U.S. and British policies? Also, by this time, the American commitment to the eventual return of Trieste to Italy was well established. The British tended to be a little bit more on the fence on that one; they had a very sharp eye on Yugoslavia at that time and wished to be conciliatory with Tito. So these things had to be resolved in our working out what kinds of decisions we would make; this meant civilian-military compromises and American-British compromises.

The response of the military to my suggestions depended a great deal on the individual situation. There were definite British and American differences, to say nothing of differences with the French, the Yugoslavs, and the Italians when we had to deal with them, which we did from time to time.

The British were old, experienced hands at this kind of arrangement. To have a British General administering was a situation that they had had a lot of experience with before. Also, the British Political Advisor, who was from the British Foreign Office, had a very clear and well understood relationship with his superior.

The American General, who was deputy to the British Commanding General -- and, of course, I worked with both generals -- the American General was a hearty military man who was very sharp and very perceptive, but sometimes quite impatient of some of the political considerations that I felt I had to bring to his attention. He saw it more as an exclusively military task. I believe that I had a very good relationship with the British commander as well. Terence Airey was the first one. He was really out of British Intelligence and had served in Switzerland some of the time during World War II. He was followed by a totally different individual, General John Winterton, who was a bluff British military type -- a combat soldier. We got along famously, but he had a totally different approach to everything from Airey. Airey was extremely adept and he really didn't need political advisors; he was his own political advisor! Winterton badly needed political advisors, and, by and large, he was responsive to our advice. They were two very different people.

Then my next "political advisor" job was in Naples -- that is the headquarters of the Southern command of NATO from 1952 to 1953. NATO had, of course, not very long since been set up and had started functioning with its first headquarters in Paris. Then three regional NATO headquarters were established: one for Northern Europe, somewhere in Scandinavia, one for Central Europe and one for Southern Europe, in Naples. The commander -- I don't think he was the first, I think it had already been set up for a while -- the second commander was Admiral Carney. Carney was a very political type and had very good feelings for the political situation. He realized that his command was going to be involved willy-nilly in a number of circumstances, all the way from the Middle East, then particularly Greece and Turkey, Italy and Yugoslavia,

Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, et cetera. Even North Africa. He felt that he needed, if nothing else, information and, perhaps on occasion, political advice. So I became the first political advisor to that command.

I was assigned to the Embassy in Rome, but to be resident in Naples, as advisor to the Admiral. From Rome, I got telegraphic material and dispatches and a variety of reporting from many sources, which I sorted, referenced, organized and passed on to Carney, to keep him informed as to what was going on in his region. When he would have visitors from around that region, political leaders and military leaders from all the various Mediterranean countries, he would usually have me come for lunch and/or a meeting. I traveled with him to Athens and Istanbul and once to Spain. He was very conscious of the political factors and very anxious to be as fully informed as possible. He obviously enjoyed the political side. So that was my job with him, and he was CINC all the time that I was there.

The problems between Greece and Turkey were just developing. In both cases, there were some tricky problems. But the sharp tensions between the two countries hadn't yet developed. Everybody knew that there were problems and there were territorial disputes, et cetera. Cyprus was, I think, still administered by the British. So the differences were not all that acute. Turkey was just beginning to get used to being a part of the European world, the Mediterranean world. They had people at the command and they had a great deal to learn. But they were anxious to learn.

For example, we went to Ankara; there, of course, my first contact was with the American Embassy to get a good reading on the situation. Then I went with Carney to call on the various political figures in the Turkish government. Then we went to Istanbul and similarly talked to people. He went, at one point, I think, to Izmir. I never did; Izmir was a NATO sub-command, just being set up.

As I say, I often went with him to Rome. He, in fact, also had a political advisor seconded to him by the Italian government, who was half of the time in Rome and half of the time in Naples. I worked very closely with him.

Then I returned to the Trieste problems. We settled the problem on October 8th, 1954, I think. I have recently been into those files at the Archives; as a matter of fact -- I don't know whether I brought it -- I have just written a study on that subject which is going to be published. It is one of a series at Johns Hopkins, SAIS; they are doing on negotiating histories.

I was asked by Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson, who was then our Ambassador in Austria and who had been assigned, as a secret mission, the task of representing the U.S. in a negotiation to resolve the Trieste problem. He had previously been Counselor of the Embassy in Rome, so he knew the Trieste situation. These were secret negotiations in London that began in February of 1954.

The negotiations started with the Yugoslavs, and then with the Italians; we were working jointly with the British. In other words, the meetings that took place when Thompson and Geoffrey Harrison, his British Foreign Office counterpart, met with Vladko Velebit, the Yugoslav

Ambassador to London. Then after extended discussions, they met with Manlio Brosio, the Italian Ambassador. Those individual discussions went on for a while, then it became a matter of moving back and forth, trying to narrow the differences. Eventually, the four parties did arrive at an agreed solution which was announced on October 8th, 1954. And that was the settlement of the Trieste problem which represented, essentially, a compromise division in which the city of Trieste was returned to Italy, after all those years, and most of the remainder of the territory was ceded to Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslavs, at that point, had fallen out with the Soviets; this had happened only a little while earlier. Although they certainly had never said so in so many words, except in very confidential circumstances, they were looking for help from the West. They figured the time had come to make their peace with the United States and with the Western Europeans, and specifically with the Italians.

At that time, there was a lot of talk about an Italian-Greek-Turkish Alliance. This, of course, was when the Soviet Union and its Allies in Eastern Europe were considered an active threat. The Yugoslavs, having broken away from Stalin and with Tito having taken his independent stand, led some to think that this three-power arrangement might be expanded to a Four-Power Association of some sort, including Yugoslavia. In any event, Yugoslavia was clearly intent on getting rid of any problems and situations troubling its relations with the West, particularly with the British and Americans, and also with the Italians.

Trieste was still the outstanding bone of contention; there was always trouble there. Even when I was there as Political Advisor there were frequent demonstrations and occasional riots, even though things had calmed down a good deal. The conviction was that if there was to be a constructive relationship between Yugoslavia and Italy, that this problem just had to be put out of the way.

In the popular mind, Clare Boothe Luce, our Ambassador to Italy, -- not Thompson -- had sort of been given the public credit for this for the 1954 treaty. That is the way she wanted it. She was a very articulate and vocal person. She knew how to get to the press. Tommy was not out for publicity. I wouldn't say he was a retiring person, but in a sense, he didn't give a damn. His objective was to get settled what had been a very troublesome and potentially very explosive issue. He knew that the people he wanted to impress knew what he had done. I mean, Mrs. Luce was helpful, as was Jimmy Riddleberger, our Ambassador in Yugoslavia. He had to do everything he could to put the Yugoslavs in a frame of mind where they would accept a compromise settlement. So she had to do that at the Rome end and she worked quite hard for that.

But the real genius in this thing was Tommy, without any question. He, of course, had a lot of other negotiations that he had a certain amount, if not a major responsibility for, for example when he was ambassador in the Soviet Union. He was involved in quite a number of things there, as he was also when he was in Washington.

His was a very personal method. He was leery of institutional approaches. He was a diplomat of the old school. But thoroughly alert and aware of the modern age. It wasn't that he didn't

understand how things happened in 1954 at that time, and all the years afterward, as long as he lived. He was very much alive to how things had to be done. But he had strong convictions about the personal role.

The big splash in the newspapers, and all of that, was something he didn't want to have any part in. And, in fact, as I say, I think the Trieste negotiation, because of the way he conducted it -- and the British went along with it -- and because of the very special relationship he had with the newspaper people -- in other words, he didn't ignore the newspapers -- he knew how to work with them. He knew how to get their loyalty, how to persuade them how to handle with a given story. If it were to break, it would make it impossible to get any kind of constructive solution on the problem that he was working on. The press accepted that.

We began talking early in February. It was June before any press leak that had any real validity came out. And, of course, it wasn't until October that the solution was announced publicly. The press were willing to be circumspect about it and not "spill the beans".

Today, you may find the occasional old newspaper type who understands these things. He, on his own, might go along. But he would probably be scared to death that headquarters would fire him if they knew that he was sitting on a story. So it is extremely difficult today to do this kind of thing.

But it was, I think, even in retrospect, indispensable to the process; if the word had come out, both countries would have had to take very inflexible positions and the compromises that were worked out never could have been reached.

JAMES MCCARGAR
Consular Officer
Genoa (1947-1948)

James McCargar was born and raised in San Francisco, California. He received a bachelor's degree in political science from Stanford University in 1941. He entered the Foreign Service in 1941. Mr. McCargar's career included positions in The Soviet Union, The Dominican Republic, Hungary, and France. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 18, 1995.

Q:- You're talking about major corruption within the ranks of both diplomatic and military. Right after the war there was an awful lot of loose money and objects of art.

McCARGAR: If you recall, at Potsdam, General Vaughan, who was Truman's great favorite, took off from Potsdam, flew up to Stockholm, invested in watches, flew back to Potsdam, and sold them all over the place. In protesting about it I've talked to men who answered, "I was in the First World War and, believe me, all armies are the same. This is the way it is."

While I was in Paris Geraldine, the Englishwoman who was about to be the former wife of my

British colleague in Budapest, was with me. I went to Cochran. I explained, "I have this relationship, and eventually we will put in it in order. The question is, do you think I can take this lady with me to Genoa?" Cochran looked at me, very nicely, and said, "If I could recommend something for you not to do, that is it." He said the wife of the former Consul General who had retired in Genoa was a very good friend of Mrs. George Marshall. "You wouldn't last very long," said Cochran, who wished me well. I of course took his advice.

Genoa was not a success. I was greeted politely enough by John Bailey, the Consul General, but he made it clear that he was not happy about my assignment, as he was anxious that his second-in-command, Roger Heacock, as I recall, be promoted. For that Bailey was counting heavily on Heacock's political work during the election campaign. The result was that he gave me no political assignments, notwithstanding the Department's explanatory cable of what was expected from me. The only work he assigned to me was liaison with the British Consulate in their efforts to impede Jewish immigration to Palestine, which, with Russian support in the East and Communist support locally, passed mostly through Italy.

My situation was not improved when a cable arrived one day from the Rome Embassy for me which, when decoded, was still encoded. Bailey handed it to me with considerable severity. "Is there anything you are doing here that I don't know about and should know about?" he asked. I said there was nothing of that kind.

After I had decoded the cable, it turned out to be a follow-up inquiry from my Pond successor in Budapest. I answered the cable, via Rome, and Bailey consented to its transmittal. The next step in this minor drama was a summons to Bailey's office. Without a word he handed me another cable, addressed to me via Rome, like its predecessor. I took it, expressing some mystification, repaired to my office, and decoded the message. What had gone wrong was that I had lost my touch. In coding my answer to the first message, I had transposed only once, instead of twice, so my message was unreadable in Budapest. This time I exercised double care to do it right, took the final result in to Bailey for transmittal, and, without going into detail, simply said that I had made an encryption error in replying to the first message. The temperature in the room was not perceptively improved.

While in Genoa my chief escape operative from Hungary, having taken care of himself and his, showed up with the Princess he had lived with since the Germans executed her husband, and a young Countess who, as a bartender in a Budapest hotel, had acted as a message center and letter drop for me. It was a jolly reunion, but obviously more was expected of me than I could deliver. My operative was hoping to avoid life in Austrian refugee camps by smuggling American cigarettes out of Genoa to Austria and Germany. Apart from the abundance of American cigarettes in those countries, what with the Occupation troops, I had to tell my friend he would do no such thing so long as I was in Genoa.

They returned to the Salzburg camp they had left, leaving me to explore Genoa. A strange Italian city. No music. No theater. Just so many hundreds of thousands of tons of goods, going in and out of the port, with the Genoese taking their cut. But there were diversions. There were street demonstrations in preparation for the elections. If they were organized by the Christian Democrats, nothing happened. If organized by the Communists, they usually became riotous, at

which point the Carabinieri, aboard jeeps, would drive at high speed -- they were called the "celeri" -- right into the crowds. Caught once in such an affair, I miraculously went straight up one of those stone pillars that line the Italian street arcades. This was, of course, the period when the Carabinieri fired on a Communist demonstration in the Po Valley, killing nine demonstrators. The Communists held a funeral ceremony that went the whole length of the Po, rousing the population everywhere. The British Ambassador in Rome was exercised by what he regarded as not just brutality, but also as crass stupidity. Approaching Minister of the Interior Scelba, a tough Sicilian, at a reception, the Ambassador said, "Why in Heaven's name fire on them. Why not use fire hoses, or water cannon?" Scelba looked at him coldly. "We have a shortage of water in Italy," he said.

But the simple fact was that I played no role in the 1948 Italian elections.

Q: *Was Claiborne still there when you were there?*

McCARGAR: Claiborne Pell was Consul in Bratislava when I was in Budapest. I used to see him whenever I'd go to Vienna, or Prague. From Prague Bratislava was on the road to Budapest, from Vienna it was a minor detour.

Q: *His next assignment was to Genoa, but that was after you left. Can you talk about the American participation in the elections of 1948? They were probably the one election where you might say the American influence was a factor. Can you talk about that?*

McCARGAR: I will touch upon that in connection with my next assignment, because it had to do with that. What you are suggesting was of course the case. American activity approached the frantic. It was embarrassing (I thought) to see American Ambassador Jimmy Dunn going up and down the Italian peninsula making speeches in favor of the Christian Democrats. The phrase later used, obviously a vast exaggeration, was that Eddie Page was leaning out the windows of the Embassy passing money to all the Christian Democrats. The money was plentiful. Of course we went all out, and there was, in all fairness, plenty of other money going to the Communists.

The one thing that was effective was the letter-writing campaign that was handled from Washington with the Italian communities in the United States. That helped. For example, A. P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America (originally the Bank of Italy), who was a friend of my father in San Francisco, came from a village just behind Genoa. If not a Genovese, he was certainly a Ligurian. He visited his home village before the elections, saying the right thing everywhere. The whole area was swamped with letters from San Francisco, where there was a heavy Ligurian population. It was a very effective campaign.

With the elections over, my personal affairs in some disorder, and with Bailey's attitude (although he very correctly declined to complete an efficiency report on me on the grounds that I had not been in Genoa long enough), I realized that Genoa was not the place for me to stay. I asked for home leave at my own expense which was granted.

WILLIAM E. KNIGHT
Political Officer
Rome (1947-1950)

Italian Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1951-1955)

William E. Knight was born in New York on February 1, 1922. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1942 and a master's degree in 1946. Mr. Knight joined the Foreign Service in 1946. His career included positions in Rome, Reykjavik, Canberra, Manila, and Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by Bill Jones on May 18, 1978.

Q: Why don't we begin with this question, I wonder if you could tell me how you came back to the Italian Desk in '61 when President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy] entered office? I know you had been in a similar area from '52 to '55.

KNIGHT: Yes, I'd been in exactly the same office earlier. I had started out with five years in Italy just after the war. That was my first assignment when I came into the Service, [U.S. Foreign Service] and after being in the Political Section in Rome for four years, I was brought back as the Italian Desk Officer, as it was then called.

Q: That's '47-'51?

KNIGHT: That's right. Then in '51 or so to '55 -- early '55 -- I was the Italian Desk Officer. That was in the time of Ambassador Luce [Clare Boothe Luce] and Bunker. [Ellsworth Bunker]. Then, in the framework of the rotation system of the Foreign Service, I saw myself as a generalist and not a political specialist, and so I asked for an economic assignment and I got one. I went to Iceland for two years as the principal economic officer there, just a one-man shop. And then a bigger economic job in Canberra in Australia, and I was there for three years. And as my reassignment was coming up at the end of the Canberra assignment, I got a letter from Bill Blue [William Blue] who was at that time Director, or Deputy Director perhaps it was, of the Office of Western European Affairs in State [U.S. Department of State]. It has the Italian Desk under it. He asked whether I'd be interested in going back into Italian affairs and the answer was yes. I was to go back to the next higher rung, as Officer in Charge of Italian and Austrian affairs. So, in effect, I got back into Italian affairs because Bill Blue knew of my previous Italian expertise.

Q: I see. Can you describe this point that you make in...elaborate the point you make in your essay concerning the Eisenhower [Dwight D. Eisenhower] OCB [Operations Coordinating Board] and how that worked, and the change which was brought about under President Kennedy?

KNIGHT: Right. I think that is a fairly important factor in the development of the whole debate on the apertura [l'apertura a sinistra]. In effect, the whole issue was how the United States Government affects, or rather tries to affect, the operations of all of the many, different kinds of U.S. representatives overseas. You have the military and the cultural and the economic and so

forth. And there is the question, always, of how to try to coordinate the activity of all these people. Eisenhower tried to do this through, you might say, the military approach. You had this large organization, the Operations Coordinating Board, and every Desk, every year, would have to do an Operational Plan. And you'd have to define what were agreed to be the U.S. policies and U.S. objectives. And then every actor on the scene, cultural, military, CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], State, etc. would develop lists of the actions they would be trying to take during the next year. They would identify targets and say what they were going to do to reach each target. And under each action there would be specified the principal action office concerned and the supporting offices, all very precise and detailed.

Q: Where would this report go, for example, if you did one?

KNIGHT: Well, it would be cleared through all the offices in State and then our submission would go over to the Operations Coordinating Board. The OCB had an office in a building not far from Old State, over on Jackson Place, as I recall. And there would be meetings with all the agencies concerned, with some debate and some changes, but usually not very many changes.

In the long run, this became a tremendous pain in the neck because it was just a huge paper exercise. When Kennedy came in, he was convinced that it was all a waste of time, and almost his first official act was to abolish it all.

Q: Do you know offhand whether this was his idea or Rusk's [Dean Rusk] to get rid of this?

KNIGHT: I don't have any direct knowledge, but I think Kennedy had criticized the OCB before he came in. Personally, I'm convinced it was his. It seems to me there are quotes of him saying it was a waste of time. And so, when he came in, almost his first act in the foreign affairs field was to say that the State Department ought to be the principal guardian of established policy and the principal insurer of coordination. He took it even farther. He said that the principal point where influence and expertise came together was at the Assistant Secretary level in the geographic bureaus, and that that should be the principal focal point for policy coordination and initiative. Not for ultimate decisions, but for the initiatives, because these were the people who should know everything about a country and U.S. relations with the country, and about the problems, and make policy suggestions. And they were the ones who should try to see to it that all other agencies of the United States Government worked to the same agreed tune.

And so, when I came back (as a matter of fact) I arrived on inauguration night in that great snowstorm, this was the atmosphere that I came back to. It was a time when the Desks were being urged, in effect, to take charge, to coordinate actively and not just ride along and try to synthesize other peoples' views. No. We were supposed to actively try to keep control of the foreign policy vehicle. So that's the background of this big debate.

Q: Now, that's very important because your efforts in this whole issue as it developed, and obviously as you saw it, flowed from the direct, in a sense, orders of the President...

KNIGHT: That's right.

Q: ...and he wanted you to be doing this. This was your responsibility.

KNIGHT: And then reiterated by Secretary Rusk who made speeches and sent out memos telling us to use our elbows, you know...

Q: *Right, right.*

KNIGHT: ...if necessary, bureaucratically, in the rest of Washington. We were not to be bowled over by opposition elsewhere. It was our job to be sure that policy was followed.

Q: *Okay. I wonder if you could try and recall just how the issue of "the opening to the Left" began to surface, or maybe -- . Let me put it another way. When you first returned, was this already an issue? Did you see it coming? Or when did it begin to surface and how did it begin to surface?*

KNIGHT: It had been emerging gradually as an issue over the previous years; it wasn't new then. There had been various times when the question of moving relatively farther left had arisen. Farther Left, you might say, than we had been.

Q: *Yes, I'm aware of the fact that the issue had been raised in the late fifties, but now with a new administration, was it more realistic to think that this might actually occur, and how did you begin to see it as a significant issue?*

KNIGHT: I think it was partly that there was a new administration, but primarily it was because of events in Italy. In Italy it was becoming more and more an issue. The Italians themselves were more and more preoccupied with this as a possible way out of their impasse in which the old center party formula could no longer rule. The question was where they were going to get their governing majority, and the Apertura was being increasingly discussed as a possibility. That, in effect, presented us with the issue. Then, when the Administration changed and Arthur Schlesinger [Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.] and others became interested in it, that added to the pressure.

Q: *Okay. Now from your point of view, the initiative, then, toward "the Opening to the Left" came largely from Schlesinger in the White House. Was there anyone in the State Department who...*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes. You see, you're talking about varying time frames here. Arthur Schlesinger came to it a few months after he'd been on board when the debate had already been going on for a considerable time. There's another bureaucratic element here that might be of interest to some who read this tape. There was, in effect, a coalescence of opinion between two different functional sections of the State Department and the CIA which cut across agency lines. In both agencies the operators, in effect, were in agreement among themselves on one position and the intelligence analysts were in general agreement on another.

Q: *That's very interesting.*

KNIGHT: It is interesting, and one of the reasons it's interesting was that the intelligence analysts back in those days...

Q: This is an operational versus a research kind of split.

KNIGHT: Right. Now, back in those days the feeling was that there ought to be an independent bunch of people looking at policy without any commitment towards it, so they would be intellectually and bureaucratically uncommitted. This was seen as a double-check on policy. And so the intelligence analysts, the whole community of them, were under instructions not to negotiate positions with the operators. They were just to develop their own opinions. It went to the extent that in State they would bring down their analyses to the desks, and they were supposed to show them to us and they did. But, even if we were able to convince them that such and such a thing was incorrect, their rules then were that they were not to change those drafts. [Laughter] It was really incredible! And so...

Q: Do you think it served a useful purpose, this sort of...

KNIGHT: No, I don't really. State has moved entirely away from it now. Now all research is very much operations oriented. And, in addition, they've been so cut down on budget that they don't have the personnel to do this basic research anymore in almost any area.

Q: It would seem to be almost institutionalized conflict. The way...

KNIGHT: It was. And, to me, one of the fallacies of it was that you still could get the researchers becoming committed to a policy. It just became their policy. [Laughter] They still developed an institutionalize wisdom and an agreement on a policy. It's just that it was not the official policy.

Q: I see.

KNIGHT: They didn't become completely uncommitted merely because they were kept separate. Anyway, so in the Italian context, in the apertura context, you had a group of people in INR [Intelligence and Research] and in the CIA analytical side. They were the two principal groups. But, then, they had a lot of contacts in the academic community outside because they were the channel for contacts of that kind.

Q: Right.

KNIGHT: That was in essence the heart of the pro-apertura group. On the operating side, there were the desk officers, and the chain of command above us to some extent, and the CIA operators and the military attachés who were making their analyses of these matters. And, also, in the public community, since this is a highly political world we are talking about, you mustn't forget that the Italo-American community which was very influential in U.S.-Italian affairs, was very suspicious and hesitant, essentially against the apertura.

Q: About a change. Suspicious of a change.

KNIGHT: Right. And essentially was against the change. And Meany [George Meany] and the AFL [American Federation of Labor] were against it. Reuther [Walter P. Reuther] was believed to be sort of in favor of it but he was not an active participant in the matter. So most of the weighty political forces were together with the operators and you might say that the operators were reinforced in their position by this fact. And possibly also those above my level, who later on did not intervene actively when they could have, because they had the power and the position to do so, were probably influenced by this political constellation.

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: Now, all of those things had been in being before I came back. This was the situation as it existed and before Schlesinger came on board.

Q: *In January of '61.*

KNIGHT: Right.

Q: *Now, when did it become apparent to you that there was something going on, that there was clearly a political effort -- with Schlesinger obviously a major participant -- to make this change?*

KNIGHT: Well, it was, I'd guess, looking back, probably within a couple of months of the new administration coming in. And it would keep coming up because there were all sorts of specific little issues involved in the over-all issue, like how you treat visitors and whom you see and at what level on the U.S. side, what you say and how you handle press inquiries and all that sort of thing.

Q: *Right. What about these, for example, things like leadership grants and...*

KNIGHT: Leader grants.

Q: *Leader grants, rather. Was there any specific pressure to open those to the PSI [Partita Socialista Italiani] this early?*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes, now...

Q: *We're talking, let's say, about the first few months of the Administration.*

KNIGHT: We're talking about January of '62 aren't we?

Q: *'61.*

KNIGHT: '61, yes. There had been debate on the question of the leader grants before that. All I really remember on that is that in the fall of '61 it was sort of agreed that we would loosen up. And some invitations to selected PSI people were actually offered.

Q: *If I may interrupt. You say it was agreed.*

KNIGHT: I mean that there was...

Q: *How was it agreed? Exactly by whom?*

KNIGHT: It was agreed as a matter of policy and as the result of discussion, exchange of views presumably in the form of telegrams and also supporting letters, between the Embassy and the Desk.

Q: *I see, between the Embassy and the Desk.*

KNIGHT: And then it would be discussed up above, probably at least to the Assistant Secretary level. It would be discussed with USIA [United States Information Agency] because they handled the program. That kind of thing would also have been discussed with the CIA operators. So there was an interagency discussion of it, if my memory is correct. But in any case, my memory is clear that there was an actual, formal decision that the offers would be made. And the people we offered the grants to didn't come over right away. They had their own political situations, and those that were invited didn't come that year. They eventually came the following year.

Q: *In '62?*

KNIGHT: Yes, as I recall, yes.

Q: *I see. I guess that was after Nenni [Pietro Nenni] published the article in Foreign Affairs?*

KNIGHT: Well, it was after...

Q: *Which was, I think, January of '62.*

KNIGHT: Well, then it would have been after. Yes, because I think that the first one came like April or May or something like that.

Q: *Of '62?*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *I see. What about Ambassador Harriman's [W. Averell Harriman] trip in March of '61. He told Italian leaders that the United States was receptive to quote, "new ideas." That was the phrase he used. And yet apparently he did that without any very specific instructions from either Secretary Rusk or from the President. Did that have any...how did you react to that?*

KNIGHT: Now, as to any instructions to Harriman, I'm not sure that he required instructions. [Laughter]

Q: *Well, of course, he was in a unique position. That's quite true.*

KNIGHT: He was the gray eminence -- he was then.

Q: *That's right.*

KNIGHT: And I don't remember any prior discussion of the line he was to take, before he went overseas. I don't think there was any. I also don't remember any great repercussions of his visit after he went. There was no follow-up to speak of.

Q: *Yes. No follow-up, for example, through Schlesinger? Nothing?*

KNIGHT: No. Or from Harriman! I don't remember anything coming from him or his office after he came back saying, "This is what I said and this is what I think. And now we should do thus and so."

Q: *I see.*

KNIGHT: At the desk level, I don't think there was anything.

Q: *He was expressing then only a very general kind of an opinion.*

KNIGHT: No. My feeling is more that, although he had the opinion, he wasn't so devoted to it that he wanted to follow through to be sure that something happened as a result of it.

Q: *I see.*

KNIGHT: I'm saying, I guess, that operationally I don't recall his taking that trip and saying those things to have been important to us.

Q: *I see. I see.*

KNIGHT: It didn't require action or any follow-up.

Q: *I see. He was apparently in Schlesinger's camp. I have to say that in quotes because it's not... The evidence that I've seen doesn't make it 100 per cent sure, but on the other hand there is evidence, for example, that he intervened in the Lister [George T. Lister] case that we talked about briefly before. And that he was...*

KNIGHT: George Lister spoke to him...

Q: *That's right.*

KNIGHT: ...when he was over there. Yes.

Q: *And helped to change the rating. Lister's rating. He at least intervened on his behalf. So he was to some degree...*

KNIGHT: That I don't know anything about, yes.

Q: *And...*

KNIGHT: I know he was involved in...

Q: *...sympathetic to Schlesinger's point of view. But after this one trip I haven't found any evidence that he did very much in it again. That he had very much to do with it again.*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *And as far as you know, that's the case?*

KNIGHT: As far as I know, that's the case. Yes, yes.

Q: *As far as you know.*

KNIGHT: Well, I'm trying to think who it was -- we discussed this at the [Hoover Foundation/American Enterprise Institute] conclave last year and someone said that he was convinced that the reason Harriman didn't take any more action, and the reason Rusk didn't get into it, and the others at other levels didn't get into it, was that politically they felt it was a no-win situation: taking great risks particularly in view of some of the disasters that had already occurred since the coming of the Kennedys, you know...

Q: *Yes.*

KNIGHT: And the threat and the power of the right wing. He came in on such a sliver-thin majority, and here they would be taking great political risks for something that the people closest to the scene said was very dangerous. So, why bother? And, particularly since the people closest to the scene were saying that it was going to happen anyway. So quote, "What are we going to win by sticking our necks out when it doesn't really mean that much to us?" I have no idea whether that is a valid thesis, but it is, plausible, at least.

Q: *I see. Well, I think that makes a lot of sense. And some of the evidence I've seen suggests that you're right. I was particularly curious about one kind of question. As I was saying earlier, the kinds of nuts and bolts, the nitty gritty daily activities sort of knowledge which very often, I think, scholars fail to look for. I wonder if you could perhaps give me a description of what a day was like for you on the Desk? I mean, precisely what kinds of thing did you do on an average day, if there is such a thing as an average day?*

KNIGHT: All right.

Q: *From when you came in in the morning to when you left in the evening.*

KNIGHT: All right, all right. The telegraph traffic would probably be your first thing in the morning, although it would continue during the day because you'd continue to get batches. But

the biggest batch was there in the morning.

Q: *The things that had come in during the night, for example, overnight?*

KNIGHT: That's right. And the Desk got everything that related to Italy. As far as I know, everything. And so you'd wade through it and this was a task. It would be a couple of inches high. So it would be...

Q: *In a single day? A couple of inches high?*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *Wow!*

KNIGHT: Including the dispatches and the telegrams both.

Q: *From the Embassy.*

KNIGHT: And you'd sort them out and the things you had to read quickly you'd read quickly, and some with more care than others. But, nevertheless you had this volume of stuff because it wouldn't just be Italian affairs but it would be NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] because Italy's involved in NATO etc., etc. So, the traffic you would wade through. Then, anybody going out to Italy in an official capacity of any kind, a new appointee or a visiting fireman, would come by the Desk for a briefing, typically. Any telegram going out to the Embassy with instructions or questions or anything, would be cleared with the Desk. This was one of the instruments of coordination and control, this clearance process.

Q: *That's especially interesting for me because apparently at one point Schlesinger would be writing letters to people in Italy without clearing them with you. He did, didn't he?*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes, yes, yes. And then, continual meetings. Italians coming in from Italy would be seeing others but would be coming through the Desk. In the case of an official visit like the Fanfani [Amintore Fanfani] visit it was a tremendous exercise because the Desk would be the point of coordination for all the preparatory paperwork.

Q: *I see. Did you, for example, have anything to do with deciding who would be invited to functions and scheduling appointments and, for example, that kind of thing?*

KNIGHT: Not really, because with a presidential or a prime ministerial visit, I don't mean to say that the desk was doing all that. It was not. And these practices tended to vary somewhat from year to year. But the Desk plays a huge role in any of the substantive preparations on policies.

Q: *Yes. For example, did you supply the President with any kind of policy papers or suggestions as to what he might discuss with Fanfani or that kind of thing?*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *You did.*

KNIGHT: But on Fanfani that was just a single memo.

Q: *Typically, I see.*

KNIGHT: I mean, as I recall, on this issue it was a single memo. Then there would be different memos on different subjects as well. More than one.

So. For the rest of the day the Desk was the working point of contact with the Italian Embassy. Now, the Italian Embassy was one of the most active and effective embassies and they had their contacts all over town. They would often know about things in our government before we did. [Laughter] Old Ortona [Egidio Ortona], who later became ambassador here, was an incredible operator, terribly good. He was a good fellow, I'm not criticizing him at all. But they were very active and the Desk was one of their principal points of contact. I'm not saying the Desk was all of it. They would also go in to see the Office Director and the Assistant Secretary and the deputy assistants. And if the issue got big, they'd go up to the under secretaries, and the Secretary. But that was part of the Desk's function and an important part.

What other elements of the thing? Well, analyses. You'd have questions come down about what's going on in Italy or what was the importance to Italy of such and such a thing. And the Desk was supposed to have the expertise to tell people what the political constellation of forces was and what the probable meaning of this or that was and so forth. So there was a continual memorandum-writing function that the Desk performed.

Q: *Did you have a staff to help you with this sort of thing?*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes!

Q: *A research staff? How many people?*

KNIGHT: Not a research staff, they were all sort of operational people you might say.

Q: *I see. I see.*

KNIGHT: At that time, I was the Officer in Charge of Italy and Austria and there was an Austrian Desk Officer and an Italian Desk Officer. And also we had an Economic Officer on the Italian Desk then.

Q: *I see.*

KNIGHT: And then there were two people in the file room one of whom would also do some background paper work. And then we had the staff of secretaries. So there was a good little set.

One of the basic differences -- the changes -- in the Foreign Service structure since those days

which I think is fundamental and terribly harmful is that the Desks do not typically now have their own economic officers.

Q: *When did that change?*

KNIGHT: Over the years. Gradually, with the attrition, the budgetary constraints, they'd shift to one economic officer for a regional office, or one and a half or two, which would mean that these economic officers would then have to cover many countries. Well, to me, this means that they don't really know what's going on in any one country. And I think it's very much too bad. But that's a sideline.

Q: *A side issue, right.*

KNIGHT: A side issue.

Q: *Let's say, for example, you were to get a request from either the Assistant Secretary or the Secretary. Let's say on some development in the Italian Parliament. And they were concerned about what it meant and how the United States ought to respond to it. And they were to send you a memo saying what does this mean? How would you respond in terms of the mechanics of what you would do?*

KNIGHT: Well, they would either send a memo or their aide would just get on the phone and say send us a memo. Or very often they would just get a telegram and have questions about it and they'd scribble on it, "What does this mean?" And that would come down to us and then, if they were in a great hurry, we might simply go up and tell them orally -- but the proper way of doing it would be to write them a memo. "In response to your question, this is what we think is the situation and what it means to us." And, at that point, if we had an action to suggest, we could suggest a course of action. Very often, this kind of request for a memo was related to a development. Somebody would be coming in. Somebody visiting. They were expected to raise certain things. The Embassy had already told us they were going to raise certain things. Or the Italian Government had raised a problem in Rome and the Embassy had to respond and what was our response going to be, etc., etc.? On most of these endless numbers of action questions, the Desk would be the principal initial formulator of a response. And then the Desk would be responsible for clearing [the reply] with any other U.S. government agencies or sections of the State Department that had a legitimate interest.

Q: *I see.*

KNIGHT: And then that memo would go back up through channels, depending on how high it was to go. Certainly it would always go through the Office Director, the officer who was in charge of Western European Affairs. And then if it was aimed at the Bureau level, it would just stop at the Bureau. Or, if it were addressed to an under secretary or the Secretary, it would go up through channels to that destination.

Q: *I see. So obviously, for example, when Fanfani came, you had a lot of work in connection with that visit.*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes.

Q: *On the other side of the coin, for example, when President Kennedy visited Italy -- oh, you weren't there in June of '63.*

KNIGHT: No.

Q: *But I assume that that, too, would have, for the Italian Desk Officer, meant a great deal of responsibility.*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Q: *In terms of the nuts and bolts of a presidential visit.*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *What sort of things, for example, do you think they might ask the Italian Desk Officer if the President was going to visit Rome?*

KNIGHT: Well, the most important would be a whole series of briefing papers, depending on the subject. And then the Desk also would clear everybody else's briefing papers. Because the result would be a great big briefing book, you see. And then there are backgrounds on the current situation in Italy and Italian preoccupations and descriptions of the political scene and so forth.

Q: *Yes.*

KNIGHT: There was always a lot of biographic data included. That, however, was fundamentally the responsibility of INR [Intelligence and Research], the intelligence side.

Q: *I see. Well, let's return then for a moment to the gradual emergence of this Opening- to-the-Left issue. How often did you communicate with Ambassador Reinhardt [G. Frederick Reinhardt], with Mr. Horsey [Outerbridge Horsey] and people in the Embassy? And, in general, was it daily, were you in contact in a daily way?*

KNIGHT: No, that would be an exaggeration. Continually, and what I would call frequently, but by no means daily. I would say we probably exchanged letters -- see, it's considered good practice in that role, between the Embassy and the Desk, to exchange backgrounder letters frequently. By that I mean every week, ten days, every two weeks or something, in which we would just keep each other informed of what was cooking, what the problems were, what was coming up, what was being worked on. It's an element of coordination. And, I would imagine we exchanged letters every couple of weeks, something like that. Not always on this. Not necessarily on this.

Q: *Not necessarily...*

KNIGHT: Not necessarily. Very much of this issue was of such importance and sensitivity that it would come in a telegram. You see, the problem about a letter is that it gets no distribution unless the Desk Officer deliberately decides to reproduce it and to send it to somebody else who he knows is interested. And so, there is sort of a tension there. On the one hand, letters are encouraged because they provide a form of coordination which is better than a telegram that is going to be distributed to a hundred and fifty people. They permit more freedom of expression and so forth.

Q: *Sure.*

KNIGHT: But on the other hand, they are not distributed, so there is suspicion that some things are sent back by letter that really should not be. So, this is a problem that is never going to be resolved. It will always be there. It has to be watched over.

Q: *Right. Was the May '61 meeting that you had, you and I think, Mr. Blue, with Mr. Schlesinger at the White House, was that your first overt discussion of this issue with him?*

KNIGHT: I really do not remember and I cannot testify as to when the meetings were. I don't think...

Q: *Do you remember that particular meeting in May of '61?*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes. I remember that one specifically.

Q: *What did he say? What did he try and...was he trying to convince you?*

KNIGHT: As I recall, it was sort of pro forma. He was...He didn't really try to convince us. He didn't really think there was any chance, I think. [Laughter]

Q: *The evidence certainly suggests that he definitely was trying...*

KNIGHT: And incidentally Rostow [Walt W. Rostow] was present; he was there too.

Q: *Oh, he was! I didn't know that.*

KNIGHT: Rostow was there and it was in Schlesinger's office in the East Wing. And Rostow just sort of sat there, owlshly listening, didn't participate. He didn't do much, as I recall. But I think Schlesinger made some of his key points and asked our opinion and we, in effect, replied that we considered it a risky thing for the United States. We had nothing to gain and it [The Apertura] was going to happen anyway. The meeting wasn't terribly long as I recall, probably thirty-five or forty minutes, something like that.

Q: *What was the mood of the group? Was it in any way tense or...*

KNIGHT: No. That one wasn't tense.

Q: *I know that there was a later meeting with Mr. Horsey which was very, very bitter.*

KNIGHT: I've heard second hand that that was very bitter and very outspoken, but this one was not that at all. This was sort of unimpassioned. So, I don't remember anything from that meeting that was of particular significance. It didn't lead to anything.

Q: *Did you have the sense at that point that he might be moving in this direction, whether or not you were going to go along with him?*

KNIGHT: Oh, no. If my memory is correct, he had already given abundant evidence that he was thinking in these terms. But that was not the kick-off...

Q: *But when I say moving I mean -- I certainly agree with you there was evidence before May '61 -- When I say moving, though, I mean that he would take direct action on his own.*

KNIGHT: No.

Q: *No.*

KNIGHT: No, I wouldn't say so.

Q: *So that was then somewhat of a surprise to you when it did come.*

KNIGHT: Right. And incidentally, before I gave my talk last year, I went over to see Bill Blue, who lives in Georgetown, and he couldn't remember anything about that meeting, either. He said it seemed to him a rather perfunctory meeting. It was not a dramatic encounter.

Q: *No, but that's not the description Schlesinger gives for it either. But, it was just sort of a frank exchange of views. To say the least. Diplomatically put.*

KNIGHT: But I think that Platt [Alan A. Platt] makes the point that it was following that meeting that Schlesinger in effect gave up on the State Department and decided to try to go out on his own.

Q: *Did you feel at that point, or at any point soon after, that he had essentially an anti-bureaucratic bias? That he tended to think that innovation could come only by working around the bureaucracy? Which I think is a fair description of his...*

KNIGHT: Oh, I think we know it now. I mean, in his book it's quite clear.

Q: *A Thousand Days. Is what you're talking about?*

KNIGHT: Yeah. Whether we were aware of it as early as May of that year. We already knew, I think, by then that he was very interested because he was meeting with Dana Durand and others and urging us to do things on the individual elements of substance. So, I think we knew what his interests were and what his recommendations were.

Q: Right. Now, by June of '61 when Fanfani came, you did specifically at that point recommend against the President opening this question with him?

KNIGHT: We sent a memo to the President, but I'll have to confess that exactly what we said in that memo I have to get from documents like this that mention it. I certainly remember that we did not recommend any change in our essential position. We did not...I can testify that we did not say that the United States should change its position and come out in favor of openly encouraging the apertura.

Q: Right.

KNIGHT: In other words, essentially it would have been a reiteration of our concern and the possible implications [of the apertura] for policy in relations with NATO and the rest of it.

Q: Right. Now, apparently Schlesinger, Komer [Robert W. Komer] and some others urged the President to at least informally raise the issue with Fanfani. To at least suggest that if you think it's a good idea, we would support it. Rather than to imply that the United States would want to push it against the wishes of the Italian Government. But when the meeting was over, the President's own recollection was very, very general and he wasn't even sure he had raised it. The evidence that I've seen suggests that he wasn't even, he didn't even remember with any certainty that he had said anything about it.

KNIGHT: Really!

Q: Yes. He doubted that. He said, "I think I mentioned it." But only -- and even then if he did, and that's not sure -- it was in only the most general way saying that if you think that you wanted to move in this direction, we would not be against it. Which is certainly something far short of an open and active endorsement.

KNIGHT: Right.

Q: Which would seem to be much, much closer to your position than it was to Schlesinger's.

KNIGHT: Well, the only thing I can contribute to that is that nothing came down to us on the Desk which indicated any change in the President's position on it, or which in effect indicated any presidential position on it at all.

Q: At all, right. And you had to assume, therefore, that the policy was the policy previously in effect.

KNIGHT: That's right. If they were going to have that writ run, it had to come down to the Desk, because that was the place where it ran.

Q: Right.

KNIGHT: At least in those days, that was the place where it ran. That was the place where actions were taken on all the individual substantive questions which flowed from the policy posture. And so, it would have had to come to us. And it didn't come to us.

Q: *So then, your argument in your essay that there was never, essentially, as Platt would say, two policies running concurrently or parallel. You argued and said that there was one policy, plus dissenters from that policy who tried to change it.*

KNIGHT: And who tried to give the impression that there had been a change.

Q: *And that the President approved of that change.*

KNIGHT: That's correct.

Q: *At least tacitly.*

KNIGHT: That's correct.

Q: *If not actively.*

KNIGHT: That's correct. And I say that there was only one policy, and that we were responsible for coordinating its implementation, and that's what we were trying to do. Any policy can be challenged any time, and arguments can be adduced for the need for a change, and then it's debated, and that's fair game.

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: But it was never changed during this period, and so anybody who was acting on a different line was following his own private policy and not the U.S. policy. [Laughter]

Q: *This is exactly what makes this such an interesting story.*

KNIGHT: It is. It is.

Q: *Because it tells so much about the way in which individuals, interest groups, factions, bureaucracy, etc., will try and work their will. Especially...this is uniquely an interesting case because you have the President and the Secretary of State largely uninterested, not taking hold of it, not holding the reins on the issue.*

KNIGHT: That's right.

Q: *Thus giving a lot of freedom of action to a lot of different people.*

KNIGHT: That's right.

Q: *On a lot of different levels. And that's what is so interesting, seeing all these things in conflict*

on this question.

KNIGHT: Right. Now, I think that, because of his [Arthur Schlesinger's] physical position on the White House staff, before he was through, the Italians in Italy became convinced that there had been a change in the position.

Q: *Oh, that's interesting. That's...*

KNIGHT: You see?

Q: *I see. When Ambassador Reinhardt visited the President in -- I think it was -- the spring of '62 -- when I think he was still...*

KNIGHT: I was still there.

Q: *You were still on the Italian Desk, he asked him very explicitly whether or not he had endorsed the change and of course mentioned what was going on. And the President said, "No, I have not and you would be making a mistake to assume that I did."*

KNIGHT: I read that. That's fascinating...

Q: *Yes, it is. It's an absolutely fascinating...And it would suggest...it also suggests the possibility that the President was moving in two directions at once.*

KNIGHT: Well, my own hunch -- and this is not a contribution of fact but only my opinion -- is that the President probably knew what Schlesinger was doing.

Q: *Oh, no doubt about that at all.*

KNIGHT: And was willing to let him act.

Q: *Right. It reminds me of...*

KNIGHT: But that's not the same as saying that he had made the decision that the whole Government should do it.

Q: *That's right. There's a whole different assumption there which is that, "All right, I will let Schlesinger act and if he can move things in that direction successfully, fine. On the other hand, if it falls through or creates real problems, that'll be his problem rather than mine. Because I never endorsed it."*

KNIGHT: Yes, yes.

Q: *I think that perhaps that's what Kennedy was doing. And if he was -- if that is the case and the evidence is indirect -- then it was a, I think, rather sophisticated and clever way to do it. Although one could also say it was evasive. It depends, I suppose, on your point of view.*

KNIGHT: Well, now, when was that NSC [National Security Council] memo?

Q: *That was...*

KNIGHT: Asking for a reassessment.

Q: *The NSC memo. That is...late, well, I think about in the late summer of '62? No, spring of '62. I'm sorry. Spring of '62.*

KNIGHT: Spring of '62.

Q: *And you were still on the Desk at that time.*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *Right. Spring of '62.*

KNIGHT: Well, that was sort of a watershed. I think that's when Schlesinger really gave up on the State Department. There, you might say, the career officer's attitude as to his function played an important role -- if I was a typical career officer, and I don't know whether I was or not, but I certainly shared some of their attitudes. If the memo had said, "The President has decided that a change in United States posture is now necessary and the problem is how to implement it and what is to be the desirable and the wise way of moving, involving timing as well as specific steps and so forth" then our tradition was that we would accept the decision and implement it. We would make recommendations so that it was implemented in what we considered a wise fashion, but we would implement it.

Q: *Sure.*

KNIGHT: The request was not that. The request was for a reassessment and a re-presentation of our opinion on what the United States' position should be and the implications for the United States. And my position was, "As long as they're asking for my opinion, I'm going to give them my opinion and not what I consider to be a negotiated consensus reflecting everybody's view."

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: And not what I thought they wanted. Well, if they knew what they wanted why did I have to tell them what they wanted? They were asking for my expert opinion as to what the implications for the United States were. And so the reply that I drafted was exactly that, and it was cleared with Bill Tyler, [William R. Tyler, Assistant Secretary for EUR] and he approved it. And, that was a key point, you see. He could have said, "No, we have to be a little bit... We have to do something else now because Schlesinger feels so strongly about it," and so forth. Well, he didn't. He supported it. By then I was Acting Deputy Director of Western European Affairs. I was still doing the Italian-Austrian thing as well, but physically my office was in the Deputy Director's office of Western Europe. And I remember when Bob Komer came over to receive our

reply to this NSC memo. And he came marching in and sat down...

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: ...He read it and his face fell. And he said...

Q: *Well, he was clearly sympathetic to Schlesinger's position. No doubt about that.*

KNIGHT: He, in effect, had brought the whole issue to Schlesinger's urgent attention to begin with. But, Bob said, "Oh, all right, if you guys want to bleed and die over this." And then he left.

Q: *Did you feel then that this situation, which really in many ways is unique because of the constellation of events and levels of authority here, presented you with, relatively speaking, a unique ability not only to just define policy but almost to make it. Do you feel that that was the case?*

KNIGHT: Well...

Q: *Or is that -- am I putting that a little too strongly?*

KNIGHT: It's not correct to say that we were in the position of making and defining policy, because anything we did had to be with the endorsement and the acceptance of those above us. For example, on the telegrams which would present the position on key substantive issues as they would come along, those would go up to the higher levels. I couldn't even say which levels each one would reach, but Assistant Secretary, or at least Office Director. Maybe some of them even went up to the Under Secretary or the Secretary. And so, we weren't making policy. We were proposing positions which were endorsed because no one else had contrary views that they wanted to make a big issue over.

Q: *But, this situation did...It gave you a lot of space to maneuver.*

KNIGHT: That's right. It gave us a role. That's the big thing, because...

Q: *Right. That's what I'm trying to get at.*

KNIGHT: Typically, somebody up the line will be intensely interested, concerned and active. And so, although the proposals will go up from the lower levels, they will be put off or changed, or what have you. The unique element of this situation was that that didn't happen. What the Desk was proposing was, in effect, always being done, because nobody else wanted to take over. So in that it was a unique situation in my experience.

Q: *Did you get any, as you can recall, any specific reactions from the Embassy in Rome to Schlesinger's visit?*

KNIGHT: Oh, yes. Oh, they were in an uproar.

Q: *All right. What happened exactly?*

KNIGHT: I don't remember details... (End of tape)

...and I think that we got this in the course of the weeks after he left, when what had been going on became more and more clear from the playbacks that the Embassy was getting from the Italians that Schlesinger had seen. And when I say 'they' I certainly mean Outerbridge Horsey. I don't think I have direct evidence from that period of Ambassador Reinhardt's view but I subsequently became convinced that he had these feelings as well, partly from his oral interview with your series.

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: They [the Embassy] felt that this was unauthorized. It was representing an unofficial policy, an unsanctioned policy, in effect, not policy at all.

Q: *Which Reinhardt, it seems, confirmed when he spoke to the President, which, I believe, was right after Schlesinger's visit. Either right after or right before. I can't remember for sure. Now, was there anything else...*

KNIGHT: You see, there were various things. There was the correspondence as well as the visit. And whether the correspondence was after the visit or before, I have no direct recollection.

Q: *I think it was both, as I recall.*

KNIGHT: Perhaps both.

Q: *And he did use White House stationery. Did you ever see one of these letters?*

KNIGHT: I never saw one, no. But I think they've been published. Some of them have been published in Italian publications so that there should be really no doubt as to whether they existed or whether they were on White House stationery.

Q: *Oh, there's...It's...*

KNIGHT: I think there would be hard evidence of that.

Q: *I don't think that's an issue. Right. What about the Humphrey [Hubert H. Humphrey] visit? Any reaction to that?*

KNIGHT: I don't remember anything specifically about that.

Q: *Or Assistant Secretary of State Gardner [Richard N. Gardner] who was at the UN [United Nations] with Adlai Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson]?*

KNIGHT: I don't remember anything specifically about that.

Q: *He's now Ambassador.*

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *Did you talk to Mr. Horsey at all about his meeting with Schlesinger at the White House? Apparently it was much less peaceful than yours.*

KNIGHT: I have talked to him since, because we're still friends and I see him every couple of years. But I don't remember talking to him then about it. I think I know that it was a bloody meeting. [Laughter] But I don't know anything specific about it.

Q: *Okay. I was especially intrigued by one thing in your essay when you mentioned the advice to publicly oppose the Opening to the Left and then privately worked against it.*

KNIGHT: Wait. Wait a minute. No, publicly the position was of neutrality.

Q: *Excuse me.*

KNIGHT: We had no position on it.

Q: *Right. That's right. I'm sorry. To publicly say that the United States essentially would keep hands off and privately try to slow it down.*

KNIGHT: Well, express our concern. Now, we're splitting hairs because if we express our concerns and the Italians care about our concerns we are discouraging it. And that we were doing. We were worried about the NATO implications, and so forth.

Q: *The reason I raised that issue -- I'm glad you corrected my error -- is that in the Platt thesis there certainly seems to be evidence that the United States was at least indirectly involved -- for example, Luce's, some of Luce's efforts in the fifties -- to influence elections. Was there any, do you know of any evidence that the Government -- whether it was the CIA or whatever -- tried in any way, for example, to influence the outcome of Italian elections? To keep the PSI or the PCI [Partita Comunista Italiana] from...*

KNIGHT: Oh, it's now in the public realm. Now, we may have to discuss later whether this particular portion should be classified. But...

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: But having put that on your tape, I'll say that it has now been in the public realm that the United States subsidized Italian elections during much of that period.

I might throw in one footnote. One mistake that Allan Platt makes in his thesis is that the United States before this had always been throwing its weight on the conservative side; by implication he almost says the reactionary side, although I'm not sure he says that.

Q: *I think there is a bias in that essay. Yes, I agree with you.*

KNIGHT: That was not the case. The policy was that we were in favor of the center party coalition. And during my first time on the Desk, there was a somewhat analogous experience with Mrs. Luce, because they [the Italians] were already then in the same parliamentary impasse which later became much worse. And she was convinced that the only way out of it was to make an apertura a destra [an Opening to the Right].

Q: *To the right.*

KNIGHT: To the monarchists, you know, bring in the Monarchists. And, in effect, I fought the same holding battle against the right then...

Q: *That's fascinating!*

KNIGHT: ...that I later fought on the left. [Laughter] And with success. The argument that I used then was that the Monarchists were just too small. And also, you had people on the left wing of the Christian Democratic Party who felt very strongly against them -- as strongly against them as the right wing felt against the PSI, in effect. But the big thing was that the Monarchists were not a substantial body. They were democrats. I wouldn't have said keep them out because they're no-good-niks. No, but they were small. They were about six percent of the Parliament and they didn't really have a policy and they didn't have much of a following. And so, there came one day when the news came that the Monarchists had split! And so that issue died. [Laughter] But exactly! They were not a partita sostanziosa [substantial]. [Laughter]

Q: *Right.*

KNIGHT: So, I just point that out. Our position had not been to support the Right as a bias. It had been towards the Center. And the only reason that we were sort of forced to consider changes with the Center was that the Center was running out of its majority.

Q: *It was a question of whether the Center could continue to rule.*

KNIGHT: Right, right.

Q: *Which of course sounds terribly contemporary, doesn't it? [Laughter] Platt mentions that between middle '62 and late '62 virtually all of the people in the State Department who had supported your position left or...I'm curious about to what degree that was, for example. Why did you...Were you forced out? Did you volunteer?*

KNIGHT: Heavens, no, no, no. That is one...

Q: *There is an implication there that there was an, almost a forcible change of...*

KNIGHT: No. That is so silly! He could have just asked me. He got that opinion from one

person that he asked. He told me who he asked. He should have just asked me.

Q: I see. Well, I would like to get it down for the record.

KNIGHT: That fellow thought that in the State Department's context one was penalized for suggesting any change in policy whatsoever and that I would have felt that I would be penalized for recommending any change in our posture, and therefore I didn't. There is nothing in that whatsoever. There would have been no penalty for recommending a change in our position on the apertura in career terms. The reason I left WE [Western European Affairs] then was that I had always wanted to go to one of the major war colleges. And the opportunity came to go to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. And it was just too tempting to pass up, you know, because those are marvelous, marvelous years.

Q: So there was no sinister...

KNIGHT: And I was right. It was a marvelous year! I loved it! So that's why I left WE [Western European Affairs].

Q: Right. What was your reaction, then, to events subsequent to your, within say the next year when essentially the opening did take place?

KNIGHT: Yes. But it really took place about a year and a half after I left. It didn't happen overnight.

Q: Late '63.

KNIGHT: Late '63.

Q: Just afterward, the assassination.

KNIGHT: That's right. It happened sort of the way I had expected. A lot of time went by. There were modifications in positions and people got used to the idea. There was danger of a split in the Christian Democratic Party, and so that had not been a vain fear. Scelba [Mario Scelba] almost left. But the bad things that I feared from it didn't necessarily happen, either.

Q: It didn't make that much of a difference.

KNIGHT: It didn't make that much of a difference.

Q: That's quite clear in retrospect.

KNIGHT: The one thing that really happened in the course of the following ten years was that it killed the PSI.

Q: Yes.

KNIGHT: And that's part of the argument in the Communist Party now, that they are going to kill themselves if they go into the Government, and that this is all a foul plot. As a matter of fact, the PSI people in Italy now, some of them, are taking the position that this was a deliberate Machiavellian Christian Democrat intention, "We'll kill the PSI through the apertura." I mean, that's their own rationalization for failure. That's not what was going on at the time. But the Communists are now saying that that is the sort of danger for them of coming into the government. Exactly the same: "That we'll be identified with a do-nothing regime and will lose our support." They have some chapter and verse that they are beginning now to be able to cite in support of that thesis. [Laughter]

Q: When Senator Humphrey went in '61, he was very surprised, for example, that the political officers in the Embassy had never met Nenni. And yet, of course, by June of '63, when Kennedy went, he met personally with him. Which I suppose has to be seen as a kind of turning point.

KNIGHT: Oh, yes. There was an evolution in that.

Q: No question about that.

KNIGHT: No question. And under this whole process of the Schlesinger pressures and so forth there was, there was modification. The modifications were underway to some extent before he came along. But there had been earlier guidelines as to who could see whom and how it would be done, because we didn't want to give the impression that this was just another party that could be dealt with like any other party. We were really worried about what the result would be of their coming into the government circles, and so there had been tight restrictions and these were, over the course of time, lifted.

Q: Right. There are some very interesting accounts of that meeting, as a matter of fact, between Nenni and President Kennedy.

KNIGHT: Really.

Q: Suggesting that William Fraleigh [William N. Fraleigh] -- is that how it's pronounced?

KNIGHT: Yes, yes.

Q: Who was a member of the Embassy, describes Nenni as being deeply emotional about it and how he felt that Kennedy had given him something that he had wanted for an awfully long time. A sort of legitimization from him. According to Fraleigh, when he came out of the meeting he was virtually in tears.

KNIGHT: Really.

Q: He was so impressed with the meaning of this meeting for him. Although, of course, subsequently one could argue that it didn't do the PSI very much good.

KNIGHT: Yes.

Q: *But they were in the government.*

KNIGHT: But that's their own fault and it's the fault of the Italian political system.

Q: *The system. Yes. Your point at the end of your essay is very interesting on that whole question of the nature of the system.*

KNIGHT: Italian checkers.

Q: *[Laughter] Do you have any other points that you would like to add, on. Let's see.*

KNIGHT: Let me just look.

Q: *Do you have any additional points that you might want to add?*

KNIGHT: Well, there is sort of a personal question, you might say, about the interaction between a career officer, such as me, and Schlesinger, as an example of someone who comes in to the operation as the result of a change in administration. We often have the feeling that the past has no real weight for such people. They tend to feel -- people that come in -- they tend to feel that history starts on the day that they arrive. Whereas we who have lived through the past ten or fifteen years, we carry it with us. We feel its reality. I think this played a part in that position at the moment.

I saw one note in the Kennedy Library materials that I'd like to comment on and that is that Mr. Schlesinger, apparently now closer to the present day (I'm not sure whom it was; it seems to me it was 1971 or so) was in effect saying that his position at that time had not been one of trying to move the United States to actively favor the apertura, but that he was trying to move it to a position of true neutrality, whereas previously we had been actively and vigorously opposing it.

Q: *You or the Desk?*

KNIGHT: The whole U.S. Government.

Q: *The United States official position, the State Department...*

KNIGHT: The United States official position and the Embassy and so forth. Well, this just does not wash. I mean, what was going on then in many, many different contexts was trying to move the United States toward the position of actively encouraging it, soliciting it, trying to push it along. Not letting it happen at its own speed but moving it along fast, partly because this was considered a potentially healthy example for other European countries like Germany. How do you bring the Socialists into the alignment in Germany? And France.

Q: *You think they had...*

KNIGHT: This was called the Grand Design. They had a name for it. The Grand Design.

Q: *[Simultaneously] There is certainly evidence... There is certainly evidence that they saw this as a precedent.*

KNIGHT: That's right.

Q: *There's no question about that.*

KNIGHT: And so, they wanted to press forward with it. And the result was a series of proposals for specific actions to encourage it. Not just to be neutral about it. So, I don't think this new myth should be accepted. The facts do not bear it out at all.

Q: *Well, do you have any other points? I think I've just about gone through my outline. Just this one last point. I was wondering about whether or not the Austrian side of your responsibilities...To what degree it occupied your time. Whether there were any fairly major issues.*

KNIGHT: Very, very much less. There were really no issues that involved me in internal Austrian affairs. They sort of ran themselves and the Desk Officer was very capable and he handled them. I pretty much signed off on what he recommended, the way Bill Tyler signed off on what things I recommended on Italy. The one issue that was important was the Alto Adige in the Tyrol. And there you had the agitations by the Austrian Irredentist groups. Fundamentally, their headquarters was in Innsbruck. And their internal Austrian political positions depended on agitating this issue. The Austrian internal political balance was delicate enough that everybody there had to sort of play with this issue in order to keep their internal political positions. And so, there was a series of disorders in the Trentino, in the Tyrol, with agitations for broader autonomy. There were those who, of course, wanted it returned to Austria. But aside from that lunatic fringe, there was tremendous support in the Tyrol for more concessions on language in the schools and a bigger role in local government. More local autonomy and so forth. And this was continually being argued about and we were being pressured to take a position on one side or the other.

Now, since this was the Desk in charge of Italy and Austria, it was sort of interesting that we had both sides of the argument.

Q: *Right. Yes, that is interesting.*

KNIGHT: And so, since we did not want to be involved, we were able to say we won't be involved, and to maintain a true neutrality. We didn't want to get caught up in this thing that had nothing for us at all. It would just make one side or the other mad. And, so that was sort of fun. Those two countries are now in different offices and so the situation is not organizationally the same.

Q: *I see.*

KNIGHT: Austria and Switzerland are together in a way they weren't then. And Italy is in a

different office.

Q: Well, one last point. I can't help but be tempted by seeing some -- I'm not sure exactly what the right word would be but...The present situation in Italy concerning bringing the Communists into the government suggests -- many of the arguments that are being made sound very, very similar to the arguments that were being made in the early sixties about whether to bring in the Socialists. Do you see any similarities? Do you think the situation would work out essentially the same way if the Communists were brought in? Or do you think that it's a fundamentally different kind of problem?

KNIGHT: The fears can be the same. You know, I might be on the other side of the fence now, merely because so much more time has passed. I don't think we are...the world is not the same as it was twenty years ago. The Communist Party is now populated probably 90 percent by people who were five years old or under when the war ended. In other words, they haven't lived through the revolutionary, horrible experiences that the earlier hard core had. Italy is so much stronger. Our ability to influence is so much less. Italy is so much less dependent upon us that I think that if I were in that position, I'd probably now be saying, "They are grown men now. It may be a mistake, but we can't affect it. They have to make their decisions and live with them."

Well, now, if I were in the Desk role, there would be all sorts of pressures on me that I don't feel now because I'm no longer in the Service. And so I don't know whether I would be able to take that position. Or, if I took it, whether I would be in the job very long. Because that's a big issue. But I'd be inclined to say that Italy has to work out its own fate now....

Q: I was just interested.

KNIGHT: ...and that if it should happen, that the same thing might happen to the Communists that happened to the Socialists -- because we have had one test case, after all. Well, that would be nice. If the Communists really lost great strength because of it, that would be an advantage. On the other hand, if they really did become tame little democratic pussy cats and -- or at least no longer Russian -- I don't think they are really controlled by the Russians -- I don't think they are really controlled by the Russians any more but we really feared that they were so solidly with the Russians in the old days, that it presented a major danger to our security position. Well, if they really were to adopt a habitually independent role -- like Tito [Josip Broz Tito] has or something -- that would be quite a gain. So, I'd be inclined to say that this time around we should really not try to wring our hands and express such great concern about what it would mean to NATO and the West and to us and our bilateral relationships already in effect.

Q: Kissinger [Henry A. Kissinger], for example...I was about to say, do you think Kissinger's overreacting?

KNIGHT: Kissinger is playing the old role and I'm sure he believes it sincerely. He may be wrong, and he may be right. But, I think maybe I would not agree now.

Q: Well, that's very interesting in the light of -- what is it now, fifteen years. Well, unless you have anything else to add, I think...

KNIGHT: That is all.

Q: *Well, thank you very much. This is very, very helpful.*

CLAIBORNE PELL
Consular Officer
Genoa (1948-1949)

Senator Claiborne Pell is the only United States Senator to have served previously in the United States Foreign Service. He joined the Foreign Service in 1945 and was sent as a consular officer to Prague. In 1946, he was transferred to Bratislava to coordinate the opening of a new American consulate. His final assignment as a Foreign Service officer was as a consular officer in Genoa. Mr. Pell subsequently entered the field of politics and has served for many years as a senator from Rhode Island. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 9, 1987.

PELL: My next assignment was to Genoa, Italy. I had been assigned to the Netherlands East Indies but I did not want to take my family there, so the Department was nice enough to send me to Genoa instead.

Again I did consular work -- immigration, visas, looking after Americans who were in jail. I had to inspect a couple of coffins to make sure they did not contain drugs. The usual consular jobs; I also did some political reporting.

I loved Italy, had loved it before the war, during the war and loved it after the war. I was stationed during the war in Sicily and Naples. On my arrival in Genoa in 1948, Italy was just starting to recover from the war at that time and holding off the Communist threat. There had been a very tight election. It was a good time to be there; you felt the country bounding back.

Czechoslovakia was more depressing. I was there when the putsch took place, when Jan Masaryk was defenestrated or defenestrated himself and it was a very tough period.

When I went to Genoa I was thinking at that point of continuing in a Foreign Service career. But while I was there I got into a pretty bad argument with my Consul General. An inspector went through the post and said to me: "Young man, what can we do to improve this post?" and at that point I really did not have enough work -- only four or five hours work spread over an eight hour day. I would not have minded if I could have gone out in the afternoon, but you had to spend eight hours there in the Consulate General stretching this work out. So I said: "Please, could we have fewer vice consuls here and then we would be busy all day." Then the inspector went to the Consul General and said: "What can we do to improve your post?" The Consul General said he needed another vice consul to carry the load of work. The inspector did the inexcusable and quoted me to the Consul General and that caused a very bad relationship with the Consul

General.

After a year or so you I was assigned back to Washington.

CHARLES F. BALDWIN
Economic Officer
Trieste (1948-1950)

Ambassador Charles F. Baldwin graduated from Georgetown University in 1926. He served in the U.S. Navy for five years during World War II. His career has included positions in Chile, Norway, Australia and Italy. Ambassador Baldwin was interviewed by Kenneth Colton on an unknown date.

Q: Then you went to Trieste. You were then in the diplomatic cone of the State Department. Were you in economic affairs there, as well?

BALDWIN: In Trieste I was the office, the whole thing. That was the first time I was; it was my first experience as really being a fecund ambassador, without the title. I set up my office there with an economic section, a political section, and an administrative section--just as you do in an embassy.

Q: In noting your posting to Trieste and so forth, this was a period when we had the Czechoslovakian crisis. The Marshall Plan came in '48. And you had the controversy--Jimmy Burns, I believe, was Secretary of State at the time--of how to manage Germany, the East of Germany and the West of Germany. Did any of that international tension ripple into your operations in Trieste?

BALDWIN: Yes, it did. My office in Trieste--I was the second [officer] in Trieste. There was a man ahead of me. He was the first [officer], that went there. I succeeded him. It bordered Yugoslavia, which in those days was a hostile nation. We were sort of guests in Italy at the time, because the Italians were claiming Trieste to be part of Italy, and the Yugoslavs were saying no. It was a hot spot, and you had bomb throwing, and other things to make life exciting. I was there.

There was a rapprochement worked out in Washington, with the Secretary of State, whereby Trieste would become part of Italy. Yugoslavia took violent exception to this. I used to make occasional trips from Trieste, down into Yugoslavia. I was received with diplomatic correctness, but not much friendliness.

Q: Were your functions there primarily political?

BALDWIN: No, they weren't. I functioned, in Trieste, very much the same way an economic counselor functions in an embassy--except I had no ambassador. I was the number one. So I did whatever needed to be done. If a company in Houston, Texas wanted an agent in Trieste, or in that part of Italy, they'd write to me and I would make the necessary connections. If, on the other

hand, there was a political development in Yugoslavia, I would cover that. That brought me in the orbit of the State Department.

Q: You were really in a [vacuum] there.

BALDWIN: I was for a while.

Q: This was just about the time when we had the Article X in foreign affairs. Italy was a turmoil, and there was a great deal of leftist pressure, and the Voice of America was sending postcards over there. It would seem to me that you must have been involved in quite a bit of liaison with other departments?

BALDWIN: I was it; I was a one-man show. And these things had repercussions; a bomb went off in my front yard one day, in Trieste. I picked up a bomb one morning in the dining room, as I was having breakfast; fortunately it was not set to go off. That kind of thing happened in those days.

Q: You didn't have any CIA. Of course, they were established in the National Security Act of 1947; they probably didn't have anybody posted in your place at that time?

BALDWIN: No, they didn't. Whatever was done, I was doing.

LOUISE SCHAFFNER ARMSTRONG
Consular Officer
Palermo (1949-1950)

Louise Schaffner Armstrong was born in Tokyo, Japan on November 16, 1917. She received her BA from Wellesley College in 1938. Her career has included positions in countries including India, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Canada, and Switzerland. Ms. Armstrong was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 13, 2000.

ARMSTRONG: But fortunately I was already out. I had my travel orders to go to Palermo. Most of our third secretaries went to Italian posts. And I watched the good ones being picked off and my tour was Palermo.

Q: Yes, my Claiborne pal went to Genoa.

ARMSTRONG: That's right. I think the same personnel bureau was handling both countries. At any rate, I stopped in Florence to see if I could get some petrol coupons. Petrol was still scarce. He greeted me with the Herald Tribune with my picture on the front page. That was the reason the professor from Boston got in touch with me, because he found me. He said that by and large there was nothing in there that suggested that I was anywhere as guilty as I had been made out to be.

Q: What were they claiming?

ARMSTRONG: They were claiming that I had been working with the Czech Underground and named Czechs who were later imprisoned and executed in some cases. In other words, I should have blood on my hands, but in fact I'm exonerated by what's in the archives.

Q: It didn't seem to take anywhere. When you left you were assigned to Palermo and you went there in what, was it '49 by that time?

ARMSTRONG: Yes, it was October '49.

Q: And you were in Palermo from when to when?

ARMSTRONG: Until the beginning of June '50.

Q: What was your job in Palermo?

ARMSTRONG: I was a vice consul handling visas. They had a big office handling citizenship because of the fact that there had been this holy year during which Americans had come over in great droves, had been persuaded by their cousins or sisters and their aunts to vote against the communists in the elections.

Q: Oh, yes the elections of '48.

ARMSTRONG: We were pushing that in every way we could to prevent the communists from winning.

Q: Lots of money went in.

ARMSTRONG: A friend of mine was busy handing it out, a fellow named Mark [unknown name] who was with the CIA. But these American innocents would come over and they would try to vote, and then they would lose their citizenship by those rules. The same rules don't apply anymore. So the citizenship office was very busy, and of course everybody wanted to get out of Palermo. It was still impoverished from the war. The opportunities were nil. Those who did get out were usually the ones who went to Milan, where there was more opportunities just generally. But the others would want to get out because they had a distant relative in the United States, and they thought this was the answer. [There were] a lot of pitiful cases. So what could you do? You got trained to say no.

Q: You were just saying no, no, no.

ARMSTRONG: That's right. As nicely as you could.

Q: Was there concern about the mafia in the United States and its ties to Sicily at that time?

ARMSTRONG: I understand that Lucky Luciano was in Palermo while I was there. I was told he showed up at bars, particular bars. Only later, from looking at television, did I learn how the mafia had gotten their grip on things in Palermo. It was thanks to the American army, which had come in and figured out the best way to accomplish its own purposes was to establish these characters in key situations, and they took over. But what we had in my day was not a mafia situation, but a kind of crazy Robin Hood situation. There was a man who was said to have robbed the rich to feed the poor. I'm groping for his name right now. Kidnapping was a favorite activity. It still is in Chechnya I get.

Q: Oh, yes, well, in Colombia, too.

ARMSTRONG: So that was going on, and if you took a drive upcountry, let's say, not very far out of town, you would get into an area where people lived - and this is so European, so different from the United States - if you worked a farm in the United States, you lived on the farm. If you worked on a farm in Europe, you lived in the village and went off to the fields every day and came back at the end of the day. So you'd see these peasants going along with their donkey carts, going to or from the fields, and they always had a gun across their laps. They had a dog in the back and a gun across the knees. They were afraid of the very kind of marauding that was going on by this Robin Hood type. Wasn't the mafia that they were worried about.

Q: Were you getting pressure from New York congressmen and all to issue visas?

ARMSTRONG: On visa cases, yes. I'd get a call in the middle of the night, and I'd think, "Oh, my God, what's happened to my brother or my sister?" And it'd be some congressman. And one in particular, I think Rooney, maybe one of the more objectionable -

Q: John Rooney of Brooklyn.

ARMSTRONG: He wasn't of Italian background, but I guess he had a lot of Italians in his voting district.

Q: He was a very powerful figure for state department appropriations.

ARMSTRONG: Very much so. At the end, I was due a home leave at the end of six or seven months, and I was determined not to come back. It was a very disagreeable climate in the consulate itself. We had a consul general who very few people could get along with except the one woman consul who was his spy. And the consul general's wife was very autocratic. And because her mother was very big in California politics, she and both her mother, who was there much of the time, they would throw their weight around. They treated the staff as if they were peons. It was really quite a shock. We didn't expect to find that in the foreign service. But the story was, I'm told, that he was an old China hand, and some of them I think were accustomed to situations where they were all powerful. And he wasn't as bad as his wife; she was very difficult.

Q: Who was it?

ARMSTRONG: His name was David Berger. And he retired after that post. And I liked to think I helped it along. At any rate, the one thing she, the wife was very, well this is just gossip –

Q: Well, it gives a flavor for the period.

ARMSTRONG: She seemed to be resentful of the fact that somebody had served at an embassy. And there were two of us who'd come from embassies, one from Hungary and then the other, I, and my mother. And I think she was particularly unpleasant with respect to us. And when you get to a post, of course, you have a month or six weeks, I don't know how much it is today, where you can live in a hotel, until you've found something suitable. But your expenses are covered for you. And so we decided we'd live in a hotel that was probably the nicest one there and had a lovely view of the bay. Although we couldn't afford the food prices there, so we managed cooking some meals in our hotel room on a little electric hot plate. But Mrs. Berger couldn't stand this, and neither could her husband. They tried to get me out of there so fast. And they offered me all kinds of opportunities, and they were crummy. You lived in neighborhoods where everybody hung their clothes out on the line. And I said to my mother that I didn't join the Foreign Service to live in a slum. And eventually a situation opened up [in] a part of a compound that had a major house that belonged to a principessa, which we rented as a government and where the consul general lived. There were a number of ancillary buildings and in one case it was a stable, and that had been renovated and made more or less habitable. So my mother and I moved into this stable. And it looked quite charming except that in the winter, there wasn't the kind of, the building was built in such a way that it would be cool in summer. So in winter it would be just damp and you could write your name on the walls of your bedroom in the mold. But we were surrounded by lemon groves; that part of it was pleasant.

But Palermo was a place where all you could do, your work was dull, but you could get in the car on the weekend with your bread and your cheese and wine and see beautiful things and interesting places. A lot of old Greek ruins are there, which you probably know and some which are not on the tourist beat. There are small minor amphitheaters, which most people don't even know about, which we'd be shown by our Sicilian friends. That was the way we made it habitable for us, so to speak, or passed the time. Plus in the winter there was the opera season.

CHESTER H. OPAL
Information Officer, USIS
Rome (1949-1950)

Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Naples (1950-1952)

Chester H. Opal was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1918. A writer and journalist, Opal was recruited by the State Department in 1946. He was posted as an information and press officer later that year for the USIS in Poland. In 1949, Mr.

Opal became the first Western diplomat to be expelled from The Soviet Union. He was subsequently transferred to Italy. Mr. Opal later served as a public affairs officer in Austria, Mexico, and Vietnam, and Lebanon. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt in 1989.

OPAL: Then I was transferred to Rome -- the "warm place" of the Warsaw soothsayers -- no hell for me yet at least. I was regional officer for our seven USIS branches in Italy. The position had been established under Maurice Rice, who now took my job in Warsaw. I was in the Rome office for about six months. That was mainly representing the branches in the home office.

The program itself was a large one. It was under Orville C. Anderson. My job was getting guidance and services support to the branches. We had them in Genoa, Milan, Turin, Venice, Naples, Sicily and so on. The program was geared pretty much to promoting the Marshall Plan objectives, which was quite extensive in Italy. Andy Berding was chief of the Marshall Plan information program and he worked with us in Rome. Andy had written the memoirs of Cordell Hull and later was deputy for policy in USIA and an assistant secretary of state for public affairs.

He and Andy Anderson had really pulled a coup in 1948 when the communists were expected to win the general elections and probably take over the government. Actually they were found to have less than the percentage vote than that which had been assumed for them -- a little over 30 percent, in fact.

They really mounted an effort to defeat the communists at that time and they were very successful in doing so. It was really a coup for the information program. It was something that the Christian Democrats, who were the government in power, wanted and this was my first indication of something that I have laid down as a principle and that I think applies. And that is, if the local government feels that there is second external power that is attempting to subvert it through a fifth column, such as the communist party, it will allow the U.S. government to conduct anti-communist propaganda. We had complete freedom. Not simply Americana, but to engage in real polemics with communists, with anti-communist materials. A neutral government won't permit it. This is in contrast, for example, to our experience later in Chile where we were castigated for intervening indirectly. We were criticized by the Chileans and criticized here by the American people, who felt that this was interference. It is considered to be interference because in that case the Allende Government didn't sanction it. This is the point that I am making. If the government hadn't sanctioned our working with the parties that we were working with, the press, etc., to give them some support, which was anti-Allende, then this principle is still invoked but it is in reverse.

This is why in France we were able to do it because there was a fear when they had a crisis of confidence occurred in the early 1950's, when they thought war was coming and that the communists might take over in France too. The anti-communist propaganda was permitted to be openly carried out.

In neutral countries like India, we were just permitted to talk about the United States but not about the Soviet Union or of India itself. In Poland we could not talk about communism at all. We could not talk about Poland at all, except through the Voice of America, which they couldn't

touch. (That is why they jammed it.) But on the ground you could not talk about Poland and you could not talk about the Soviet Union. This is the principle that I am asserting.

I had these two contrasts: one where you could not speak about Poland, about communism and about the Soviet Union in Poland and then Italy, where we had complete freedom. Why? The difference was the fact that in Italy there was an anti-communist government in power who needed our support because they feared a fifth column which represented a second external power, namely the Soviet Union. We had it there.

We had enormous film production. John Secondari, for example, who wrote the novel on which the movie, "Three Coins in a Fountain," was based, was head of the motion picture production for the Marshall Plan. I remember one thing they turned out which had a musical tract called the "Carousel Concerto." It concerned the opening of a long-closed factory in an Italian town and they just showed the unlocking of the gate and then the factory with people pouring in and then all the lathes and so on working. It just had the sound track running through it and every once in a while the logo of the Marshall Plan would flash across as a box was carried in.

This was the original subliminal advertising. This was the whole message. It was one of the most popular programs that we had. Even if the Italians saw this they were nevertheless grateful because of all the things that we were doing. The Italians were very odd. For example, one of the things they objected to was our delegating so much of the power of the running of the program to Italians. They said, "Why, we are all dishonest. You Americans run it and it will be run well, but if you give it to us it will be terrible." They objected to this because they knew what the hell had happened. As most people do, they distrusted themselves and they wanted somebody from the outside to administer this thing.

The audiences were very sharp. We had an Italian documentary film called "Clean Windows." It was produced by USIS and showed a window washer arriving in front of a New York skyscraper, and staring up at this huge building with all these windows that he was going to have to wash. He had an unlighted cigarette in his mouth. He struck a match, lit it and looked up, took one puff, and threw it down. When he threw that cigarette down all our audiences, and I was present once, just let out such a groan; they didn't believe the windows, the skyscraper, anything. All of this was eradicated. This was a phony picture because nobody in the world would take only one puff from a cigarette. We just defeated ourselves completely.

Just as we discovered, for example, in Indonesia you could not have George Washington on a horse and have a black man on the ground -- you could not have a black man standing below George Washington. These are things that we discovered over time. These little subtleties. I was reminded again of Keith Adamson's story about the Soviets and our strike-breakers.

But this was phony; this was propaganda. They didn't care about the huge windows and skyscrapers. All of this: "these Americans were exaggerating their own thing." The Italians had come out of the fascist period where there was a certain lack of pride in themselves.

This is my definition of what happened to Italy during Mussolini's time. If I was standing on a corner talking to somebody and I walked across the street and talked to another Italian, he would

say, "In Mussolini's time, nobody would stand on a corner and talk with you and waste his time - - Mussolini's time. That man would have been doing something; he would have been working."

If I asked the first man that I talked to on that corner about this man who had just jaywalked across the street, he would say, "You see that guy? In Mussolini's time that man would never have jaywalked across the street."

I came to the conclusion that all fascism was a system that was chosen by every Italian for every other Italian. He thought he could beat the system, but everybody else needed fascism. This is my definition of it anyway.

When I was transferred to Naples, I had this huge palace, out of which Mussolini, when he came to Naples, would talk -- he would go on its balcony and harangue the people. It was the Palazzo Fondi and I will tell you about it later, when transferred down there.

The Italian program was a saturation program in every sense of the word. All our publications were in Italian; they were widely distributed. We even had different translations because the people of Florence, who think that they have the classic Italian tongue, deriving from Dante, never accepted the translations that came out of Rome, because these were Romanos -- what the hell did they know about Italian. They would never take anything out of Naples. Sicily was outside the pale. This partisan spirit, which is completely provincial, existed all through Italy. So we took a ton of these things and even issued different editions of things in order to accommodate these special interests.

It was saturation, pure and simple, which was increasingly cut back after this great victory in 1948 and after the Christian Democrats had established their power and the communists proved to be much weaker than anticipated. Most Italians will tell you that the communists were like radishes -- red on the outside but white on the inside. And in fact, Togliatti, who was head of the Communist Party, and the Party itself became so bureaucratic: it was really a recruiting office for workers for Milan, the chemical plants, and less of an agitating party. So the party was less an agent of the Soviet Union and more indigenously dominated in terms of its own objectives and its own needs. In fact, that was the basis in later years that drove the decentralization of communist control.

Our cultural officer in Rome, Charles Rufus Morey, carried on a cultural exchange program of his own. He was a professor of medieval art. He was a great character. He was an expert and writer on medieval art and had catalogued the Vatican library. He had academic links throughout the country. If he couldn't get an exchange scholarship for somebody through the State Department, he just wrote to some president of a university, "I have got a fellow here who is bright. I can't do anything with these bureaucrats." And he would place him in an American school. He had a separate program of his own. Andy Anderson, the Country PAO, voiced only token objections, but it was perfectly fine because it meant that we got that many more people out to the U.S.

The up and coming Italians passed through our system. Jim Mocerri, who was studying with Philosopher Benedetto Croce when I met him in Naples, entered our program and was PAO in

Florence in the 1950s. He had a man who was later President of Italy go through an exchange program; Jim had selected him as a young intellectual, somewhat leftist, if I recall. He was an up and coming politician and definitely a patriot as far as Italy was concerned. There were many people like this. The Italians who worked for us were first rate, intelligent and hard-working, from all classes, although there were also countesses and marquesas -- we even had secretaries who were Italian marquesas. Cipriana Scelba, who worked in the cultural office, knew everybody in the cultural world. She had been a professor. Her father was Minister of the Interior and he had a heavy hand that he could readily apply. These people laid out a program that was as powerful as any that I have seen in government service. It was all under the wise and genial hand of Andy Anderson, who had entered Italy as a major with our troops.

Of course, our ambassador was James Clement Dunn, who was a great statesmanly character. Steven Zellerbach, who administered the Marshall Plan program and later went back as our Ambassador, was lavish not only in the funds that he directed into information and propaganda work, but in his praise of it, because the whole program, I would say, was effective. The 1948 program was effective only because of Marshall Plan efforts and USIS, which were all meshed and lavishly funded.

The only wealthy man that diverted his funds -- and he did it anonymously -- was Ambassador Stanton Griffis. Stanton Griffis hated Poland. He hated his service there and he always complained of it, but he had a second secretary, an FSO, who administered his private charities and I discovered that -- and this was only when I was writing something on Stanton Griffis for the Saturday Evening Post -- he had distributed a third of a million dollars in drugs and auto tires and other things as charities, completely anonymously. How he did it, I don't know; whether the government knew about it, or not, I have no idea, but he did this on his own and he didn't allow me to publicize it. He was known as a terror and a bastard and he wanted to be known as a terror and a bastard, but he gave his own funds privately.

Zellerbach, what he did later when he went back as Ambassador, I don't know. I wouldn't be surprised. He was from Crown Zellerbach and he supported many charities. He wanted to be an ambassador in the worst way apparently but James Dunn, who was the Ambassador, made sure that Zellerbach, for all his money as head of the Marshall Plan, did not have equal status with him. This was a cardinal point with Dunn. Zellerbach was an administrator. He did not have ambassadorial rank or anything. He was number two in the country all the time.

Dunn, with those sharp, far-seeing eyes, would go to parties; I have always said, "James Dunn has the capacity to spend 18 seconds at a party, eye it with the sharp Irish glances of his for the full 18 seconds, depart with his wife, and so go from party to party, and everybody afterwards will tell you he had been there all evening." He was a superb diplomat and he had been Assistant Secretary for Europe during the war. He was old line, with the independence of being married to an Armour heiress.

The minister was Homer Byington, who was a sweet gent, whose dream was to end up his career as Consul General in Naples -- which he did. He had gone to school there. He had been a boy in Naples when his father was in the Foreign Service. He had a lot of friends there. He wound up in Naples. He was very proud of it, when I saw him in 1963.

There was only one other man that I know of who was proud to have ended his career as a consul general, and that was Alfred Tyrrell Nestor. He was a man who should go down in infamy. He hated me. The moment he met me he tried to get me out of Naples. The operation in Naples where I was the Branch PAO was responsible for coverage of the southern peninsula, with its 12.5 million people I stood up for him at once when he came to my office. In any case, Nestor came to my office; he sat down, I sat down, he stood up again and I refused to get up again, he sat down, he got up again, and I refused to get up until he said goodbye. He hated me for this, I am convinced.

We had a misunderstanding on the American flag. There was a strike and people were lying down in the streets of the city before the trolleys. Nester came to my office in the palazzo just before lunch. All the staff was out for lunch, with the library closed for the siesta hours. Nester told me to take the flag in to avoid attracting demonstrators. I did. I went out and took the flag down myself. Unfortunately, I had an office at the back of this palazzo, with most of USIS ahead of me toward the entrance, and I couldn't see what was going on there and there was nobody there at the moment anyway.

So I took it down myself -- I pulled the flag in. This was a day when I had brought a sandwich for lunching in the office. I had no occasion to witness what happened. I got a call two hours later. Nester was shouting on the phone: "You defied me, you ran that flag back up, I want you out of here. I am going to get you out of here." I said, "I will investigate it and find out what this is all about." I did investigate. The flag was up. The librarian had come back after lunch, had seen from the street that the flag was down and, knowing people knew the library was open only when we had the flag up, she ran the flag up herself. I didn't know it because I was in my back office. I never explained this to Mr. Nester. I said if he didn't believe that I didn't know about this, my explanation isn't going to help me now either.

Nestor resented the fact that I had my own chauffeur driven car. Well, I had this vast territory and I was always in the car and besides, I was the unofficial mayor of Naples. This was an inheritance from Joe Costanzo, who was my predecessor -- a fifty year old man which was a good 20 years older than I. He had come in with the occupation forces and dispensed drugs and food. He was a hero to the Neapolitans. I came along and I inherited all this good will. But I also had a chauffeur driven car. I needed it. Nester could not understand why the PAO had a car. Nester probably resented also the fact that an Italian placed in my hands the whole syllabus and class notes of a course on subversion at the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, where he had been trained for commie activism while a prisoner of war. This was quite a coup and Nester couldn't understand how I had acquired it. My superiors in Poland had never cared if such stuff came into my hands, although I never solicited it or considered it my real business.

Anyway, I am happy to report that Alfred Tyrrell Nestor was surreptitiously drummed out of the Foreign Service, allegedly for some sort of irregularity in his personal or official life. The security people descended on him one day (after I left the post), barred him from his files, and they directed him out of the office. There were hearings and he was allowed to retire. Nester made sure, by the way, that the handsome villa which he had occupied in Posillippo as Consul General became his. He simply bought it.

In 1966, at a farewell meeting in Beirut, I joked that I could see myself finishing a very honorable career either as an ambassador to a little country in Africa or "even higher", as consul general in Florence. All my colleagues laughed. Even better would be if I would end my days as consul general in Florence. Everybody at the table laughed, not guessing the Nester background.

The purpose of the Naples program in Italy was largely anti-communist. There also was a lot of promotion of American ideas and democracy because we were trying to establish a democratic system. We had the Christian Democrats in power, so that was no problem. The Italians, who had lost a lot of pride in the 1920s and 1930s, had much need of encouragement. We encouraged them mainly through exchange programs. It was a well-rounded program. It covered all the purposes of the State Department.

We had an Italian citizen, Dr. Sam Eisenstein, who is now a psychoanalyst in Los Angeles, who has remained a close friend. He headed the science section of our press service. We had so much scientific material to get into the academic community and to the press. The journalists we would send back here on exchanges and seminars.

Andy Anderson was famous for having organized the Italian press service, ANSA. This stemmed from the time we had an Allied High Commissioner after the war. He had all these people. Some were even communist. Andy knew one man who was a communist. The Communist Party wanted the man trained as a journalist. Andy said, "Put him to work in my office." And he did. This man remained his friend all the time he was in Italy. He became an editor of *L'Unita*; they promoted communism but made sure that nothing was said against the United States.

Andy, who lateraled in as an FSO in 1950, was asked about this by our State Department security people. In fact his promotion was held up for at least two years in the mid-1950s because of the ANSA business in his personal dossier.

We had radio scripts which the Italians would broadcast. We had people placed in their studios and materials placed with them. We didn't have Italian VOA. We depended completely on the local radio which was very effective because there was no television at that time.

I had a housekeeper who was a great Roman dialect poet. This poor gal had been raped 40 times when the Greeks came into Italy in reprisals for what the Italians had done to them during the war. Her name was Lidia Valentini. She used to write poems to our little boy who talked Italian before he talked English. Saturdays I would be listening to these Vivaldi concerts and they would have an intermission and there was Lidia Valentini, winning another prize for her dialect poetry. She earned 50 times as much from her poetry as she did working for us. She was blind as a bat, but she would never wear glasses. Virginia McGonigal later went there as executive officer and inherited her, after we left Italy. She was great.

The friendliness of the Italians you can assume existed. The only ones I found the Italians disliked more than each other was Italo-Americans -- Italians who returned from the States. The Italo-American soldiers lorded it over the Italians -- loved to give them candy after the liberation and buy their women. But any other American was fine to them. We had a friendly reception.

They had these peculiar attitudes and you had to take them into account. We insisted on making as much of the administration of the aid program an Italian thing. It worked out well and they had great economic recovery.

I had this contrast between an open and closed society. This opens your mind a little bit. It was at the beginning of my career. Within three years I had run the spectrum. This was very healthy for me.

MARY CHIAVARINI
Secretary to Political/Military Advisor
Rome (1949-1954)

Ms. Chiavarini was born and raised in Massachusetts. After Secretarial training, she worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC before joining the Foreign Service in 1944. During her career with the State Department, Ms. Chiavarini served as secretary to the ambassador and other officers in Naples, Tirana, Manila, Seoul, Prague, Rome, Singapore and Warsaw. After her appointment in 1957 as Consul and Secretary in the Diplomatic Service she served in Palermo, Monrovia and Paris. She also served as special “trouble shooter” in Nicosia, Dublin and Riyadh. Ms. Chiavarini was interviewed by David T. Jones in 2007.

Q: You said that from Albania you went to Rome.

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: Had you ever been to Rome before?

CHIAVARINI: No, I had never been. And it was great.

Q: Did you have family there?

CHIAVARINI: I had no family in Rome, but I went up to Parma and visited them.

Q: About what year was this?

CHIAVARINI: I can't tell you.

Q: Maybe about 1948? Or would it have been after that?

CHIAVARINI: I think it was after that.

Q: Were you assigned to the embassy in Rome?

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: Was Ambassador Jacobs also in Rome?

CHIAVARINI: He was assigned there on the military mission, and I went with him after he got there. Then he left, and I left. I didn't stay long in Rome. Then I was assigned to the Philippines.

Q: Can we talk a little bit more about Rome? Was the military mission separate from the embassy?

CHIAVARINI: Separate in that he did what he wanted. He had his own objectives.

Q: His own responsibilities?

CHIAVARINI: And there were some riots in Rome at that time. I remember we were on the fifth floor and I had to stand on a chair to look out. I saw them. They tried to storm the embassy, but they didn't make it.

Q: Riot police held them back?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. They are called *cheledai*. I saw them trying to get through the gates, and they couldn't make it. Not that we had any military defenders. But I remember the rioters gave up.

Q: What were you doing personally at the embassy for the ambassador?

CHIAVARINI: Well I was taking his dictation and I met several other people. One of them was Mr. Unger. Have you ever heard of him? He was a wonderful guy, and I worked for him while Mr. Jacobs was on his way to Italy. I liked working for him, but I never ran into him again.

Q: Did you travel in Italy while you were at the embassy?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. I had a boyfriend who was the general's aide. Of course, he had a jeep. He would pick me up in the evening and take me someplace. Often we went to the general's parties.

Q: Where did you travel in Italy?

CHIAVARINI: Well, we went all around Rome, and I went to visit my relatives.

Q: Did you feel very much at home?

CHIAVARINI: Oh no, I didn't because their lives were different. They were farmers. Their lives were entirely different than I had experienced.

Q: How long did you stay?

CHIAVARINI: Maybe a week.

Q: Did you visit any of the other great cities in Italy?

CHIAVARINI: Oh yes, I visited Naples and Venice.

Q: Florence?

CHIAVARINI: Florence also.

Q: Were the Italians very pro-American?

CHIAVARINI: I would say so. Yes.

Q: This would have been a period in which the communist party in Italy was surging. Was this a problem?

CHIAVARINI: I think so. I can't give you any concrete information about that.

Q: How did the embassy work at that point? How was it functioning bureaucratically?

CHIAVARINI: It was doing very well. Of course, the embassy was a beautiful place. Everybody wanted to come to visit the embassy.

Q: And that was about where we were going to pick up from last week. How did the circumstances evolve in Rome? Could you tell me about moving to Rome and what Rome was like then?

CHIAVARINI: Rome wasn't battered quite like Prague was. The Ambassador and I were up on the fifth floor of the embassy. I remember that there was a demonstration when the locals tried to enter the embassy. But the police got rid of them. I remember seeing it happen from the top floor of the embassy.

Q: What were they rioting about?

CHIAVARINI: I don't remember. It wasn't anything that was important.

Q: Well, this was one of the periods when the communist effort to take control of Italy was particularly strong.

CHIAVARINI: Yes, yes. I remember that.

Q: I know we were working to prevent the communist electoral effort. Do you remember anything about that?

CHIAVARINI: Well I just remember that one time when they tried to enter the embassy but were stopped by the Carabinieri.

Q: Was it very useful for you to be able to speak Italian in Rome?

CHIAVARINI: Well, I tell you I was always a bit embarrassed about my Italian. Because I really spoke the dialect of Parma. However, it was quite a bit like Roman-Italian, but I always felt embarrassed by it. I didn't have to do too much of it. I remember speaking with one Italian; but when I did speak a little but with him, he kind of laughed at me, and I was embarrassed.

Q: Did you see the great sights of Rome?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. Every Saturday we had a little group that went out on the town, you might say. A sideline for one of the men was doing tours, and he took a little group of us out on Saturday and then we ate someplace.

Q: This was an Italian friend?

CHIAVARINI: It was this man. I had loved it all.

Q: Was there anything particularly about Rome that you enjoyed?

CHIAVARINI: Well, I enjoyed all the sights of Rome. I thought no other city could compare with that. And I think I was right.

Q: We'll have to ask you to compare it to Paris later.

CHIAVARINI: Well, I thought nothing would compare with it.

Q: To continue with the discussion of Rome. Did you ever have an audience with the Pope.

CHIAVARINI: I never did.

Q: Did you see Pius XII.

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: On the balcony, and at Easter?

CHIAVARINI: Yes, I did. And my church had a little group that went to visit the Pope. So I went with them. That's how I got to see him.

Q: Do you have any impression personally of him?

CHIAVARINI: Well, he was better looking than the pictures the papers took of him. That was

Pacelli. Then when the new Pope came, I also saw him. He was so different from Father Pacelli, Pope Pacelli. He seemed to be more Pope-like than I thought at first. Then I loved the old Pope more than the one that followed Pacelli.

Q: Were there any members of the embassy in Rome that you particularly remember?

CHIAVARINI: Well, yes. One was Freeman. He played the trombone. He would drag it out every possible time to play it.

Q: What was his position in the embassy?

CHIAVARINI: He had something to do with the political section. And his wife Phyllis was very nice; I remember her.

Q: What did the ambassador have you doing as his secretary?

CHIAVARINI: Oh, nothing really important other than the work of the embassy.

Q: Did he give dictation? Was his technique to give dictation and then you took it in shorthand?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. And then I transcribed it.

Q: Do you remember any special issue that took up a lot of time and effort?

CHIAVARINI: No, I don't. It didn't. He was very good at dictating so I didn't have too much trouble.

Q: Where did you travel in Italy while you were there?

CHIAVARINI: Well, as I may have told you, I had a boyfriend in the military who had a jeep.

Q: Another boyfriend? The same boyfriend from Korea?

CHIAVARINI: No.

Q: But the same jeep?

CHIAVARINI: [laughter] Probably, I don't know.

Q: So where did you go while you were in Italy?

CHIAVARINI: Well, I went to all the places that a tourist would go. I loved it all. We went to ... a place in southern Italy.

Q: You did go to Florence, I imagine.

CHIAVARINI: No, not that far north. It was down south. It was overrun by communists.

Q: Did you see, Monte Cassino?

CHIAVARINI: No, I didn't. I don't think it was famous then.

Q: That was where the World War II battle was--at Monte Cassino, and I guess it was completely destroyed but it has since been rebuilt. But you didn't see that?

Was your friend somebody who toured World War II battlefields?

CHIAVARINI: No, he didn't.

Q: Did you get to Sicily at that point?

CHIAVARINI: No. I'd never been to Sicily until I went there on assignment.

Q: You had never been to Sicily until you were assigned there?

CHIAVARINI: That's right.

Q: Were you able to travel north to see family in Parma?

CHIAVARINI: Not until late in my time in Sicily. No, I went up to Florence and then up north from there. I thought it was the most beautiful country I had ever visited.

Q: Had you seen Venice?

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: Your tour in Italy ended in 1951. Then you went to Singapore.

After Ambassador Jacobs left Rome, you stayed in Italy?

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: Were you still the ambassador's secretary?

CHIAVARINI: No, I was down in Sicily as my own boss.

Q: Oh, you went to Sicily at that point.

CHIAVARINI: No, I was already there.

Q: You went to Sicily to go to the consulate there?

CHIAVARINI: I was in charge of the consulate. I was the consul.

Q: But that wasn't until the very end of your career, was it?

CHIAVARINI: Well, somehow or other I was there as the consul general most of the time.

PARKE D. MASSEY
Economic and Political Reporting Officer
Genoa (1950-1952)

Economic and Political Reporting Officer
Rome (1952)

Parke D. Massey was born on February 8, 1920 in New York. He received his BA from Haverford College in 1947 and his MPA from Harvard University in 1961. He served in the US Army from 1942 to 1946. His career has included positions in countries including Italy, Mexico, Germany, the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta, Nicaragua, Panama, Bolivia, Chile, Haiti, and Uruguay. He was interviewed by Morris Weisz on March 19, 1992.

MASSEY: No, I was transferred to Genoa, Italy

Q: Oh, really. Now there you saw some labor.

MASSEY: There the situation was quite different. I was in the Consulate General in Genoa as economic and political reporting officer...
(Tape recorder turned off.)

Q: Okay, Parke, can we continue?

MASSEY: Yes.

Q: You came to Genoa.

MASSEY: Right, as economic and political reporting officer. I wrote a political report every two weeks.

This industrial area along the Genovese coast was of great political importance to us. It had a communist mayor, who was very effective. And, of course, the three great contending parties in Italy at that time each was associated with a trade union movement. The Christian Democrats had a trade union movement as did the Communists.

Q: CGIL and UIL?

MASSEY: CISL. Although I followed as best I could the trade union part of the political activity, it was in some measure not my primary concern because, if I remember the name right, Tom Lane in Rome was essentially responsible for this coverage, the importance of the trade unions in the political activity. I would say that in Italy the attempt to make the labor diplomacy a more coherent part of our foreign policy was more successful than any other place that I knew of. It may have been in other parts of Europe, in other parts of the Marshall Plan, I do not know. Lane was hard working, hail fellow well met, knew everybody on God's green earth.

Q: Including all the political groupings or just...

MASSEY: I think he knew the labor people far better than he knew the political people.

Q: But even the labor people on different sides like the Communists?

MASSEY: Absolutely, he knew them. He frequently would talk about those in the labor movement who had a tendency to shift their allegiances back and forth. Now then, he gave every impression to me of a very wide personal acquaintance with the people of the labor movement and their attitudes in Italy. How well he was able to judge their impact, their influence on their parties, the influence on the workers, how often a worker voted the party that was associated with his trade union, I never heard him mention. And I would doubt if given the highly volatile mature of Marshall Plan era politics in Italy, I doubt if anybody could answer that sort of question.

Q: Did he come frequently to Genoa?

MASSEY: Very frequently.

Q: Was Livorno part of the consular district of Genoa?

MASSEY: No.

Q: He was very active in Leghorn.

MASSEY: In Leghorn, yes. No, the consular district of Genoa consisted of the provinces there of La Spezia, Genoa itself and over towards the French border San Remo and Savona. Those are the areas which are known as Liguria. Yes, he visited frequently. He had his own agenda as far as people he would be meeting and talking to, but he was in a very friendly, almost boisterous fashion, meticulous in seeing to it that I, although a very junior officer doing political reporting, was kept informed of his feelings and findings and the people he talked to.

Q: Did he use you in any way? Did he say, "While I'm gone could you look into that or this?"

MASSEY: Frequently. Not quite in that manner. Basically he would urge me to include more trade union and labor data in my fortnightly political reporting.

Q: To make sure to include it?

MASSEY: Yes. He always wanted for me to make sure to include it.

Q: Now he had some responsibility in the Marshall Plan aid function, and he also had an Assistant Labor Attaché, Bruce Millen, whom you may know.

MASSEY: Yes, I remember Bruce Millen but not well.

Q: Bruce is a member of this committee that is active in this study that we are doing. What was his relation to the Marshall Plan? Was there any clear line of demarcation between the Embassy work and the Marshall Plan assistance to trade unions and labor work generally? Could you distinguish in your own mind as to who was a labor guy from the Marshall Plan labor office or from the Embassy office or was it all in one bowl under Tom Lane?

MASSEY: In Rome the economic section of the Embassy and the Marshall Plan were combined into a single office.

Q: Oh, that's right, under Henry Tasca, I believe.

MASSEY: That's right. I always thought of Tom Lane as being more politically oriented than economically or Marshall Plan oriented. I do not recall ever any discussion with anybody from the Marshall Plan on the economic side of labor and manpower in Italy. It was assumed that the skilled labor was there and that problems of unemployment were far more important than problems of making effective use of the manpower resources.

Q: And any indication of a favoritism toward one type of manpower policy that would favor one of the politically oriented unions as against another?

MASSEY: Not that I was aware of.

Q: You know the allegation by many people that we used Marshall Plan manpower policy to favor our own people. I have no objection to that.

MASSEY: ...no quarrel with it. But this is all in the realm of speculation. Certainly a project where the labor force was heavily committed to the Christian Democrats would stand a better chance of being financed than one where the labor force was voting 100 percent Communist Party. I mean, we were fighting the Communists for control of the country.

Q: Well, that's one of the subjects that concerns us, the tendency to look back at the period and ascribe dire purpose to our confessed objective of helping one side in this terrible war.

MASSEY: Having been a soldier on various occasions, I have a peculiar notion and that is one helps one's friends and confuses one's enemies.

Q: If possible. How long were you in the Genoa district?

MASSEY: I was to stay there for two years, a full tour. I was then to go to Rome for six months, however, not in a position that had anything to do with labor or labor diplomacy. I was primarily concerned with international payments and finance and with East-West trade problems.

Q: That's interesting. But retained an interest in labor things or follow them in any way?

MASSEY: I would say that I tended, when it reflected directly upon my responsibilities, to maintain some interest in the labor side. But I also tended to abandon that interest when I moved into another assignment. And my coming back to labor is another story.

Q: Then you finished a two year tour and went on to another? Or go back to Washington?

MASSEY: After the two year tour, I did six months in Rome and then came back to the United States but not to Washington, to Columbia University where I spent a year in German area studies--actually primarily European economic studies.

ROBERT C. TETRO
Agricultural Attaché
Rome (1950-1953)

Agricultural Attaché
Rome (1962-1969)

Robert C. Tetro served in the US Navy from 1946 to 1950. His career has included positions in countries including Italy and Argentina. Mr. Tetro was interviewed by Lane Beatty on December 1, 1989.

TETRO: In '50 to '53 when I was first in Rome, we had a hell of a good crew. Howard was an excellent boss with a good flair in management. For example, he had set up the embassy and the Marshall Plan program sites together.

Q: For Italy?

TETRO: For Italy. How do you use this? To improve your reporting, when you're working with the programs, you ask the Italians for a certain kind of information. You need to help them get it, otherwise they don't get the program. So you've got a two-way thing here. I was the Ag attaché and I had three guys working with me. Joey Montoya was one. [He was] bilingual in Italian. I very rapidly became fluent because you can't move out in the country in Italy, particularly in those days, without being able to talk Italian. I used to get in the car my driver - you had an Italian assistant everywhere you went. I said, we going to talk Italian until you see that I'm going to go bananas. But press me.

Q: How long did it take you to become comfortable in the language?

TETRO: A year-and-a-half to two years. I had the French background quite adequately. And I was also going to - they had a language teacher and she was an excellent teacher. A tyrant, but good. About the third or fourth month I was taking lessons from her because that was a tremendous job. We had a lot of work night and day. I wasn't getting my homework done in the language. So I walked in one day not too well prepared and she said, "Mr. Tetro, you're wasting my time. You either study or..." So you added another hour at night to your schedule.

The FAO, in 1951 decided that they were going to move headquarters to Rome.

Q: From where?

TETRO: It was in Washington.

Q: It was in Washington?

TETRO: It was originally set up here in Washington on Connecticut Avenue. The United States bought that land because they had to. The second director general was an American. But the embassy had a little problem with how to handle the traffic with everybody that came with FAO. They were going to send a liaison with FAO in Rome. How do you do it so we could have a combined operation? Howard was against the war college. Howard and I went this way on one thing: He thought the Foreign Service could do no wrong. I did. His one goal was to be ambassador, which he finally made.

Q: Where was he ambassador?

TETRO: Kuwait. And he thought Dick Nixon was a friend of his, so when Nixon got in office he went back to Washington. I think he wanted Iraq. I don't know why, except it was a little step higher. He got back to Washington and as far as Nixon was concerned, he couldn't care less. It was about this time that I - War College in those days was great. I couldn't have disagreed with him more on that. It's an assignment I wish I could have gotten.

So we have a change of administration in 1953. My first ambassador was a guy by the name of Jamie Dunn. The top exec was Thompson who later became the ambassador to Moscow. Fascinating people. When Dunn left and went to Paris, Elsworth Bunker came in. Another fascinating man.

Q: You've been posted to Rome and there is no formal set up? You have no idea how long you'll be there or anything like that?

TETRO: In those days you spent two years and went back for home leave. Tommy was the deputy and my two years was coming up and I go to Tommy and tell him, "Tommy, I can't afford home leave." In those days, you paid for your own kids' education, you're paid for your own language lessons. And the other costs we had. And Tommy looked at me and said, "I can't either." So no problem for Ike to extend it. During the next course, Eisenhower is in. Bunker comes to our special staff session. "Gentlemen, he said, I have news for you. I have been

replaced by Mrs. Luce." A top character like Jacobson became ambassador of Poland. Every department head but one said, "When she arrives, I won't be here." And they weren't. I was the only one left because I couldn't afford to go anywhere.

Q: Why did they object? Was it the change of administration?

TETRO: I lay awake the night she nominated Ike Eisenhower. You know she nominated Ike. And she got out of G.I. Joe, G.I. Jane. She said things about the Democrats handling the postwar that weren't very nice. And the whole mess of the Foreign Service operation, we'll do it better. Wasteful. So she arrives: Here I am. Well, she was a fascinating woman to work with. About the third time I met with her, I thought to myself, don't get close to this snake or it will bite you. A lovely, beautiful attractive woman. She used to have a budding rose in a little- (end of tape)

She was a trooper though, and attractive as I've said.

Shortly after she arrived, the head of the Marshall Plan operation, a man named Chauncey Parker said, Mrs. Luce, if you want to understand the problems of Italy, I suggest you do what I did: take a tour of the south. This is where the problems really are - where they talk dialects, and even though your Italian is good, you don't understand it.

Q: Did she master the language?

TETRO: She learnt a bit. In this case, she agreed with Parker and we set the trip up. It was very much like Parker. We were fighting communists in those days, too, you know. It was part of the show. Two days before we were to leave, she comes down with a flu and so we had to decide what the hell we were going to do. And she says, "I'm going." And, by God, she did.

Q: Trooper.

TETRO: For the two or three days she would prepare her performance part of the show and then she'd go to bed. By about the third day, she was beginning to get into it. We even had evening sessions to recap what went on during the day and what have you. We often, in this case in Sicily, had a communist demonstration against Mrs. Luce. Parker was learning to speak the language and took lessons. And when we took him down to one place in particular, not far from where the people were, after he'd said something to the crowd - we almost managed the crowd - this was a managed operation - they got up and said, "Vivono Stati Uniti." Long live the United States. And by the third time they chant this, Parker hears it, and leaps out to the microphone, "Viva Italia." We had a great time.

With Luce now, I get from OFAR Washington we're setting up the service.

Q: So this is in '54?

TETRO: Yes. No, that was '53. Prior to that, Fred Rossiter wrote to me and said he would like me to come back to head up the commodity area of OFAR. And I immediately wrote back that Joe Becker is there. Joe Becker is an old friend of mine. We used to square dance together. And

he writes a letter that says: Joe has agreed that you should do it. He's going to be doing something else. You could already see the Democrats and Republicans debacle. Mind you, I'm a Democrat from way back. Socialist first. Anyway, he says come back. And this is when Clare Boothe Luce calls me over, with her beautiful smile, gentle pat on the shoulder, "Bob, I would like to have you stay here." I'm not sure what would have happened had I done so.

Q: So you're on your way to Rome?

TETRO: Back to Rome for another cruise, I feel like. Freddie Reinhardt was the ambassador and he was excellent. A bit of an aside, Reinhardt gave me the best performance rating I've ever had. I talked with you a little earlier about some of the relationships there. But this performance rating ends up saying, "If I could only have one person with me in the embassy, it would be Mr. Tetro."

Q: Oh, how wonderful.

TETRO: FAS never gave me anything like that. Well, my story at this point could be very brief because of what I have to say. In 1962 I stopped fighting to get the world straightened out. I didn't drop my values, but there was no way of pushing any more for the kinds of things that starting back twenty years before I had aimed to do.

When I became administrator, I was probably at my peak for getting these things done, getting my concept of how the department works both within itself and outside itself with other agencies because we didn't have to work only with State, certainly with Labor, certainly with Commerce. We had knock-downs and drag-outs with Commerce on commodity affairs; we probably still do. How you react to that bureaucratically - I have a story on Gus Burmeister who we got rid of when I became administrator. In the fights that I had with Burmeister in the Garnett and Max Meyers' operation, I used an interesting approach. Burmeister never trusted anybody, so in the debate I would tell him the truth. By the time he realized he'd been had, I'd be by him. It worked beautifully, particularly with Art Minor.

Here I had an assistant, Gerry Tichenor, who was a big deal. He was my buffer with Art. When I had a problem with Art, I'd send Gerry down, and Gerry would sit and listen, and listen. I couldn't do this. I'm too impatient. But then finally Gerry would say, "As you were saying, Art," which he hadn't been, "maybe we ought to do this," and half the time he was right. Tichenor was great. One of my biggest mistakes was not making Tichenor the assistant for the attaches. I didn't for one reason: he never had any experience in the area. But he had done a better deal than Doug Crawford who later drank himself to death. Anyway, we're trotting back to Rome.

Q: Why is it you think that your agenda is finished? [cross-talk]

TETRO: As the attache in Rome, you don't have the power.

Q: You don't have the power. But you think that would be your last try for the administrator? You have no intention of ever trying for it again or thinking it would be possible?

TETRO: In 1967, Freeman came over for an FAO conference and went through several of my

statements. He had really wonderful contacts Freeman has a heart of gold and is a hell of a nice guy. He and Kennedy both came retired in World War II. They had that in common. But then in '37 when Dorothy Jacobson was the assistant secretary - she was my friend, she and Charlie Murphy. I was at the airport with Alice and Jane, and Paul and I were walking to the plane. He takes me aside, puts his arm around my shoulder and says, "Bob, I'd like to have you come back to Washington as assistant secretary." And I knew that for other reasons somebody was trying to get Dorothy out. So I said, "Mr. Secretary, thanks, but no thanks." I don't know whether that would have been better. In '62 I retired, but I stayed on two payrolls until '76. First Rome - And when I say retired, when you're retire, you do what you want to do. I had a ball.

First of all, I still had a contact for a while with Charlie Murphy. I still had some kind of contact with Freeman and Dorothy Jacobson that the FAS guys, particularly Art Minor, didn't know about. So if I wanted to get something done which we had agreed we wanted to do, I could do it. You'd just have to ask. We had this market development program, a lamb feeding demonstration project which we'd set up where the Italian we used got to be an expert and consulted with Spain and Greece and two or three other places around the Mediterranean. In the beginning he had no interest in feeding at all. But when he learned he could make money on it, we were in business.

The other thing we had which was fantastic, Bill Schultz and I could take 5,000 bucks any time we wanted to, to do any kind of a show anywhere with the consulates. You got the ConGen to agree. We had some excellent projects, even selling [materials] produced in Washington and Oregon in northern Italy, which we did.

The other area where I think FAS has completely lost control is their market development program. Ray wasn't the only one that wanted me out. The Serbian consulate wanted me out.

Q: Why?

TETRO: They wouldn't do anything Howard Howard Rex Cottam wanted me to do. Yet, when the Serbian consulate in Italy got under the gun with Congress, Art Minor went back in a corner. Who the hell stood up and defended the office, protected it, saw that it was properly dismantled but Tetro?

Q: It sounds like you had said earlier, there were two routes to go - to make noise or not to make noise.

TETRO: To do something useful. Yes. Hopefully.

Q: How many years were you in Rome the second time?

TETRO: I went over there in '62 and came back in '69.

Q: They don't do that any more, do they?

TETRO: As long as the Democrats were in, you couldn't get around me. They wanted to. Sure. We had a good shop; a good family. I still exchange Christmas cards with some of the kids in

that office that I've known since 1950. I'm not getting any younger here, so that's a bit of a problem. We did some things that we liked to do and enjoyed it. And we had home leave. I couldn't afford home leave now. You could go on cruises back and forth. I used to fight this all the time. I don't know if the State Department regs [regulations] still have this. An attache cannot be forced to travel by means which he disapproves of. You have a choice. You've got a choice to cruise if you can. We flew once. Then we had a change of administration. Well, here we had a problem. We had had a cocktail party at our house. We were pushing for Humphrey. Humphrey/Muskie-

Q: You just can't stay out of politics, that's the problem.

TETRO: We, a couple of friends, set up a committee for Humphrey/Muskie which had this cocktail party at our house among other things. We paid all of his expenses and sent back \$2,000 or \$3,000 to the state. So come '69 and we lose, I've got to go.

Q: Most definitely. You've been a thorn in the side, aren't you?

TETRO: Eddie Meyer was sent over. He worked with me in Rome. He, by the way, when I became administrator, I fired him. It broke his heart. Ralph Roberts was a business administrator and he put us up to it. He was a great assistant secretary to work it. I did not have much trouble with [him]. When we took over, I got an order to fire Pat O'Leary. I went to Freeman myself and said, "Mr. Secretary, this guy is really Republican." Pat O'Leary, when I was appointed administrator, was one of two people who called me up at home and said, "Give me my military 90 days and I'll get out." I said, "Pat, just shut up. Sit down and keep quiet." And we kept him until he got fed up with Ioanes and took off.

Q: Ioanes stayed on as administrator until when?

TETRO: Precisely, I don't know. But at that point, I was administrator, Ray was still a deputy on the other side. He was in charge of market development for a while. But at any rate, Pat called me, "Give me my 90 days." And then I got the order fire him and then I went to Freeman and said, "Mr. Secretary, I've got a problem running FAS. You may not realize it, but it's a horribly complicated operation." [...] barter program and that general sales manager we stole from ASCS to get their CCC money. We got not one, but two of them. The guy was the deputy over at ASCS when he discovered that these two units were being transferred - there was a secretary's memo announcing it - tried to get it changed. Of course, Godfrey, the ASCS contact came to Duncan's office - Duncan didn't even understand what the hell was going on here. And Duncan, Godfrey and I sat down and Oris was across the table with Bob Lewis, I guess, and I said: Oris, how can we put out a secretary's memo that says the secretary is a damn fool? And Oris said we can't. God bless. We had a good working relationship with the man. But that operation lost a thread.

Oh, by the way, I told Andy, I said: Andy, you can't fire me; I'm a veteran. You've got to hold me at grade at least for two years - the law says so. And then Ioanes said the problem with that was what they were going to do with me. So I began - I had a special job and I was examining the Common Market to see what our problems might be and how they might develop. I even have a folder on that somewhere around the place. But I was obviously not very happy that they

had to get me a job but they didn't want me.

Cottam ended up as the head of the FAO office in Washington with which we had been working off and on for years. When he couldn't make Nixon get him the ambassadorship that he wanted, we got him that job. And here I did have another aim which was, hopefully, to be director-general of FAO. But I gave that up for other reasons. The family just couldn't stand it. The cursing and fighting bureaucratically which you've got to do to stay on top, can get you down, can get your family down, too.

We'd gotten Howard a job here, which I could have had if I'd wanted it. Howard calls me up one day. And he said: how would you like to be the senior economist for North America? A dear friend of mine, McLean, who I worked closely with who, since '48 or '49 was in that job. So I asked what about him. He was sick and was going to have to take disability retirement and would be out in about two or three months. So I got that job.

Shortly before I left Rome in '69, I was asked by the NATO Defense College - their version of the war college - to give a talk on the importance of food and the problems that NATO might face. The first thing I discovered is that nobody knows very much about this. And so I begin to put on paper on some days when I had nothing better to do. A copy I've still got. When I got to be senior economist, I kept building on this paper. And then in the early '70s, you'll remember that food got to be an enthralling topic but nobody knew much about it. I've already got a paper developed. So I go everywhere I want to go: seminars, universities, two or three places where Alice could go with me, first-class air travel paid, hotel paid all the way. I enjoyed it.

Going back to the director-general Oris Wells who said, "Oh, Bob you never could have done that." The director-general-to-be in Burma. He was the assistant general and he aimed himself a program to get to be the top dog. And I was one of the first two people he called to have lunch with to see if, in my case, I was aiming for the job. And I quite honestly told him at lunch that up until three years ago, yes. But I said I decided that neither I, nor my family, could handle the stress so I better not try.

PAUL D. MCCUSKER
Legal Affairs Officer
Rome (1950-1955)

Paul D. McCusker was born in 1921 in New York. He received a bachelor's degree in economics from Holy Cross in 1943 and subsequently received a juris doctor degree from Cornell Law School. He was selected for a Fulbright Fellowship in Italy in the fall of 1949. While in Italy, Mr. McCusker joined the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Jakarta, Hamburg, and Washington, DC, and served at the United Nations Secretariat in New York, New York for 13 years. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

MCCUSKER: Well, I did. I spent a year in Lionel Summers' office doing the work on claims

against Italy. Then we had the court, the International Tribunal, which had been set up under the Treaty of Peace, involving an Italian member, and an American member. The American member was a Democratic politician from Kansas City, Missouri, who had lost an election and got the appointment to Rome for which he was totally unprepared professionally, or any other way. He was the U.S. member on the Italian-U.S. Conciliation Commission. And I went to work for him. It wasn't a transfer because it was obviously the same embassy. So I stayed on for a total of five years in the embassy working on this claims program, and getting exposed to a lot of areas in which I did research in public international law. I think probably the most outstanding, most important work I did was, on the question of claims of dual nationals which are espoused by the government of one of those two nationalities, against the government of the other nationality, and how do you resolve this conflict of nationalities. For that case, because both the U.S. and the Italians could not reconcile or compromise a position, or find a compromise, we had to have a third member. The same member took my draft and practically translated it into his language, Spanish, and it came out as sort of leading case in the law of dual nationality claims of dual nationals, which was applied in the recent Iranian claims situation. That is the theory of dominant, or effective nationality, the nationality with which you are most closely connected. And that is a question of fact. So the U.S. lost the case, but we established a decision which has been used down through the years adopting the theory of dominant nationality.

I could probably have stayed on in Rome for some more time but I thought, here I am, by this time I had come into the career Foreign Service through the lateral entry process. I should add though, after I was in Rome at the embassy, I did take the Foreign Service examinations again, and again I passed them, but it would have been ridiculous to go back to the entry level when I was by this time in the Foreign Service staff corps. I was already, I think, FSO...I can't remember, whatever the numbers were at that time, FSO-5, I think, level. So I waited for the lateral entry program.

Q: Before we leave the Rome thing, could you describe a little bit -- we had three major figures in the foreign affairs establishment as ambassadors there. First was James Dunn, who represented the old Foreign Service...

MCCUSKER: Celluloid collars, and all that.

Q: ...you know, a top ranking person. Then we had from outside, but a man who had a very distinguished career, although technically not a career ambassador, Ellsworth Bunker, whom I served with in Vietnam. And then Clare Boothe Luce who was really considered a major figure both because she was an early major political figure, and a woman, and also married to the head of Time-Life Magazine. So this made a very powerful combination for her. So she was extremely powerful there. Could you describe, from your vantage point, how these people were viewed within the embassy, and how they operated?

MCCUSKER: I'd be happy to, Stu. Let's start with Dunn who was ambassador when I arrived and started work. Dunn, as you point out, is an old-line traditional...I call him the celluloid collar type ambassador. Aloof, at least from those who were at that time third secretaries, or attaché at the embassy. His wife was, as you may recall, Mary Armour, extremely wealthy...

Q: From the Chicago Armourers.

MCCUSKER: That's right. So he had no concerns about living within his Foreign Service salary. An impressive couple. He was highly successful and went on to greater things, actually, from Rome, if there is anything greater than being ambassador to Rome.

Ellsworth Bunker came and it was just unfortunate that the administration changed after he had only had the job for eleven months and he had to go away, submit his resignation. Ellsworth Bunker, as you certainly would agree having served with him, was a very kindly gentleman, and had time for everybody, very democratic and just a delight to see and be with. Now my work was very independent of any of the usual embassy functions, doing international legal work. So I didn't have any work relationship directly with him, but certainly around the embassy he treated everybody well, fairly, and everybody loved him.

But there it was, he had to go, and in came Clare, arriving on an Italian ship, by the way, when all the rest of us, of course, had to travel by some U.S. carrier, cleverly enough, because she was not welcomed in the initial days in Rome, the Italians being very full of machismo, felt it was an insult to them to have a woman as an ambassador. Well, she quickly disproved any ideas the Italians, or for that matter, her co-workers had that she was just another pretty face, which she certainly was -- a very pretty woman, very charming woman actually. And she showed that she was made of flint, if not stainless steel.

Her ability to argue logically was phenomenal. I've never seen such a steeltrap mind that she had. And with her I was a little bit closer because I had been working on...I should have mentioned that I probably was more fluent in Italian than any Italian member of the staff because during my years I had acquired a degree in Italian law at the University of Rome. Since I had registered at the University when I was a Fulbright student, I had overcome the main problem of getting a university degree, which is fighting the administration at universities. And since I had to work full time and I didn't have to go to classes, I read the books and took my examinations, wrote my dissertation on a comparative law subject, and acquired an Italian law degree. That gave me a kind of leg up in the embassy and I was put on assisting with some of the status of forces military agreements between the US and Italy. Tony Freeman was there at that time, and heading it up.

Well, I thought Clare Boothe Luce was great, and you know the famous story about the arsenic in the coffee, was absolutely true. I knew very well her then staff assistant, Jack Shea, who subsequently moved from State to another agency, through the Luce connection with Allen Dulles. When the story began to break about the fact that she was suffering literally from arsenic poisoning, she looked awful, I must say, and was away from the office quite a bit. Well, the story was true. There was arsenic in the lead in the paint in her boudoir, and flakes dropped into her coffee cup, and she drank the coffee. Jack told me one time that she used to complain about the taste of the coffee, and she said, "This tastes like poison." Actually, it was. And he sent away to Sears for a new coffee maker for her and that didn't help the situation, because she would, like the Marschallin in the opera *Der Rosenkavalier*, kind of hold her levee in the morning, and sip coffee in her bed, really. And Jack would go there early in the morning -- not too early -- bring her the overnight collection of cables, and messages, etc. And she'd come into the embassy quite late as a result, but having drunk a lot of coffee, I guess, with arsenic of lead in it.

She was brilliant, and made a tremendous impression on anybody she met. So I was sorry to leave during her regime, and she was very kind to me in a number of ways.

Then I went to Washington...

Q: How did you find that sort of representing American interest to the Italian system, and subsequently as Consul General in Naples. The bureaucracy is quite something in Italy. How did you find the American system impacted with the Italian system? How did they deal with each other on issues that you had to deal with?

MCCUSKER: The issues I had to deal with were unusual because our little office, under the claims provisions of the Treaty of Peace, collecting money from the Italian government to pay claims of our citizens who suffered damages as the result of the war, was the only program in the entire American government relationship with Italy where we were trying to get money out of the Italians, rather than to give it to them. And there was an awful lot of money changing hands, overtly and covertly, in Italy at that time through those years. Now since we were trying to get money out of the Italians, and the Italians were nowhere near as well off as they are today, they dug in their heels and fought us every inch of the way by fair and foul means. I'm not going to identify any foul means, but they took legal positions which were untenable in my view, and obfuscated issues to the point that they were defeating our efforts to collect money under the Treaty of Peace. So we had probably the toughest time in this claims work in trying to get money from the Italians. They didn't say they were not going to pay; they just dragged their feet.

Q: It's no secret, today anyway, particularly in the election before you arrived in '48, which was considered a critical election, that major amounts of money were given to the Christian Democratic Party by us, covertly -- not terribly covertly -- but also were doing that. There must have been times at the embassy when, say the political people, would come around to you and say, "What the hell are you doing trying to get money? We're trying to give these people...cut it out. You're just screwing up the matter."

MCCUSKER: Nobody ever said that to me. But perhaps I should have indicated earlier, during the Dunn/Bunker period the head of the claims program -- the American side of the Conciliation Commission -- was a man who devoted very little time to the job at hand. Mostly he was interested in his investments in the United States. He was getting the Value Line, and spending most of his day looking at the Value Line materials. I mean, that's a serious criticism, well deserved in my opinion. He was replaced when Eisenhower came in by a serious, hard working, Italian- American, who also had been a defeated Republican candidate for Congress from New Jersey. This fellow had a totally different view of his job. And obviously nobody had given the previous man any instructions from Washington saying, don't push the Italians too hard on these claims, because we had an obligation to our citizens, and a legal obligation to proceed, which was not pushed by the earlier administration's nominee. But it was by the new man who came under the Republican administration, and we accomplished a great deal more after he arrived because he pushed the Italians. He didn't hesitate.

Now there's an interesting conflict as you with your experience in Italy will realize. This is an

Italian-American from New Jersey, a son of immigrants from southern Italy.

Q: Remember the Sons of Italy.

MCCUSKER: Well, I don't know. He wasn't a member of the Ancient Hibernians, that's for sure, which the previous man could have been. He was looked upon by the Italians, the educated Italians, as a product of peasants, and they were very nice to him on the surface. But they considered him an oaf, in their terms.

Q: This for the record often happens, particularly in Italy, and maybe some other countries, because so many of the people who left Italy and settled in the United States came both from peasant families, and often from the Mezzogiorno, the southern part and any good Roman of any background, or pseudo background, is immediately qualified to look down upon these people. And when they come back they are not greeted as long lost brothers, but as...

MCCUSKER: ...rather resented.

Q: ...and sort of rustic, country cousins of obviously lower background and to be disdained.

MCCUSKER: Yes, not obtrusively but in any case they are considered to be "caffoni", as the Italians call them. Well, nonetheless, he was successful in pushing for it, and there was absolutely no indication that anybody had told him, or his predecessors, to go slowly and not push the Italians too much. There was, of course, some difference between the Conciliation Commission work which I was doing, and the work that Lionel Summers headed up in the embassy. He was the agent for the United States in processing the claims. There was a claims program set up which finally wound up with a kind of lump sum settlement at the end. I wasn't there but other people carried on. Carlos Warner, for example, was part of our team. I don't know if you know the name but Carlos was a marvelous, great, old-line Foreign Service officer who hated the fact that they had discovered that he was a lawyer, and put into this claims program.

JEAN MARY WILKOWSKI

Commercial Officer

Milan (1950-1951)

Economic Officer

Rome (1963-1966)

Economic Minister

Rome (1969-1973)

Ambassador Jean Mary Wilkowski entered the Foreign Service in 1944. Her career included assignments in Trinidad, Colombia, Italy, France, Chile, Switzerland, Honduras, and an ambassadorship to Zambia. Ambassador Wilkowski was interviewed by Willis Armstrong in 1989.

WILKOWSKI: Then I thought that the Foreign Service seemed interesting. I had experienced Trinidad and the problems of U.S. bases overseas, then Bogota, Colombia and Latin America relations. I wanted a change -- to take a look at Europe before I decided if the Foreign Service was for life. I was assigned to Milan, Italy and I went there in 1950 to take over the commercial section. I did a lot of very interesting work with American companies coming over after the war wanting to invest, have licensing arrangements or engage in imports and exports. We had an excellent local staff, very good people, very supportive and very helpful. They also made good friends.

As a result of the Milan experience I was called back to head the Italian desk at the Department of Commerce. Frankly I didn't care too much about it. I missed being in the mainstream at State. My colleagues proved a different breed. But in some ways it was good preparation for a later assignment to the GATT Tariff negotiations because we needed significant contributions from Commerce and other agencies. So I learned, how to work between agencies in Washington, which is pretty important. That was in the early 1950s.

AID was still operating in Milan when I got there. There wasn't anything major going on in Italy which was trying to get back on its feet economically. It was before the "Miracle" of the sixties. Norman Armour's daughter was married to Ambassador James Dunn. He headed our Rome mission. The big thing in Milan was the annual Trade Fair and the Ambassador always brought up a big delegation from the Embassy. Dunn was a good Ambassador. His wife Mary was very gracious and had a good sense of humor. She agreed to have the Italian Garden Club name a rose for her. They told her, "It did well in beds!" The Zellerbachs came after Dunn. Different people - very political and less Foreign Service oriented.

Milan was Europe for the first time. It was a wonderful introduction and made me decide in favor of taking the Foreign Service exam. I was assigned to Paris, took the exam there and then came in. I was Assistant Commercial Attaché in Paris.

I took special language training while at posts. I always went in for the course at post in Bogota, on my own in Milan, and in Embassy classes in Rome and Paris, also at the Foreign Service Institute. I took intensive Spanish before I went to Chile, and a refresher before Honduras. I think the greatest lessons I had in Italian came from buying a farm with another Foreign Service Officer in Tuscany. I had to deal with the plumbers and the carpenters and the electricians and the real estate people.

WILKOWSKI: I was then assigned to Rome, in 1963, and I was there until 1966. On my first Rome tour I started out as deputy to the Economic Minister, Sydney Mellen. I was the number two in the economic section. Sydney couldn't go to a conference in Vienna in 1966 and I represented Embassy Rome there. Between 1969 and 1973, I was the Economic Minister in Rome. Then I started out as Commercial Counselor because there was an opening there. I can't say I was thrilled, having been DCM and chargé in Central America. Personnel said, "You are going to be an Ambassador and it is better to park you there than in Washington." -- all these

cute little arrangements the Department makes.

Rome was the second of three assignments in Italy. It involved renegotiation of the civil air agreement which was very, very interesting. It was a negotiation of standstill arrangement on Italian shoe exports, that even brought out Secretary of the Treasury to Rome. At times I didn't feel too honorable doing them as it involved twisting the arm of our allies. But there was some interesting work and involved interesting people from Washington.

It was, after all, U.S. Government policy -- protectionist as regards U.S. shoe interests. The shoe work came after I had worked for Sydney Mellen with whom I did not get along with at all. Sydney tried hard to have me transferred to the Kennedy round of GATT negotiations in Geneva in 1963, but he didn't succeed. I stayed on.

Freddie Reinhardt was the Ambassador in Rome in my first tour there, and I think he suspected as much. Both Wells Stabler, the DCM, and he were somewhat protective of me. I felt that Sydney could be very arbitrary, and there were other personal problems with Sydney which we can discuss privately.

One of my principal problems as Economic Minister was organizational. We had all these U.S. Government agency representatives -- dukes in their duchies. It was a management problem. The Treasury Attaché considered himself quite autonomous, but was actually in the Economic Section. We had an Agricultural Attaché, formerly in the Dutch Foreign Service, who thought that he was ultra-autonomous, and we had a Maritime Attaché. We also had a Civil Air Attaché, and a Commercial Counselor. I had to hold staff meetings once a week with that disparate group and give some leadership direction and coherence. There were 56 people in the Economic Section. Italy's role in the EEC occupied much time.

Then there were the usual bilateral problems -- trade and investment with the Italians, getting the Italians to see the wisdom of our positions, vis a vis the EEC and getting their votes, of course. And visitors. You know, Congressmen and businessmen all the time coming in.

We had the chicken war and the citrus wars with the EEC at that time. The big problems were organization and management and then the leadership-by-a-woman thing to which some had trouble adjusting. The Dutchman, who was the Agricultural Attaché, was impossible. I sort of ignored him. We had a very fine Treasury Attaché, and we worked very, very well together. I was also responsible for policy guidance, the management oversight of economic and commercial work at seven constituent posts -- Palermo, Naples, Genoa, Florence, Trieste, Milan, and Turin. I traveled to these cities for special events -- trade fairs, and delegations.

Venice was handled by Trieste. Al Fidel was the Consul General there. By 1969, we had shut down Venice. We kept a beautiful floor on a villa, if I recall, and we had a speedboat there, none of which I took advantage of because if you used it, you had to sort of blow the dust away and sleep on a cot. I didn't go there.

The Consulate Generals wanted a minimum of interference, of course.

PETER J. SKOUFIS
Veteran Affairs/Administrative Officer
Rome (1951-1952)

Peter Skoufis was born on May 7, 1919 in Bangor, Maine. He received his BA from the University of Maine in 1941 and then attended George Washington Law School until 1942. He served in the US Army Air Force during World War II from 1942 to 1946. His career has included positions in countries including France, Italy, South Africa, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Mr. Skoufis was interviewed by Thomas Stern on January 27 and 29, 1992.

SKOUFIS: I went to see Graham Martin and told him that I didn't want to stay in the VA operation. I wanted out and was prepared to return to the U.S. He asked whether I would be interested in working for the Embassy. I told him that I had been in Paris for four years and that I thought it was time to move on. I had been recently married and I thought it was time to get back home. Then I got a cable from the VA informing me that Tom Quinnen in Rome was about to retire and that I had been assigned to replace him. I thought that that job sounded interesting; I wanted to get back to Italy and I would be in charge of the office. Tom had been an FSR and an Attaché--diplomatic passport and status. The VA promised that I would be given the same rank and privileges that Tom had had.

So at the end of 1950, Helen and I embarked for Rome; we were anxious to do a tour there. We drove to Rome with all of our earthly belongings. We didn't have many personal effects because we had lived in a furnished apartment in Paris after we were married in 1949. After we arrived in Rome, we ran into similar problems. The Department's attitudes toward the former VA employees had been adopted by Embassy Rome. We were to be supported by the Embassy, but were viewed as essentially VA employees. I did my best to disabuse them of that notion. The Rome administrative officer was Gase Lukas, assisted by Tom Carroll and Jim McDevitt. Mrs. Flack was the disbursing officer. We dealt with her because she got the money from the VA and wrote out the checks to our clients.

So we had the same perception problems in Rome as we had had in Paris. The "straw that broke that camel's back" came when my mother sent me a Christmas present--some shirts and ties. The package was held up by the Italian postal authorities for customs duties. At the time, that duty may have been all of \$1.50 or perhaps even less. I refused to pay it and sent the chit I had received to the personnel office so that they would clear my package through customs under the diplomatic immunity process. I was then told that my name was not on the "Diplomatic List". I said that I was replacing Tom Quinnen as the head of the VA office and had been told that I would be accorded the same privileges that he had. The Embassy checked with the State Department who again took the position that I worked for the VA and therefore not eligible for any diplomatic privileges. That meant that my car would also be subjected to taxation; I refused to pay that as well. The Embassy said that my car would be impounded; I said "So be it". I became very stubborn.

Of course, we had a very busy office and I had many other things to do besides wrestling with the State Department's bureaucracy. Finally, Gase Lukas used his own name to clear my package through customs and some else was worked out on the car; I never did pay taxes. So slowly our status was clarified. In the meantime in Paris, a regional office to handle VA matters was established by consolidating the London and Paris offices so that our relationships with Washington began to flow though Paris. But there not seemed to have been any meeting of minds in Washington on our status; each Embassy played it by ear. Some of them were very flexible; they did their level best and kept the paper flowing. In those days, they didn't send cables on this subject, but sent "Operations Memoranda". They kept us pretty well informed. In any case, we knew from the annual promotion lists which never included any ex-VA people.

It was getting close to five years without any of us having been promoted. Our status was still being debated. I went to Rome on a direct transfer in December, 1951. I stayed there until the summer. The work-load was different in Rome than it had been in Paris. There were fewer students and more claims. All the payments to Italian beneficiaries had been suspended during World War II because Italy was an enemy nation. Payments could only be resumed after the claimant had certified to his or her eligibility and after we had investigated the claim because payments could not be made to those who had aided and abetted the enemy. Most of the beneficiaries were World War I veterans who were poor and farmers and who had come to Italy during our Depression. A high proportion had been victims of poison gas during World War I and were therefore eligible for small disability pensions. During the Depression, they found out that the small amounts went further in Italy then they did in the U.S. and went to there to live. There must have been over 2,000 World War I veterans living in Italy. Of course, when the veteran died, his widow received half of the benefits, which although very little, still enabled them to live in a small Italian village. A system was worked out which permitted them to cash their checks at the Bank D'Italia; we would sent the dollar check to the Bank which would then call the payee and make the payment in lira.

We lived in a furnished apartment in Rome. Two of my staff, who had families, were housed in government owned housing in a new apartment building that the U.S. government had built. The allowances were adequate to cover the rent. Our offices were an integral part of the Consular Section, which was in a small villa next to the Chancery. Later we were moved to the FIAT building which was just two blocks down the street toward the railroad station. We were housed there along with some other U.S. government offices. We moved primarily because we needed more space which couldn't be provided in the villa. Our files were growing by leaps and bounds. We hired more local personnel to handle the paper work and to serve as interpreters. All our documents had to be translated; furthermore, in Italy, our clients were more often natives than they were in France. Many of the ex-GIs were also artists. Also we had a large contingent going to the medical school in Bologna because the American schools were over-subscribed and Bologna's medical school had a very good reputation.

My job in Rome was to be the head of the office. I had five or six Americans working for me and probably the same number of locals. Our principal contact was the Consul General and the administrative and disbursing officers. We always faced that end-of-the-month deadline; we would bring the payroll to the disbursing office a couple of days before the end of the month and someone there would then type out the checks. I thought that the Rome Embassy, just like the

Paris one, did a very good job in helping us. For example, my mother's package issue was resolved by subsequently having her use the APO--she had sent the first package by international mail. We enjoyed living abroad and the emoluments were fair; we thought that if one had to work for Uncle Sam, doing so abroad was as rich as experience as one could have. We had good personal relations with the Rome Embassy staff, but unlike Paris, we of course never saw the Ambassador, Mr. James Dunn. I think I saw the DCM, Llewellyn Thompson one time when I first arrived and reported to him. I had by that time become "Foreign Service wise" and knew what one had to do, like "dropping the card". We were very much integrated into the Consular Section. The legal staff helped us from time to time because we needed assistance on the status of the Italian claimants.

The only fly in the ointment was that nagging question of our status and that began to wear on me. There were a lot of other new activities--agriculture, commerce--that were being integrated into the Department and did not seem to have the same problems that we did. There were always a lot of discussions on "how he got into the Foreign Service?"--the Manpower Act, the Ramspeck Act, etc. In the meantime, the VA group was entirely neglected. I had become much more militant on the question of the ex-VA staff feeling that I representing not only myself, but all my colleagues around the world who were also being left out in the cold. Since I had been one of the earliest people to join the Foreign Service, people looked to me to carry their message. I was to be the test case and although I don't think I antagonized anyone, I was always after the administrative people to resolve our issue. Socially, we were part of the consular group and very much involved. As in Paris, we were invited to the Fourth of July party where we would meet the Ambassador and his wife. The ladies were very expert in taking your hand and moving you right along; I was always amazed how they managed to keep the line going; you got moved from one side of them to the other in a hurry.

The Embassy's personnel office--Jim McDevitt and Tom Carroll--were very helpful and were constantly bugging the Department about our issue. One day there was an announcement that two "high" State Department officials were coming to Rome and that they would be available for consultation on any problems any one might have. These officials were Pete Martin and Bill Boswell, who were part of the Foreign Service Administration Office. I took the opportunity to talk to them about our problem. They took notes and promised to look into it when they got back to Washington. It was roughly the same conversation I had had with members of the Inspection Corps when they were in Paris several years earlier. That dialogue never produced anything. In any case, I didn't hear anything directly from Martin and Boswell; I was still an FSS, my car still had a French license plate because I refused to pay the Italian tax. I was not on any diplomatic list provided the Italian Foreign Ministry. That was the situation when we went on home leave.

Helen and I agreed that I would leave the Foreign Service as long as it didn't recognize us as a part of it. I had written to the VA people who were anxious to have me return to their employment. It was about to seek new authorities to handle its work-load. While in Rome, I had written a paper on how I thought the system could be improved--eligibility determination, fraud elimination (which was not unusual on the part of "schools" which were not that and our own veterans who did not attend schools but took the stipends. People at the schools would certify anybody's attendance. In fact, schools in Europe did not take attendance very often and the educational system really didn't care whether you attended classes or not. It was a different

educational system from the American one--we were more disciplined. We adapted the Americans rules to the European circumstances and did the best we could. We also had inadequate man-power to investigate all the fraud possibilities. The schools, of course, were interested in maximizing their rolls to earn more tuition. The language training schools were particularly loose in their monitoring of attendance and we used to watch them particularly carefully). My paper had received some attention at VA headquarters and the people there seemed eager to have me come back to the organization in the International Affairs Office.

ROBERT J. MARTENS
Consular Officer
Naples (1951-1953)

Robert J. Martens was born in Kansas City, Missouri in November of 1925. He served in the U.S. Army Specialized Training Program. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California. In 1951, Mr. Martens joined the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Rangoon, Bucharest, and Stockholm. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 13, 1991.

Q: Because these are sort of career interviews, I would like to touch for a moment on Naples. You served in Naples from '51 to '53. What were you doing?

MARTENS: I started out doing visa work, non-immigrant visas, for about a year. In those days we turned down probably 90% of the applicants. That was under the 1924 Act. The US immigration waiting list was enormous; the waiting list from the Italian government, before they could get an Italian passport as a required first step, was even longer. So people had to wait seven or eight years. The idea of people getting around the system, and cheating the people that stood in line, was not very appealing, but in any case a great many of these non-immigrant applicants were obviously going for immigration purposes. I did that and then I went into immigrant visa work for a very short period with straight Italian immigrants, and then for a much longer period analyzing the security backgrounds of Eastern Europeans applying under the -- before the Refugee Relief Program.

Q: It was the Displaced Persons Act.

MARTENS: Yes. So I spent a lot of time working on Eastern European people. I think I was assigned to that partly because of my Eastern European background. Then I finally ended up the last eight months there in the most interesting job of all, which was handling shipping and seamen, welfare, mental cases, that type of thing.

Q: How did you find the Foreign Service -- I'm sure you'd had one vision of the Foreign Service, and you were really thrown into sort of the guts of the Consular operation. How did it strike you?

MARTENS: I found it tremendously interesting. In fact I liked Naples so much, and I liked the work I was doing so much, that I remember thinking to myself at the time, and I thought it many times later, that I could have spent the rest of my life being a Vice Consul in Naples, and would have been eminently satisfied.

JAMES B. ENGLE
Political Officer
Naples (1951-1953)

Political Officer
Rome (1953-1955)

James B. Engle received a Ph.D. in American Foreign Policy from the University of Chicago in 1941. He then studied at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar before taking the Foreign Service exam in 1949. He was posted in 1951 to Italy. His subsequent postings included London, Germany, Central America, Africa and Indochina. He was ambassador to Dahomey. Engle was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1988.

ENGLE: I was assigned to Italy in early 1951. I had taken and passed the Foreign Service exams in 1949; then one had to wait two years in order to be appointed. This was 1951. I had gone from Oxford to Italy. I had been a Rhodes Scholar. I went from Oxford to Italy on a Fulbright in the fall of 1950, and I was studying politics in the home of Benedetto Croce. The consulate general was nearby, and it turned out that I had worked for Consul General, Alfred T. Nestor, in Ecuador in 1942 and 1943 when I was a Foreign Service staff officer.

This is the third time, actually, as a staff officer. I had been a staff officer twice before. First, from 1941 to 1944, I was in the old Auxiliary Service. That was converted to a staff service in 1946, and in 1947, I was taken back from the military directly to the staff service, knowing that I was leaving later on a Rhodes Scholarship.

But in 1951, I was going in for the third time -- this time with a foreign wife, namely English. Nestor needed a political officer, so he arranged with the Department of State that I would be appointed in the staff service, and my wife, would be sent immediately to the U.S. for naturalization, and on her return, I would be made an FSO. It worked out just that way.

I had studied Italian and was almost bilingual. But in 1953, Mrs Luce was appointed as Ambassador to Rome. She had been there for three or four months when she decided to select me from among those junior officers serving in consulates, to replace Nathaniel Davis in the political section. I went there for an interview, and I was asked to come up to Rome from Naples immediately and join the political section -- urgently because one of the great elections of the post-war was held in May of 1953 -- De Gasperi versus the Communists -- a second round, the first having been in 1948.

I was very cautious about the transfer because it was so unusual to have a woman ambassador, and also because of her known antecedents politically. But very shortly, my reservations evaporated and I grew to like her very much. I always found that it was extremely stimulating to be around her. For one thing, she was intellectually curious, and she wanted to know what the facts were. It just happened that I knew Italy very well from several years of study and work there, and I knew Italian politicians and Italian history. I could give her an answer quickly on almost everything. Therefore, I tended to be referred to rather often and also be called upon when she needed an interpreter when she spoke to the president or the prime minister or the foreign minister or any politician or any minister. Therefore, I was with her and I wrote up the conversations.

I found her to be very effective, and I think she was popular with the Italian Government and with the ministers. Certainly the policy she followed was very popular -- something they found agreeable.

When I was in Naples, most of my time was spent doing political work. The last year I was doing consular work, and in effect, political work on the side because I had so many influential connections. Then I was given a special assignment to run down the antecedents of U.S. gangsters. My "clients" included "Lucky" Luciano. He was hanging around Naples at the time with Joe Adonis, who was then public enemy number one, but he came back shortly after I got the goods on him. He was deported to Italy. Murder, Inc., that was the Anastasia brothers, who controlled the waterfront in New York.

I went out in some places, literally on foot, spent days walking from one place to another to ask village clerks for birth certificates and that sort of thing -- by surprise. That was Naples.

But by the time I got to Rome, I was then in charge of the moderate political parties, those of the government and those supporting the government, the Cabinet, Parliament. In other words, the ministry as a whole and how it was doing. The rest of my time was spent with directly supporting the Ambassador as interpreter and sort of political aide and drafter of many of her personal communications.

The "Opening to the Left" was a matter of discussion for several years when I was in Italy, and then when I became the Italian desk officer at the Department of State. The results of the 1953 Parliamentary elections were unfavorable to democratic Italy. The more moderate parties, Christian Democrats and two or three others, were returned with such a small majority in Parliament, it was only 20 or 25 seats, that it became clear that that did not give the country enough latitude to govern effectively. There was always a question of opening up on one side or the other to bring another party or two in, so that the majority would be larger and the consensus in the public would be larger. That was, you might say, the classic political problem of the day.

The Italians themselves -- that is, key Italian politicians who would be responsible for such a maneuver -- had doubts, and the U.S. Government, particularly in Washington, had doubts about whether it would be a good idea to move either in the right, in the direction of the Neo-Fascist that was going too much into the past, or moving to the left to embrace Pietro Nenni, who was an ally of the Communists. He was the head of the Italian Socialist Party.

The attitudes in Italy and in Washington evolved over the period of four or five years, and we began, in about 1957, to get rather serious in Washington about an opening, this time to the left with Nenni. Many in his party had given many signs of being sort of independent, instead of being tied to the Communists. They had been drifting toward the center, and they were in favor of being taken in; they wanted to be taken in. It became much clearer that this could be done successfully by 1957, and as I recall, it was 1958 when it became our official policy to support that maneuver.

When the U.S. said this would be all right, the Italians maneuvered so that Nenni was brought into the family. Mrs. Luce never pressed for this. I think her thinking did evolve, but the initiative hadn't matured that far for her to have to take a stand before she was replaced by Zellerbach. I think it would be fair to say that she was against bringing Nenni in during her ambassadorship. In fact, most responsible Americans were. We wanted to be very cautious about bringing in something that might be a Trojan horse.

BRUCE H. MILLEN
Assistant Labor Attaché
Rome (1951-1954)

Bruce H. Millen was born and raised in Appleton, Wisconsin. He received his BA from Northwestern University. His career has included positions in countries such as Italy, Norway, India, and Turkey. He was interviewed on November 15 and 22, 1993 by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle.

Q: Did you have any trouble getting AFL support given your CIO background?

MILLEN: In those days Mike and Phil had a working relationship [and I could expect approval] unless I came in with warts all over my head or something. Early on in my briefing over at the Department of State, I began to realize the factions that were developing over labor policy in Italy. They were all trying to enlist my support, and I being a neophyte was trying to fight them off. I knew nothing about Italy, foreign labor or anything else. So I certainly wasn't going to join a cabal at that stage of the game. On the other hand I learned that there were existing cabals.

Q: Could you describe the briefing process that went on in 1951?

MILLEN: I really can't in any detail. I saw this and that fellow: Dan Horowitz, Irwin Tobin, the fellow from Latin America who finally got in trouble with the McCarthy.

Q: John Fishburn?

MILLEN: Yes, [John] Fishburn. All those people. Some of them took me a little higher in their organizations, but to me it was a brand new experience and I was reeling from [both] the

confusion that existed within me and the excitement of this type of assignment.

Q: How long was the briefing process?

MILLEN: Well, it went on for a long time, because, as I remember, I got to Washington and I was sworn in on June 29th and through some failure of the appropriations bill, all travel was suspended. So here I was sitting over in a room on 16th Street all ready to go and I had to wait an extra four or five weeks before I could get in motion. I arrived in Rome on August 15th or something on that order, right in the middle of *ferro agosto*, where you wondered where all the people had gone. I must say, however, the delay did give me a period in which to assay the factional battles being fought with State.

Q: Do you want to go into the factions that were there?

MILLEN: Well, it really boiled down to the pro-UIL (Unione Italiana del Lavoro or Italian Union of Labor Unions) and the pro-CISL (Confederazione Italiana Syndacati Lavoratori or Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions) [factions], the former being a mildly Social Democratic-Republican mixture and CISL being a Christian Democratic [group]. Of course at that early stage I didn't realize how thin the veil was over CISL with regard to its professed apolitical, aconfessional image. It was anything but.

Q: How would you characterize it?

MILLEN: In reality CISL was almost totally dominated by the Christian Democratic Party. The only ones who didn't know that were the Americans, I guess. I remember going into a barber shop in La Spezia. I had gone upstairs to the CISL office and [nobody was there]. It was around lunch time, so I went downstairs and got a haircut in the barber shop. I told them I was looking for the CISL. "Oh, *Sindacato de preti*." was his response. (The syndicate of priests.) The Italians knew this game and it was only the Americans, particularly the American trade union leaders, who came over and were so firm in their beliefs that this was an apolitical, aconfessional union.

Q: Did you get any language training in the United States?

MILLEN: No, in those days we didn't get paid [for language training]. Those bills were not paid. I started the first week I was in Rome at Berlitz, and studied for the first six to eight months. Then along about that time [the Department of State] brought in language subsidies.

Q: You had no Italian before you went over to Italy?

MILLEN: No. In fact one of my fears was, as we came down and landed on a Saturday night, I said to myself, "What am I doing here? I know not one word of the language." Italy was a strange new world, both bureaucratically on my side of the fence and in terms of the Italian culture and systems and so forth. I was petrified, absolutely petrified. [On my arrival] I was greeted by a fellow who had been called in from his vacation to come and meet me at the airport. He was in not too cheery a disposition, but he did get us into town, and the next day being a

Sunday, some guy from the Administrative Office called up and said, "Is this Bruce Millen?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Thank you," and hung up.

Q: Who was your boss there, the Labor Attaché?

MILLEN: Colonel Lane. We all called him "the colonel" because of his military background. He had earlier had experience with the Fifth Army, much of which was over in Trieste. Then right after the war he moved into the Embassy in Rome. I guess he had been a colonel in "intelligence," and this operation going that was interesting. I had been there two days, I think, and was writing about some little thing out of the paper to send back as a form of a dispatch-It would have been my first dispatch. Those are high moments, you know.- and I was told by Tom's principal assistant, "You can report anything as long as it is favorable to CISL."

Q: There was a slight bias?

MILLEN: That was my welcome.

Q: Can you recall who the assistant was?

MILLEN: It was Jim Toughill. He came out of the I.U.E. He was a charming rascal.

Q: Was he an American?

MILLEN: Yes. So that was my first instruction. Then I had been there not more than a week when I was called over by either the Political Counselor or Tommy Thompson, who would have been Deputy Chief of Mission. I don't know [which for sure]. Anyway, talk came up about my background and I told them what I had been doing, and he said, "Oh! We were told that you were out of public relations in the union movement." Here again, the atmosphere already had this sense of mystery and conspiracy, and I had only been there a week. But life settled down, and I enjoyed myself.

Q: How would you characterize our policy toward the trade union movements?

MILLEN: In a way [our policy was] juvenile.

Q: In terms of promoting CISL at the expense of other non-Communist but legitimate unions?

MILLEN: In a way. It wasn't that everything we did was wrong. We were pumping a lot of covert money in and certainly at one stage of the game back, in 1948, that was important. As I have noticed these things over the years in different countries, we just don't know how stop anything. That which has a very legitimate starting point usually just continues on and on and on and builds and more and more people get a vested interest in it and there is no way to stop it. To gain perspective, one must realize our support for CISL was only indirectly a trade union issue. The U.S. commitment to CISL by the U.S. Government and the American trade union alike was, more accurately, support for the Christian Democratic Party as the chosen agent against Communism in general and the USSR in

particular. The Communist CGIL, being so powerful and with its ties to Socialism (no matter how confused at times) or variants thereof, became a major field of battle.

Many labor attachés and others doing related work in the international labor field thought that building solid, independent trade unions in and by itself contributed to building democratic institutions. In Italy, we reverted to the pre-World War II pattern of building a religious political movement and a union movement controlled by, or guided by, the Church. This was a chancy gamble given the extent of anti-monarchical and anti-clerical opinion in Italy. The policy worked in 1948 fortunately because of the fear of Communism in the general public-even among those who normally would never vote Christian Democratic. But, in the long haul, it was a self-defeating policy.

On the labor side with the break away of the CISL group (helped in great measure by U.S. assistance) its leaders and the U.S. sources, public and private, declared the new labor confederation to be apolitical and a confessional. Few Italians believed that claim. The moderate Saragat Socialists under Saragat set up their own union, the UIL; the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions accepted the UIL membership. The U. S. persisted in its sole support for CISL as the representative of the Italian workers. In effect, we denied trade union and political legitimacy to a substantial part of the Italian electorate. Instead of working to build a multi-faceted, genuine anti-Communist trade union force which could contribute to complementing other democratic institutions, we returned to an old agenda.

Q: How were we assisting CISL?

MILLEN: Oh, we were paying an awful lot of money out. I don't know [exactly how much but] the Italians used to tell me to the tenth of a lira how much we were paying out. Tom Lane's English counterpart, the British Labor Counselor, would have lunch with me and say, "And what about this 620 million lire?"-or whatever the amount was in those days. He had specific figures and I knew nothing about amounts or anything like that. There were lots of indications that money was being passed. There were certain safes that I couldn't use and things of that nature. There was plenty of evidence that CISL was pretty much in our keep. The amusing thing was that all we did was pick up the tab for what the Christian Democratic Party would have had to pick up if we hadn't been there. The rationale-and I think it could be justified at one time-was that if we paid CISL that made the unions more independent of the party. But I never saw any evidence that CISL had that much control over anything very important. Of course, Lane had influence in the selection of ministers of labor and that sort of stuff, but it created such an unreal situation that over the long run it probably made it much more difficult for CISL to become an independent force from either the party or us.

But as I said, I had fun. Lane dreamed up this idea that we would use [our] bargaining power when we issued large contracts or loans. We would use political criteria and I spent a lot of my time out on the road checking the political situation in various plants there. How much [union representation came from]

CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro or the Italian General Federation of Labor) or CISL or UIL or MSI (Movimento Socialista Italiana, the neo-fascist labor movement).

Q: These were assistance loans to private firms?

MILLEN: Yes, or they were contacts.

Q: Was this the forerunner of the off-shore procurement policy?

MILLEN: Yes, this was part and parcel of off-shore procurement, combined with MSA loans, etc. In fact

I remember one day-I was not invited until very late-some admiral from the United States came over with his flock to discuss the procurement of 75 to 90 million dollars worth of ships, and I talked about using these contracts as a political instrument. There must have been 50 to 75 people there. Looking back it was funny because the admiral just looked at me and said, "Very interesting, young man. We're here to buy ships." He could not have cared less about the political complexion.

Q: Were there cases where contracts were denied to organizations that had unions other than CISL?

MILLEN: Well, it gave us a basis for bargaining. I think for a while we had some impact. We didn't say to fire anybody, or at least I didn't. Some others did. But you could say, "Well, it is our understanding that the Communists"-We called them "shop stewards" which was not exactly a precise term but a short hand method for their representatives on the Commissioni Interni, the Internal Commission.-"are reportedly running free, while the CISL members are tied to their machines." So we could make pitches to give them at least equality of treatment: "Either tighten up on one force or let the other force loose" and things of that nature. I think for a while we had some short run influence, but I began to suspect later on that what CISL and all the unions were really saying was, "Well, look, if it is the difference between getting a contract or not getting a contract, we'll give you ten of our Commissiones Interni members," and all could agree to that kind of a division. Jobs were jobs. Possibly we induced management to be more circumspect.

Q: Were we in effect influencing management to give preferential treatment to CISL?

MILLEN: Yes, this is what we hoped to do. But it all broke down and was very discouraging. I ran into one straight three million dollar loan from the Mutual Security Administration, which we now call AID, for a plant up in the Alto Adige, right outside of Bolzano. That was one of the plants that Mussolini had put there to get some Italian presence up in the Austrian part of Italy, and it was staffed 99 percent with Italians. Mussolini moved Italians up there to take those jobs. Well, the problem there, at least from my point of view, was that the management was supporting neo-fascists, so I blocked the loan and got in serious difficulty with our Deputy Chief of the Economic Aid Mission. I also got a lecture from either the Deputy Chief of Mission or the head of the Political Section. I pointed out, "If we are not here to support democratic rights, what good is all our anti-Communism going to do us? You are going to lose." Well, he was much disgruntled by my [comments].

Q: There was no effort at all to eliminate fascists from positions of power?

MILLEN: The management there was actually giving active support to the fascist unions. So I held up that [loan] but at some personal cost. I was informed the loan was approved after my transfer.

Q: This would have been around 1952?

MILLEN: This would have been 1953 or something on that order. My attitude didn't leave a satisfactory taste in the mouths of our people who called me in.

The one person I know about who was fired because of our efforts provided a great deal of (from my point of view) national adverse publicity to our Mission and provided to the cynic in me a piece of high comedy. A plant superintendent in Florence, an avowed Communist famous for his behavior during World War II, credited with bringing his optical plant back into production quickly after the war, was identified as one who "must go." All this in a city with a saintly Christian Socialist mayor who supported the plant manager.

A high level delegation from the U.S. Mission tramped over to Florence to insure action. It worked.

Dozens of papers in Florence and Rome headlined the "discharge." The plant manager was released, transferred to headquarters in Belgium with a big title, made a member of the Board of Directors and provided with a much larger income. Peace was restored and the Embassy was satisfied. Fortunately, I was too junior to accompany our warriors, and for that matter, never knew what propelled us to take this action. For a change, I kept my comments to myself. It was a purely Italian solution and apparently satisfactory to all concerned.

One final story under this category took place one night in Minister Tasca's office. A director of one of

Italy's myriad of state owned enterprises sought support for a loan or contract. After listening to the

U.S. plea for more sympathetic treatment of the CISL, the director stated bluntly that it was not a difficult problem. He would direct the discharge of 3,000 Communist workers. I coughed and yammered and finally succeeded in getting our Minister out of the room. I pointed out to him that the United States

Government could not absorb this type of publicity as the story was bound to become public-in fact the plant director would be the first to claim he was "following U.S. orders." We came back into the room and explained we were not demanding discharges, simply equal treatment of CGIL leaders and CISL activists on the work floor. The three of us parted soon thereafter, convinced we had done something important, nebulous as that might be.

In general one might say the entire effort of political-economic coercion to be of sound and fury. It might have stiffened a few backs on the side of management, but suffered diminishing returns as the Italians learned how to manipulate the system.

Q: How did the Labor Attaché Tom Lane react [to your blocking the MSA loan to the plant in Alto Adige]?

MILLEN: Tom seldom said anything to me. He boasted of his never leaving "fingerprints," i.e. his signature on any matter. And that was certainly true in all of his relationships with me. He stayed out of this one publicly as he did on any issue involving me or any of the issues I raised. On economic issues or decisions I took, I did pretty much what I wanted.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

MILLEN: When I got there, we had one of the real old-timers. I can't remember his name. He went from there to France. Then we got the sugar king, [Ellsworth] Bunker. He was a delightful guy, savvy and a decent type of person. He was not ideological in the sense others were, a pragmatist one would say. You could talk to him and reason with him. In later years, when I would meet him on the street or when he was Ambassador to India-I visited him there.-I always enjoyed talking to him.

And then in about 1954 we had Clare Boothe Luce come in. I didn't have much contact with her. I was led to believe that she, by mere chance, saved my neck on an investigation of me. I was the subject of an apparently informal inquiry within the Embassy about me, and the best that I could make out of it was that I was being charged with being an irresponsible radical.

Q: Who raised the charges?

MILLEN: I don't know. A year later I was later told by the Political Counselor that he had not been there long when a serious person in the Embassy had laid letters in front of him pertaining to me which he signed. He said the he had no reason to doubt that this fellow and others and didn't understand what was going on. He said to me, "I signed the papers and sent them to Washington." I was later told by the fellow who kept the records on this investigation [at the Embassy] that it went on for two months. I never knew anything about it until it was all over.

Q: What were the specifics of the charges?

MILLEN: I have told you as much as he told me. My friend got semi-drunk one night after both of our wives had returned to the United States, and we had been invited over to dinner at somebody's house.

Afterwards he came back to my place and we talked and drank and drank and talked. This whole story came out. It is just absolutely fascinating. This guy was a personal friend. He was a garrulous old boy from Tennessee, and I am sure it would have been hard for him to sit on this information, so he just told me. I was absolutely flabbergasted at the whole thing. Finally it was just dropped. I don't think it ever reached any conclusion. As he told the story, Ambassador Luce came through while they were deliberating one day and said, "Is this [discussion] still [about] the Millen problem?" They said, "Yes." And she said, "Why don't we forget about it," and that was the end of it!

Q: So Ambassador Luce closed the case?

MILLEN: Unwittingly she closed the case. I think that she had begun to lose faith in Tom Lane.

Q: What sort of labor background did Tom Lane have?

MILLEN: Tom was member of the Brick Masons' Local Number One in Washington, D.C. I could never figure out whether he ever actually laid brick or not. I suspect that he did in his youth. He became a lawyer, which always dumbfounded me because he was "illiterate" in both English and Italian. What a show he could put on!

Q: He must have been a good "contact person"?

MILLEN: Well, look, anybody who is delivering that much money is a good contact person. You don't have to look for friends. I heard him once. I had written a despatch of some sort, and he called [into his office] Louisa San Severino, a marvelous research person, [who worked at the Embassy]. She was both a Contessa and a Professoressa. She was an interesting and nice person. She did research for us and translation of articles. I happened to be in the outside office one day and Tom was saying to her, "What do you think of that?" There was a pause. I guess my name was attached to this question, because I stood stock still. She looked at it and said, "Well, you know, I turn material over to Mr. Millen and then he does with it what he wants. I don't assume direct responsibility for that interpretation, but if you want to know whether I agree with that, yes, I do."

Q: Bruce, at that time you got around Rome. Did you meet any of the officials of the CGIL.

MILLEN: No. There was pretty much a non-contact policy, and they weren't available. I used to go to all their rallies. I would go to some of their inside rallies when DeVittorio was speaking in a theater, and they never objected. But when an architect-sculptor. . . I have forgotten his name now, but the man who did the figure in front of Solidarity House in Detroit. . . He was a architect. He did public housing. He was an advisor to Walter [Reuther] and so forth. [In any case], among other things he did a statue that he cast in a little town just outside of Florence, and I got an invitation for the unveiling. "Oh, God, no! You can't go there!" was the cry. "They have a Communist mayor." Well, I said, "So what? The mayor probably won't show up anyway." Well, he didn't show up. I did go. Nobody could really dream up a reason why I shouldn't go.

Q: What were your impressions of Giuseppe DeVittorio?

MILLEN: Well, from reading and seeing him at meetings and so forth, he was a very commanding guy and had a true presence on the platform. He looked like a big peasant from my recollection.

Q: As I recall he was a peasant, I think, from Puglia.

MILLEN: Yes, something of that sort.

Q: This was the head of the CGIL?

MILLEN: Yes

Q: As I understand it, he was from the Farm Workers Union.

MILLEN: He may have been. I have forgotten all that. But that CGIL staff had good economists. They really were for the most part first rate. I remember once that the CGIL put out a five year economic plan for Italy, which was a good plan, worthy of serious consideration. I wouldn't want to buy the whole thing.

At any rate I went to a reception from the Confindustria, which is the industrial association, and I asked one of their chief economists what he thought of the plan. He said, "Well, it's not bad." [I asked], "Does the Confindustria ever put out any such documents?" He replied with a grin, "Our job is to create a response to the CGIL plan."

Kienzle: Were your contacts almost exclusively with the CISL?

MILLEN: And the UIL. I had a lot of contacts with the UIL. That was part of the problem that I had there. I got into trouble with Irving Brown and Jay [Lovestone] and the Colonel [Tom Lane] and the

Embassy and the CIA and the AFL, because I was being friendly to the UIL and occasionally I would get them a trip to the United States, or some other favor. It was the contacts which really troubled "our crowd." At one point I got both groups at the senior working level to agree on worker housing legislation.

Q: The UIL was the Socialist trade union?

MILLEN: The UIL was Social Democratic along with a Republican current. And because the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) accepted them for membership, my activities were tolerated, even though not always appreciated.

Q: Who headed up the UIL?

MILLEN: Italo Viglianesi-later to be Minister of Transport as the Christian Democrats weakened and had to look for allies.

Q: Why did you get in trouble [for your contacts with UIL]?

MILLEN: Because they were not part of CISL. And then of course there was always the suggestion that the UIL were really laced with crypto-Communists and so forth. It was that they were out of step with what we wanted them to do, which was namely become one unified opposition to the CGIL. When we engineered the separation of CISL from the CGIL, we didn't realize that we were setting in force traditional Mediterranean cultural-political instincts to have multiparty operations. Once you broke a big piece off of CGIL, it was inevitable that smaller pieces were going to come off and try to maintain their own identity and their own political force. Given the AFL's strong plea for unitary unionism, i.e. no dual unionism, it was only natural from our point of view to say, "Well, you can't have two [labor movements]. You've got to have one." That just went counter to the entire European

tradition. The general European mode of operation led to coalition governments as well as trade unions, leaving the door open to Communist domination. It led to muddled politics, not clear-cut results as exemplified by the American model. All of this is true, of course. We just never realized we could not pull it off.

Q: Who in the Embassy supported your contacts with the UIL?

MILLEN: To my knowledge, no one on the political side of the Mission. The economic division and many on what we now call the AID Mission, including the Minister, were quite comfortable with my activities. One or two from the CIA seemed quite comfortable and cooperative.

The UIL contacts came about naturally. I didn't break my neck to do it. And there were people, who were not my superiors and so forth, who were quite happy to see material coming out [of the contacts]. Many people on the economic side of the Embassy felt there was a smell of craziness about the work of the labor section. And a good many of the Consular officers were very realistic in their appraisal of Embassy policies.

Q: Did Tom Lane oppose the contacts?

MILLEN: Yes, but he couldn't say, "You can't do it." because the ICFTU recognized the UIL and because they were afraid of possible repercussions. They just thought that I shouldn't. I wasn't trying to be an obstructionist or anything. I just thought it came naturally, and I certainly was not in opposition to the CISL. I just thought that if you can't have one organization fighting the Commies, then you had better make use of what tools you have and that was it. UIL, standing alone, could never have been a match for the CGIL. It would have always been an adjunct to the CISL, never a substitute.

Q: Pastore headed up the. . .

MILLEN: Yes, Guilio Pastore was head of CISL. I kind of liked him. He was a short, squat, little fellow. But he never commanded the respect of a DeVittorio, nor could he shape Christian Democratic policy.

Q: Do you recall his origin?

MILLEN: No. That has faded into the past. He was always interested in the development of the south.

I can't remember whether that came from part of his origins or whether he just felt that in order to develop

Italy had to do something in the south. He was no dummy. He was a respectable guy. Bruno Storti was his deputy and later became [head of CISL]. Bruno was motion picture star handsome. Didn't you think that?

Q: Yes, that's right.

MILLEN: I understand third hand that by 1967 or 1968 Storti had pretty much had it up to the

throat with

American interference, . . . -- because actually we were still monkeying around there -- and there was a move for unity among the trade unions.

Q: And they were engaged in joint collective bargaining.

MILLEN: I understand that the AFL-CIO was doing its best to try to block that and were putting up a fair amount of money to stop it.

Q: To stop the unity?

MILLEN: Yes.

Q: Because they were afraid of Communists and Socialists?

MILLEN: Oh, I suppose so, although I really was amused [sometime] along about 1970 [when] I was reading the AFL-CIO News and there was a picture of the UIL General Convention up in Torino and by God there must have been five presidents of AFL-CIO [member unions] in that picture. I thought, "How things have changed!"

Q: Five Executive Council members?

MILLEN: Yes, and then of course we had Harry Goldberg there in residence as part of the Lovestone operation.

Q: Didn't they have the trade union training school down in Anzio?

MILLEN: CISL had one up just outside of Florence in the hills.

Q: Jazali?

MILLEN: I am not sure.

Q: Do you want to describe Harry Goldberg's operations.

MILLEN: Well, it was too veiled. He floated around. Occasionally he and his wife would invite my wife and me to lunch, and then, as I understand it, he would frequently go back to CISL and talk about my "Communist connections."

Q: What was his official position there?

MILLEN: He was just a representative of the Free Trade Union Committee. I believe that probably would have been his title. He was a likeable and bright guy.

Q: And an accomplished musician.

MILLEN: Yes, a very fine musician. I don't know whether he may still be living, but he was in very bad health.

Q: He passed away a few years ago.

MILLEN: Did he?

Q: Why did he report back on your activities?

MILLEN: Because they were very unhappy with my contacts and the things I was doing. I never considered these things to be all that important, but they became magnified in the minds of some observers.

Q: Was there any sense that there was a need to keep track of other factions in the trade union movement besides CISL, even if we did not influence them?

MILLEN: They certainly wanted information about the UIL, and they certainly wanted to keep track of me. We had one fellow in the office who was openly from the [Central Intelligence] Agency. He was a nice fellow. He made no bones about his connection. We worked together and traded information back and forth. Then another fellow was assigned, and interestingly enough my first alert came from [our local] Italian employees in the Mission. "Be careful of this new guy coming in. He is out looking after you." These employees were from the Mutual Security Agency. How they knew it I don't know, but that was the first warning I got; later I danced with the wife of a CIA employee and she said, "Bruce, be careful. This guy is here primarily just to watch you."

Q: Do you think that her husband put up to saying that?

MILLEN: No, I don't think so. I was a good friend of her husband's. No, I don't think he put her up to it. I don't think he would have trusted her with that kind of information. Then, interestingly enough, when I was getting ready to leave, the agency wanted to fill my job too. That was when I worked something out with Henry Tasca, who was Deputy Chief of the Mutual Security Agency Mission, and I think also Minister of Economic Affairs in the Embassy, but I am not quite sure of that.

Q: Yes, as I recall, he was.

MILLEN: Well, at any rate, I went to Henry and said, "Hey, Henry, I understand that 'they' are trying to put somebody in my job." He was startled and said, "How can we stop it?" I said, "They apparently haven't selected anybody yet. There's nobody ready to come right in. Maybe you can fill the job on an 'acting basis' right away." So he called Ted Long down [to Rome] from Genoa, and Ted took the job [at the Embassy] and stayed in it.

Q: How did the Agency go about filling those spots at that time?

MILLEN: Well, I don't know. The one that I told you about that I had been alerted to. . . I can't

imagine him being very effective in any sense of the word. I heard indirectly that he was not a deep or a great agent. I guess that they selected him on the basis that he had an Italian name and spoke some Italian. He was responsible for vetting some of my reports-in fact stopped one. He succeeded in getting new cars for three CISL officers in central Italy. That type of thing.

Q: Bruce, going back to [the subject of] the CGIL, when you went to some of these CGIL rallies, would Togliatti, [head of the Italian Communist Party], put in an appearance?

MILLEN: No, I never was at a meeting where Togliatti spoke. I think that was part of their game too.

They didn't want to juxtapose these two forces.

Q: They made a distinction between the party and the union?

MILLEN: Yes, I think they were trying to, but nobody was fooled by it. It was for public relations purposes.

Q: As I recall, from its very beginning, the CGIL always had a Socialist Assistant Secretary General.

MILLEN: Yes, the Nenni Socialist Party made common force with the Communists and was also in the CGIL as the main socialist party. They were rewarded with second-level jobs.

Q: This would have been Nenni?

MILLEN: This would have been Nenni's people. I have forgotten the names of the CGIL people, but

[Nenni's people] had the important spots in the CGIL and probably from time to time had considerable influence. There was no question that the Communists controlled the operation.

Well, we have talked so much about this covert phase and I don't want to leave the impression that that's all which occupied me. It took up only about ten percent of my time, but because I was right in the middle of it, it loomed as a very important part of the picture. I think we did some good things: that school in Fiesole and some of those things.

Q: Did you have other duties besides labor?

MILLEN: Indirectly, yes. I worked with the Economic Aid Mission closely. I sat on their loan committee, and I think I had some influence there, partly because of the political information that I had about individual plants where loans were being directed. I got involved to some extent in the cooperative situation. There again, Tom Lane had a certain instinct for what was important in a political sense. He said one day, "You know, we don't know much about the Italian cooperative movement. Why don't you look into it." So I wrote a very extensive report on it. Of course, it was almost a mirror image of the trade union situation, but to my knowledge nobody had ever touched on the subject before. The Communist Cooperative Movement was strong, healthy and so forth, and organized much like the CGIL. I did work with the productivity committee, as well

as general economic work.

Q: It was particularly strong in the Emilia Romagna.

MILLEN: Yes, there farm cooperatives and everything were very [strong]. The other parties had matching organizations, which were about as effective as [their counterparts] in the trade union field. Bang! This report hit Washington and within a month we had a special group out on co-ops.

Q: Did we support co-ops?

MILLEN: Just to figure out what we could do and how we could strengthen them, as far as I know, but in Italy, who knows?. Interestingly enough San Severino, the Professoressa, was a consultant to the Christian Democratic Cooperative Movement. She was a professor at Pisa. She would go up there two or three times a year "to take examinations." What she meant was to give exams. I have no knowledge she ever met a class, but that would be part and parcel of an Italian university. You know, they don't have enough seats to seat all their students if they came to class. It is not like an American university set up. You are pretty much on your own. You are an independent scholar and that is one reason why to this day relatively few people get university degrees.

Q: Yes, I can attest to that because I was a student at the University of Perugia for a while. Bruce, do you remember when Abe Kramer was there?

MILLEN: Oh, yes. This is an interesting story. For three years I was not permitted to go to Torino, Pisa, or Trieste, because those were Tom's private bailiwicks.

Q: Any particular reason for that?

MILLEN: Well, in Pisa he had set up a dual dock union, which was really run-I may be oversimplifying here-out of the prefect's office. They selected the people who would load and unload American ships. That was one of the major debarkation points for both our troops and supplies going into Austria. So in a security sense it was very important.

Q: That was at Livorno?

MILLEN: Yes. So Tom Lane had established this separate section of the Dock Workers which was pretty much a CISL operation with the prefect running the show. I guess that was considered to be too delicate for me to go into it. For the first two or three years, I was just not permitted to go. So Tom went up there one day and the newspapers mentioned that he was up in Livorno/Pisa. He was a public figure. I am not quite sure what the problem was but among other things, the leadership needed more money. I think that's what it was. So he went up there. He never told us or anybody about what went on. Well, Kramer was in town at that time, and Irving Brown was in the Flora Hotel. So the same guys who met with Tom on Tuesday met with Irving Brown on Thursday. They told Brown that they didn't get much from Lane and so forth, so

Brown upped the ante. Kramer was at the Brown meeting and told me about it.

Q: How did he do that? What was the mechanism?

MILLEN: Keeping matters and finances straight in so far as activities of the CIA and their surrogates [are concerned] is beyond my ken [capacity]. I don't know what the mechanism was, but obviously he and Lane were in great competition.

Q: Kramer, as I recall, was brought down from Germany.

MILLEN: Well, he went into Trieste, because that was a special flash point. There was a lot of labor activity in the port, even though it was a declining port.

One final anecdote about the Italian scene, and then let's move on. I tell this simply to demonstrate CGIL-CP methods and tactics versus those of CISL. Probably in 1954 or 1955, CGIL ran a most impressive and economically devastating farm strike in Ferrara, north of Bologna. Day after day, newspapers in Rome of all political persuasions carried front page stories. It was fast becoming an important political issue with the Socialists and the Communists playing the story for everything possible. The economic issues have long been lost to my memory.

I went to Ferrara for three days to see developments first hand and spent most of two days with two fine CISL representatives who were overwhelmed by events-and frankly they were more than a little frightened in as much as they had to flee from the rear as the CGIL supporters broke in the front. Farmers were afraid to go out to milk their cows; animals were being shipped out of the province; cattle were going unfed. The CGIL mounted demonstrations led by pregnant women.

Initially the police had bicycles for transport while the strikers used motor-scooters. Jeeps were brought in for the police, but the strikers ripped up the loose planking which formed the road service for many of the small streams. I felt the isolation of the CISL forces and was stunned when, in thanking me for my visit and attention [one of them] said, "Tell some of the CISL leaders we need help. Some of our people from CISL should visit us."

The dispute was resolved a few days later under terms virtually identical to a set of recommendations I made to Minister Tasca upon my return. Cause and effect? Who knows?

So that's it. Why don't we move on to another country? Suffice it to say that Lane gave no consideration to economic issues or the work of economic development. I did not even consult with him on issues in this area.

Q: Okay. Well, how long were you in Italy?

MILLEN: Three and a half years.

Q: So you were there until about 1954?

MILLEN: I left in about October 1954.

THOMAS D. BOWIE
Labor/Political Reporting Officer
Milan (1951-1955)

Labor/Political Reporting Officer
Rome (1962-1973)

Thomas D. Bowie was born in Minnesota on September 1, 1917. He received his BA and MA from Carleton College in 1938 and 1940 respectively. His career has included positions in Spain, France, Poland, Italy, and Saigon. He was interviewed by James Shea on February 25, 1994.

BOWIE: At the end of our tour of duty in Warsaw we returned to Washington and from there we were assigned to Milan. I was to be a labor/political reporting officer. That was the beginning of my work in labor. Almost no briefing or preparation. I remember being told by a Personnel officer that I was a guinea-pig: Could labor work be handled by regular Foreign Service Officers? Actually, a Foreign Service colleague, Jack Fuess, had already done that work in Milan. And, indeed, I was to follow him again, as Labor Attaché in Rome, years later. So we were at least two guinea pigs. I sometimes would wonder how the experiment was proceeding.

Q: What year was that, Tom?

BOWIE: It was 1951. First week we were there we heard that somebody by the name of Irving Brown, a trade unionist from Washington, was coming through on a United Nations mission to Yugoslavia. We were still living out of packing cases but had Irving over for supper served on a trunk top. It provided as good a chance as any to become acquainted.

Later, after Irving had gone on, some of the very new labor contacts congregated in my office. Chairs had been gathered and the office was quite filled with oh, I can remember Ettore Calvi, Franco Volonté, other faces come to mind, but the rest of the names are gone. At least six or seven of them had come in. Maybe just to look me over in the office. Then the receptionist called me and said there was a Colonel Lonny outside who wanted to see me. I had never heard of any Colonel Lonny. It never occurred to me that it could be Colonel Lane, the Labor Attaché in Rome, whom I had heard of and expected to meet some day. I'll never forget the sharp look in his eyes as he burst into the office. But he at once was pleased to see all his friends. It turned into a great time. Then, the two of us went out and had a good lunch together with plenty of red wine. When we went back to the office and I said, "You know, Colonel Lane, I don't know anything about labor, I don't have anything to teach these people." And he said to me, very encouragingly, "You can learn, can't you?" I have always remembered that. Here was someone I could discuss these labor problems with. I remember going down to Rome filled with the one-sided

impressions of the industrial north and urging something on Tom Lane. He would reply "Penso oggi; parlo domani." I'll think about it today and talk about it tomorrow. He had lots of things to weigh that I hadn't considered.

Q: What kind of a guy was he in physical appearance?

BOWIE: He was above average in height, heavy-set, slow moving, weighing perhaps 200 pounds, in those years. He died of some lung ailment at the age of 67. This was some years before that so I suppose he was around 50 at the time. He had thinning light brown hair, piercing blue eyes, a firm look. Very simpatico. Very simpatico. In fact, Jim, he had a lot of Irish charm.

I doubt that he was ever totally at home in the Embassy atmosphere and setting but he had worked there with great success for many years. By the time I got to Milan in 1951 he was a very well-known figure throughout Italy. He had been sent into Sicily by the American Military Government authorities from North Africa at the time of the landings in southern Italy in 1943, I believe. He later learned with great surprise that one of the colonels selecting him to go there and serve in Military Government was my brother-in law, the husband of my wife's older sister. So Tom Lane always thought that was quite a coincidence.

Q: What was his name?

BOWIE: Henry T. Rowell, professor of classics at Johns Hopkins University. When I asked him about Colonel Lane he said, "Yes, I guess I do remember that name. He was on a list with several other to go in." And then I asked him what made them choose him, he answered, "Oh, I can't remember that..." After retirement Henry became the resident director of the American Academy in Rome. He loved the Italians and knew to deal with them. But he slipped up once when in Military Government in Rome. He was convinced that opera was opera and thought it appropriate to schedule a concert with the famous singer, Beniamino Gigli, who had some kind of Fascist past. There was a huge uproar by the Italians. Tom had to be called in to straighten out the situation. So their paths crossed once again.

Q: And how did you report, Tom?

BOWIE: Well, the labor reporting officer in Milan wrote various kinds of messages. One was an Office Memorandum (OM) which could be sent directly to the Department, always with copies to Rome; or dispatches as they were called in those days--long formal documents, "The Honorable, The Secretary of State: I have the honor to..."; or airgrams. The latter were devised during the war to save telegram traffic. Draft in telegraphese; send by air pouch: airgram. I used OM's and airgrams. Airgrams for the required reports, including responses to special requests from the Labor Department. We used OM's for various other kinds of reporting.

Soon after the Eisenhower administration came in, in 1953, there was a big RIF (25 percent and more across the board. Some found jobs with temporary programs such as the Refugee Relief Program, but others simply sought work outside the government.) From the overseas perspective

the impression was inescapable that there was an aggravated aspect of the outs coming to power and grabbing jobs from the INS. I remember hearing how it was when Hoover came in after the 1928 election: Commercial attachés were given 30 days to pack up and return to Washington.

In 1953 "cleaning up the mess in Washington and weeding out security risks" made it an especially rich harvest. Some known Mccarthyites were taken into the State Department and carved out careers for themselves. Secretary John Foster Dulles seemed to set the tone when he announced to the assembled staff that he did not intend to defend what he did not know. But to be balanced, when the Democrats came in 1960 after the death of Mccarthyism, many strong personalities had to re-invent the wheel.) Yet, the coming to power in 1953 of the party of which Senator Mccarthy was a member constituted validation or strengthening of his dynamics, and brought more fear and loathing to the hearts of most government employees. They had seen too many names besmirched and careers ruined by downright lies and misrepresentation. I do not think any society is exempt from the threat of a repeat of such extremism.

In Rome there was soon a fresh emphasis on a program called "Offshore Procurement." That meant US military purchases abroad. They were of great interest to a country in need of orders. I had already worked on offshore procurement with Tom Lane's office in Rome. When Mrs. Luce came as Ambassador to Italy under the Eisenhower administration, she announced that no such orders would be approved for Italian firms having a CGIL (Communist-dominated trade union, the biggest union confederation in Italy) majority in their labor force. I looked at that announcement and thought, no, I've got to say something about that. It must have crossed my mind that dissent might be considered uncalled for, unwelcome, even disloyal in these times, but it had to be done. I don't recall agonizing over it and weighing the pros and cons.

Margit and I had talked over Mccarthyism one day as we were driving through northern Italy. I said it really could strike like lightning. The life and career of innocent officers had been ruined, but I at least had an alternative profession--teaching--. Margit, a child of the depression, answered reassuringly: "I've been poor before and can be poor again. We'll be alright anyway."

I discussed my reaction to the announcement with my boss, who was very sympathetic and said "Go ahead." He needed no convincing but had lots of questions for me as I was writing. He wanted to understand it clearly. The big thing was to get my comments down straight. When the report was finally ready for my boss's approval he quietly inserted his initials after mine as a drafter. Without any discussion I understood he was certainly not trying to take any drafting credit, but wanted to stand beside me ready to take what came. Those initials closed the door to his possible disavowal of the report if it caused him real trouble.

Q: Who was your boss, Tom?

BOWIE: Paul Tenney, a fine man in the best traditions of our Service. I tried to set forth a closely reasoned dispatch to Washington with copies to Rome, saying that it probably wouldn't be in our interest to withdraw contracts from firms having a CGIL dominated union representation because most of northern Italian firms were then in that situation and many CGIL members were not Communists. Above all, to take away bread and butter from an Italian worker, and threaten their employment, would be the worst thing that could happen to them and their

families. It would strongly influence their feelings, but not in favor of US objectives. I felt that such action would inflict needless injury on Italian workers who were not Communists but members of the CGIL. I recalled how the Moody Amendment outlined in detail US foreign policy objectives in the labor field, seeking to strengthen the democratic trade unions and induce workers to join them. But I thought this sanction, this bludgeoning, of Italian workers, more than the CGIL and the Communists, was ill-advised. Counterproductive, to use a term heard more often in Latin America. That's the best I can remember it now, but in a word it took polite but definite issue with the substance--or as it turned out, an unintended implication--of Mrs. Luce's announcement.

Durby Durbrow, the DCM, came up to Milan, had dinner with us. After mystifying our son with slight-of-hand tricks, he then explained the target of the announcement had been Italian management. The aim was not to take away work from Italian workers in the CGIL but rather to pressure Italian management to favor the democratic unions. One of the consequences was that I was asked to go over and interview the FIAT people after the disappointing election returns in their internal commissions elections.

Q: The people in Turin?

BOWIE: Yes, I thought this was an interesting development and Tom Lane said that what I had written had been useful. I think they were more than ordinarily willing in the Embassy to have a dissident opinion because there was much concern over conformity imposed by the fear of Mccarthyism at that time.

I was also put in charge of the OSP investigations and recommendations for the Embassy's consideration for northern Italy.

Q: Who was Elbridge Durbrow?

BOWIE: He was the DCM and later became ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam. I eventually went there as his political counselor.

Q: In 1952 when you were in Milan I was a student at the University of Perugia and I used to get to Milan quite often. And I traveled out to Sesto San Giovanni...

BOWIE: Oh yes...

Q: I used to find the anti-American feeling there to be terrific.

BOWIE: Yes, there was a lot of Communist propoganda there. It was reinforced by their alliance with the Nenni Socialists and the weight of the CGIL. I used to sit perplexed when commuting by train into town from where we stayed in the summer. The passenger cars on the train and the locomotive and the freight cars were marked "From the US" but that didn't seem to influence the anger and resentment you could sense in the crew and the passengers. We used to wonder what to do about it. I worked very closely with the USIS office in Milan. It seemed as if the Communists had so many more resources than we did even in those fabulous times of our own

spending. I used to read carefully their "Quaderno degli Attivisti" published weekly, I think. That edition paid much attention to labor developments in northern Italy. I thought it provided some insight into Communist thinking and, perhaps, their actions at the plant level. But the free trade union leaders had to be angry, too, with lots to criticize. "All that money wasted," complained one of the free trade unionists to me. I would go out to Sesto San Giovanni and I seem to recall spending a lot of time at Breda, in addition to Pirelli and Magneti Marelli. Breda had a reputation for being a pretty red state-participation enterprise. (It was a Socialist, Giovanni Mosca, who was later to become a top Socialist leader in the CGIL, eventually visiting the US and quietly seeing AFL-CIO officials, who gave the word on the eve of Liberation for the strike at Breda that developed into a memorable general strike.) Great big plant, first started by an Italian, Ernesto Breda, years before. Oh, they took so much time to draw up the blueprints for the new Settebello train. I was on its inaugural run to Bologna and back. It is still going now, an old but still sleek, stream-lined modern train. And all the managers and workers were so worried about orders, orders, orders. Comesse. We don't have enough orders. Anyway we've got to keep the workers on the rolls. Losing ones job was a family catastrophe. Management lost face by dismissing workers. The hour of lean-ness and mean-ness had not yet struck. Despite all the well-founded criticism of northern Italian managers and enterprise owners in their dealing with the workers, they thought twice before firing workers.

An incident comes back to me. In those times there were no worker cantinas, restaurants with subsidized meals. The workers brought their own food, hooked up their little heaters to a factory electricity outlet to warm up their minestrone, or ate cheese or ham in buns with red wine. I would walk along and smile, [It was extremely rare, if ever, that I gained entry into those plants without management sponsorship] and workers would smile back, sometimes making a friendly gesture. One afternoon a worker at Breda, on the job, was furious about something. He was apparently a skilled worker since he was doing some drilling on a piece of machinery. Something made him madder yet and so he threw down his electric drill with all his might. No one said a word, least of all management. Tantrums were in. I have often thought about that incident, wondering sometimes if it was a gesture against the American. However it was such an isolated event in all the times I was there, that I tend to think it was something else, within the worker. I repeat, I never was aware of direct, personal hostility. But that certainly doesn't mean there weren't great anti-American demonstrations. Something personal, however, did not strike me as characteristically Italian. On the other hand, when we were in Poland Poles expressed personal animosity against Americans while in public because they were pressured into doing so. It private it was quite the opposite. But I did not get close to the workers in Milan other than as a US representative. I would go out to the rice fields with the USIS truck and free union representatives. Those poor rice pickers lived in medieval conditions.

To return to the subject of keeping workers on the payroll rather than firing them, there may still be an interesting institution in Italy called the Cassa Integrazione dei Guadagni. It is a fund for supplementing worker wages when they are placed on part-time. Unfortunately, it has been translated by the opaque term of Wage Integration Fund. Wage Supplement Fund would be less mystifying. Labor economists will say it is an income transfer device, a cushion for frictional unemployment, and a means for assuring an immediately available supply of skilled and retrainable labor to employers. Workers may be put on half time, even zero hours, but they are kept on the payroll for a meaningful time, a period often extended by parliamentary decision,

their social insurance is maintained, and they are paid a substantial enough fraction of their wages to be able to live. Italian unemployment insurance is a mere pittance. (That makes me think of how Herbert Stein, former economic adviser to President Nixon, quite recently made what he called an "heretical" proposal, namely that economists should begin to consider how to revise current economic models to take better into account our current social problems.)

The "Cassa" --"The Fund"--(actually there are a number of sub-funds applying to different sectors of the economy) is financed by social insurance contributions and the general treasury. It has worked in Italy for decades, even before World War II. But Italians have a host of devices "combinazioni" that, perhaps after the fashion of Rube Goldberg machines, make their society go. But I digress. What's the next question, my friend?

Q: Oh, I recall, Tom, that the Socialists, especially under Nenni, were just as fierce in their anti-Americanism as the Communists. Would you care to comment on that?

BOWIE: Yes, Yes. Where to begin? There was a Socialist Congress in Milan before we got there in

1951. It would have been instructive to sense what was going on behind that anti-American line and their alliance with the Communists. Did you, too, ever get glimmerings that some Socialists were following the line enunciated by Nenni because they were personally loyal to him? I did, here and there. But at that time their anti-American stance was fierce. That was the harsh fact. Despite their positions, even then, one got the inkling that they did not always think the same as Communists. The Socialist-Communist relationship was not permanently defined by that gross anti-American propaganda. They have a long history. They were frustrated. They were overwhelmed. And in the end--after years had passed, particularly the 1956 Soviet occupation of Hungary--I seem to recall that Nenni was quoted as saying "Ho sbagliato tutto." And over time they had a fresh beginning. But during our years in Milan their position was hard to distinguish from the Communists. We tended to lump them together indiscriminately.

If I may go ahead a little on the subject of Socialists, which deserves several encyclopedias, I recommend Dan Horowitz's book on Italy as an excellent study. When I was down in Rome as labor attaché some years later, and there was more movement among the Socialists, I used to think that each Socialist was almost a career in itself: Each individual Socialist's evolution in thinking, their psychological change, the things they were going through, their problems.

Q: Tom, how long did you stay in Milan on your first tour in Italy?

BOWIE: From 1951 to 1954. But you see, I've digressed and leapt around. Apropos of some of these stories I've recalled, wouldn't you agree, you who know Italy so well in so many ways, that no generalization about Italy is accurate, even this one?

Q: Did Mrs. Luce come to Milan during the years we are discussing?

BOWIE: Yes. First there was Ambassador James C. Dunn, then Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and then Mrs. Luce. Her first visit to Milan was right before the 1953 elections and she delivered a speech

to the

US Chamber of Commerce containing an observation that if the elections went unfavorably (meaning if the Communists gained), US aid to Italy could be in jeopardy. It was not taken well, perhaps because of the great nationalist sensitivity in northern Italy that has always been there, partly because it was in style to be sensitive to Mrs. Luce's nomination as an Ambassador to Italy. They weren't used to having women ambassadors and the press was full of it. Nevertheless Mrs. Luce succeeded in winning over some popularity. When she arrived on the train that day from Rome she pleased the crowd by waving the back-handed bye bye the Italians do to say "ciao."

Also she won over the Embassy staff on the first staff meeting, according to the toms toms of the day. But to express disapproval of Mrs. Luce's speech to the Chamber of Commerce that evening, the *Corriere della Sera* printed a picture of Mrs. Luce looking like an angry schoolmarm with her forefinger in the air in exhortation. They didn't appreciate interference in Italian domestic affairs.

Q: I must say I've heard Bruce Millen on that.

BOWIE: Yes, but sometimes they depended on our "interference." Our history of liberation and post-war development involved "interference." Graduation is a long process. Not long after Mrs. Luce's visit I remember being flabbergasted to hear that "The Consulate General had given its green light ('nulla osta') to a certain local strike in Milan." I had never done anything quite that stupid. It's interesting because it suggests that dependence was there, if only receding gradually to a tiny speck later on, in the culture of that time. Like a child learning how to walk. How the Italians slalom now.

Q: Bruce; you know how outspoken he is against Lane. Well, on the tape he wasn't so...

BOWIE: Maybe this...

Q: Of course, Colonel Lane was very close to the Christian Democrats and also the Socialists. Could you tell us a little bit how these organizations were helped.

BOWIE: Well, the Christian Democratic party was the party after the 1947 elections in Italy, as in Germany. I'm afraid I've neglected relations with the CD organizations in our talk. They occupied much of our attention. Prior to the 1947 elections there had been a great Communist scare that cast a long shadow over Italian politics for some time. ["Verra Baffone..." Big Moustache (Stalin) is coming...] Every possible means was used in American foreign policy to assist the Christian Democratic party organizations and, to a certain extent, other democratic party organizations, to gain strength, to defeat the Communist threat. However, I never had any doubt that the Christian Democrats' share in US assistance more or less equaled their status as the pivotal party. I must tell you I never was actively involved in who, how, what, and why in that activity.

The same is true of the democratic trade unions. Remember, a great deal happened and was decided in the immediate post-war years, and throughout the 1950's. I was Labor Attaché from

1962-1973 and in Milan as labor reporting officer, far from the scene of decision-making, from 1951-54. I remember hearing of the jealousies within the free labor organizations on that score.

The CISL was the largest free trade union and certainly got more support than the UIL. I recall how the UIL had Social Democrats, Republicans and some Socialists among their supporters, under Italo Viglianesi. The CISL was an amalgam of Christian Democrat oriented unions with a smattering of other forces participating, including some Republicans and I guess even some Socialists and Social Democrats. In later years CISL cultivated "autonomy" and strenuously pressed independence from political parties. In earlier years each of the two major free trade unions would claim that only one democratic union would absorb all the other democratically-oriented workers. That didn't come about. The trade union configuration, aside from what now may appear as minor anomalies, reflected the political scene.

The Socialist Party had a statute requiring its members to be active in the CGIL, along with the Communist leadership. Later, when the Socialists and the Social Democrats united in the 1960's for a while there emerged a fairly substantial Socialist segment in the UIL organization. That Socialist requirement was glided over. I wonder whether they have yet amended it, and how. Remember how the Social Democrats had left the Socialist Party in the post-war years in disagreement over that party's alliance with the Communists. They were in effect merely coming back together in the 1960's. But this provided a fertile field for internal strife in the US for years. There was a difference during the post-war years in the US labor movement--rivalry between the AFL and the CIO. They were not unified until around 1952 and after that there was still the difference between UAW leadership and the AFL-CIO. As one US labor leader said to me in a moment of illuminating frankness, "We all have our favorites." Efforts were made to smooth out those differences: In some countries the AFL had predominance, it was said, and in others, the CIO, or the UAW. And of course in the government we had to bear that in mind.

Sometimes I would be perplexed when someone would come out and castigate the CISL and the AFL on behalf of the CIO or UAW, not to me but in public in speeches to Italian labor representatives. That was something a government representative might regret as undermining a common thrust, but it wasn't always a common thrust and that was the reality. It called for a certain amount of tact in our work. I tried to be fair to both democratic unions.

I remember one time when Mr. Meany was visiting Rome I recommended to him that he see both Storti, head of CISL, and Viglianesi, head of UIL. Storti was having a meeting that both could attend. I didn't press my recommendation to Mr. Meany while he was doing other things in Rome, but the day of the meeting, I was accompanying him over to this meeting. He said "Tom, I told Storti that the American Embassy had recommended that Viglianesi attend this meeting and Storti agreed. So I guess he'll be there." I breathed a sigh of relief because I thought it would be a very much more constructive move for Viglianesi to be there. For him to fail to see Viglianesi when he came to Rome would be a needless offense.

I have to smile. I remember interpreting for Mr. Meany at that meeting at CISL and Mr. Meany had his own points to make and his own positions to make clear. Which he could do in various ways. So, when called on to speak, he began : "Brother Storti!" and half growled "Brother

Viglianesi!" That said it all. Still it was good he saw them both.

Q: Could you more or less give us an evaluation of Tom Lane's contribution to the development of the Christian Democrat and Socialist Unions.

BOWIE: Oh, I think he was a great inspiration. He was also the subject of criticism and jealousy. A kind of lightning rod for a lot of the criticism and policy rivalry I've mentioned above. Given the political context of our relations with Italy, the position of the Christian Democratic party, can you imagine his not having a more generous approach, so to speak, to the Christian Democrat organizations than the Socialist ones? That certainly inspired jealousy, resentment, and criticism on the part of those not benefiting so much from US help I do not think for one moment that Tom Lane created that situation. But it must be remembered that I saw nothing of what he was trying to do until 1951, six years after the end of the war. I do know that he was regarded as a person who loved the Italian workers and Italian people. He had a wide range of contacts. I doubt that any other person there under those circumstances and in the play of forces existing during those early years, and later, could have been able to act much differently. I think it was recognized that he was the right person in the right place at the right time. I give him full marks. But from my point of view I come back to the position that under the circumstances of our policies, which labor recommendations could only influence to a certain degree, and which were almost always more the creature of those political circumstances than their driving force, I doubt that there could have been any different approach than what there was.

Tom Lane was an Irish Catholic from the AFL Bricklayers' Union, (formerly headed by the Bates, who as a widower married a US Foreign Service secretary, former secretary to the famous Ambassador Jefferson Caffery, who would invite them to dinner at his Grand Hotel residence when the Bates were in Rome, and who had been in the Bisbee riots prior to World War I, fighting against the ideologically motivated IWW and its strikes and riots simply to defend bricklayers' jobs and work. He helped President Roosevelt get Congressional approval for funds to build the Pentagon and complained to Roosevelt when he heard bricks were not to be used to build it. Roosevelt said he never heard of that and promised to "get after the person who thought that up...") Roots...

Also, Mr. Meany made a statement that I always regarded as significant no earlier than 1960 recognizing the value and contribution of the Socialist movement in the world. That helped clear away some old underbrush.

Just like in Vietnam, history will have to make a final judgment on the impact, wisdom, and appropriateness of those policies. But as one looks back 40-50 years, one already sees how 20 - 20 hindsight is so much better than trying to see straight in the hurly burly of the crises of the period. We did the best we could, all of us. Disagreement is an essential part of exploring solutions to given problems. Think how we fumble around over current problems. And history is now passing another verdict on those leading parties of Italian coalitions for so many decades. It doesn't look very favorable right now for either the Christian Democrats or the Socialists, with the revelations of scandals and the destruction of reputations. A whole new ball game. But to come back to your question, Jim, I stand today firmly in grateful recognition of Tom Lane for what he did.

Q: Did people like Luigi Antonini and Seraphino Romualdi travel to Italy at that time?

BOWIE: Yes, as the years went by they represented a beautiful tradition, something wonderful that had happened...in the past. I remember how one of the trade union leaders said to me "Each year it seems to us that they become less informed," or words to that effect. . . "They understand less and less about what is going on." What the situation was six months ago on the occasion of their last visit no longer obtains.

They might be aware of all that had happened since and what was under way, or they might be informed by some correspondents that may or may not have been accurate. At any rate that was the reaction of one of the trade union leaders that discussed the Italo-American phenomenon with me. I have to say that when I saw some of them, I could see there was a measure of truth in it. On the other hand, I have seen Italian trade unionists accept with minimum graciousness a check from US workers who could perhaps ill afford what they had contributed to their Italian recipients. I noted that in Palermo later in my stay as Labor Attaché. Times change; reactions evolve. I could not believe that the intense post-war Italo-American labor ties would last through another generation. I have not kept track whether I was right or wrong. I doubt it has been maintained as 30-40 years ago. I cannot conclude my comments without emphasizing the great contribution these men and women made in the post-war years.

In that connection I am reminded of a man whose name escapes me, I'm sorry to say. He was born in Lodz, Poland, a leader of textile workers in New York, and did much for Italy in the early years.

Q: That was Emil Rieve, wasn't it, or...

BOWIE: No. This one was close to the Social Democrats, rather short and stocky, not Emile Rieve.

Anyway, whatever his name is, when Giuseppe Saragat, a Social Democrat, was president of the Republic of Italy he had this man over to Rome and gave him a medal the size of a dishpan. He was so pleased. He showed me the great medal. On getting ready to return to the US he generously tipped all the hotel staff that had served him. And then, because they were aware of what he had done for Italy, they all came out and lined up again to give him a final farewell as he was on the curb waiting for his car. But he looked at them in anxious frustration and asked, "But haven't I already seen you?" And they answered, "No, no, not that. We just wanted to say good bye to you again." On that note we can leave the subject of Italo-American labor ties.

Q: Tom, do you recall much about Giuseppe Di Vittorio?

BOWIE: No, not directly. He was the head of the CGIL during the years I was in Milan. He died in 1957. Originally a southern farm worker, Di Vittorio never forgot that. He was a gifted leader of men, with a human touch and feeling for the poor that probably weighed more heavily than the strategic aims of theoretical communism. In the years after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia there was such a labor leader, but the Soviets ultimately executed him. He had put trade union concerns before party aims. While it may have been said that Di Vittorio was no cold Communist theoretician, perhaps even something of a loose cannon in Communist eyes, I never

personally became aware of anything other than a militant, charismatic, unchallenged Communist leader. Perhaps those seeing more of him had better informed impressions.

Q: Di Vittorio was from the south, Apuglia, as I recall.

BOWIE: Yes.

Q: He still had a tremendous following in the CGIL, I gather.

BOWIE: Oh, yes, yes he did and I recall some speculation about why the Communists came to accept someone who wasn't to the party born, so to speak, as the head of the CGIL. Of course it made good sense because he had very great appeal to the "masses." And it wasn't just the farm workers, it was to everybody, all the working people in Italy. Recalling the attacks against Communist leaders by the democratic forces, particularly the democratic unions, in those years, Di Vittorio was something of an invulnerable icon, a towering figure who so transcended his actual political orientation, that he came to stand for what workers thought they wanted. It was very hard for the democratic unions. Di Vittorio was hard to attack.

Q: Yes, as I understand it, perhaps I'm wrong, I'm told that the only non-Communist leader who could approach di Vittorio as far as ability was Bruno Buozzi, who of course was assassinated by the Germans before he left Rome.

BOWIE: I think you're absolutely right. It happened before he could make any contribution to post-war developments. A great tragedy. His picture was in all the democratic trade union offices.

Q: What kind of a reception would you get as you went around labor circles in Milan at that time?

BOWIE: Considering the virulent anti-American propaganda and its inroads, I would say quite friendly.

The democratic labor leaders were very cordial. But of course, I was very much the US government representative, never pretending to speak on behalf of US labor. It comes back to me now how once Tom Lane and I went out to attend some sort of big demonstration in Milan. Later the same day he told me his free trade union friends had just let him know they had kept us under watch every moment we were at the demonstration, unbeknownst to us. He said they wanted to make sure nothing happened to us.

Time and again I would get a friendly reception when calling on Franco Volonté, head of the CISL metalworkers union, and later Giuseppe Zanzi, who succeeded Volonté. I remember how cold those labor offices were when I went there in the winters. We would sit with our winter coats on. How welcome were the little wet cold cups of hot coffee.

Speaking of clothing, I remember we had a meeting early on in Milan of "productivity experts" from the US textile worker unions. A couple of them and a dozen free trade union leaders. In the Consulate General or the USIS, I forget. The US labor representatives were urging the local

manufacture of ready-made clothes, including men's suits. But the Italians couldn't accept the idea of not having made-to-measure suits, even shirts. As it was they were lucky to have one suit, who knows how long it had to last. They said they would rather have less than anything ready-made. They couldn't afford to dress as well as they did later, after ready-made clothes became accepted.

Later, when coming up to Milan as Labor Attaché 10-15 years later, particularly during the Vietnam war, I could clearly sense anti-American feelings. For example, when I called on Pier Carniti, then head of the CISL metalworkers union in Milan, I felt an almost glacial atmosphere. I noted and reported that he was a clean desk man and at the time thought that would help him on his career goals. It didn't pay him to be friendly with the American labor attaché at that particular time. He changed when he got to Rome. That reception was a contrast to the outspoken welcome I would receive earlier. And, actually, I believe it contrasted with relations I had with other leaders when visiting in Milan. That particular union was very gung-ho early on for trade union unity.

Certain factions in the unions in the north and elsewhere espoused anti-American positions but usually over certain specific issues. Such questions as trade union unity profoundly divided the free labor unions. Some rival leaders made their progress to power by espousing these minority views and challenging existing leaders. I wish I could remember more clearly examples from my experience there but you remember it is some twenty years since I left Rome and closed that drawer, so to speak.

Q: Your memory is still very good, Tom. Where were the Communists the strongest? In Lombardia or Piemonte.

BOWIE: I wish I could remember that. There were the areas you called the white areas that weredominated by the Christian Democrats...

Q: Emilia Romagna...

BOWIE: Those were the red areas...Toward the Dolomite, Vicenza, Verona, that is where there had traditionally been strong "white" unions. Socialists were also strong in certain unions there, and there were fewer Communists. In certain places there there were many strong Catholic unions, with a long Catholic or "white union" tradition which later blended into the CISL and the ACLI (Associations of Christian Workers). Communists could mount demonstrations just about anywhere. But in the south there was the CD party and its organizations including the trade unions. In the north and in the center the Communists were very strong. They were everywhere. Very few places where they didn't have a strong grip. In those days strength was measured by the extent of strikes they could rally, the support they could get, and how they could transcend the differences between the several unions. They had been seeking that for a long time ("unity of action"). They came close to actual "unity" in the early 1970's after "trade union unity" had been a watch word for some years. I remember attending a meeting that a Soviet labor representative assigned to the Soviet Embassy attended. He had little to say except "L'unita sindacale." That Russian accent echoed in my ears for a long time. Despite the many natural and forced trends to labor unity at the time, the Communists overplayed their hand in 1971 and 1972 when actually

putting down on paper the plans for the unified organization with the free union leaders. How the democratic leaders backtracked and pretended. I was surprised at the number of people coming to the office. They feared a repeat of 1945.

Political leaders began to sound warnings. It took the CISL and UIL metalworkers unions years to become untangled.

Q: They [the Communists] were particularly strong in the Alfa Romeo as I recall.

BOWIE: Yes, yes. Although I remember going through Alfa Romeo in Milan with some trade unionists and having a reasonably nice reception. I didn't find that CGIL people as individuals felt called on to make a hostile demonstration, as I remember.

Q: And how about FIAT.

BOWIE: Well, that's another story. Of course, harking back to 1953, the FIAT had some very bad results in their local plant elections. They got a dressing down from Mrs. Luce and later they produced more favorable results, shall we say.

But those Communist dominated unions in the north have a fascinating tradition. There is the Socialist tradition as well and also that of the CISL and UIL unions. The Communist tradition was very strong there. Piedmont and the north have been especially fascinating for researchers from all over. Over the years some of the research I saw would perplex me. Some researchers seemed to have adopted a "CGIL point of view" without acknowledging it. That was part of the ideological-political battle in which the far left had its own vocabulary, buzz words, and arresting allies. (As early as the 1960's worker priests had joined the CGIL.) When I saw these words in serious studies I would be suspicious of their orientation or as we say today their "hidden agenda." Particularly when the writer would mention only the CGIL, would refer to "the labor union," and would ignore or dismiss the ongoing struggle within the Italian labor movement between free trade unions and Communist dominated ones, and the differences within the CGIL. Once again I point to Dan Horowitz' work as outstandingly sound and utterly praiseworthy in all respects.

The free unions in effect were conducting an effort to prevent the Communist-dominated majority unions from prevailing or taking over entirely. That work of the democratic trade unions went on over a long period of time. Over a period of immense economic and social change and challenge, when they had to fight their own people in the government all too often, somewhat like in the US.

Q: There was a very strong anti-clerical feeling there, as I recall.

BOWIE: Yes, very strong and deep. There was a dependable knee-jerk reaction. Maybe it has diminished over time. I think anti-clericalism is a whole encyclopedia to be discussed in terms of all of Italy. It could be invoked against any CISL trade union anywhere and any time, despite their immense strides over the years to autonomy and independence. These democratic trade unions had well established their credentials as valid representatives of the workers, often showing up the Communists as not being free from party political considerations.

Q: Tom, in connection with affairs within the Consulate General in Milan and also in the Embassy in Rome, how did the regular FSO's regard labor officers?

BOWIE: Well, you know I'm not the best person to answer that because I was a regular foreign service officer brought to do that work, as you can see from our conversation. But I can tell you when I was sent to Paris I saw a real difference right away. I had been Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs in Saigon and then after going to the Army war college was sent to Paris as labor attaché. Shortly after I arrived and Dan was showing me the ropes, somebody from another organization came up to him and asked indignantly "When is this garbage strike going to be over?" As if Dan were somehow responsible for it. And I could tell the difference. Your standing as a political officer was the same no matter who you were or what your career experience was, so long as you did your work effectively. The labor attaché just didn't come through like that. I got the feeling some officers in the Embassy didn't quite know what to make of labor officers, and the prevalent anti-labor views in the US were broadly shared by individuals in the Foreign Service. "Your Mr. Meany..."

Fortunately for me, the DCM in Paris was an old-time Foreign Service friend--from Warsaw days. It was nice to know he was there.

Some high-ranking FSO's knew perfectly well what to make of the labor function. That should be emphasized. They worked very effectively with it. I'm not going to name names because I might be unfair in leaving out some sterling characters but I have to say that some of the most traditional foreign service officers were the most supportive and the most interested in the labor program.

When I came to Rome in 1962 there was a great deal of dissension over the desirability of the Italians' forming a center-left government, taking the Socialists into the government. The labor aspect was particularly acute because the Socialists had left the question of trade union affiliation of their members unchanged; labor leaders in the Socialist party would remain in the CGIL. Well, I remember thinking that as far as I could see that was an unresolved problem and we were just going to have to recognize that it was going to be there. The international relations department of the AFL-CIO told me the center-left formula was "rubbish." I had been in the economic section in Paris and the DCM, the minister, in Rome, said that they proposed to put me in the political section in Rome. I said that wherever the labor attaché was, whether in the economic section or in the political section or reporting directly to the DCM and Ambassador, I thought the work would be pretty much the same. Of course I would be glad to go wherever they put me. But I had to say that I was going to be the bearer of bad and contradictory news about the center left as far as the labor situation was concerned. There was a possibility that that could be washed out if it were filtered through the political section, obviously in favor of the center left as a political solution. So, I wondered about that before we even got started. In a couple of weeks he told me I should report directly to the DCM and Ambassador but "if you don't get along with the political section, it will be your fault."

That was fair enough and so I tried very hard, using techniques of close consultation and occasional joint drafting. I also was careful not to tread on the vested turf interests of the political

people. But there were also pitfalls with some economic specialists who occasionally might be disapproving and complain about my reports, although they would be cleared through the economic section, political section, and the Ambassador. This was during times when the economic policies of the Italian government were being attacked and perhaps sometimes slightly attenuated by local trade union forces and the economic agencies of the US government were especially sensitive. Sometimes, too, congressional delegations would have a special axe to grind over interpretation of local labor statistics. I remember how they seemed to require a lot of explanation. I'm sure I'm not adding anything new, but merely adding a bit of color to the experience we're discussing. Where there were friendly personal relationships and where trust and understanding had developed substantive questions were easier. These varied with the change in individuals throughout my long stay in Rome.

In general the labor function was more appreciated when you could do something helpful, whether for the business people calling having labor problems of one kind or another, the military, and so on. Once there was a huge general strike throughout the whole province of Leghorn over dismissals of local employees of the US military base there. The military called the Ambassador. He and the DCM called me in. I saw that it was the opening steps of the procedure that offended practically all the Italians. What to do? Well, the Ambassador and DCM were the kind of persons who would listen. My idea was that the concept of a fresh start might help things. Tomorrow would be the opening step instead of today. I remember to this day throwing around the imperfect subjunctive in talking with the labor representatives involved. They bought it. The Ambassador persuaded the military. It worked. I suppose it also helped the stature of the labor function.

But I must cut matters short and not begin talking about my boo-boos. We'll draw a veil of charity over them. Maybe some of these problems are eliminated when the labor officer has other reporting responsibilities and is operating cheek-by-jowl in a smaller and close-knit staff.

Q: And after Paris, Tom, you went straight to Rome and you had your great years in Rome.

BOWIE: Well, they were years of effort and learning and I think I learned more about being a labor attaché in Rome. No doubt our staying there for so long was perhaps somewhat stultifying career-wise, but

I have no complaints on that score. I remember saying to one of the four Ambassadors I served under that it was in my interests to be transferred. He said, "Yes, it is in your interests to be transferred but it's in the government's interest to keep you. So what could you say? That was Graham Martin. I want to honor his memory.

Q: And Martin, how long was Martin in Rome?

BOWIE: I suppose around a couple of years. Then he came back and was sent to Saigon.

Q: And at that time was Storti head of CISL.

BOWIE: He was just giving it up then. I worked with Storti all the time I was there. I knew of Marini when he was a young comer.

Q: How was Storti to work with?

BOWIE: No problem, as they say today. He was not a man that you could deal with on a very relaxed and friendly basis, but intellectually very decent to work with and very honest. I got to be friends on an entirely different basis with his deputy, Dionigi Coppo, we were friends and he found time to talk more relaxedly. I kept in touch with Coppo for a long time. The last time I was in Rome briefly I was busy and did not see Storti until we met at a meeting. He "reproved me" for not calling on him earlier. By that time he had of course withdrawn from trade union activity.

Q: So that's what he said.

BOWIE: Yes. That was just pro-forma. Things had changed. I was no longer an official contact. I accepted the fact that throughout my stay in Rome the free trade unionists had graduated from their feeling of dependency on the US. I was no Tom Lane and a man like Storti had to maintain his distance and utter freedom of orientation. Their US labor friends came over and criticized them from time to time, especially for actions in the international labor field. (Sometimes more than I thought necessary: One top leader, a delegate to a CISL congress, showed me his speech and asked what I thought of it. I said I thought it was a bit heavy. His Italian labor friends were already aware of the dangers he was stressing. He said he knew that, too, but it was "domestic politics" that made him do it.)

Q: And who was the head of the UIL at that time?

BOWIE: Italo Viglianesi, and then Georgio Benvenuto took over. Come to think of it, I believe there was a Republican who headed UIL for awhile. But I believe that was before Georgio Benvenuto took over. He wanted to be sure he was well and favorably known to the Americans. And he was. It was rather long before he even became head of the metalworkers in UIL. He was a fine person. These Italians are very decent people doing a very difficult job. One has to admire what they were working for and all they are trying to do. I wasn't aware of any great corruption among the people I knew.

Q: No, that has always been my feeling too. All I can say is that they took advantage of the perks but nothing more.

BOWIE: Right. Italo Viglianesi was accused widely of enriching himself. They called him "Migliardese" instead of Viglianesi, in some circles.

Q: Oh, yes?

BOWIE: He "lives like a Nabob," they used to say. His apartment was so luxurious, and so forth.

Q: Where was Storti from? Milano?

BOWIE: No, he's from south of Rome.

Q: Oh is he?

BOWIE: Yes.

Q: Because I know that Benvenuto is from Frosinone.

BOWIE: Yes, that's it. Storti is not very far from there. I just can't remember the name. Somewhere.

. . . Avellino I think it might be. But I don't now recall much about Storti's background: a right-hand man to the preceding head of CISL, Giulio Pastore.

Giulio Pastore could not be called a charismatic leader. He was bespectacled, slightly owlsh, yet a leader of great personality and drive. One of his contributions, with US assistance in the early years, was the creation of a really fine training school in Fiesole, near Florence, for young CISL trade unionists. So CISL has had trained cadres of great independence and initiative. Young lions coming roaring out of their den in Fiesole. I used to go up there and give talks, also to the summer school in the Dolomites.

To return to Benvenuto, I think Benvenuto traveled throughout Italy when growing up because his father was an admiral. And I don't know whether Storti had, for instance, the same education as Benvenuto, although he appeared to be educated. All these trade union leaders in Italy seem, Socialists and Communists as well, to be dapper, well-spoken, well-dressed.

Q: Yes. Benvenuto grew up in Pola.

BOWIE: Yes. He was there during the war with his father, I think.

Q: His father was assigned there during the war as an officer in the Italian navy.

BOWIE: Yes.

Q: I must say that Benvenuto never told me that his father retired as an admiral. I learned that from other people. Like you, I always impressed by caliber of the Italian labor leaders.

BOWIE: Yes, and then there is always something special to consider in Italy. I'm thinking of one man whom I spent a great deal of time on. Elio Capodaglio. He was a Socialist in the CGIL. He wanted to talk with an American. So he invited me out to supper one time. And he said "You're the first American I've talked with since 1945 when I had a good friend in the American army. Before I knew him I thought Monopoly was the name of a town in Italy. He taught me more. He came from Chicago."

Capodaglio finally got disillusioned with the situation in the CGIL and got a government job working in one of the government agencies. One Socialist CGIL leader, I can't remember which one, Oh yes, Fernando Montagnani, I think that's how he spelled his name, told me about his trip

to Moscow with that CGIL Communist leader who retired just about the time you got there. What was his name...

Q: That was ... Luciano...

BOWIE: Luciano...not Pavarotti...Lama! Luciano Lama. Very good presence. Everybody liked him. A "secret friend" to many on the Roman scene.

Q: He was very anxious to speak to Americans.

BOWIE: In your years, yes.

Q: I was only there two months before he stepped down. He would come over and speak to me. At every function he would come over and speak to me. Then, we had, I don't know if you knew Ottaviano delTurco.

BOWIE: I know of him. I never did get to see him. But I understand he has been very great friends with Embassy officers. I think he cultivated the Embassy.

It was interesting about Lama. I used to worry about his Socialist side-kick. Because Lama would always go to seminars and study and this Socialist never had any opportunity to study that way and to be trained and to keep up. I never felt he could really argue back in a detailed and pointed way with Lama over particular issues. Anyway they went to Moscow to explain the CGIL position on the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. Remember their glitch on the invasion of Czechoslovakia? And the Soviet labor leader, I think it was Shelepin, summoned them, both Luciano Lama and Fernando Montagnani, to Moscow. Montagnani later described to me his experience at that meeting in Moscow with Lama and the Soviets. I remember writing it up. Shelepin berated them oh, he berated them for letting down the Soviet Union over Czechoslovakia. He wiped up the floor with them and then he slammed the door on them and kept them isolated in a waiting room for seven hours. And this Socialist friend of mine said Lama's face was ashen: "And he looked at me and said 'Do you think we're arrested?'" I thought boy, they must be bound together by this experience. The Communist isn't any more loyal than the Socialist to the Soviet cause in this moment of truth. (I am of course relying on what the Socialist said...) And then when you study the relations of the Italian Communist party and the CGIL with the Soviets, to the extent that we can find things out, I think they must sometimes have been a great big pain in the neck to the Soviets, too.

Q: I would certainly agree.

BOWIE: Maybe we didn't know that well enough.

JAMES MOCERI
Director, USIS
Florence (1951-1956)

James Mocerri was born in Seattle, Washington in 1915. He completed graduate studies in European history at Columbia University before being offered one of the first Fulbright grants to study in Italy in 1949. He was a public affairs officer in the predecessor to the USIA (USIS) in Italy, and later served in Taiwan, Sudan, Guinea, and Washington, DC. Before retiring in 1976, Mr. Mocerri served as the Director of Research for the USIA. Mr. Mocerri was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on May 22, 1990.

MOCERI: From 1947 to 1949, I was employed as an assistant professor at a newly established college in northern Idaho at Farragut, the former Navy boot camp. There I handled the course offerings in ancient and modern history and in political science as well. Learning that a Fulbright program for Italy would be inaugurated in 1949, I applied for a grant to do full time research in Italy. My application was accepted, and in November of 1949, accompanied by my wife and daughter, I was on my way to Italy as one of the first group of Fulbrighters in Italy.

At this point the recollection of an incident that occurred during our trip to Italy may constitute at least a minor footnote to a history of the Fulbright program. Almost the entire group of American Fulbrighters selected for Italy traveled together on board the vessel Saturnia in third class from New York to Genoa. About three days out of New York I was summoned to meet an individual who I was informed was Assistant Secretary of State John Peurifoy. After some preliminary conversation he informed me that he was accompanying Congressman John Rooney. The Congressman had had that day an unfortunate run-in with two young Fulbrighters and was so enraged that he was threatening to cancel the entire Fulbright program on his return to Washington. Having made inquiries and heard quite complimentary things about me and my wife, Peurifoy wanted us to join Rep. Rooney at his dinner table and spend the evening with him. Quite simply, our task was to mollify Mr. Rooney. Little could I have imagined that would be my first diplomatic assignment. Apparently my wife and I succeeded because nothing more was heard of the unpleasant incident. Only many years later did I learn that my first and only encounter with Congressman Rooney was with the man who later became the terror of USIA witnesses at budget hearings.

I went to Naples as a Fulbright scholar. I was attached to the Italian Institute for Historical Studies, located in the home of Benedetto Croce, the distinguished Italian philosopher-historian in whose works I had been greatly interested ever since my undergraduate days. I spent two years there. During that time, I had my first contacts with USIS/Naples, because Fulbrighters were expected to maintain contact with the Fulbright Commission in Rome through the local USIS office. In the course of my stay at the Italian Institute of Historical Studies, I was fortunate enough to have excellent personal rapport with Benedetto, the entire staff of the Institute, and all the young Italian historians working there in various fields of historical studies. This gave me a wide range of contacts in Italian life, because these students, mostly people in their early twenties, came from all parts of Italy.

My Fulbright grant was renewed for a second year at Croce's request, so I remained in Naples at the Institute until June of 1950. During that period, people at USIS, particularly the branch PAO, Chet Opal, became aware of the degree of my acceptance in Italian intellectual circles.

This point was certainly made when I was invited to give a lecture at the USIS library. I chose to lecture on Charles Beard and his concept of American civilization. My impression was that people at USIS were rather surprised by the attendance at the lecture; the director of the Institute, Frederico Chabod, who was one of the most noted of contemporary European historians and at the time president of the International Conference of Historians, came with the rest of his staff and many of the students. These were people who had never shown up at any USIS function before.

Word apparently got to USIS Rome and the American Embassy about my activities in Neapolitan intellectual circles. I was sounded out on the prospects of joining the United States information program and subsequently invited to apply. I hadn't thought of the possibility at all, because my intention had been to go on with historical research -- my specialty having been European intellectual history in the 19th century.

I discussed the possibility with my Italian friends. They urged me to give it serious consideration because they felt that, if I joined the American Foreign Service in Italy, they would have a contact who at least knew the ABCs of Italian political life. As they said, "We don't have to explain the ABCs to you. You know them." These were people, young people, best defined as members of the Italian democratic center, outside of the confessional party, the Christian Democratic Party.

The feeling in these circles was that Americans in Italy talked to democrats but slept with the Fascists. I found their arguments persuasive and decided, if I could be of help in furthering what I viewed as the common cause of the United States and the kind of Italy that I cared about, it would be worth making some contribution. So I went through the formalities of applying, on the assumption that, after all, I would be sent back to Italy because USIS Rome wanted me.

Two elements in the experiences of my Neapolitan years are worth recalling because they later counted heavily among the factors that persuaded me to join the USIS sphere of activities in the Foreign Service. My closest Neapolitan friends, whom I had met at the Institute, were under constant, almost daily attack by the local Communist party leaders and intellectuals in the press, in communist publications, and in every forum of political cultural activity. The attacks on my friends, who were fondly referred to by their own democratic colleagues in northern Italy as "i quattro radicali del Mezzogiorno" (best translated as "the little band of Southern radicals"), were vituperative and all too frequently violent in tone: most common was the threat to hang them from the lampposts of Naples the day when the revolution would come. The post-war struggle between democratic and communist forces thus became internalized for me as a civil war in progress within the framework of Western civilization. If I really honored my friendship with these young Italians, I had a moral obligation to join forces with them in the common struggle to preserve and enlarge the arena of liberty in the modern world, a struggle which even then appeared to become long-enduring.

The second element was one that I came to call the "Great Fear of 1950". In the late spring and summer of 1950 a wide-spread conviction took root among my friends and in many other Italian circles that Soviet forces would indeed invade western Europe in August of that year. My friends

actively engaged in planning escape routes and organization of eventual resistance activities. The danger never materialized, but the fear was not entirely groundless. The episode further strengthened my growing conviction that the struggle to reaffirm and expand a liberal order in the post-war world was not a matter of abstract verbalisms but the very flesh and blood of politics, national and international.

In the Spring of 1951, I got a call from someone apparently in the European division of the State Department. I was informed that the division was delighted to be able to offer me a position in Italy. After all, they had worked out this arrangement and were glad to offer me a position as director of the USIS operation in Bari, Italy. I was to open it up and that was quite important to them. Would I accept that position at a FSR-5/3 level? Again, I never asked what it meant in monetary terms.

I learned later that it always would be a feather in the cap of any personnel officer to get someone at a lower rate than had originally been planned. But I thought, well, I knew Bari. I knew something of Bari. It was, among many other things, also the seat of an important publishing house. I felt I could make a contribution there. So I indicated my immediate acceptance. They asked me to report to Washington in early November of 1951.

So I arrived in Washington knowing absolutely nothing about Washington bureaucracy. I reported in to the personnel office. There I was told to report to the European branch and given a name and an office number. Arrangements would be made there for my briefings. I found the office and reported to the individual whose name had been given me. I asked what I was supposed to do. "Well, sit down and you can spend the next two weeks reading the files." So I lived with those file cabinets for two weeks systematically reading their contents. Only then, in those files, did I learn that, in fact, not only USIS Rome had been insistent on the State Department making an effort to get me, recruit me, but also the European division in Washington had been equally insistent and had recommended that I be offered an FSR-4 position.

The only memorable moment in that Washington experience was my attendance in a large auditorium at a full-scale briefing that Secretary Acheson gave on his recent NATO meeting in Lisbon. I came away enormously impressed by the man.

Such, then, was the extent of my introduction, orientation and briefing on Washington, the foreign service, USIS organization and functions in Washington and the field, and on my own duties and responsibilities. I had no idea who was in charge of information and cultural programs for the European area. I had no live contacts with anyone except the personnel and travel offices. Once my orders were cut, off I went, after picking up my family, to Rome and arrived there in January of 1952.

On arrival, I reported to the USIS office on Via Buon Compagni in the embassy complex. I had been met at the plane by someone from USIS. I was told to report to Heath Bowman, the USIS Italy deputy director. My introduction, then, to official Foreign Service procedures was a call on the Ambassador.

Ambassador was James Dunn. In the course of the meeting Ambassador Dunn informed Lloyd Free, the director, and Heath Bowman that he wanted me sent to Florence. There was no further

talk of opening the post in Bari. They would have to look for someone else.

The reason for sending me to Florence was that Ambassador Dunn was exceedingly unhappy with Colonel Vissering, who was the commanding officer of the military supply base in Livorno, which was the anchor for the supply line -- our military supply line -- to our troops in Austria and Bavaria. Colonel Vissering was a man who had achieved a certain notoriety. I had remembered that there were articles in the Reporter magazine, Max Ascoli's Reporter magazine, on Colonel Vissering, who ran the operation pretty much as he saw fit and paid little or no attention to the American Embassy or Ambassador Dunn -- to Ambassador Dunn's great displeasure.

The instruction I received directly from Ambassador Dunn was, "I want you to go to Florence. That will be your base. And I want you to keep an eye on Colonel Vissering and report on his activities and keep him in line with embassy policy." (I vouch for the accuracy of the quotation for a neophyte could hardly forget the language of an order so direct and peremptory from so exalted an authority.)

I may have been naive about government procedures, but I wasn't naive about political realities. I was astonished that a man who was regarded as one of the stars of the American diplomatic service at the time, a man of very considerable reputation, after all, would think that by simply sending someone up as an observer, that this person could keep a strong-minded man like Colonel Vissering in line with Mr. Dunn's own policies, whatever those policies were.

I knew enough that you could not really control anyone unless you had some authority to do so. I had no written document. There was nothing that would empower me to even make inquiries and tell Colonel Vissering that I would appreciate being informed of his actions. I have always had good reason to believe that the Colonel was never informed, officially or otherwise, of the mission with which I had been charged.

At any rate, I left Rome after five days, a period during which I became acquainted with the staff in Rome. I went to Florence, where I reported to the public affairs officer, Marjorie Ferguson. I informed her of what my new assignment had been and that nothing had been said about my role in USIS activities. I was only to keep a watch on Colonel Vissering.

In the meantime, apparently, Rome decided that this would be a great time for Marjorie Ferguson to get some much needed home leave. So I was there as her substitute and put in charge of the program. I knew nothing about the program at this point, really. So I spent time familiarizing myself with the staff and the USIS activities in the area of Tuscany. And at the same time I made a call on Colonel Vissering in Livorno. And then I began to talk to people in the Livorno area.

Obviously, I thought it was simply absurd that I maintain any kind of control over Colonel Vissering. He was not the kind of man who was about to listen to anyone out of the line of command. And maybe he didn't listen to people in the line of command, either. But I did keep myself informed as to his policies with regard to labor practices and the relationship with various elements of the society of Livorno -- its political society, that is.

In the course of making inquiries, I became acquainted with quite a few people in the Livorno area, including a Dr. Merli, editor of an interesting little magazine for intellectuals seriously interested in politics.

I think I should say that, at this point, Livorno had been administered since the end of the war by the Communist Party. The mayor of Livorno was a communist -- a young communist intellectual, considered to be one of the coming lights of the Party, and, possibly, an eventual successor to Palmiero Togliatti. His name was Furio Diaz.

Furio Diaz was then a young man, about my age. I was then 34. His academic work had been in the field of Italian history and of historical methodology -- another one of my principal intellectual interests. We later became acquainted and there were some interesting developments to which I will get in a moment.

He had heard about me from Dr. Merli, the editor of the magazine to which I have just referred. Incidentally, Merli was also an increasingly important figure among the Christian Democrats of the Livorno area. Many people might have been surprised by the relationship between the two men. Certainly, Americans would have been surprised that there was this kind of contact and relationship and even friendship among people who were exponents of opposing ideologies. But anyone who had been in Italy knew that statistically the chances were every third person one might meet could be a member of the Communist Party. And families were divided, and yet united, as Italian families often are.

I went about my work of learning something of the activities of USIS. I, of course, saw the material sent out by Rome: press releases, material for the press. I became acquainted with a number of Italian newspaper people in Florence and plunged into the time-consuming routine of developing contacts with editors, publishers, newspapers, magazines, university people, particularly in the areas of politics and history, to identify those who had some influence in local political life, and reached out throughout the Tuscany area which at that time was, of course, communist controlled. Almost every commune of Tuscany was under the control of a communist administration. I approached people like the people at Il Ponte, an independent left-wing monthly magazine, providing them with materials and, (more importantly), laying the foundations for the kind of relationship that would permit serious discussion of political issues of common interest.

At that time, we had mobile units showing films around the countryside and in Florence itself. So gradually I became familiar with the whole array of USIS materials and techniques of distribution. That, simply, was the mechanical part. The real part was keeping informed as to what political sentiments were, who the players were, who had any kind of influence, and in what ways.

And this in an environment where the democratic parties squabbled among themselves as much as they squabbled with the communists. Being the minority, they had little influence on actual political decisions made in the -- both in the city of Florence and in the region itself.

Of memorable experiences, let me point out a couple examples. First, let me get back to Furio Diaz, the mayor of Livorno. Through Dr. Merli, with whom over time I had established an

excellent rapport, Furio Diaz learned a good deal about me. In early 1955 or late 1954, he sent out various feelers and indicated that he would be interested in meeting with me. Could I arrange for him to receive materials on the Soviet judicial system and practice? I viewed this as the first overture to an eventual break with the Communist Party and realized immediately what the consequences could be. By 1955 Furio Diaz had established himself in the opinion of many well-informed people, as the unnamed successor to Togliatti, whenever Togliatti would step down. His defection from the party in 1955 would have severely shaken the party, particularly the whole category of the intellectuals who were members of the party. And, of course, in the area of Tuscany there were a number of prominent intellectuals who were ardent party members.

I dutifully reported this to USIS Rome and received an interesting response: that I was to stay away from Furio Diaz and the matter would be taken care of through other channels.

It is hard to know what may have happened. I assume that at the time Rome decided the matter could be handled very quietly by someone else. It took no great power of divination to sense that the "someone else" proved to be a sometime American journalist living in Florence at the time, whom I knew reasonably well. The point is that Furio Diaz did not leave the party, as I fully anticipated he intended to do in 1955. He left only after the Hungarian revolution and the Soviet suppression of that revolution. Although his defection was an important loss for the Communist Party, it did not have the enormous political impact that it would have had in 1955, a year earlier. In the wake of the Hungarian Revolution, a considerable number of intellectuals left the party, and Diaz was only one among the more prominent. There were others, like Antonio Giolitti, the grandson of the famous premier of the once-democratic, pre-Fascist Italy.

I knew that the journalist had received the charge to make contact with Diaz. I decided, because I felt that there should be a clear distinction between my activities and CIA activities -- I was very sensitive on this subject -- I decided not to inform myself. So I do not know what he did, or whether, in fact, he ever established contact. I never saw Furio Diaz again. I never asked my intermediary, Dr. Merli in Livorno. And even though I saw Merli frequently after that, I felt it was just better to let the matter die. Because, in their minds, they must have been greatly puzzled by the strange way in which Americans did things. From their perspective, given what they know of my intellectual interests, I was surely an "interlocutor valable" for Furio Diaz.

Another aspect of my association with Dr. Merli in Livorno was that he was very close to the then-president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Giovanni Gronchi. He later became President of Italy. My friend Merli had obviously briefed him very carefully on me. Whenever Gronchi came to Florence, he made arrangements for me to meet him and spend an hour riding with him in his car around Florence. He would talk to me about this view of America and the Americans in Rome, the European situation and whatever else he felt Americans should hear from him. Gronchi was the leader of an important faction of the left-wing faction of the Christian Democratic Party. For reasons which I never quite understood, he had very poor relations with Mrs. Luce, who had become our Ambassador to Italy. When he was elected president of Italy, the relations worsened. I think it was common knowledge that the kindest word, epithet, Mrs. Luce had for Gronchi was "that stallion." She really had contempt for him.

I assumed that he conducted his conversations with me in his car because he felt that there was a

possibility he would be listened to elsewhere or that he would be too visible and he just wanted see me in private. He learned, felt -- because of the things his press secretary, who was my friend, had told him about me -- that he could count on me to report accurately anything he said. So he would convey his view of Mrs. Luce and American policy in Italy and so on to me. And I would faithfully report it in written memoranda to Rome, copies of which were apparently sent to Washington. I thought it was not up to me to report to Washington. That was a function of the Rome office. I assumed that the Embassy Political Section did see the memoranda that I sent to our people in Rome -- to Ned Nordness, the country PAO -- and that the CIA people also saw it. Whether the Political Section had any interest in transmitting my reports to Washington, I don't know. I learned later that the CIA headquarters in Washington did know of my reports.

When Gronchi went to the United States in 1956, Mrs. Luce had recommended that he be given, simply, the courtesy of a brief meeting, get-acquainted meeting with President Eisenhower. And that he then be dismissed by the White House and left to the various other agencies of government, to satisfy his ego.

The fact of the matter was, that Gronchi spent six hours with Eisenhower. I was later told that this was the direct result of the CIA input, based on the various memoranda that I had sent about our conversations -- my conversations with Gronchi.

There is another aspect to this story which has some interest, I think, for the whole question of the USIA role. Gronchi, through his press officer, my friend, asked that I be assigned to him, to accompany him to the United States. My friend felt this was great because I could explain all kinds of things about the United States to Gronchi, who had never been to this country before. He thought I could serve, in fact, as a consultant to him on American life and so on. The request was made verbally to the Political Section of the Embassy. The response was, "We would like to have this in writing over the President's signature," something President Gronchi, and I would assume any other President, would never do. They would not put that kind of a request in writing. That was the end of that. I, of course, was rather upset about it.

I began to understand something about bureaucratic infighting within the American Government -- an understanding that became the basis for my later firm belief that the various entities of the U.S. Government spent more time fighting each other than working on their common problems.

In those days, it was quite common for anybody on the political -- the State Department regular political side -- to look down upon anyone in USIA. And they refused to admit that anyone in that organization could have a political concept worth considering. So I assume that they felt this would be a slap in the face to them, and, consequently, they were never to permit it. That was the conclusion to which I came. It led to my conviction that the only way those of us in USIA -- because by that time we were a separate organization -- could establish our own credibility and achieve any kind of status, was to be as good if not better political officers than any other people in the State Department.

We really had to understand the politics of the country to which we were accredited and work ourselves into that fabric so that we could move in it easily and learn. I had met a Montecatini employee responsible for management's relations with that giant corporation's labor force in the

mines of the Grosseto province of Tuscany. He had good connections with the top management of the Montecatini industrial complex in Milan, a lot of experience in the labor movement and knew a number of the top cadre of the Italian Communist Party, including, especially, a certain Onofrio, who was the member of the Italian Communist Party Central Committee in charge of the training of communist cadres.

I had, from him, an open invitation to meet with Onofrio or any other member of the Central Committee any time I wanted. Such meetings could have been easily and quietly arranged. Having been slightly burned in the matter of contacts with the mayor of Livorno, I did let Mrs. Luce know of this new possibility through Ned Nordness. Mrs. Luce informed me, personally, on the occasion of a visit to Florence, that despite all the confidence she had in my judgment and discretion, she could not agree to my meeting with members of the Italian Communist Party hierarchy. If she allowed me to do this, she could not turn down the numerous requests she would inevitably get from other people in the Embassy and elsewhere for arranging similar contacts.

I thought, to myself, we were really cutting off our legs, you know. I felt then that, especially, we Americans ought to be able to talk to anyone in the country. We ought not to deny ourselves access to any segment of political thought or action in the country, regardless of the attitude of the governing group. For it is in the nature of history that change occurs. And those who may have been in opposition or in dissent may one day be in power. And it, also, becomes a valuable means of checking on the claims and pretensions and, indeed, the effective power of the governing group. I might have more to say about this when I get to the question of my service in the Sudan.

During all these years there were of course all the other, more conventional USIS activities in which I was heavily involved. A few examples, by way of illustration. In a city with a great tradition of private libraries and semi-private libraries belonging to generally restricted scholarly societies (sometimes centuries-old), I wanted the open-shelved USIS library to be as rich in its holdings as possible. So much of what had been published in America during the Fascists era and the war years was virtually unknown in Italy, exception being made for a handful of specialists. Moreover, given Florentine pride in the city's great literary traditions, I made every effort to ensure that our library had the most substantial holdings in American literature and literary magazines in all of Italy. I personally interviewed -- and recommended as candidates to the Fulbright Commission in Rome -- all Italian applicants for Fulbright grants residing in my territorial area of responsibility. For me it became a source of considerable satisfaction and even pride that virtually all my recommendations were accepted by the Fulbright Commission. In later decades most of these grantees achieved standings of some note in the political or intellectual life of Italian society. The same could be said, in even more unqualified terms, for my recommendations of candidates for our State Department-financed leader program.

As an illustration of this last point let me cite the case of Ettore Bernabei, who was when I first met him the editor of the Florentine daily Il Mattino d'Italia, the local mouthpiece of the ruling Christian Democratic Party. After we had developed a reasonably good working relationship, I made it possible for him to go to the United States on one of our leader grants. By the mid-sixties he had been elevated to the position of director-general of Italy's RAI/TV, the State's

radio/television broadcasting monopoly.

I should mention that in 1953, I became the head of the Florence USIS office. When Marjorie Ferguson returned from her home leave, a decision had been made by Lloyd Free and Heath Bowman to move her up to Milan, which really was a much more important center because Milan was the economic capital of Italy. I had been de facto head of the USIS office in Florence. And on Marjorie's return from home leave, I became the de jure head.

Then, a year later, because of budget cuts in Washington, they decided to consolidate offices. And there was a decision to abolish the Bologna office as a separate branch post, however, retaining the office, staff and library as part of the USIS Florence operation. Frederick Jochem who was the PAO in Bologna, was transferred to Florence as the new director. Being junior to Fritz in grade, I was downgraded to the rank of deputy branch PAO; something, which, greatly puzzled all my Florentine associates and contacts. Word kept coming back to me as, "How do Americans run their administrative procedures?"

They found this move puzzling because they viewed the change in my status as a question of personal dignity; that it would have been more correct to have removed me from Florence rather than to subject me to the humiliation of a subordinate position in the same office. But there were games that were played. As Heath Bowman said, "They just wanted to see how the chemistry would work." And I was determined to make it work. After all, there wasn't much else I could do, and I did want the momentum of the program activities I had been developing to continue. It was more uncomfortable for Fritz Jochem, because he really had to overcome attitudes of puzzlement and even resentment among his Florentine contacts. I think it fair to say that he never really succeeded.

In the process, though, I also, in that period in Florence, established very good relations with a group of young university people in Bologna who had gotten a magazine and small publishing house under way. Working with Gertrude Hooker an assistant cultural affairs officer in Rome, we got them interested in the USIS translation program. And they became -- the group of Il Molino -- became one of the principal publishing outlets for our book translation program. Today Il Molino ranks as one of the leading publishing houses in Italy. It is almost as important as Mondadori, the giant among Italian book publishers. And for scholarly work, probably even more important. That, to me, was a real achievement.

So much of this, so much of my work with the intellectuals, magazines, newspapers and universities could be traced back to the initial contacts that I had made at the Italian Institute for Historical Studies in Naples. That earlier association made it possible for me to move into almost any Italian city and rapidly develop a useful network of contacts and personal relations.

Unlike France, in Italy influence and prestige and power are all related to given circles. And the circles are always overlapping. Therefore, if you have entree in one circle, that entree enables you to move into any number of other circles. Each circle always radiates outward for almost always each member of the circle has ties with other circles. In France each circle is virtually self-contained, and movement from one circle to another becomes quite difficult to manage.

In 1955, the Allied military government in Trieste was dissolved and administration was turned over to Italy. Parenthetically I should note here that Fritz Jochem remained less than a year before transferring to Washington in a more important position in the motion picture division; I then became PAO again. I thus inherited, not only the Emilia-Romagna region around Bologna but also Venice, where our offices had been closed down, and its hinterland, the Veneto. All this in 1954. And then in 1955, Trieste, as well. The territory for which I was responsible accounted for more than a quarter of Italy's territory and contained, after all, some of the most important universities, magazines, publishers, newspapers and the electoral backbone of the Italian communist party.

Fritz had been partly responsible, I think, for the upgrading of my status. He had come in suspecting that I would probably be disloyal to him. He made several trips to Rome to find out what I might have been reporting through other channels. I suppose you might say "back channels," although I didn't even know that term, at the time. As he acknowledged later, he satisfied himself that I had been completely loyal and that I kept our differences entirely within our personal relationship. In Washington, I know he was responsible for putting in a very strong word for me. It was only at the end of 1954 that I was given my first promotion.

There are, I guess, other things I should mention. One of my early encounters, at first unpleasant, with Lloyd Free was in relationship to the Italian political elections of 1953 and the famous Legge Truffa, literally, the "fraudulent law." This was a law governing the elections for 1953, to the effect that a party or coalition of parties which received 50% plus 1 vote -- in other words, a numerical majority of at least one vote -- would receive 66% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Americans seem not to have understood that this was the same law by which Mussolini had seized control of the Italian Parliament. It had been pressed, of course, by the Christian Democratic Party. They wanted to assure themselves of the majority. We saw this as a way of guaranteeing the passage of anything we wanted our friends in the Italian Government to do.

My own soundings, not only in Tuscany, but through my various friends in other cities of Italy, led me to the conclusion that unless Mario Scelba, who was Minister of Interior of the Christian Democratic Government, could manipulate with more than 10% of the vote, the center coalition formed by the DC's and liberals, republicans and social democrats would not win the necessary majority.

There was a meeting of the branch public affairs officers in Rome in the early spring of '53. Lloyd Free presided. Naturally, the concern, the concern of all the people in the American Embassy in Rome, was the issue of the upcoming elections. Would the center get its majority? And there was great confidence that it would.

The reporting to Washington had been that they would win a majority, though it must be said that as the date of the elections approached the prediction of the margin of victory kept changing so that the margin kept shrinking. At the meeting, every branch PAO reported, for his area, that yes, things were going well and the center coalition would, indeed, win and win solidly.

This was one of my first meetings. And I spoke up. I was asked, by Lloyd Free, what the feeling was in Tuscany. I reported on that. I then broadened by statements to say, flatly, that I did not think that the center coalition would get its majority. Lloyd Free was almost visibly shaken. I was called in the next day and raked over the coals for my "presumption" in the face of the conventional wisdom. After all, even a country PAO is not a free agent. And I have to assume that he was dealing with a situation, some aspects of which I did not know.

Let me say that, once the election returns came in, I got a telephone call from Lloyd Free. He asked me to come down to Rome to spend two days. I went to Rome. He called me into his office on my arrival. And he told me that he wanted, personally, to apologize for having raked me over the coals. He wanted me to understand that he recognized that I had been right in my analysis and he accepted that. I was, as you can imagine, immensely pleased, because I think this was the first word of praise that I had received from anyone in USIA. All I can say is that I think that the mind-set in Rome was such, it was cast in concrete and there was no changing it. There was no willingness to question anything about it.

That also led to one of my firm convictions that stayed with me all through my Agency career. For God's sake, never take all your assumptions for granted. Keep questioning them. No matter how right they may seem to you, try to find out if today, at this moment, in this particular situation, they really hold. Because I think we'd have been so much better off if we had really recognized what was going on.

The American Embassy spent a good deal of time trying to explain away its miscalculation. There was always talk about the -- something like 3,000 votes short of majority, without any realization of what the broader implications of such a victory might have been. This was stealing the elections, in the crudest sense possible, and in the pattern of a, by then, well-hated regime -- a regime, which had brought Italy only disaster.

I was talking earlier about people I sent to the States. I sent another journalist, a young man named Lepri to the United States on a Leader grant. Ten years later he was made the head of ANSA, the Italian news agency. This happened with many of the people I recommended for either Fulbright grants or Leader grants; people who in the years after I left Italy carved out a position of prominence for themselves in Italian affairs, even on the national level. Obviously, it meant that I felt very deeply about the importance of this kind of grantee-type program and a very strong sense of responsibility for selecting people who had the kind of substance that could lead to important positions in Italian life.

In 1955, I got a call from Ned Nordness in Rome, by then our Public Affairs Officer in Rome, to come down to Rome and act in his place. He had suffered an injury. So I went down to Rome and became acting country public affairs officer for about three months. This was the summer of 1955. Ned was hospitalized and then decided to take some leave until he had fully recovered. So for three months I was in charge of the Italian program -- a difficult time faced as I was with the problem of submitting the annual report and a country budget, to mention only two major items. I had never dealt with a country budget before. Moreover, there was no deputy country PAO and I also had to assume the responsibilities of chief information officer -- yet another vacancy at the top of the country program.

I think the thing that astonished me most in Rome was lack of coordination among the various officers of USIS Rome. They had country responsibilities and also local responsibilities. Messages would go out with little or no coordination. So I set up, for myself, a procedure for reviewing absolutely all outgoing correspondence, before it left our offices. I would send notes to people, saying in effect, "Look, why didn't you check with your colleague across the hall?"

I was appalled. I couldn't understand this sort of thing. The press section never talked to the people in the cultural section and vice versa. Or one officer to another officer. I did hold staff meetings. The staff went through all those formalities, but when it came time to do their own work they never bothered to inform anybody else. So that occupied a lot of time. I was the lowest-ranking branch PAO in Italy, and outranked by all department heads in Rome headquarters. This meant that I could establish my authority only through exhaustive knowledge of all our operations. That was the only way I could do it with any credibility.

One of the most important items of business during that summer of 1955 was the requirement to submit to Washington, together with the USIS Budget, the annual report on USIS Italy activities. I had been appalled by the lack of interest, indeed the indifference, shown by so many of our officers in our library operations in Italy. I was well aware of all the pressure from Washington for the submission of evidences of effectiveness. (I had my own views -- skeptical, to say the least -- on what often was palmed off as evidence of effectiveness.)

I realized I could use the authority of my new situation to produce a solid body of evidence that could be subjected to independent verification. I drafted a message to all our branches, requesting them to submit in their reports a specific accounting of the uses made of our libraries. Specifically I wanted this in terms of university theses, papers, articles, materials, prepared for public speeches, etc., by Italians using materials from our libraries.

I wanted titles, publication date, if any, when the material was prepared, who prepared it, under whose supervision, and for what purpose. My hope was that we could put together a checklist that could be analyzed and subjected to independent verification. I was insistent on that last requirement because I wanted branch PAO's to realize there could be no fudging or doctoring of the evidence.

We assembled all the material submitted in the form of a catalogue of items devoid of any editorial commentary or rationalization. I forwarded this massive catalogue as a separate report to Washington. It contained over 5,500 instances of use of library materials in the preparation of magazine or newspaper articles, university theses, publications, etc. from all of Italy in that one year.

Many years later, in 1971, Henry Loomis instructed me to do a study of USIS library functions overseas. I searched high and low for a copy of that 1955 report from Rome. It could not be found. We searched in the retired Agency archives in Virginia. The original and any copies had simply disappeared -- a report that I had every reason to believe would be considered in Washington to be one of the most impressive evidences of the effectiveness, not merely of the library, but of the USIS organization itself ever produced.

How could anyone have ignored all the implications of such a record? It had to mean that an awful lot of people in Italy had turned to the USIS sources. It meant a continuing and, in many cases, sustained relationship. Yet USIS Rome never heard a word from Washington about the catalogue or any use made of it. I was left to wonder whether anyone even looked at it.

My point was that here, with all the Agency talk about effectiveness, was one of the most important evidences of effectiveness. One could have gone to Congress with the material and made an excellent case, because this was a list not only of topics that showed the range of interest in the materials that we provided but also of people who had actively used our resources.

These were certainly not the kind of library visitors that William Buckley had in mind when he said in a USIA Advisory Committee meeting, airily dismissing my library study, "Oh, people come in only to get cool because the libraries are air-conditioned." I am sure Buckley hasn't changed his mind to this day, because hard evidence held no interest for him in matters on which he had formed an opinion, however groundless.

I suppose there are many other things I could say about my Italian experience. I had had my share of frustrations and disappointments. I had generally managed to keep these under control and in perspective. One disappointment, however, cut quite deeply and certainly had a decided effect on my Agency career. The position of deputy country PAO had been vacant since the spring of 1955, when John McKnight and Ambassador Luce had had a parting of ways. Having served for three months as acting country PAO, acting deputy country PAO and acting chief information officer for a program as large as USIS Italy, when Nordness returned to his office as Country PAO in September of that year, I asked if he would consider nominating me for the position. He knew how satisfied Mrs. Luce was with my performance and how well she thought of me. He declined, adducing as his reason his conviction that in fairness to the Foreign Service all officers should be expected to move up the career ladder step by step. In October Mrs. Luce was in Washington on consultation. The Agency approached her on the subject of the vacant position and suggested the name of Charles Blackman as deputy to Nordness. Mrs. Luce accepted. In the meantime Nordness had second thoughts and called Mrs. Luce in Washington to suggest my name for appointment as his deputy. She told him that unfortunately she had just accepted the Blackman designation. According to Nordness, she would gladly have asked for my appointment to the position if Nordness had given her any hint of his interest for he knew how well she thought of me and how willing she was to do anything in reason for me. More than one person in Rome wondered why I never asked Mrs. Luce for anything because there were those who sometimes referred to me as "her fair-haired boy." Frankly, I hated the very idea of being obligated to anyone of superior rank for a favor.

Another incident involving my relationship with Mrs. Luce may serve as a minor historical or biographical footnote, because I don't think anybody else knows about it. In the same summer of 1955, Mrs. Luce had expressed to me a desire to have a reputable Italian writer do a thoughtful history of her ambassadorship in Italy. I said I thought I could arrange this. Later, I arranged an appointment with her office for her to meet my closest Italian friend, a young Italian historian, Vittorio de Capra Riis. Vittorio de Capra Riis had been my earliest Italian contact when I came to Italy.

He was, at the time, Secretary to the Italian Institute for Historical Studies, and probably the most promising historian of his generation. His specialty had been in the history of political thought.

In the intervening years, he had written an impressive volume on the origins of democratic thought in France in the 16th century. He had been in 1950 one of those who had urged me to talk about Charles Beard at USIS Naples because he knew about my high respect for Beard as an historian. He wrote an excellent essay on Carl Becker and became -- in part as a result of our own conversations about American historians -- more and more interested in the history of American political thought, as a major contribution to the general realm of democratic thought in the modern world.

I introduced Vittorio to Mrs. Luce. We had a wonderful meeting. He and I insisted that he had to have open access to the records of the Embassy. I felt this was absolutely essential, because I saw it as a means of going beyond partisan polemics to a genuinely valid American policy in Italy from the end of the war. I felt we had nothing to be ashamed of and an accurate accounting would be very creditable.

At any rate, I think when Mrs. Luce realized that this young man was not going to lend himself to a propaganda job but wanted to do a serious piece of research, then she backed away -- but very pleasantly. We all parted on very amicable terms.

This brings to mind one other episode involving Mrs. Luce. In 1954, the then mayor of Florence was Giorgio La Pira, who really thought of himself in both deed and spirit as a modern Saint Francis. "The red monk," as he was called by some including Mrs. Luce. A man who never had a lira in his pocket and on more than one occasion had taken the coat off his back to give to a person he felt in need. "The Communist Christian Democrat," as he was sometimes called, decided to organize a series of annual conferences, on the use of atomic energy for world peace. He was derided by many people for this kind of proposal. He was a dreamer. He was the kind of person who could get 55,000 nuns around the world to devote a day of prayer for the salvation of Stalin's soul because he believed in the efficacy of prayer. He was serious about this.

He came one day to my office (and subsequently we met in his office) to discuss the possibility of American participation. Because he felt that without American participation, that is, the participation of the leader in atomic energy and possessors of nuclear bombing capability, his conference plan would have no world resonance.

I thought, "Well, this is an excellent opportunity for the Eisenhower Administration to start mending fences with the scientific community in the United States". There had been, as you well remember, the great split with much of that community over the Oppenheimer matter. Although it could be argued that I was being guilty of unusual political naivete concerning American politics, I felt instantly that La Pira's initiative could be used as a skillful ploy to get us over a pretty rough period in relations with American Scientists. The American Government could simply designate Oppenheimer as the American speaker for this conference, or let it be known that it had no objection to Oppenheimer addressing this conference if he were invited by Mayor

La Pira. Oppenheimer would not even have to speak in the name of the American Government. What could impress European intellectuals more at that time than to have the Eisenhower Administration demonstrate its even-handedness and its respect for the scientific mind.

Well, through Ned Nordness I relayed the suggestion and my rationale to Mrs. Luce, who apparently was just horrified by the thought of being the intermediary for such a communication to Washington. It never happened, but I still consider it a great political opportunity lost.

Let me go back to my first days in Italy, when I went as a Fulbright grantee, because there is another episode that I would really like to be a matter of record.

In the spring of 1951, the various resistance groups -- World War II resistance groups in Italy -- decided to hold their first national meeting of the post-war era. So they organized a conference in Venice. My close Neapolitan friends -- a group of five, who were known as the radicals of the south, in democratic circles in Italy -- asked me to go up to Venice with them.

I was delighted and eagerly looked forward to being in Venice. I thought, "Oh, all the people I have read about, people who were active in the resistance movement, are going to be there. And I can meet people like Leo Valiani, who was a close friend of Arthur Koestler and figured prominently in one of Koestler's novels. And meeting Ferruccio Parri, and all the other important figures in that Italian resistance movement."

I hadn't thought about the question of American representation until I got there and realized that I was the only foreigner at this meeting, in Venice, of all the major figures of the Italian resistance movement.

I said to my self, "The people in the American Embassy in Rome have got to be out of their minds. Are they so fearful of the communists that they don't want to be seen in the same arena with them, for goodness sake?" Because, you know, the communist propaganda line was that the communist really created and led the Italian resistance movement. This line, historically speaking, was nonsense. They played an important part, of course, because they were an important political force. They'd been an active underground during the Fascist era. But there were other groups, many other groups.

Here I was the only foreigner on the scene. An American figure of prominence in the Italian campaign of World War II, even as an unofficial representative, would have had an electrifying effect on that audience in Venice. We were victims of a demonology. We thought in terms of demonology; so many of us did. Not only did we deny ourselves, but we also denied ourselves a positive effect on groups that had some kind of kinship with us in their democratic beliefs. And we could have reinforced them. Perhaps we might even have influenced some communists. I mentioned earlier, Furio Diaz, the mayor of Livorno, was looking for a way out, but he did not want to appear as, you know, a captive of the Americans. He did not want to appear as if he owed a future, his future, to the dominant political party, the Christian Democrats, or anyone else. He wanted to be independent. He wanted it understood that he was his own man. And this is, you know, very important in the political world.

Reflecting on what I have already said about my tour of duty in Florence, my first in the foreign service, I ought to record here certain aspects of that experience which may be of interest for the light they shed on my program activities and my standing in the foreign service.

In 1954 USIS Rome called me to enlist my help in persuading the Ministry of Education to establish a university chair in American history. Rome had tried for two years without any success whatsoever. I reminded Rome that its goal was utterly alien to the Italian academic tradition and would encounter, as they must already have realized, intransigent academic and political resistance. In the Italian university system only four cattedre, i.e., chairs or full professorships, in the area of historical studies were recognized: ancient history, medieval history, modern history and -- the only national history -- history of the Risorgimento and Italian Unity. After many exploratory discussions with most of my contacts in university circles I had a series of meetings with Giacomo Devoto, then Italy's most distinguished philologist and dean of the faculty of letters at the University of Florence. Devoto was quite aware of my links with Naples and Benedetto Croce. With considerable patience and in great detail he outlined for my benefit the very lengthy, complicated, indeed tortuous procedures that had to be followed to achieve the goal I had set for myself. Under the best of circumstances it would take at least two years to move the proposals through the various chains of authority in the Italian state's bureaucratic universe. The very first and possibly most difficult hurdle was the person of the professor of modern history. Without his consent the question could not even be brought before the faculty of letters for a vote. That person was Delio Cantimori, not only one of Italy's best historians but the most distinguished intellectual in the fold of the Italian Communist Party. Thanks to the diplomatic overtures of several friends, his consent was finally obtained. And thanks to Devoto's unfailing support, the proposal completed its arduous journey through all the necessary organs of the Italian government and was approved two years later, not long before my departure from Italy.

Let me mention my first effort to get direct Washington media support essential to implement a program activity. It ended in a disaster. And here is the essence of the story.

In the early fifties Italians were among the most avid devotees of motion pictures in the western world, partly as a momentary refuge from the taxing struggles of daily existence, also as an inexpensive form of entertainment, and finally as an interesting art form. It was a time when private film clubs, sometimes numbering hundreds of members, began to flourish in many of the large Italian cities. In 1953, Carlo L. Ragghianti, one of the most respected art critics in Italy and a man who occupied a special status in Tuscan life because he had been the leader of the armed resistance in Tuscany during World War II, came to me with a fascinating proposal. As a prime mover in the organization of film clubs, he wanted to build up their membership and stature in their communities by offering in a multi-year cycle a comprehensive retrospective of American films from the early twenties to the end of the forties. He would provide the speakers to introduce and provide a context for each film. He would also make the arrangements for panel discussions and interactions with the film club audience. (Film clubs always arranged their showings in commercial movie houses.) All he was asking me to do was arrange for the loan of the prints necessary to sustain the proposed program. I was convinced that Ragghianti's proposal offered an extraordinary opportunity to extend the range and depth of USIS contacts in Tuscany and many other important urban centers of Italy.

My initial communication and subsequent elaborations and arguments, made with the knowledge of Frank Dennis, then the country PAO in Rome, were rejected out of hand by the motion picture division in Washington. The day I reported into Washington before beginning home leave in the summer of 1954, I was given a message informing me to go to the office of Turner Shelton, head of IMV, the next morning at ten o'clock. After cooling my heels for some time in IMV's reception room that morning, I was summoned into the presence of Turner Shelton to a blistering attack on my ignorance, incompetence and insolent insubordination. It is easy to imagine how this affected my view of our Washington media.

My relations with our consulate in Florence seemed to be entirely a function of the personalities of the three consuls-general under whom I served. I shall summarize each case briefly, using a single example to show the relationship to my role and standing in the course of my first assignment in the foreign service.

1) Charles Reed, my first consul-general, was an "old China hand," who probably resented having been put out to pasture, however much the pleasures of life in the upper reaches of Florentine society. His normal attitude was one of disdain -- and often amused contempt -- for anything associated with USIS. When the New York City Ballet made its first trip to Europe in 1953 and appeared in Florence (its first city in Italy), the Consul-General instructed me to prepare a guest list for the reception he was planning. I prepared a list of more than 200 names, representative of the range of our contacts with the artistic, intellectual, political and media circles of Florence. Toward the end of that reception Mrs. Reed, who was normally a quite reserved and sometimes aloof person, came up to me and in a tone of genuine amazement said, "Why haven't I met any of these people before." A good question!

2) Richard Service, John Service's younger brother and Charles Reed's successor, was a classic example of the cool, reserved diplomat very conscious of his status. That very attitude caused him to come a cropper in an incident involving our Ambassador, Mrs. Luce, and me. Mrs. Luce was scheduled to come to Florence for the opening of the first national exhibit of Italian arts and crafts. USIS Rome failed to inform me of her departure time from Rome. After checking all bases, I and my wife arrived separately at the station and met Mrs. Luce just as she was getting off the train. Dick Service, of course, had been there a half hour waiting for the Ambassador. As the two of them approached his car, he invited her to have "a very quiet, private dinner a quattré." Her clearly audible response was, "I will accept only if you invite the Moceris." That evening she drove home her lesson with a vengeance; throughout the dinner she ignored Dick Service completely and addressed all her conversation to my wife and me.

3) Dale Fisher, Service's successor, was a different, younger breed. Several days after his arrival he called me to the consulate and said he wanted to have the benefit of my views of Italian politics. Over a period of several hours in the course of a few days, he tape-recorded my analysis of the Italian and Tuscan scenes.

NORMAN V. SCHUTE

**Regional Security Officer
Rome (1952)**

Norman V. Schute graduated from Stanford University in 1938. He served in the US Navy during World War II. His career has included positions in countries including Sweden, Italy, and Mexico. Mr. Schute was interviewed in 1995 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

SCHUTE: I conducted surveys of the constituent post in England and of the I.G. Farben building in Frankfurt, headquarters of the High Commissioner, and embassies in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Vienna and Bern. During this period, arrangements were made by the Department with the US Marine Corps to staff embassies and large consular posts, e.g. the Consulate General in Naples in Italy, with Marine Security Guards. In mid-1950 I was transferred to the Rome Embassy as resident or Regional Security Officer with responsibilities also for covering our posts of Milan, Genoa, Florence, Naples, Bari and Palermo. Work went more smoothly here and I reported to the Deputy Chief of Mission Llewellyn E. Thompson, later Ambassador to Moscow, and prudently kept the administrative officer, Gaze Lucas, generally informed of my work, always bearing in mind the principle of "need to know," the fundamental tenet of basic security.

In late 1952, I was transferred to Mexico City and carried on pretty much the same as I had in Rome as Regional Security Supervisor until transferred to Washington in the Department's Office of Security in the Physical Security Section (SY/P as we called it). In addition to basic four areas of security, there were also a technical laboratory, a protection unit for official visitors and a highly specialized office staffed by two officers, Fred Traband and Paul Clarke, dealing with personnel cases. During this tour, I was assigned to provide protection services in cooperation with the Office of Protocol during the visits of Queen Elizabeth and King Saud of which more later.

**JACK A. SULSER
Information Officer
Bologna (1952-1953)**

Jack A. Sulser was born in Moline, Illinois in 1925. Upon graduating from high school, he joined the U.S. Armed Forces. After completing his military service, Mr. Sulser received a bachelor's degree from Augustana University and a master's degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin. He joined the Foreign Service in 1950. His career included positions in London, Newcastle, Dusseldorf, Vienna, Frankfurt, and Rotterdam. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 14, 1994.

Q: *Let's see, I've got you in Bologna from about 1952...*

SULSER: We got there in January of '53 and it closed in October of '53. When I got the

assignment, I went to a local bookstore in Newcastle and bought a book on "Teach Yourself Italian," and my wife and I spent hours with that book during home leave. When I got to Bologna I found that the Public Affairs officer had asked the Department to assign an Italian-speaking newspaperman. Of course I didn't speak Italian. The radio station in Rock Island was owned by a newspaper, and I had read the news written by somebody else on the radio, but I could not be described as a newspaperman! But he swallowed his disappointment and we hired a teacher from the local Berlitz School at our own expense who came to us for an hour every day to learn Italian. I had a local staff of 21 people, only two of whom could converse much in English, so here I was trying to learn Italian, trying to supervise a staff that was largely non-English-speaking.

Q: What was the staff doing?

SULSER: I was the Information Officer, and my side of the staff was distributing material to newspapers from the wireless file, things of that sort, hoping they would publish it. Trying to make contact with editors, and so on, get them to use information we could supply them. But most of my staff was distributing unattributed anti-communist pamphlets that we were publishing there in Italy without attribution to the United States government, leading up to the 1953 Parliamentary elections. We were trying to weaken the communists in Italy.

Q: Part of the Red Belt, wasn't it?

SULSER: Indeed! There were about 200 communes in our area, and nearly all had communist majorities on their elected councils. The mayor of Bologna was Luigi Longo, who was then the deputy head and became the head of the Italian Communist Party. We had several people who were bundling these unattributed pamphlets and delivering them or sending them out to churches, non-communist trade unions, things of that sort, who would pass them around. We also had a mobile film unit that showed anti-communist films out in the sticks. The PAO decided it would be good for my Italian to go out with one of these mobile film units for about two weeks. We had the driver and the projectionist, neither of whom could speak English, and I went out with them for two weeks, driving from one little hamlet to another putting up posters of the movies we were going to be showing that night, usually in the village square, projecting them against the side of a building. These guys were just ordinary fellows, but as the stereotype of the Italian goes, everybody goes around singing opera all the time; and in fact these guys were opera fans. They had opera records and a record player in the truck and loudspeakers, and we'd play opera records for an hour before we'd show the films. In those days USIS was bragging about how many people would come up after such film shows and turn in their communist party cards, and that sort of thing. We were sending in monthly reports, "evidence of effectiveness," how many communist party cards had been turned into us as a result of our propaganda activities.

The other part of the Bologna operation was a library, a beautiful library in an historic palazzo. When Eisenhower and Dulles took over in 1953, they started closing posts all over the world. They decided to close this information center in Bologna just after we'd spent over a quarter of a million dollars refurbishing the library. We got permission to keep the library open after the post had closed in October 1953. Two or three of the Italian library staff were retained. In 1955, when Johns Hopkins opened their Bologna center of the School of Advanced International Studies,

they took over the library and our old staff there. So I had about nine months in Bologna, cramming Italian, learning Italian food as well as the language. While the Italian language was not retained very well, the interest in la cucina italiana certainly was...particularly la cucina Bolognese.

Q: *Did you ever have any people turn in their communist party badges during the time you were...*

SULSER: The two weeks I went out with the film unit, no.

HENRY L. HEYMANN
Consular Officer
Naples (1953-1955)

Henry L. Heymann was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1920. He graduated in 1943 from Princeton University with a degree in history. Afterwards, he served in the U.S. Army for four years. In 1950, Mr. Heymann entered the Foreign Service. His career included positions in Germany, Italy, Indonesia, and Washington, DC. Mr. Heymann was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

HEYMANN: Then I went to Naples. When I was assigned to Naples, I was assigned as a citizenship officer and was enthusiastically looking forward to a new field. The Consul General in Hamburg wanted to keep me in Hamburg. My orders to leave had arrived, but I was not informed of this or of his request to Washington to keep me. I thought I should go on to my new career as a citizenship officer and was irritated that I had not been informed of my transfer orders. However, much to my disappointment when I got to Naples I was assigned to the visa section. Having been in charge of a large visa section, I suddenly found myself an underling in another visa section, which is a common occurrence in the Foreign Service. You get transferred and you find yourself at the bottom of the totem pole all over again.

I handled regular immigration for southern Italian peasants. I didn't stay long at that. I moved for a brief time to the commercial section. The commercial officer, a staff officer, resented me as an FSO and wanted to make sure that I didn't jeopardize his position. He put me to work on walnut and nut production to keep me occupied and away from the office contacts. But I didn't stay very long and was transferred to become the consular officer who covered shipping, welfare and notaries. That was an interesting job.

The interesting part was the welfare. I got several tourists - people with mental problems who when they left the United States thought they were leaving their problems behind. We had one woman who ran naked down the hall of the Excelsior Hotel brandishing a knife. The Italian authorities would put such people in our hands and I would place them temporarily in a mental hospital (we had a fairly steady business with one mental hospital) or a hotel (with which we had more business) until I was able to arrange their passage back. Sometimes they needed an escort.

Often it was a long and difficult process in dealing with relatives in the States who might be willing to pay for the hotel and transportation. This often involved considerable letter writing to persuade people to accept their responsibilities. We had other cases where people dumped their old parents on their Italian relatives who in turn dumped them on us.

The Embassy in Rome also handed us problems. One day they telephoned me that they wanted me to escort a woman to the boat; they were sending her to Naples by train that day. Shortly after boarding the boat, an American Export Line boat, she suddenly screamed that she wasn't going back to the U.S. where she was denied the right to do a four letter word meaning intercourse. She ran down the gangplank with me after her. I chased after her around the docks of Naples until I caught her. I did not know if she was going to jump into the water.

I kept her at a hotel for I don't know how many weeks. Finally I persuaded the Italian Line to take her. I did not bring out exactly all her bad points to the Italian Line officials. I got her on board the ship and just as we got seated in the lounge she started looking around wildly. I departed and the boat sailed without incident to my great relief.

We had other such mental cases. Another thing about the case of the woman who I finally got on the Italian Lines, the Consul General, Alfred Nestor, thought maybe I had jeopardized his relations with the Italian Lines which I hadn't. He bawled the hell out of me. He roared at me. He had a cane - he was an invalid - and he threatened me with his cane. I think some of the Consuls General viewed the comfort of their relationships with the Italians more important than taking care of people. Nestor had spent a large part of his career in southern Italy and that was his life. What happened was: an Italian Lines official came to see him and Nestor asked me, "Did you have anything to do with this? Can you explain why he is visiting me?" I told him what I had done and that is when he threatened and roared at me. It turned out the Italian Lines man had come to see him about something entirely different and my case was never mentioned.

I had another case of a woman who gave birth to a baby in the woman's room on the ship coming over. She arrived with the baby to whom she had given a long name including that of an Indian chief and the ship. I knew nothing about babies. The Consulate doctor said, "You better get some equipment to that woman." She was carrying the baby around like a suitcase. The doctor gave me some equipment and I hurried to her hotel to give the paraphernalia to her, but the baby died. The Consul General again was furious - "Why in the hell were so concerned about the baby?"

I think my most memorable case was when I was asked to meet somebody at the boat. The Naval Attaché in Rome telephoned me. Would I meet on the boat the wife of a man who had died at sea? She had cabled him demanding a full Naval funeral. The deceased did not qualify since he was just a civilian who was in the Naval Reserve. "Would I take care of it? Just go and meet the boat and take care of the death certificate and whatever else consular people do?" I met the boat and she turned her back on me. I never had a chance to speak. Evidently she was greatly disappointed. She had expected Naval officers with full regalia, but only a civilian appeared. The next day a man came to my office and said, "I was there when you met her and I understand what happened. I feel sorry for you." I had asked her the data about her husband for the death certificate and she would provide no information. The visitor said, "I would like to help you. I am a British citizen." I thought what the dickens can you do? The man turned out to be Arthur

Koestler -- he had been a Hungarian, the author of "Darkness at Noon." He contributed to "The God That Failed". Of course, his most famous book was "Darkness at Noon," which with uncanny accuracy reproduced the experience of a victim of Stalin's 1937 purge trials, modeled after Bukharin. Later he tired of writing about communism and delved into mathematics and other fields. He was a genius. He wrote in English and spoke fluent English, but his written English wasn't polished. The deceased had polished up the English for Koestler for "Darkness at Noon". That was the connection between them. Koestler gave me the information for the death certificate. The Naval attaché agreed that his office would provide a funeral with some Naval trimmings. The widow got mad at the Navy and during the funeral sat across the street having her fingernails done to show her irritation.

Subsequent to that Koestler invited me over several times to his home on Ischia, a redone farmhouse. We would go to a village cafe in the evening and drink joined by W.H. Auden and other intellectual celebrities. I left Naples in 1955.

THOMAS STERN
Budget and Fiscal Officer
Rome (1953-1955)

Thomas Stern was born in Germany in 1927. He received a bachelor's degree from Haverford in 1950 and attended the Maxwell School of Public Affairs in 1951. His Foreign Service career included positions in Rome, Bonn, Korea, and Washington, DC. Mr. Stern was interviewed in 1993 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

STERN: I was then assigned to that hardship post called Rome, Italy. I went there as the Budget and Fiscal officer. That was a good assignment. In the first place, I knew part of the work well. I had some idea what was expected from an Embassy in the way of budget submissions. I worked first for Bill Boswell, the Administrative Officer and later Bill Crockett, when he was assigned to Rome as the Deputy Administrative Officer. Both were very good supervisors. They essentially left me to my own devices and had enough confidence in me, despite my age, to let me develop the Embassy's budget and supervise its Fiscal section. That was the section that kept the fiscal accounts and approved all bills for payments which were made by the Disbursing Officer, who at that time, was a separate entity, responsible both to the Administrative Officer and the Treasury Department. I am not sure that the confidence was necessarily well placed because I was entirely a novice in the fiscal area.

The fiscal work was done by a dozen or more of Italian local employees. Most of them had been with the Embassy at least since the end of the War and knew their jobs backwards and forwards. As I said, they used to make up the vouchers for payments which I would approve before they went to the Disbursing Office. They came to me by the dozens, day after day. I had not the slightest idea what I was doing. Had there been an inappropriate payment, the law held me responsible and liable.

I learned a lesson in Rome. One day, among one of the stacks of vouchers that I signed, was one

which authorized payment of a million lire to the "Man in the Moon". I didn't catch it because I gave most of the vouchers only a cursory glance, if one at all. Fortunately, the employee who had perpetrated this scheme, brought the voucher back and showed me what I had done. From then on, I became a little more careful and reviewed all vouchers, although because of the work-load, none ever received the scrutiny that they probably deserved. The fiscal process was essentially a standard one with very room for judgement. The emphasize was on the mechanics; i.e. that all requisitions had been approved by the responsible officer, that some one signed to show that the goods and services had been received and finally that there were adequate funds for payment. It was not an intellectually challenging process. It was mostly a matter of trying to expedite a system which was laden with so many checks and balances that timely payments to our vendors were very difficult. I was one of those jobs held always by Americans which raised the question - often asked, but seldom clearly answered -- why an American had to supervise an operation which the local personnel were perfectly competent to manage on their own. It is a question that I wondered about frequently during my career, but which has not been answered satisfactorily to date.

What I remember most clearly about Rome was my office. I never had a splendid office like it before or thereafter. The American Embassy in Rome is in an old palace. It had, between it and the street, a building which probably had served once upon a time as the servant's quarters. In that little palazzo, the Budget and Fiscal Office was located. My office must have been at least 600 square feet. The most impressive part of it was the ceiling which was two stories high. The ceiling had a fresco painted on it. It wasn't a masterpiece but there is something soothing about being able to look up and see little cherubs playing on the ceiling. We of course honored siesta time at the Embassy and periodically, I would eat a quick snack at the cafeteria and then lean back in my easy chair and watch the ceiling. It was one of several advantages of living in Rome. A few years later, the Embassy had to find more space and made that office into two by adding a ceiling half way up. That gave them a two floor office, ruining the whole ambiance.

The Ambassador was Clare Boothe Luce. I was at the bottom of the chain and yet, even there, one could tell that there were certain tensions in the upper echelons -- e.g. Luce and her DCM, Elbridge Durbrow. It was a high powered Embassy, staffed with a number of "old lions". Outerbridge Horsey III was the Political Counselor and Bill Boswell the Administrative Officer. I don't remember who the Economic Counselor was, but undoubtedly some one from the same "club". So the senior staff was all old professionals who probably had little sympathy for a career appointee and especially one that was a woman. Her knowledge of Italian affairs was probably far less than theirs, but she had far better contacts in Washington than they did. She probably didn't like them anymore than they liked her. I don't know whether the famous story of her lecturing the Pope had any truth to it, but I feel certain that the Embassy did not work as a team; it was centrally directed. We used to hear stories periodically on how things were going in the Ambassadorial suite and not everything was sweet. Letitia Baldrige was Luce's social secretary, so you can see that there was a lot of talent in the Embassy, most of which rose to higher ranks later on.

The story I remember the best about Mrs. Luce was that concerning her poisoning. I have some recollection of that because as part of my job, I had to be acquainted fairly thoroughly with our physical plants. I had been in the servants' quarters on the top floor of the residence, which were

right above Mrs. Luce's bedroom. I walked on the ceiling and I can well imagine that some flakes of paint may well have fallen from that ceiling if someone walked across it; it was not that sturdy and the ceiling may well have shook a little and the paint could have peeled off. I am sure that since we bought the cheapest paint around, it did contain lead, some of which may have fallen in her breakfast which was served to her in bed. So there may well have been some basis for her accusation, although it probably did not deserve the hysteria that she and others developed over it.

Life in Rome was a very pleasant one, as you can well imagine. The senior staff lived in a magnificent old villa across from the Borghese Gardens. The DCM had the top floor, the Political Counselor the next one, the Economic Counselor the next one. The servants' house was occupied by Administrative Officer or his deputy; I don't remember exactly. Most of the staff lived in two apartment houses in the Parioli section, well taken care of. I started sharing an apartment with a fellow by the name of Stan Wagenheim; then I had one to myself. It was not hard to take.

I left Rome for both personal reasons and because I was getting bored with the job. In fact, my personality at the time did not fit the Italian mode. I could not get used to always "Domani". Also I thought that my career in the management field would be enhanced by a Washington assignment. One day, I received a cable from the International Cooperation Administration (I think that was what the assistance agency was called at the time) offering me a position as a management analyst in its Management Office. That offer was made because one of my Syracuse classmates was working there and she had recommended me to her boss. The ICA Management Office was growing at the time and it was looking for additional staff.

CLARE BOOTHE LUCE
Ambassador
Rome (1953-1956)

Clare Boothe Luce was born on April 10, 1903 in New York City. She briefly attended Clare Tree Major's School of Theatre, pursuing a career as an actress, before losing interest and dropping out. She later pursued a career in journalism, serving as an editor for Vanity Fair and a writer for Life magazine. She was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1942, where she served until 1946. She served as Ambassador to Italy from 1953 to 1956. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1983. She died on October 9, 1987. She was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin on June 19, 1986.

Q: . . . and getting agreement between different people. In connection with that, would you explain your part in the Treaty of Trieste? I have seen so many different versions, and it's something that I want to highlight in the book.

LUCE: You've seen many different versions partly because I never wanted to press my own view on anyone. I was content to let everyone figure it out the way they wanted to at the time. But the

actual fact was, very soon after I arrived, the prime minister at the time ordered the Italian troops to Trieste, to the border. And I had been briefed about the so-called Trieste situation, and faced with what looked like war which was about to come, I remembered that what State Department advice had been was, "When it boils up, calm it down; when it calms down, forget it." And that struck me as a recipe for constant conflict. The Italians were doing, or the Italian leadership was doing, pretty much what leadership does in any country when in a domestic jam, trying to create a diversion with a foreign country with whom you have sufficient disagreement, so that the diversion seems logical. So there it was, and I strived to find out from my minister counselor, who was a man called [Elbridge] Durbrow, what steps we were taking, what steps I should take to get the question solved. And was told that it was probably insolvable within the present context, you know? So I wrote some letters, as I remember, to Livy [Livingston] Merchant, who was the head of the European desk, and got back equivocal answers and they all came to the same thing: "As soon as they calm down, they'll forget it, forget the whole thing." I knew it was boiling up again, because the situation in Italy was such that the next prime minister, and the next, would all return to Trieste to settle their own political disagreements. As a matter of fact, De Gasperi [Alcide De Gasperi, leader of the Christian Democratic Party and sometime prime minister of Italy.] said to me, "If I had had this Trieste settled, I would still be Prime Minister."

So I then said, "Well, how do you get this thing settled?" And somebody in the embassy, and I couldn't remember who it was, said, "You have to get [to] the National Security Council; you have to get it on the agenda."

Q: On the agenda of the National Security Council.

LUCE: So I said, "Well, how do you get it on the agenda?" And he said, "Well, you know the president. He can put it on." Well, I did know the president, and this was one thing where it goes to show that it's important to know, and by know, I don't mean just shake his hand. I knew that Ike, President Eisenhower, was the kind of military man who never could read more, never had the time to read more than a page on any question. So I sat down at my own typewriter and tried very hard to put the complicated Trieste question--it was terribly complicated--and the reasons for solving it on one sheet of paper. I was always running over onto two and three, and pulling it out of the typewriter. I said to myself, "My goodness! This guy is a soldier. If there's anything that he is familiar with, it's that famous little childhood poem, 'For the want of a nail the shoe was lost; for the want of a shoe, and so on'." So I paraphrased it.

Q: Very cleverly, too.

LUCE: Anyway, I think that Ike had it in one of the books he wrote, the one that he called Stories That I Dine Out On, or something like that, I just don't remember; it's such a long time ago. Anyway, the way the thing began was, "For the want of a two-penny town." And I wrote at the bottom of this letter, "Dear Mr. President, please let us try to solve this." Put it on the agenda, or whatever. And the word

came over, "Go ahead. Try to solve it." Well, cheers! And then [laughs], it was impossible, of course, to solve it without the British, because the occupying powers were the British and ourselves in Trieste then. Somehow or other--I've forgotten all this history; it was a long time ago--but the end of the war left Americans still in Trieste, which was disputed between Tito [Marshal Tito (Josip Broz), Yugoslav communist leader] and the then caretaker government of Italy. As it happened, with De Gasperi towards the end, and with [Mario] Scelba, and then with I've forgotten whom. We had a new prime minister every year, as you know.

Q: Yes.

LUCE: Then it was all right to try to do this, and it was not only all right, it was most agreeable to do it with the British ambassador. Meanwhile, the news was that we could put it on the agenda. Permitted my opposite number in Yugoslavia--sorry, I cannot remember his name . . .

Q: Mr. Riddleberger?

LUCE: Riddleberger [James Riddleberger, FSO, ambassador to Yugoslavia, 1953-1958] Riddleberger could tell Tito to lay off because we're going to get this solved and, obviously, Riddleberger was in favor of his client; it was Tito's argument. I was in favor of the Italians'. So anyway, everybody fell back and the arguments began. At what point the French latched onto it, I don't know, except to say that the French always latched onto to everything pour la gloire or pour raison d'autre . . .

Q: [Laughs] Yes.

LUCE: . . . and they don't give up. Anyhow, there the French walked in on it, and not only did they walk in on it, but I never will forget that French ambassador--he's a career ambassador--who insisted that he sit in on the meetings at the American embassy and insisted that every word of everything should be translated into French, and the final document should be in French. That wasn't bad enough, but we had to go to the foreign office, and there we finally became like a musical comedy, with the English ambassador and the American ambassador and the French ambassador marching three abreast to the Chigi. And there would be reporters as we went in, and reporters as we left. And after a while . . . I think that went on for some time. I didn't write up the experience or keep a diary, but, anyway, it then occurred to me that it would never get settled, because trying to conduct these diplomatic negotiations in public . . . that's when I first realized that modern communication had absolutely ruined the diplomatic technique of getting things solved. It's really a very serious problem.

Q: Oh, it is, especially in this country.

LUCE: Yes. I mean, for example, there isn't any question that the media has made it all but impossible to solve the question of terrorism.

Q: That's right.

LUCE: So I said, "How do we get this thing where it belongs? Where it isn't in the headlines

with the dope story, or whatever. I told my husband what I had in mind and he said, "It's worth a shot." I made a trip back to Washington and I went to see the secretary, whom also I knew very well, Foster Dulles [John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State 1953-59], and said, "Foster, why not--if I can get them to agree, and I'll do my best, and you tell Riddleberger to go ahead on his end, and we'll persuade the Italians to appoint a team and the Yugoslavs to appoint a team to negotiate this thing in the place where they will both agree; not in Italy and not in Yugoslavia.

Q: In a third country.

LUCE: And then you pick a diplomat and the British pick one to chair it, and see if you cannot decide [on an agreement]. Now, they began those negotiations and I think they took over a year. Our man--what was his name? He'd been ambassador to Austria, a wonderful man.

Q: Llewellyn Thompson.

LUCE: Llewellyn Thompson. That wasn't what we called him.

Q: "Tommy."

LUCE: "Tommy." Tommy Thompson chaired the Trieste proceedings. Who his British opposite number was, I don't know. In any case, in the end, when they began discussing the ownership of Trieste, the whole city and everything it encompassed, when they got to the end, they hit a road block. It had a certain similarity to the difficulties the Israelis are having with Golan Heights. What they were arguing about was the crest of a hill, 14 acres--I mean, a little more than that--the size of a golf course. That's all there was: a golf course, but it was on the crest of the hill, and the Israelis' idiotic nationalistic things come in [to play]. The Yugoslavs didn't want the Italians looking down on them, and vice-versa. And there it was, absolutely, hopelessly stuck.

Q: As only they can be in the Balkans.

LUCE: Now, I was dressing to go to a dinner when someone came to me, and I shall not tell you the name at this point because it would be breaking a promise made many years ago. A telephone rang and it was a man. I was told it was very urgent and I went to the phone. Oh, yes, I remember my husband was there, and he said to me, "It's So-and-So," who asked for me, and it was someone who'd worked for my husband.

Q: So you knew the person was trustworthy.

LUCE: And my husband said to me, "Doesn't want to talk to me. He wants to talk to you." I got on the phone and he said, "May I come and see you? It is really very urgent, and your husband will tell you I'm a serious man." I was going out to dinner, but I put aside the time, and he came to see me. I'll never forget it as long as I live. He laid down a map and that's how I remember his pointing. He said, "This is all that it's about. These few little acres." And he said, "Now I'll tell you why; what the real argument is about. The real argument."

Now if you've been reading the history of Trieste, you might come to think it was about fishing rights and this or that. Even today I'll be in trouble if I tell you what real troubles it was about. I just can't tell you. All I can tell you is there was something--there was a way in Tito's own interest, and there was a way that certain very important people in Italy would be satisfied on the question of the debt they thought was owed to them.

Q: I see. I understand.

LUCE: Then this man--I said to him, "Why are you telling me these things instead of the CIA?" "Well," he said, "I'm telling you first because I've never met you and I've always liked you and, secondly, because I'm going to tell them tomorrow but I thought you should have the first crack at it because you have worked so hard and you're the only person that has." So there I had the secret, but I did not have the means at my disposal of twisting Tito's arm, and there were reasons why it couldn't be twisted, even on the cables, so I was very unhappy about it and said, "I will go back to Washington. I got back to Washington, and the day before I was going to see the president there was big dinner given at the Pan American Union, a ball of some sort--a big diplomatic dinner, enormous. And the man I sat next to was an old friend, Bob Murphy [FSO, ambassador-at-large].

Q: Oh, yes.

LUCE: And Bob said to me, "How is the Trieste affair going?" And I said, "Bob, it's hung up because we have a little problem that I can't solve. I can take care of the Italian end, but I can't take care of the Yugoslavian, because our ambassador there has gotten us painted into a corner because he insists that there is no possible way of changing Tito's mind." That was also part of my information.

Q: Sure.

LUCE: And I said--and I remember using that phrase, because it always stuck in my mind, "What we need is someone who knows Tito well enough to twist his arm." And he said, "You're talking to the man."

Q: Isn't it amazing, the fortunes of history?

LUCE: It always reminds me of Churchill, when we were talking about what makes a great man, and he said, "I've told you all these things and you've forgotten the most important thing." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Luck." Well, anyway, there I was, lucky enough to sit next to Bob Murphy who, who had been in the OSS during the war and who had had OSS contacts with the Partisans in Vis. He was on a first-name basis with Tito. I said, "Now," and this I can say now because Tito's dead and all of that doesn't matter. We were then giving wheat to Tito under our Marshall Aid. It's still going on. Now one of the unbreakable rules in the State Department was, you do not--what do they call it-- I haven't thought of all these things in a long time--I must remember the phrase-- Kissinger--linkage. You were not permitted linkage. The person who, say, was negotiating a trade treaty would not be able, for example, to use part of one. Our government

would not be able to marry two separate problems.

Q: Right. I understand. It would look like a bribe otherwise, I suppose.

LUCE: Yes. We've--Kissinger [Henry Kissinger, secretary of state, 1973-77] got all over that by coming outright and saying, "We're going to proceed on a quid pro quo basis." But in my day you weren't supposed to link things. So I said, "Now, if you will go over and tell Tito that unless he gives in on those 14 acres [whatever the little piece of property was], no wheat." He won't know because he's a totalitarian and he thinks that the State Department, the president, and everybody would act the way he would act in those circumstances.

Q: He'd believe it.

LUCE: I said, "Could you go? He said, "I can't go like that unless the President sends me." So the next day I went to see the President. I said, "Mr. President, I only have one favor to ask, and we've almost gotten this Trieste thing solved. If Bob will stop in Rome and then go on to Belgrade, and be briefed in both places, and make his call on Tito, we can settle this thing." And I think if you looked this up in the papers, you will see that he wasn't gone but three days, or four days--and a few days later, with great sighs of relief, Tito and the Yugoslavs signed the treaty. Then there were all sorts of amusing things happening after that.

I may say in passing, and I haven't sought to make any great capital out of this because what is Trieste to the average American? But you ask any Italian . . . There's no doubt in their minds who--you may find there's still . . . First, the Italians knew I did it, and everybody in the embassy knew.

Q: Sure.

LUCE: The first--this is very funny. After I left Rome, I think the first public service job that I took was with the Carnegie Peace Foundation, right after Alger Hiss [a former assistant of state, was accused of being a communist spy and was convicted of perjury in 1950] left, and they had put an awful lot of money up for articles on how the nations deal with conscience. I hadn't been there a week before the chairman asked the executive secretary--he was the one who did all the work--and there was no money for any new project. That's why I left, because Mr. Hiss had allocated all the money for the next six years.

Q: Oh, is that so?

LUCE: You know? So there really was very little money. So the executive secretary came forth with a document called La Problems de Trieste.

And so help me, I found out to my amazement--what was on the table was whether it should be translated and put out--I took it home and read it and I was really enchanted to discover that the French had settled it.

Q: Oh, had they? [Laughter] Isn't that lovely?

LUCE: We'd check the French out, you know, in London. [Laughs] It really was funny.

Q: They had no part at all in the final settlement, did they?

LUCE: Nothing at all. That's one of the reasons why, like I told them in the State Department, "You will not be able to keep the French out of this if we go on," so, it was only by dropping--

Q: It had to be done by secret means. Isn't that funny?

LUCE: Yes. So then after that, there were various interpretations and, generally, Bob Murphy was given the credit, which was due him.

Q: Yes.

LUCE: That his visits, surprisingly, unblocked everything. And I was perfectly happy he should have that credit, because it is true that I would not have known quite how to dig us out of that personal contact.

Q: Yes, yes, yes. But all the same, you put him up to it. So . . .

LUCE: Yes. I went to the President.

Q: You were the deus ex machina, weren't you?

LUCE: That was one of the reasons he was given this great dinner at the OSS. He asked me to do some things--

Q: Oh, did he? Is that why you were given the high award-- the Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic?

LUCE: Well, that may go with the job, I don't know. But they did give me--and I have it somewhere--when I left (and I may say that this was before we had rules about personal gifts)--I have a little charm bracelet that I wore very often--little mementos, things my husband--every time I did anything that he thought was interesting--I have it inside. It's really a very fascinating piece of jewelry.

Q: I'm sure it is.

LUCE: But I thought I'd lost it, and my husband kept saying, "Don't worry, it will turn up." He had come and gone to the Foreign Office--

Q: Really? The Italian Foreign Office?

LUCE: Yes. Got my bracelet and had made in enamel with just very tiny little, itsy-bitsy chip diamonds, a charm, about as big as my thumb but, nevertheless, a charm to wear on my bracelet,

with the insignia of Trieste.

Q: How charming!

LUCE: Which was wonderful. And when I left, they gave me a huge dinner at the Villa Madonna. And I said to [Vittorio Zoppi], who was the head of the Foreign Office--that's the kind of name you don't forget--

Q: No. [laughing]

LUCE: Zoppi. I said to Signor Zoppi, "You have all made these wonderful toasts and said these marvelous things about me. Would you privately tell me the truth why you say you're all so sad that I'm leaving?" And he gave me a most unexpected answer. He said, "Because you've always told us the truth."

Now, I don't mean to imply by that other ambassadors didn't tell the truth, but I'll say this is where my congressional experience came in very useful. Host of the things that happen in your foreign countries are comparable to questions requiring the acquiescence of the American Congress. And knowing how Congress will vote and what the mood of the American people is, politically is of great value.

Q: I had not thought of that, but you're absolutely right.

LUCE: Now it wouldn't matter so much, I suppose, in a country that was very rich. But it matters that we're on the giving rather than the receiving end. Most countries in the '50s were on the receiving end.

You had to be very careful. Now the other triumph I had which did not make me so popular with the Italians, was what was called the Off-Shore Procurement.

Q: Oh, yes. I want to hear about that.

LUCE: It did make me--someone was telling me--Sylvia Morris, who's doing the biography, has gone to all the trouble to have [Vittorio] Valetta's book translated from Italian. I haven't even bothered, to tell you the truth, to read it, because you can't sit and read things about yourself; it doesn't make you any younger.

Q: Well, that's true.

LUCE: Valetta was the head of Fiat, and there were two labor unions there. One was the Christian Labor

Union; I think that was called Chislu. And then there was the Communist Labor Union. I mean, I should have briefed myself about all this past history. I haven't thought about this in many years. At any rate, the name of the game at the American Embassy was lessening the Communist vote and the Communist influence, and where it was most important was in the labor unions.

And the--the Communist--the fellow who was the shop steward--he was the guy. He was the

Communist who was going to put in other Communists.

Q: Sure.

LUCE: Now, what kind of arm-twisting could we do which was legitimate which wouldn't be called interference? Well, I found the recipe for that. There, again, the Congress really was very useful. The

Congress had passed a bill called the Offshore Procurement bill. And this was part of a plan to restore the industries of the French and the Germans, and everybody by buying in their countries the material that would then be assigned to NATO, the hardware of various sorts for the NATO forces. And this was terribly important to the Italians, and even more important--most important--to the largest complex, industrial complex, of all, which was Fiat, owned by Gianni [Giovanni] Agnelli's family. But the brains of the particular thing--and I won't call him the Iacocca, because I think Valetta could have run circles around Iacocca [Lee Iacocca, Chief Operating Officer, Chrysler Corp.]--was a little professore, Valetta. And then the other important industry, the shipyards--shipping. Now all these things we were . . .

[Tape 1, Side 2]

LUCE: The Congressional law had a clause in it that none of these funds should be used in any way that would increase the Communist influence in any country where the funds were going. Italy was one of those countries, and it was almost on the verge.

Q: It certainly was. It was a big worry.

LUCE: And, as I say, this was something I had to do. And it finally came down to the point where I would either make good on what I was saying or not. You see, we can't interfere. I can't say, "You know my heart bleeds for you, Mr. Lauro." Oddly enough, the guy I had the most trouble with, they've got a ship named after him now, called the Achille Lauro, and he was the big shipowner and shipbuilder in the south of Italy. He was one of them; there were a number of them. But my story was the same to all of them, which was--whatever the industry, be it shipowners, automobiles, whatever it was--I always told them the same thing, which was, "Yes, I did understand that if we canceled the order it would mean unemployment. And I couldn't feel more badly about the whole thing, but the Congress would send for me and I would be fired and the next ambassador would be fired, too, if we allow any Communist-dominated factory," which was true--true in the sense that the Congress had written the legislation. It was not quite true that if push came to shove that they would have penalized the poor Italians, but I had to act as though the Congress meant what it said.

Q: Sure.

LUCE: And they didn't believe me. Not at the beginning.

Q: They didn't believe you at the beginning?

LUCE: If you could see the Italian newspapers! The Archives in Congress are full of the

cartoons that they wrote about me. And, incidentally, during the Trieste one, there was--my name, which has always been a misery here, you know, "loose woman," "loose talk," all that kind of thing--in Italy, it was just wonderful:

"Clara Lou-chay" meant "clear light." And there were a lot of cartoons, many of them puns on my name during the Trieste thing. "The light at last," you see.

Q: Uh-huh. I see, yes.

LUCE: And all kinds of cartoons were always being-- I remember one Trieste cartoon with two characters--always the "Mike and Ike" kind of characters were in one of the Italian papers--and one was saying to the other, "It's a strange thing. In Italy the only man is a woman."

Q: [Laughs] I love that.

LUCE: I thought that was funny. And really, the funniest one is--this is again having the sense of the Congress. I wrote to Foster and said, "Foster, one of the big things the Italians are talking about is how badly we treat our blacks. Could you find me a black cultural attaché?" And we brought over--I think I was the first who ever had . . .

Q: You must have been.

LUCE: . . . a black man [as cultural attaché] in an embassy. A Dr. Snowden from Howard University. He was Master of Romance Languages at Howard, and a charming man. He never speaks much about the extraordinary honor. He just fell so much in love with Italy that, while he returned, his daughters married Italians. At any rate, he was very good. But one of the--I'll just tell you this because this is a very amusing pun. The Italians did not very much like blacks. I wasn't doing it to please them, but to be able to stop the business that we just. . .

Q: Yes.

LUCE: The day after he arrived, there was a cartoon in the paper and it showed me--I was always shown smacking along like that, you know. [Laughter] They never quite knew--the Communist papers made me look like a hag. You know, I was made to look like an awful witch, with shrunken bosom and everything. And the papers that were for me would have me going along with bosoms pointed out--it really was very funny. They couldn't get their act together as far as what I looked like. Well, anyway, there was this cartoon of me spanking along down the Via Veneto, followed by a black man, and the thing underneath it said, "Dopo la luce l'oscuro," which quite literally means "After the light, the dark." The way we put it is, "After the night comes the dawn." But anyhow, there were lots of cartoons, an enormous number of cartoons.

Q: You were really taken apart by the Communist press over there, weren't you?

LUCE: Oh, terribly.

Q: How did that affect you? Did it bother your self-confidence? Or did you figure, well, I'm obviously doing the right thing or they wouldn't be after me this way?

LUCE: Oh, I didn't let it bother me. It didn't even bother me when my side was; the side I was for.

And they were in this question I was speaking of. You cannot imagine the press I got when I canceled a very large ship order. They were building a new ship.

Q: Oh, you did?

LUCE: But I canceled the contract. I said, "It's invalid. The United States will not honor or allow this contract to be signed because you just had an election and your shipyards have gone Communist." Which they had, to test me, you see.

Q: I see.

LUCE: I'm sure they did it to test me. And they still didn't believe it. They thought publicity would get to me. And then I canceled the second order. And then things began to happen.

Q: I bet they did.

LUCE: Very quickly. I would have these endless conversations with Valetta, and he was about as big as a peanut. I think he was 5'3", or something like that. He would send me, after every one of these conversations, enormous boxes of red roses. My little secretary, the one that died that I loved so dearly, she used to say to me, "You know, I always know how the questions are going in Italy by the length of the stems [laughing] and the number of the roses that come." That was her barometer about how things were going. So the nut of this was that the day came when Gianni Agnelli himself, together with Valetta, came in on a very big contract. And I said, "No."

Q: This was the third one, then?

LUCE: No. This was the one that I had to say no to. Everybody else sort of zipped up and got in line, but Fiat was the biggest one of them all.

Q: Oh, of course.

LUCE: And I just said, "No, no way." And Gianni Agnelli plead, and Valetta begged me to do it, and I said, "No." I mean, they were there for two hours.

Q: Is that right?

LUCE: And along with my labor attaché and the economic officer--you work like a team--that's another very agreeable thing about diplomacy. You have a team that you work with, and it's very rare that if the ambassador's half-way good that team--even if the ambassador is no good--they do their best. I'm really very impressed with the way Foreign Service officers shape up those without experience. Oh, I think they can be very, very helpful. They're really wonderful. Anyway, the king was there, and the captain was saying, "No." Agnelli left first, and Valetta stood at the door, talking to me for a minute, and then

Gianni Agnelli yelled at him, and he went along out. That night, I got the biggest bunch of roses that were ever sent, awfully nice roses. I thought, "My God, I know what happened. He ordered them before this conversation."

I think I ran into him three or four days later, and I said, "Well, Dr. Valetta, I was embarrassed by your wonderful flowers. I know you were very unhappy when you left." And I said, "Even if you did put in the order ahead of time." He said, "No. I sent them afterward." He was so afraid someone would see him. And then he said, "You did make it difficult for us." He said, "We'll have to use our own money [laughter] to buy up those shop stewards." But I'll always remember one thing he said, and one thing I said to him. He said, "Don't you realize if you close us down that you are going to throw hundreds of people out of work?"

I said, "No, I don't think that will happen." I said, "Every one of your papers have given wide publicity now to why I cancel orders." And I said, "You know what's going to happen? Joe Boni is coming home to sit down for dinner--or supper--and his wife's going to say to him, 'You vote for the Christian Democrats. We have to put the meat on the table.'" I said, "I'm counting on that little Italian wife and mother to notice where . . ."

Q: Where her bread is buttered.

LUCE: And so afterward, Valetta told me that he would, as they say, use their own money to finance the campaign for the stewardships. You see, it's like everything else. There were campaigns, and they needed campaign contributions, and the Communists were putting them up. We also got a great deal of help from a wonderful character; I don't even know if he's alive now, but he was the head of the Garment Workers, an American.

Q: Oh, really?

LUCE: The American labor unions, as you know, have always been very anti-Communist, and they were enormously helpful. They had an experience with Communism in my district. We were the first union to boot them out up in Connecticut.

Q: Connecticut, is that so?

LUCE: The Fifth Connecticut, in the electrical industry. What number it was called, I can't remember now. I should have done more homework on this for you. But you're talking, you know, about things that happened thirty years ago. So, at any rate, the [Italian] elections were held. And this meant a trip for Mr. Scelba, the foreign minister. He got his trip to America. I think it was Scelba; I did two trips. The other one was [Giovanni] Gronchi.

Q: Now, who was Mr. Gronchi?

LUCE: That's wonderful you should ask that. The president of Italy when I went to Italy was Einaudi, whose son still lives here, and, like his father was, is an economist. The next president--well, I think the next president was Gronchi. I'm not sure I haven't missed a president. Scelba

was also president, but
I think after Gronchi. Yes. Well, anyway, Gronchi was president.

This is a really funny story. Mr. Gronchi was very left of the Christian Democratic Party. So to speak, it's Mondale, except that the left in Italy was a good deal more left than Mr. Mondale. He was also a very intelligent man, with a large following, and when the question of the presidency came up; I mean, who was going to become the president, everyone was speculating about what the American Embassy would do. Our instructions were very, very clear: "Do not interfere in the Italian election."

And I, having been accused when I had not been interfering with the election of Mr. De Gasperi in 1953, was certainly determined that I would not interfere. But the people who didn't like Mr. Gronchi would say, "La Signora is against him." Now, you see, they couldn't call me "L'ambasciatrice" because that means the wife. And "ambasciatore" was ridiculous. Can't call a female a male. So they signed off by calling me "La Signora." So I became "La Signora d'America." I was just the American Signora, and everybody knew who they were talking about. So the word went out, "La Signora was against Gronchi." And then there were others who said, "La Signora was for Gronchi. Be that as it may, Gronchi was elected, and the word went out that he was cool to La Signora.

This sort of thing went on all the time. Italiani pette [gossip], we used to call it; it just went on. Well, at that particular moment, what had happened was that the Soviets had withdrawn from the only country they ever did voluntarily withdraw from, which was Austria. The Austrians were free, and the conditions were that we would pull our atomic unit, our nuclear unit, out of Austria. And this unit was sent to Livorno, to embark for the United States. I received word from the department, would I, for God's sake, do my best to talk to the prime minister, whose name was [Antonio] Segni at that point. (I told you, I had one [prime minister] a year. Now this was Mr. Segni.) Would I convince Segni that the unit should be sent into the Po Valley to safeguard Italy at the Ljubljana Gap? And believe me, my war experiences came in very useful in this job.

Q: Oh, I can imagine.

LUCE: So, if I were given this task of taking Italy at that moment, I could have taken it with two tank divisions going through the Ljubljana Gap into the Po Valley. So it was much in their interests. But, like everyone in Europe, and in America now too, the very word "atomic" or "nuclear"--I don't know whether we used "nuclear." I think we still used "atomic"--well, whichever it was--the Communists would have made a terrific to-do at stationing that unit there. Now, in between the time that I got these instructions, we had a MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] mission in Rome, a military mission to the Italians, who had just gotten into NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], and in the way that the routine was, the head of the military mission was a general something-or-other. The head of the military mission consulted his opposite number in Italy, and he would consult the head of the Italian army, and then he would wire back to the Pentagon. So the first round was that he--our general--wires the Pentagon, "No." No way the Italians will accept a nuclear division. So the Pentagon gets in touch with the Department of State, the Department of State to me. I go to see Segni; Segni says, "No way." I go back, wire the department, "No way." The department maybe calls up the Pentagon,

the Pentagon goes to MAAG, MAAG goes back to the Pentagon; the Pentagon goes to the State Department; the State Department comes back to me. So there may be about three rounds, and then, finally, the anguished plea from the department said, "Once those troops are embarked for the United States it will take an Act of Congress to get them back, and there is no way the Italians would then accept it, so you've got to get them in there." Well, I really thought--we're now coming to lady luck--I said to myself, "Go for it." I made an appointment with Mr. Segni to have one last crack at it, [with] what? three days to go before anybody embarked, something like that. "Perils of Pauline," I'm now telling you. [Singing] "Percy drifted to out to sea, then they tie her to a tree. Wonder what the end will be? The suspense is awful." [Laughs] You don't remember that?

Q: No, I don't remember that.

LUCE: Well, that's the kind of thing we used to sing when I was a child. From the "Perils of Pauline."

Anyway, I had an appointment with Mr. Segni at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The Foreign Office works the most dreadful hours, as you know. They wouldn't get to their desks until 11 in the mornings, then they'd quit around 8 o'clock at night, or 9 o'clock at night, and then we have to get up at eight, so we'd have sometimes 12-hour days. At any rate, I was coming down the steps, walking down the steps of the embassy, when my minister counselor rushed after me and said to me, "Just had word from Mr. Segni that he cannot see you at 5 o'clock. Will you come at 6:30?" Okay. I'm on my way out. I get into my car, and say to Gino, the chauffeur, "Go back to the residence." Get back to the residence, have a little cup of tea, and sitting there. And two characters from the Italian Foreign Office, young men, stop by to pay their respects, and there I am with an hour to kill, so I talk to them. And one of them says, "Too bad you don't get along with Gronchi."

"Well, it isn't my not wanting to see him, but he just has never asked to see me." And they said, "Well, if you ever see him, remember he's a vain man, a brilliant man, an attractive man, and you and he ought to get along very well because he's a military buff." And I say, "He is?" "Yes, sure. It's a good thing, too, because after all he is the commander-in-chief."

Now, why it never occurred to me that the president of Italy was also the commander-in-chief, I don't know. But I thought to myself, well, that's interesting. If I ever see Gronchi, I'll simply tell him. So the young men left. I looked at my watch. It was 6:30, it's time for me to go to the Chigi. And I got in the car and I had one of those cars with a window that goes up and down [between the front and back seats]. So the window was up and I pressed it and it goes down this far, and I've got my finger on the button. And I say to the chauffeur, "Gino, Il Presidente della Consiglia." Now, the Presidente della Consiglia is the prime minister. The Presidente is the president. It's the difference between the president of the United States and the president of the Ladies' Club, you know?

Q: Sure.

LUCE: Anyway, pressing the button, I cut off the--

Q: Oh, no!

LUCE: Yes! And now it was getting dark, and I'm reading over my points, clarifying my mind, going, rushing through Rome. And I looked up from my homework, 'cause I wanted to have every last little point clearly in mind when I saw the prime minister. The door opens and here's a guy, 6'4" with a plume in his hat and a sword by his side. And I am at the Caranoli, the president's apartment. And before I can catch my breath, this huge man says, "Ah, La Signora! Veni." And he got me in the door. And there's an elevator and I'm being shot upstairs. And I thought, "Well, when I get out I'll quietly find a staircase and come back." But there standing was a character I knew very well; I'll think of his name in a minute. He'd become the secretary to Gronchi. He'd been in the foreign office. And there's this huge room, full of gold chairs, and he comes forward and he says, "But, Signora, what are you doing here? Did you have an appointment?" God, I could see the papers: "Mrs. La Signora doesn't even know, after all this time, the difference between the Caranoli and the Chigi [foreign office]," you see. So I said, "Well, I know I have no appointment, but the matter is really very urgent." "Maybe you can tell it to me?" And I said, "No, I didn't come here to tell you."

He said, "Shall I--well, just a moment," and he disappeared and he came back. And he said, "The president will see you in his study." I walk in a room about half the size of this. The president is sitting at a big desk, but behind him there's a map. And he said to me, "To what do I owe the honor?" and in a really sarcastic voice "of this unexpected visit?"

As I said, the whole thing was luck. So I said, "Well, I think it's a question of the defense of Italy, and you as the commander-in-chief should really make this decision."

Q: That's what's known as thinking on your feet.

LUCE: He knew all about the matter and was very annoyed that no one in the American Embassy--that his input hadn't been there. Then I said to him, "Well, how would you defend the Ljubljana Gap?" And then I explained to him that if this bunch got on the ship they'd only be brought back by an Act of Congress. He knew how long it took for the United States to interest itself in foreign difficulties. And, my goodness! he was so pleased. Now he went on and on, talking about the defense of Italy. And I said, reminding myself that Mr. Segni must be wondering what the devil has become of me--

Q: Oh, gosh! Yes.

LUCE: --And next thing I knew I was--he was leaving for a vacation the next day--the next thing I knew--oh, he said to me during this conversation, "My predecessor visited America." And I said, "Mr. Gronchi, I'm sure that when this question is settled, you will be received in America with open arms." At any event, I left.

I went to Mr. Segni. It was very much on my mind that I'd kept him waiting, and I said, "Now I must tell you, too," and I said, "I made a mistake. I kept my finger on the button." I told him exactly what had happened. I never had a conversation in Italy, except this one with the president, without an interpreter, an American interpreter as well as Italian, being present.

Anyway, he said he'd already received a telephone call from the president, and he and the president were d'accordo, so everything was fine. And I got back to the embassy.

Meanwhile, my troops were lined up for the sad word back. Communications--even in Rome--are very rapid. They greeted me with, "My God, why did you go to the Caranoli?" you know. And, "What happened?" They knew when I left I wasn't going there, and I'd given no word. And the press was trying to find out.

Q: I'll bet.

LUCE: And Mr. Segni himself was trying to find out what had become of me. Then I was reported as having been seen going to the Caranoli and staying there a good half-hour, and so on. And while we were having this conversation, my office telephone rang. It had been ringing all day. My secretary came in and said, "The press wants to talk to you." I said, "Now you just tell them that the ambassador has left and you think is on the way to Castel Gondolfo." [The Pope's Palace]

Q: [Laughs]

LUCE: Might as well make this a good trip while we're about it. Well, anyhow, there was great rejoicing over that. Then my officers began to tell me that nobody believed me. They thought that I had deliberately planned this. This is why I say nobody "lucked" very often. [Luck] plays a much larger part than people know. Obviously, you have to be able to avail yourself of a sudden opportunity, but without that opportunity I would never have been able to accomplish that mission. Now having said that, I may say that it didn't much matter because there was surprisingly little publicity about it in the Communist press for the simple reason that there were some thousands--I can't remember, 2,000 to 3,000--[American] troops involved, and that was money in the pockets of the Italians in this otherwise somewhat poor area, so they were delighted to have those people there. The Communists--once they had to, they had to try to prevent it, but it happened too fast for them. You see?

Q: Uh-huh. Yes.

LUCE: And once it happened, it was bread and butter again, so they couldn't make a fuss about it. As it happened, thank God, the unit was never needed, and there was no war and nothing else, so that was all to the good. But diplomatic triumphs are as often a matter of luck, they say, as of skill. Negotiations are a little different. But afterward, the press began to publish their version, and five years after I had left

Italy, Gronchi wrote his memoirs, and his was that a distraught and weeping American ambassador had arrived, having plotted this carefully.

Q: Oh, I see.

LUCE: And offered to him the prize of coming to America, which he said he would consider, going to America, but that he had before that instructed Mr. Segni to accept the invitation. So that was the

Italian version.

Q: Afraid he'd lose face, I suppose.

LUCE: Oh, yes.

Q: Well, you have to take people as you find them, but it must be very annoying.

LUCE: Well, if I allowed myself to be distraught by every piece of bad publicity, I mean, I wouldn't have a peaceful evening. Now, furthermore, most of my bad publicity, as far as Italy went, was in the American papers.

Q: Is that so?

LUCE: Uh-hmm.

Q: Is that so? I didn't know. I myself was overseas at the time you were in Italy, so I didn't see the American press. Why were they vilifying you at that time?

LUCE: Well, my mission got off on the wrong foot. First of all, members of the embassy itself were--this was in the McCarthy [Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin, anti-Communist zealot, accused the Department of State of harboring hundreds of Communists)] days, and most of the embassies were staffed by people of the Rooseveltian heyday, really, when New Dealers sponsored a very, very mild and very necessary reform. I myself began as a New Dealer, as you know. Bunker--Ellsworth Bunker was the ambassador. He had called the entire staff together and told them he would have no more talk about me becoming the ambassador.

Q: Was this because you were Mrs. Luce, Harry Luce's wife?

LUCE: Yes, and because I was a Republican.

Q: Because you were a Republican. It had nothing to do with your being a woman?

LUCE: . . . And the idea of being a playwright. Oh, yes, it did. Previously I was offered Spain, but

I had made a mistake, and this one operated against me. Well, anyway, an interviewer came, and he didn't speak--hardly a word of English, very poor English. I said I wouldn't see him unless he spoke English because my Italian was not, at that point, very good--after I was appointed.

I'd just begun my Italian lessons. I said I knew De Gasperi. Because, see, I told you to begin with I'd known De Gasperi during the war, before the war. Where did I meet him? I think I met him at some kind of a business conference that my husband had for foreign economists and that sort of thing. Anyway, I said to this interviewer, "What kind of hobbies does Mr. De Gasperi have?" And there's no word in Italian for hobby. But I finally said to him, "What does he like to do when he is not working, to amuse himself?" You know. And very gradually got the idea through to him. Then he replied to me that he did not know the English word, but he'd say it in Italian. And

I said, "Oh, we have the same word for it in English." And I repeated, "entomology." And he said, "Si."

Okay, we now found out that Mr. De Gasperi was interested in insects. And I said, "Butterflies," and he just didn't understand "butterflies," and I didn't know the Italian word, but I assumed "Si, si, signora," as being agreeable, and so on. So I reported to my husband that I had made my first interesting discovery in having discussed Italy with a foreigner, with an Italian, that De Gasperi collects butterflies. Harry had the Time people get a frame and box of beautiful butterflies of North America for the entomologist. I told the State Department that I'd already picked the gift I'm taking to the foreign minister, and they asked me what? And I said, "He's an entomologist and he's a butterfly collector." The next thing I'm told is that I have made a serious mistake. He's not an entomologist, he's an etymologist. He collects books on linguistics, or languages. Fine, except someone in the department thought it was so funny they started to tell the press, and it gets in the press that I am so ignorant I don't know the difference between butterflies and books. But it also gets into the Italian press, where one little writer, who said his knees were shot off by the Red Brigade, called Montenelli--I think he's just died--but he was the wittiest and the cleverest of all the Italian writers, political commentators, and he wrote something called *L'histoire des Papillons*; it was *Pappilloni* in Italian. He said that it was appropriate that a well-known American butterfly--that was me--should bring butterflies to the man with the butterfly brain. [Laughs]

It was really all very funny, except it was just one more thing, one more thing. When I landed on the ship, which also sank--fortunately, not with me . . .

Q: No, not with you on it. The Andrea Doria [SS Andrea Doria - Italian liner that later collided with the Swedish liner, Stockholm, and sank].

LUCE: I took the Andrea Doria to be courteous, mind. I was met by a swarm of Communists protesting the electrocution of the Rosenbergs [an American couple convicted of espionage for passing nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union and executed].

That was the way I entered Rome; it was very unfortunate. And my whole staff was very cold and remote.

Q: Is that so?

LUCE: Very. And I may say that when I left, much of the original staff was still there, and they assembled outside the residence. And led by one of the political officers at the embassy, Tony, who was very lucid and a fine boy, they sang *I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face*.

Q: Oh, how touching!

LUCE: It was so nice. Really was wonderful, and they gave me a decoration--wasn't really a real decoration, but it had on it: "Pazienza, Sforzo, Coraggio." ["Patience, Effort, Courage."] So we all did very well, and it was really a great bunch of men and women.

Q: Well, I think after your tremendous success in Italy, any other country would take it as a great compliment to have you sent to them. I think that's about the size of it.

LUCE: Yes, I had a little trouble about that. I'll tell you a story that was never printed; or I don't think it was ever printed. [Winthrop] Aldrich, our ambassador [to the U.K.], for some reason or other was not altogether a success. And somebody--it was toward the end of my stay in Rome--put it in the paper that I was going to replace Aldrich.

Q: Uh-hmm.

LUCE: This piece of news, which was instantly printed in Italy, not only startled me and my husband, it embarrassed us because we had just accepted an invitation from Aldrich for a dinner that he was giving for the Queen. And so, what to do? Nothing to do but go. So we got there and I was sitting in earshot of my husband--it was not difficult to do because he had a very loud voice--and on this occasion I couldn't be more pleased because he was sitting next to Harriet Aldrich, and there was a little silence and Harry's voice was heard to say, "Harriet, there's something I want you to know, and that is that I'm not trying to get your job."

Q: [Laughs] He, as the spouse.

LUCE: And everybody laughed, you know, and it broke the tension. Then after that he said "I assure you that there's nothing in the rumor." But then from the time I came back, things started about where I would go next. But it was too much of a strain on my marriage. Now the only reason that Harry consented--found it easy in Rome--was because he had an office in Rome. Time had an office in Paris and London and Berlin, so he was [only] overnight away from any of his offices, and he enjoyed it.

LUCE: When I went back to Rome this time--that reminds me of something I forgot--oh, my word! God bless me! How could I forget it? The Women's Club--I founded the Women's Club in Rome.

Q: Did you?

LUCE: And when I was there last year, they were having their whatever it was--I guess 20th or 25th anniversary. They wanted me to make a speech and I was leaving the next day, so I wrote a letter for the woman who's the president, and left it on the table at the residence. They were having a big reception for the new cardinals. She never got it, don't ask me why; I don't know. I wrote it. Mrs. Rabb [Mrs. Maxwell Rabb, whose husband was Reagan's ambassador to Italy, 1981 to 1989] called me up--it's now more than a month ago--to ask me to write a letter. From what I have seen of ambassadors in any given capital, the hardest-working ambassador is certain to be the American

ambassador.

Q: Really? Well, we're the most important country so we're involved in more things.

LUCE: Yes. Now in Europe, of course, you'll find--well, in Rome--I was always so amused by some of my colleagues who would play golf and tennis. And most often they'd be off on trips, and they and their wives would pick up chits in other capitals. I never had time to do anything but work, work, work.

Q: All the time. How did you disarm your staff in Rome, the ones who were so cold and hostile? I know you did it and did it very quickly, but how did you set about doing it?

LUCE: Well, I do not wish to be quoted.

Q: All right.

LUCE: You know you can get anything accomplished if you're willing not to get credit for it.

Q: That's true.

LUCE: So the first thing I made up my mind [to] was that anything I got done, somebody else would get the credit.

Q: I see.

LUCE: 'Cause then I would be sure it was done.

Q: And you'd get their loyalty.

LUCE: So the first thing I did was to admit, quite honestly, my own ignorance in respect to a question, and say, "Tony, would you handle it?" And for a while, for the first few months I was there, a lot of time was spent just in those interminable visits--

Q: I can imagine.

LUCE: --which I put an end to.

Q: Did you?

LUCE: Two things I got Foster Dulles to quit: one was the obligatory half-hour visit to the ambassadors, which took your whole morning, and the other was the Fourth of July reception.

Q: Oh, you got rid of that? Good for you! [Laughter]

LUCE: I got rid of that because all those poor fellows, those consuls, everybody, was putting out their money for people who had no business with the embassy at all. It was a hangover from the

19th century, which is understandable; but at any rate, I wrote the letter that got rid of it.

Q: It was for all American citizens, was it, at that time?

LUCE: Yes! [all] Americans. And I said, "Well, let us have a diplomatic Fourth of July within our own residence for our colleagues." That I was for.

Q: Exactly.

LUCE: The last time, I sort of eased out of it. [At] first they used to have the reception on the embassy grounds, and there'd be a couple of thousand people there. Then I insisted that we go somewhere and have a baseball game with hamburgers and wieners, you know.

Q: Oh sure, sure. Really American.

LUCE: Really American. One, because it was a little bit out of town, and that knocked out a lot of the tourists. Well, we got rid of that. But the American ambassador is, in every place that I've ever been, the hardest working one.

Q: How much--I don't mean amounts, but percentages--did you have to pay to do all that entertaining you did, and fixing up the embassy, and all?

LUCE: Sometimes it's useful, if you're an ambassador, to have a husband who's . . . [laughs]

Q: Especially one who's head of Time-Life.

LUCE: Who could well afford to pay for all that.

Q: Yes, but I mean, it must be a tremendous amount, because what the government gives you . . .

LUCE: Yes. Well, it runs up, especially if you do the flowers. Oh, the thing that was most amusing was we had to buy all the table linen. Rome was a very poor embassy, and I remember that we went up to Venice and I bought marvelous tablecloths for 24 people, and tea cloths, and lunchcloths--all of which I gave to Nixon's White House when I returned.

Q: Well, I want to thank you on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and myself for a most interesting interview.

LEWIS D. JUNIOR
Government Expert
Palermo (1953-1956)

Political Officer
Rome (1974-1977)

Lewis D. Junior was born in Hutchison, Kansas in 1925. He served in the U.S. military and then joined the Foreign Service in 1950. Mr. Junior's career included positions in Lagos, Hamburg, Bonn, Addis Ababa, Lubumbashi, and Rotterdam. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 21, 1991.

Q: Which wouldn't be the first time; it certainly won't be the last. Then you went to Palermo. What were you doing there and what was the situation?

JUNIOR: That was a very interesting situation; we could talk about that for a long time.

Q: I'd like to get a feel for the atmosphere there.

JUNIOR: Well, briefly speaking, the department said, "Get your tail up to Palermo right away, they're in desperate need." And you can imagine what happened when I got to Palermo.

Q: "Who are you?"

JUNIOR: Yes, "Why are you here and what are we going to do with you?" They suggested I take some leave, which I did immediately. They were busy in Washington taking young officers out of the Foreign Service officers course. What is that, 101?

Q: Yes.

JUNIOR: And distributing them around the Mediterranean to man the Refugee Relief Act mechanisms. And, of course, these were newly minted officers who had no Foreign Service experience at all, with the exception of one or two who were Foreign Service brats, and I was the only officer there for a long time who had any consular experience. But eventually, other, more experienced consular officers came along, and we geared up for that major visa-mill effort.

Q: Could you explain what the Refugee Relief Act program was all about?

JUNIOR: It was a program that I think became law in 1956, if I'm not mistaken. It's ostensible stated purposes were...

Q: I think it was either '54 or '55.

JUNIOR: Maybe so.

Q: Because I was working on it in Frankfurt in '55. So I think it probably was '54ish.

JUNIOR: It could have been as early as '53.

Q: It could have been, yes.

JUNIOR: At any rate, the stated objective was to take various refugees and displaced persons

and one other category similar to those, to screen them thoroughly, and to send them off, with families, to the United States if they qualified under the grounds that they were in great trouble and economic misery, some political difficulty perhaps, in Europe. Again, conspiratorially. My view is that it was a purely political effort on the part of certain influential congressmen to get many, primarily Italians, but also Greeks and others, into the United States, to suit the demands of American constituents.

Q: Well, to add to this, I did an interview with Maxwell Rabb, who at that time was sort of the secretary or counsel to the president, and Gasperi, the Italian prime minister, according to him, had come to Eisenhower and said, "You've got to do something; I've got a lot of Italians who need help." And so Eisenhower sort of turned to his staff and said, "Do something." And this was the genesis of this. And Emmanuel Celler, I think, was a strong proponent of this. It was this Italian bribe, but it ended up being a refugee..., and of course it was almost impossible for somebody to be a refugee and to be in Italy, by definition.

JUNIOR: Well, we found some very... definitions during this whole period. You might recall, too, that during this period the famous henchman of McCarthy, Scott McCleod, took over in Washington and... the whole security...

Q: He was chief of security and Consular Affairs in those days.

JUNIOR: Yes, and he was beating like crazy on consular officers to be careful about security. That was on the left ear. And on the right ear, they were getting hit on the head by irate congressmen who wanted their constituents' relatives... to the United States. So it was not always an easy kind of life, to send those thousands of people off to the States. Of course, I mentioned the Italians, and you know this better than I, the Act ended up sucking an awful lot of people out of Central and Eastern Europe.

Q: Also from the Netherlands, too, because I think the ranking member on the Republican side of the Justice Committee or something was from Holland, Michigan.

JUNIOR: ...

Q: Well, no, it was a woman. But this is my recollection, that there were a lot of refugees found also in the Netherlands, who can move from one side to another.

JUNIOR: This was a real hodge podge.

Q: I think anybody who wants to look at the use of government instructions should look at the immigration advisory opinions for this period, particularly dealing with Italy -- what constituted a refugee in their own country. Did you feel, in Palermo, the fine hand of the Mafia?

JUNIOR: I'm glad you asked me that. Although we had American investigators assigned under the program from the United States, investigators many of whom had police background experience, somehow or the other I became the liaison officer between the consulate and the Sicilian police authority when it came to Mafia matters. So I knew quite a bit about what was

going on, and quite a bit about what the police saw as being the role of the Mafia. It was there, and it was extremely strong. It was pervasive. And I'll tell you a story in a moment about how it could reach into the heart of the consulate... At the same time, I was in fairly close contact with the narcotics guy in Rome, a fellow by the name of Charlie Siracusa, I think it was, who was just absolutely overwhelmed. He could not possibly deal with all the narcotics problems in Italy as a whole, or even in Sicily, so I did a little bit of work on the narcotics problem.

The story. We began to pick up shreds of hints and rumors to the effect that people who were coming in to get their immigrant visas under the Refugee Relief Program had to pay in order for the letters of invitation to arrive in the Italian mail. We tried in every conceivable way to find out what was going on and break it up, with the cooperation of the police, who perhaps themselves were corrupted, with the cooperation of the postal authority, who probably were corrupted. We had plants inside the postal offices, the branch offices, we had people watching a post box where occasionally you could put mail in. All to no avail. And we continued to hear that people had to pay very substantial amounts of money on the grounds that the consulate will not send you your letter until you pay up. It made us look like co-conspirators, as though we were beneficiaries of this. In the end, the only way we could break that up was to send every letter, in effect, Registered Return, Receipt Requested, so that you had a paper trail behind it. That stopped that. But what other scams they were running, I don't know.

Q: After working with this program, did you find that you and the officers dealing with it developed a certain skepticism about the administration of the law? I found this was true in Frankfurt, in that here we had a law which said this was for refugees, and yet much of the time, although we were dealing mainly with refugees, the political pressure was so great on us that we knew we had to issue, and we had to issue in a hurry, and lots of the safeguards of the law were overridden towards the end because of this. Did this sort of develop as part of a learning experience on your part?

JUNIOR: Absolutely. It was the first emersion in cynicism. Because, as you said, the advisory opinions and other messages coming out of Washington made it very clear: "Issue the goddamned visa." Even though the fellow you were dealing with was a poor Italian peasant who'd never been out of his home, and he had his family and five kids, and he was a refugee from nothing except poverty. You know, that was not even questioned anymore. That was an okay case, and if there was no adverse security, you gave him his visa and sent him on his way. You know, it was a scam, I guess a scam required for domestic political purposes.

Q: I know, it prepared me very much for our later dealings in Vietnam. What was the consulate general doing besides this? Did you get any work dealing with sort of the regular running of the consulate general?

JUNIOR: No, I was isolated, stamping out visas; I never had a chance to do any economic or political work. That was not necessarily the case with all of the officers, because, under whatever criteria, the management of the consulate reached into the consular section from time to time and pulled people out to do specific non-consular jobs, some political, some economic, most of whom were very bright and very competent, and many of whom later went on to become ambassadors. We had a very bright crew of people there, new FSOs. Sam Gammon, Bill Harrop,

... Hill.

Q: What was your impression of the Italian authorities that you had to deal with?

JUNIOR: I dealt with municipalities, mayors and prefects and police authorities. They were charming, and I wouldn't trust them as far as I could throw them. Because while many of them may have been honest, you never knew when the Mafia had got their hooks into them. And I think it was perfectly valid to assume that they were all Mafia. Which didn't mean you couldn't cooperate with them; you had to in some circumstances.

For instance, at one point, when the politicians in Washington were screaming that we weren't moving enough people, and when we said, "It's not our problem, the Sicilian government and the Italian government in Sicily is not turning out their passports fast enough," Washington said, "Go talk to the authorities." So I got a car and made a trip around the island of Sicily, stopping to talk to the ten major..., to ask them to kindly speed up the issuance of their passports to suit our purposes. It was entirely inappropriate. We didn't care; our security people were very resentful of the fact that they had to work with the Italian police at all. They felt that, by God, Scott McCleod had sent them to do a job, get out of our way.

Q: Well then, in 1974, you had what, a direct transfer to Rome?

JUNIOR: Yes.

Q: Where you served from '74 to '77. What were you doing in Rome?

JUNIOR: I had a number choices, the others of which I don't recall, but I went to Rome because I felt it was good for my family; and it was indeed good. But I didn't delude myself that being a "deputy" in the political section was much of job; and, surely, it was not. Then later I went over to a subsection of the political section to work on political/military affairs, which is where I spent most of my time in Rome.

I was sort of the working-level liaison with the Foreign Office, the Farnesina, when it came to certain functional problems, such as the persistent efforts in the U.N. to debar Israeli participation from this, that, and the other thing. My geographic beat was the Far East, the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Europe, and when problems came up that were bearing on those particular geographic regions and we had to communicate at the working level with the Foreign Office, I was the legman. It wasn't very exciting.

Q: The ambassador for most of that time was John Volpe, wasn't he?

JUNIOR: Yes.

Q: A political appointee out of Massachusetts, mainly a contractor, wasn't he?

JUNIOR: A major constructor, yes, buildings and highways.

Q: In fact, much of Washington in the era was built by Volpe, wasn't it?

JUNIOR: Volpe, and I think he had one or more brothers that were associated with him.

Q: How did you feel about his being ambassador, just from your vantage point?

JUNIOR: Ambassador Volpe and Mrs. Volpe were very nice people. I feel that under different circumstances we could have been good friends. That is, my wife and I, with them. But he illustrates many of the traps and pitfalls and fallacies that go along with putting a political ambassador in a situation like that, the fundamental having two aspects: one, his background did not prepare him for diplomacy in any way; and two, his Italian ethnic background deluded him into the idea that he would naturally fit in well with the Italians and that they were as one. Not that I'm questioning his loyalty, but he didn't perceive that simply being able to speak your brutal form of primitive Italian was not the key to all Italian offices. So he was gauche, lacked the sophistication that senior Italian political and diplomatic leaders had, and was, in fact, an object of laughter on their part, of derision. So it was very, very hard to stay quiet and be loyal and be highly supportive when this fellow was at the head.

The whole town was shaken on one particular occasion. This is just illustrative. Apparently the very distinguished, aesthetic Aldo Moro was greeted by Ambassador Volpe, who did the American bit of grabbing the arm and bending it up behind the guy's back, and slapping him on the shoulder, and making a few loud comments. Everybody present who saw this was just absolutely shocked. You didn't treat Aldo Moro that way. It just showed Volpe's total lack of perceptivity of the culture he was dealing with.

Q: Well, did you have the feeling, I'm talking about you within the political section, that you were doing a lot of sort of explaining and, whatever the message was, trying to support your ambassador, but at the same time trying to smooth ruffled feathers and this type of thing?

JUNIOR: To a certain extent. But, of course, as a mid-ranking FSO, I didn't have access to the people he was busy insulting. There was not much I could do, except for the ripple effect in dealing with it further down in the bureaucracy.

Q: What was your impression of the Italian Foreign Office? This was your beat, more or less, dealing with these things. What was your evaluation of it, both the people within it and as an organization?

JUNIOR: That will be a complex answer. But let me go back to one other point about dealing with the Italians with Volpe as the ambassador. In the end, it didn't matter a hell of a lot, because this was the era of Henry Kissinger. Anything of any import whatsoever between the U.S. and the government of Italy was handled in Washington, and the embassy was very largely cut out of the loop.

And I remember on one occasion a deputy assistant secretary from EUR came to Embassy Rome and said he'd be happy to meet with staff. So the entire political section met with him, and we said, as politely as we could, that it was a constant embarrassment to go to the Foreign Ministry

and learn from them what the U.S. was saying to Italy in Washington, where we had no clue about it. Could we not at least get information copies of reporting telegrams and so forth? And the deputy assistant secretary drew himself up and looked haughtily at us and said, "We can't share that information with every Tom, Dick, and Harry." There were two other officers, one of whom is still in the Foreign Service, and so one is Tom, and one is Dick, and I'm Harry, because we will never forget being told that it was none of our business.

Q: But probably, as a matter of fact, that information wasn't shared with the deputy assistant secretary.

JUNIOR: It may well be. It may well be.

Q: In fact, in one of his books, Kissinger mentions going to Italy on one of his trips was more ceremonial than anything else, because there was no real person to talk to.

JUNIOR: Yes.

Q: Which brings us back to your impression of the Foreign Ministry.

JUNIOR: The Foreign Ministry was staffed with some very bright and capable Italians, some really brilliant people. A great many of them are from great Italian families; they are aristocrats. Others are not, but don't lack sophistication. But they frequently don't like to work very hard. They worked quite late at night, because they took a long lunch break.

But they also, at the level I was dealing with and even higher, were reluctant to advocate within their own government any kind of a leadership role for Italy inside the EEC or apart from it. And as a consequence, you knew that when you went in to request an Italian vote on a U.N. issue, or any other multilateral issue, that your counterpart in the Farnesina was going to listen politely, perhaps take notes, perhaps not, but you knew that at the end he was going to say, "We've taken note of your government's position, and we will be consulting with our partners in the EEC, thank you very much, good night."

I guess I'm not entitled to comment on whether or not that was a good thing or a bad thing, but certainly the Italians did not distinguish themselves by taking principled, leadership positions.

And when challenged on this, they would frequently say, "But we're just a small country, and we've been very poor, and we're just recovering from the war," and so forth. And then you said, well if you look at the Belgians, who at that time were powerful beyond all proportion to the population in national wealth and so forth, the Italians didn't have a leg to stand on. But they just didn't feel that they wanted to lead. I suppose that could be challenged by anybody else who knows the scene, but I think most observers would agree with that.

Q: No, I understand that and support it. Did you have any feeling, from the outside, about the constant change in government? You were only there about three years, so you probably only saw four or five, as they called them, crises. Which aren't crises, they're just...

JUNIOR: Musical chairs.

Q: Musical chairs. Did you feel, at your level, whatever you were dealing with, this made any difference at all?

JUNIOR: If I work hard at being fair in these judgments about the Italians and the Italian government, I would have to say that that rapid rotation in Cabinet-level positions was probably, at least in part, the reason that they didn't feel that they could take a leadership position. Because if they did, the next day they might come to the office and discover that they had a new foreign secretary who didn't agree with that leadership position. So it was safer not to stick your neck out.

WELLS STABLER
Political Officer
Rome (1953-1957)

Country Director
Washington, DC (1966-1969)

Deputy Chief of Mission
Rome (1969-1973)

Ambassador Wells Stabler was born in Massachusetts on October 31, 1919. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1941 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. His career included positions in Israel, Jordan, Italy, France, and Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Spain. Ambassador Stabler was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1991.

STABLER: I had been in Near Eastern Affairs for quite a few years -- 1944-53. Sometime in the fall of 1952, I was called in by the then Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, Burton Berry, who asked if I would be interested in an assignment to Rome -- sort of a long service and good conduct award for the years that I had been in the Middle East. I think they offered it to me with the idea that I would be in Rome for three to four years and then return to the Near East. But that was never stated. So this came right out of the blue. I was surprised and very pleased since I had visited Rome on the way back from the Near East for the first time and thought that it would be a wonderful place to be.

So, obviously, I accepted with enthusiasm and set off in February, 1953 via Madrid and then by train to Rome. At the time I arrived, Ellsworth Bunker was the Ambassador. He had been there only for about a year. He had come, if I recall correctly, from Argentina. But then there was a change of Administration. Eisenhower became President and Dulles, Secretary of State. One of the early appointments of General Eisenhower was Clare Boothe Luce as Ambassador to Italy. So very shortly after I arrived in the middle of February -- I was with Bunker only for possibly a month -- Mrs. Luce appeared on the scene early in the Spring of 1953.

When I first arrived we had in the Political Section the Political Counselor, Francis Williamson, who was not actually a Foreign Service Officer. He had served in the Department, I believe in German Affairs, and had then been sent to Rome as a Foreign Service Reserve Officer. I was very fond of Francis. He had some of the drawbacks of someone who has never served abroad in such a capacity and who did not speak Italian. I think he had some problems adjusting to the requirements of the job. Most political counselors have come up through the ranks and have served in a variety of capacities -- consular, economic, administrative, junior political officers, etc -- developing the background of how to run a section; what a political section should do; and the role of the political counselor in establishing important contacts with the political leaders -- shakers and movers in the country -- and also, obviously, with their colleagues in foreign embassies. I think Francis was fine when it came to establishing contacts with foreign embassies, but he didn't speak Italian and was not terribly comfortable in trying to establish contact with some of the Italian politicians. Obviously his inability to speak the language was a considerable drawback to him.

The Italian political leaders that I knew, as well as the rank and file, seldom spoke English. To be effective in the Italian scene you simply had to know the language because, as we all know, you lose a lot in translation. It wasn't Francis' fault. He was given this assignment and was happy to have it. But I think he was not really up to the task and I think this took a toll on him physically. He eventually became quite ill and was transferred. Then we had a career political counselor, Niles Bond.

When I first arrived in the Political Section, Francis really hadn't thought out what it was I should be doing. That makes it very awkward. I was Second Secretary and way down the line, but I did speak some Italian before I came and in a relatively short time became relatively fluent in it. I did some things for the Ambassador, but there was no structure so far as to the role I was going to fill.

In due course -- it is one of these things that happens -- I began cutting out a niche that I thought would be interesting and useful and started covering in the internal political section some of the political parties -- center parties, right wing party, etc. We didn't have anything to do with the MSI, (Movimento Socialisti Italiano), which was the Fascist Party. I also worked with some of the Christian Democrats. So in time I sort of really developed these contacts on my own and reported on these parties.

As time went on I became more and more involved in the internal political side of things. We had one man who did the Communists. In those days the Socialists were considered to be an ally of the Communists. We referred to the extreme left as Social/Communists; they were lumped together. He covered them, although we had no contacts with the Communist Party nor the Socialist Party at that time.

At that particular time, a time not so terribly long after the war and where the Communists had gained a considerable amount of ground, we, the United States, had put in a great deal of effort and money into trying to build up the democratic element in Italy, which meant the Christian Democratic Party and the three small so-called lay parties -- the Liberals, the Republicans and

the Social Democrats. The Christian Democratic Party was the largest party in Italy but constantly under attack by this increasing success of the Communists. The Socialists was relatively small, perhaps 13 or 14 percent of the vote, and the Communists were beginning to go on up into the high 20s and eventually got into the low 30s.

The attack on the democratic element in Italy was a fairly great and supported, of course, by the Soviet Union and by the Eastern European Soviet Bloc. We expended great effort, for example, in bolstering the democratic trade unions, so-called CISLs, in an effort to block the left trade unions, CGIL, in the progress they were making in taking over the various labor unions in the factories. That meant, in many instances, financial support done partly through the AFL-CIO and sometimes more directly through CIA. This is now history and a lot has been written about what had been done at that time. Tom Lane, who was the Labor Attaché at that time, was very instrumental in carrying out this program -- one in which Mrs. Luce took a very great interest. One of the methods of dealing with this problem was through offshore procurement which was a very large item at that time. It was made a condition for certain factories that in order to get offshore procurement contracts their union elections had to vote in the democratic trade unions.

Offshore procurement had been set up by NATO. Components of required military hardware was manufactured in some NATO countries. So we would put out contracts for the manufacturing of certain components from factories in Italy. But in order to obtain that contract, there had to be clear indications that the trade union situation in that factory was a democratic one. If it was heavily CGIL, then no offshore procurement. Those offshore procurement contracts produced sizeable sums of money for Italian industry, which was recovering of course from the blows of the war. There was a lot of hard ball played over this as it was felt that this was a major element in the campaign to try to block the Communists. It was fairly successful. There was no question that these industrialists clearly saw dollar signs which was important and they did what they could to try to build up the labor in their plants coming from the democratic side.

We did not see the Communists as benign because this was the time of a full blown cold war where it was generally believed that the support that Communists/Socialists had came directly from the Soviet Union or one of the Eastern European countries. So this was really another front, basically, in the Cold War with the Soviet Union at that time. It wasn't until later...one of the first indications of a break in the picture came early in 1956 with the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian uprising. The Italian Communists took a position against what the Soviet Union had done. This put the Italian Communists for the first time in a dilemma: whether to simply blindly support everything the Soviets did, or to indicate that they had a somewhat more independent view about some of these things. Since the Soviet action in Hungary was immensely unpopular, it wasn't, perhaps, too difficult for the Communists in Italy to indicate that they too disapproved of it.

Of course as we recall, one of the great difficulties at that time was that the universal disapproval of what the Soviets had done in Hungary was somewhat tempered by the considerable disapproval of what the British and the French did in Suez.

In any event, Mrs. Luce was very strongly anti-communist as indeed was Dulles, and so any indication of an Embassy contact with a Communist would have flied directly in the face of the

policy we were carrying out at that time. So I think that everybody agreed that that probably would have been a mistake to start any contacts with the Communists at that time. They developed later, probably in the early 1960s. Even after 1956, although they made a political gesture to disapprove of what the Soviets had done in Hungary, the Communists rapidly returned pretty much to being what they had always been and continued to grow in strength amongst the electorate particularly when it came to regional, local elections, where they always did well. That came from the fact that in a predominately Catholic country, the Vatican was extremely active in opposing the Communists at election time -- there would be homilies from the pulpit urging the faithful not to vote for the Communists. This unquestioningly had some effect in blocking the continuing rise of the Communist Party in last elections.

Let me speak a little more to my work. The Christian Democratic Party had formed the government and held an absolute majority in the Lower House. De Gasperi was the Prime Minister and the CD, of course, held all the portfolios. The Ambassador and the DCM has the contacts, obviously, with the ministerial level. I tried to establish contacts at my level with some of the deputies who were important in parliament to really try to find out what they were thinking and how they viewed the development of the political situation. Let me say that at that time there was a fairly active program in support of the Christian Democrats. So the principal CD players were people who were known to the more senior people at the Embassy.

But there were the other parties that had a voice such as the lay parties and at that time the Monarchist party also had some strength. So that was a party that I was also in touch with, with absolutely no expectation of being part of the government but it did have a certain number of deputies in parliament and one wanted to encourage them to support the democratic process. I had vague contacts with the Fascist part of the MSI; they also sat in parliament, they were a legal party. We felt that it was a mistake to cut them off totally although we didn't approve of their politics. But by at least having contacts, one was able then to bring forth directly to them the American point of view on things. It was one of those things that was really neither particularly a plus nor particularly a minus. The contacts were very limited.

When it became clear that the Monarchists were not going to go anywhere, they became less important and the contacts with the lay parties with Christian Democratic deputies became the principal focus of my activity.

I had some rather interesting developments. One of them related to the President of Italy, then Giovanni Gronchi. He was elected to the Presidency I would guess in 1956. He was regarded as a left wing Christian Democrat and seen by many as being somewhat perilously close to the left and perhaps not overly friendly to the United States. But in the complex picture of Italian politics, there was a constant sort of balancing of forces, right wing one time, center, left wing. It was something that was necessary for the internal workings and harmony of the Christian Democratic Party. Gronchi who had been President of the Chamber at one time and was clearly of the level that made him eligible to becoming President. He was eventually elected and the Embassy, Mrs. Luce on down, was not very happy about it.

In any event, it was decided to ask him to come to the United States on a state visit in the hopes that by paying some attention to him we would have him as a player in terms of how we felt

political development should go in Italy. I had received a letter from a colleague in our Embassy in Caracas some time before all this, mentioning that a good friend of his, the Papal Nuncio in Caracas, Monsignor Mariani, was returning to be in the Secretariat of State in the Vatican; he suggested that we might find it useful to establish some contact with him, which I did. We became quite friendly. I saw him from time to time; he was in the Secretariat of State and seemed to be remarkably well connected, although he was not a particularly senior member of the Secretariat of State. At one stage, before the visit of President Cronchi to the United States, Mariani got in touch with me and asked if it would be of interest to me to meet with the President of Italy. Well, this was rather a strange situation because I was still a Second Secretary and was not Political Counselor. But it seemed to me that there was some indications that the President of Italy wanted to meet with someone at the Embassy but did not want to meet with any of the senior people because that would attract attention. So I decided that even though it was rather unusual -- Mrs. Luce was not in the country -- I think she had gone home -- and Jack Jernegan was then the Chargé-without complicating things too much I would just go ahead and do it. I guess it had clearly by this time been conveyed to me that President Cronchi would like to have it work out this way.

I met Monsignor Mariani and we were taken to the Quirinale, the President's Residence, but to a private part of it where the President lived but which was not in the public eye. I had about two hours with the President. It was rather unusual. There was the President, myself and then this Monsignor Mariani. In this conversation, I must say Cronchi opened himself rather fully as to his political views and was very much aware of the American suspicions and doubts. He was really quite persuasive in what he had to say. When this was over I went back to the Embassy and went to see Jack Jernegan who at that point was at home in bed with the flu. So I went by to see him and explained to him what had happened and how it had happened and that I felt I really had no choice in the circumstances but just to go ahead and do it. I gave him my report and this went in to Washington and formed one of the principal papers for the Cronchi visit. I will say in regard for my bosses in Rome that they were very understanding of what had happened; they could have been really quite annoyed that a second secretary had been received by the President. But it was a chance I took -- a chance, I think, that paid off in terms of getting the first indication of Cronchi's thinking as he described it.

The Ambassador would have obviously attracted attention if she had gone and then it would have been much more formal. The Minister, Jack Jernegan, didn't speak Italian. The Political Counselor at that time may have been Niles Bond, but I am not sure. It was known in Italian political circles that I spoke Italian and therefore the decision apparently was made -- you know the way these things are done. It is quite possible that Mariani told Cronchi that I wanted to see him and then told me that Cronchi wanted to see me. But however it came out, it worked out, I think, pretty well. I think it did go a long way to reassure people. It ultimately turned out to be the case too, that Cronchi, during the years that he was President, never really did anything which was inimical to the interests of the United States.

During the years that I was in Rome, my role obviously as time went on became increasingly active in the political field. I was never number two in the section, but I ran the internal political unit and became rather closely identified with the development of political thinking in Italy; that is to say the reporting on political thinking in Italy. I did a lot of work with Mrs. Luce. When she

had political leaders to lunch I very often was invited because I knew them and I could help in interpreting. I was included in most of the big dues that concerned the political side of life.

I found it all very interesting because Italian politics, although at time frustrating, have a sort of dynamism of their own. One was very much aware of the fact that although they were many changes of government, the background music was really basically always the same. They changed the players, musical chairs, but as Italians would often point out, "We may have changed our government many, many times, but frequently the Foreign Minister is the same. We probably have had fewer Foreign Ministers than you have had Secretaries of State over a comparable period of time." There were some players that just shuffled around.

The present Prime Minister of Italy, Julio Andreotti, became a friend of mine in the 1953-57 period and remained a friend. Of course, when I went back as Minister in the Embassy in 1969, I already knew a lot of people who held high level positions. So the many changes in what the Italians call the "political games" really concerned the political class. The people of Italy didn't really care much about all this. They paid very little attention to it. Life went on, the economy boomed and the standard of living greatly increased. As long as these political games didn't interfere with that, fine.

The difficulty, of course, was that in the democratic setup. The Christian Democrats have the biggest block of votes; they lost their absolute majority which means they have to depend on the three smaller parties to provide the majority and since the smaller parties are really awfully small, the majority was pretty thin. Our policy was to support what was called the Quadrapartito -- the four party arrangement ...Christian Democrats, Liberal, Republicans and the Social Democrats. We helped those four parties considerably in an effort to maintain stability in Italy because the Quadrapartito could not draw from the right -- the monarchists and MSI -- nor from the left -- because the Socialist Party had not yet begun developing a more independent view and were pretty much in the pocket of the Communists.

At the time I am speaking of there really was a major threat from the Social/Communists who occupied a pretty large space in the political spectrum. The Soviets were spending much treasure in trying to subvert Italy and bring them totally into their orbit. That would have been an additional plum for them to have a Communist majority and government in Italy.

We had a similar situation in France though that was somewhat less of a threat because the Communists never had quite as large a share of the electorate as they were in Italy, as I recall. When I was in Paris in 1960, De Gaulle had just taken over and so the situation shifted rather radically.

It is true that a lot of these "political games" that the Italian played were frustrating, annoying, and it seemed that a lot of it was counterproductive. By the same token, that was what was going on and therefore we had to stay on top of it and see to it that Washington was kept fully informed as to what actually was happening in the political body.

The principal theme we were focusing on was to make sure that the democratic parties remained in control and that the Communists were blocked. We tried to persuade the Italian politicians not

to be quite so fickle when it came to all the political crises -- many of which were totally unnecessary. We were afraid that the electorate would tire of the endless games and look to the Communists to form a more stable and efficient government situation. One thing that was quite true and was constantly a concern to us was that those major cities, and even some of the small ones, where Social/Communists had the majority, were usually very well run. Florence was one. The mayor of Naples was a monarchist and the head of the MSI. But it is true that the cities where the Communists and Socials together had a majority, were pretty well run.

One other amusing thing, and again somewhat anecdotal. Mrs. Luce left at the end of 1956 and James David Zellerbach arrived as the new Ambassador. He had previously been in Rome immediately after the war as the AID Director. Around January of 1957 we had an announced visit of the then Vice President and Mrs. Nixon. The drill was that the Political Counselor was to go to the place that Nixon was then visiting and accompany him on the flight to the place he was going to visit. The Political Counselor at that time had apparently experienced Nixon in Korea and absolutely refused to go to Tripoli to meet Nixon. Although I was number three in the section, the number two dealt with foreign matters rather than the domestic area. So I was then instructed to proceed to Tripoli to pick up the Vice President and come back with him. I found it an interesting thing to do.

We flew back and I took Nixon around in Rome, with the Ambassador, of course, but I went as an interpreter, to meet various functionaries of the Italian government including at that time the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Giovanni Leoni. That night there was a big dinner at the Ambassador's Residence. Before dinner a picture was taken of me with Nixon and Leoni. I sort of put that picture away. But shortly after I came back to Rome as Minister in 1969, Leoni became President of Italy and Nixon President of the United States. My picture then came out and was displayed. But you can well imagine that once Nixon was forced to resign for reasons we know, and subsequent to that Leoni was forced to resign for corruption, the picture was put away again.

Flying from Tripoli to Rome, it was really pretty much towards the end of the flight that the staff decided Nixon might be briefed on what was going on. So I was called back into the cabin where I spent 15 or 20 minutes bringing him up to date on what was going on, who was in the government, what the general circumstances were. There was interest and, as I recall, good questions. He also, of course, had a briefing book, etc. There wasn't any great length of time spent on it. But I don't think there was any lack of interest. It was simply that perhaps he was sufficiently knowledgeable about what was going on not to require a lot of updating.

Then while Nixon was in Rome, he went and made these various calls -- he was good at it. He certainly showed an interest in what he was being told. As you well know there are times you have visitors who appear to be totally disinterested in what is going on and the people they are seeing and they behave like they really didn't want to see them anyway. That was not the case with Nixon at all. The Ambassador and Mrs. Zellerbach had a big dinner with all the big luminaries of the Italian government present. That is the sort of thing the Italians liked a great deal. They were always seeking high level contacts with the United States. I have had a lot to do with Italian affairs over a good many years in one form or another from 1953 -- I had Italian affairs twice in the Department and went back as Minister. So during that period every time there

was a conference involving the British, French and Germans, for example, the Italians would be very upset if they hadn't been included. They spent a great deal of time and effort in trying to persuade us that they should be included, and very often because of that they were. They were playing catch-up all the time and this was difficult for them. So high level visits were very important to them to demonstrate to themselves and to the world that they were major players in the political chess game.

It is probably fairly accurate to say, as some have, that it is hard in Italy to talk to any political leader and get a definitive decision. That is because you might deal with a Prime Minister, a Foreign Minister -- the President played more of a ceremonial role -- and everything would be fine with that individual. But it is true that he would not be able to say, "Yes, we will do it this way." He might not be Prime Minister tomorrow. You did have that feeling that you were sometimes talking into a vacuum. This is, I think, true even to this very day. Although people like Andreotti have been around so long and know where all the levers of power are, they can not always pull those levers. But there are lots of things that the Italians have done, however, one shouldn't underestimate their contributions. For example, in the late 1980s, when it came time to decide what to do with that part of the 16th Air Force that was stationed in Torrejon, Spain, the Italians agreed to base the Air Force facilities from Torrejon. This had been a pattern. The Italians earlier had agreed to house our cruise missiles. They undertook to take on quite a few things of this sort -- including sending a force to Beirut when we needed a multi-international force there in the early 1980s. A lot of things.

The Southern European Task Force up in Verona where they had the nuclear artillery is another thing. In spite of the Communist influence and strong opposition to any of these things, the Italian government was able to pull itself together, was able to accede to our request and we have many facilities in Italy. During the time I was Minister there and Chargé (1969-73), one always had the greatest cooperation from the Italians. So in spite of their shortcomings, and their unstable governmental system, they were able to produce decisions that were difficult for them. But, generally speaking, the development of relations such as we have with the Prime Minister of Britain, the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany, was not the sort of relationship you really could develop with one of the Italian leaders. He just simply didn't have the authority. Part of it, of course, comes from the fact that in England you have a two party system, in Germany you have a two party system with one coalition partner but a majority which is pretty well defined, and that has pretty much been the case in French, not always but under the Fifth Republic. But you didn't have that situation in Italy with all these parties that would form a government. They were all equal parties even though they don't have an equal number of votes.

Immediately after the war and lasting pretty much into the 1960s there was an opening to the left which was a much discussed policy because to some people opening to the left meant moving the center towards the left and to others it meant bringing what elements you could from the left towards the center. It was much after this period we speak of where this began to develop.

Let me briefly comment on Ambassador Luce. When she was assigned as Ambassador to Italy, the Italians were anything but pleased because it was pretty much a man's world in Italy and there are very few women to play a role in the body politic. There was the famous cartoon in one of the leading Italian magazines showing the facade of the American Embassy in Rome with the

American flag hanging out in front etched in lace. There was the general attitude that they had been downgraded because we were sending a woman.

It took her a little time, not terribly long, to persuade the Italians that she was an extremely capable and tough woman. She ran really a very good embassy. She had no experience in this type of thing, but she had been involved in so many things that she knew how to run things.

As a DCM she had Elbridge Durbrow, who actually had a Soviet background and with whom I think she got along with pretty well. She had a clear view of what it was she wanted to do in Italy, and that was to block the Communists. The principal theme that ran throughout the Embassy -- block the Communists and support the democratic center; keep Italy fully in the democratic camp and make it a useful, viable part of NATO. Everything she did, like the speeches that she gave, were aimed at these central points.

She obviously was controversial at times because she had a very strong personality and wasn't at all reluctant to express her point of view. There were times that she was criticized for making speeches which were regarded as pretty close to the line of interfering in domestic, internal matters. But one had to remember also that in this period of time the Americans were the principal factor in Italy. The British, French and others played relatively minor roles compared to the American role, where the Marshall Plan, offshore procurement and all the things I have talked about, were playing a major role in the economic recovery of Italy. So the American Ambassador had a very prominent position and she, being a prominent person, played a very important role in Italy.

Even though she had a very tough side to her, there was also a rather gentle side to her -- a rather thoughtful side to her. She had, as we all know, personal tragedies. I think therefore that although the exterior seemed cold, the interior at times really could be very warm. I cite this one example of that. My wife and I were married in August, 1953 and we started our married life in Rome. Shortly after we were married in October, my mother died here in Washington. I simply didn't have at that time, having just gotten married and everything or the money to even think of coming home. Mrs. Luce suspected this might be the case (it was known through the telegram that came in that my mother had died) and I had a call from her secretary, Dorothy Farmer, who had been her secretary before she came to Rome -- she was very close to Mrs. Luce. She called me and said that the Ambassador was sorry to hear about my mother's death; that she wanted my wife and me to go home; that she had bought airline tickets for us and that whenever we could pay her back, fine, but not to worry about it. That was really an extremely warm gesture and after all I had been with her only since February. However, because of the role I was playing in the internal politics at that time because I spoke fluent Italian, I was thrown with her more than I would have otherwise. But I don't think it made any difference because she would have done that for anyone else in the Embassy. That was a very human, thoughtful thing for which I was always very grateful to her.

There were other instances. At one point I got fed up with the Foreign Service and decided that I would get out and be done with it. What prompted me I consider resignation was that I had, going back to the time I was here in the Department and in Middle East affairs, really occupied positions considerably above my rank and had worked closely with the Secretary of State and

had done things that were already rather senior, but, for whatever reasons, one never seemed to get promoted at all. I was occupying a position in Rome which was really above the grade I was and I was just getting fed up with it. I had been passed over once again, and decided there was no point in carrying it on if this is the way it is going to be. So in a moment of frustration I did this. But it was one of feeling frustration and dissatisfaction over what I felt was rather curious disregard of what I thought I had done

Mrs. Luce was out of the country at the time. I decided that I would just resign. I wrote a resignation telegram which had to be approved by the DCM. She was in London at the time and called in to see what was going on and was told what I had done. She sent word that she would very much appreciate it if I did not send the telegram until she came back. She would like to talk to me. On her return I was asked to come out to the Ambassador's Residence. All the senior staff had gathered there to meet with her. She kept them all waiting and called me in and we had a long talk. She persuaded me not to do this. I think it was Ambassador Luce's interest in the matter that prompted me to give it another try. And then, of course, the next time I was promoted.

I did not get involved in the Trieste treaty at all. Mrs Luce did that pretty much with the Political Counselor and the number two in the Political Section at that time, a fellow by the name of Lansing Collins, who handled foreign affairs matters and was involved with the Foreign Office. Also, there was another officer, Jim O'Sullivan, who also did some of these things. I think she worked with him on that as well. But I was not involved in that at all.

I will say that she was really a very good Ambassador, and when she left, she gave a huge dinner party at the villa and had the Prime Minister and all the people there. My wife and I were there. She was just heaped with honors and farewell presents -- she was given the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of Italy, and then they produced a perfectly beautiful antique large crucifix which had been put into a beautiful box for presentation. They were really very sorry to see her go because they knew that they had a friend. They knew there was somebody there who spoke directly to Eisenhower and to Dulles and had influence.

The story about lead rather than arsenic poisoning that took place is true. That was a true story and one that was actually fairly simple to explain once it was realized what had happened. The villa was an old house and the floors were not always absolutely immobile and before she came everything had been painted. In those days I guess they used paint with lead in it. Her bedroom was directly beneath the room that was used for ironing by the staff. As the floors were not rigid when people walked on them there was a certain amount of motion. Over a period of time bits of paint flicked off the ceiling and landed in her morning coffee and things that she ate. She would always have breakfast in bed and there were times when one was summoned to see her at the villa and you would go up to her bedroom and conduct business with her there. Over a long period of time, she was hit by this. A lot of people tried to say that it wasn't true, that this was a sort of subterfuge, that she had been poisoned by the Soviets and the Communists, etc., which was all totally untrue. In fact, her social assistant, Letitia Baldrige, who later became the social secretary for Mrs. Kennedy, also had a minor case of this poisoning. But she lived in the villa too and it was the same sort of thing.

To go back a bit at the end of 1956, possibly early 1957, I was instrumental in bringing about change from a Social/Communist government to a democratic government in the independent Republic of San Marino which was in our jurisdiction, although the Consul General in Florence was formally accredited as Consul General in San Marino. But I had been up to San Marino a number of times and found it amusing and got to know the people up there. At one stage in 1957 -- it was during the post-Hungarian Revolution of October 1956 -- there were indications that one or two of the Socialists deputies supporting the Communist majority in San Marino were having some doubts about communist policy and their association. I was asked by my friend, Frederika Begee, who was the head of the Christian Democratic Party in San Marino, to come up there and perhaps meet with a couple of these doubting Thomases and see if I could persuade them to leave the Social/Communist majority.

I went up there and went into a smoke filled backroom with a couple of these people and talked to them at some length. The two did leave the Social/Communist majority and for the first time in post-war Europe, a Social/Communist majority was thrown out in a democratic process. And for the first time since the war the Christian Democratic government supported by a couple of these deputies got a majority and became the government of San Marino. In 1959, Begee held the position of Foreign Minister in San Marino and came over to this country. One of the reasons was that under San Marino law, San Marino citizens who became American citizens could vote in San Marino elections. He would come over to see San Marino communities, especially in Sandusky, Ohio.

I was told Begee could have three minutes with the President and that I would be drawn and quartered if we went over that time. So I took Begee over myself to the White House again to serve as interpreter. We were taken into the President's office. I had been told that he was extremely busy. I looked at his schedule and there wasn't a thing on it except a golf game. He became quite fascinated in the conversation and we were there for 15 or 20 minutes.

From Paris I went to Senior Seminar and by that time you were called Country Director -- they changed the titles. I think I got FSO-1 when I was doing that. It is quite true I had been Italian officer before, but that I didn't mind because it was an interesting area of Europe and I ended up as Minister in Rome.

STABLER: In 1966, I was asked if I would be interested in being Country Director for Italy, Austria, and Switzerland. I felt that was fine because I wanted to remain in Western Europe. So even though I had done somewhat the same thing before, I didn't have the same feeling that I had had previously about having to go back to Near Eastern Affairs. It was an active period because during that time, from the fall of 1966 to the summer of 1969, when I went back to Rome as Minister. We were taking more seriously in Italy the question of enlarging the base of democracy. It had always suffered because although the Christian Democrats remained the biggest party in the Italian political spectrum, they never had enough to really form an absolute majority, so they were always dependent on the three so-called lay parties, the Liberals, Republicans and Social Democrats, who were very small in number. The question was could you not somehow encourage a further development of the Socialists away from the Communists and

bring the Socialist Party into the democratic spectrum, and thus make it possible to perhaps have ultimately a Socialist prime minister, but where the base of the democratic system would be larger than it was. This was debated back and forth and ultimately it was decided that we could support this opening to the left. Of course, those who didn't favor it at all regarded it as moving the Christian Democrats to the left and those of us who believed that you were working toward increasing the democratic base regarded it as recouping -- by opening to the left you were opening the opportunity to the left to move to the democratic center. Ultimately that was the policy that was approved.

I can remember at that point there was a very complicated hierarchy at the National Security Council consisting of different types of committees. I don't remember all the various ins and outs of that, but all these things went through the whole stage of National Security Council consideration and ultimately approval. This was one of the principal matters that we dealt with.

Also at that time it seems to me that we also agreed that there could be limited contacts, very controlled, with the Communist Party. That was then endorsed. Not a National Security Council decision as I recall, but simply a determination made, perhaps at the level of Under Secretary for Political Affairs, to make possible at least some form of contact with lower level members of the Italian Communist Party.

And, of course, during that time there were the usual visits of Italian Presidents, and the unending effort to try to satisfy the Italian desire to participate in different things. You would have these four power meetings before the talks with the Soviets on Germany. The Foreign Ministers of the four Western powers would get together, the Germans, British, French and ourselves and you would have these angry screams from the Italians saying, "What about us?" We would scramble around to try somehow to keep them happy because in spite of the fact that there were those who, not incorrectly, believed that the bilateral talks with the Italians never produced anything particularly, they had been extremely good allies. There was a lot of real estate in Italy occupied by US troops. We -- the Sixth Fleet -- had access to various ports in Italy. We had Air Force, even our atomic artillery in Northern Italy. They were a loyal member of NATO.

Later, the Italians acted immediately to take in the Air Force units coming out of Spain. So I think those of us dealing with Italian affairs spent a lot of time during that period of trying to get the upper levels of government to recognize that while in some instances this might be a nuisance, that there was a very good political reason for making the Italians feel that they were participants on the same level as some of these other countries.

There would be situations where without any consultation with me, decisions would be made -- we are going to have this quadrilateral meeting. Then the Italians found out about it. The Ambassador would come rushing in to see the Assistant Secretary and the Minister would come rushing in to see me. I would then be called by the Assistant Secretary asking what we could do about this. Then I would have to write memos and lobby round to get the people up the line to recognize that they just had to do it. One also had to be careful that you didn't sort of wear out your welcome because all part of this was to be considered sufficiently serious in what you were doing. That you were not just regarded as an agent of the Italians, but that there was a good

justification from the US interest point of view to do this. Those were the major things with the Italians.

In December of 1967 Lyndon Johnson decided to remove Freddy Reinhardt as Ambassador to Italy. He was a career officer and had been in Rome already for I think more than six years. Johnson had gone out to the Far East to be with the troops in Vietnam over Christmas of 1967 and on the way back he wanted to go to Rome to see the Pope. That was, let's face it, sort of a political stop.

Freddy Reinhardt sent a message indicating that in light of our relations with Italy it was absolutely unthinkable that the President of the United States should come to Rome to see the Pope only and not to call on the President of Italy. He made this argument with some force and obviously was backed up by the State Department. So Johnson did it, but was apparently annoyed that he had to do so. A call was arranged on the President of Italy at a country place outside of Rome which was reserved for the President of Italy. Johnson helicoptered out there, spent relatively short time with the President. Then, of course, he also saw the Pope. Apparently Johnson, who liked to have things done his way, was irritated with Reinhardt that he made him also go to see the President of Italy. It was within very few days after Johnson returned to the States that he determined that he was going to remove Reinhardt. I had the somewhat unpleasant task of calling Reinhardt up in the mountains of Italy where he was skiing over New Year's -- I think I had to call him New Year's Eve -- to tell him that the President was going to request an agrément for a new ambassador who was going to be Gardner Ackley.

Gardner Ackley at that point was the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors to the President. Gardner had been a Fulbright professor in Rome quite a few years before that. While he was there, and he told me the story a number of times, he and his wife did a good deal of walking around and they used to walk around the outside of the grounds of Villa Taverna, which was the residence of the American Ambassador in Rome. They fell in love with Rome and fell in love with the idea of Villa Taverna. So as the time came to move along from the Council of Economic Advisors he sought the appointment as ambassador to Rome. This happened to fit into Johnson's plans to get rid of Reinhardt and give something to Ackley.

So that is what happened. I then was very much involved in the early part of 1968 in the briefing of Gardner Ackley. We became good friends. In early 1969, after Nixon had been inaugurated, one of the first appointments that he made as ambassador was that of Frank Meloy who was DCM in Rome, as Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. The reason for that was that when Frank Meloy was DCM in Rome, Nixon visited there as a private citizen; some embassies in countries that he visited not much attention was paid to him. But Frank Meloy made a particular effort to be nice to him and to brief him and to have something at his house in his honor that paid him a compliment as former Vice President. This made a great impression on Nixon and those who had not been nice to him quickly found themselves out of office, those who had been nice to him quickly found themselves either with a better embassy or as in the case of Frank Meloy with their first embassy.

So that position of DCM Rome became vacant. Because of my association with Italy and my friendship with Gardner Ackley...he obviously had something to do with my assignment as DCM

in Rome. That is the background of how I got to Rome.

I went to Rome in June, 1969. Frank Meloy had already left. Ackley was the Ambassador. It was in August of 1969 that we received a message at the Embassy announcing the request for agrément for Graham Martin as Ambassador. I had the sad duty of informing Gardner Ackley that this was the case. He was dreading this because he had only been there about a year. He was looking for possible ways to stay on. John Volpe thought the same thing. There are many instances in which it is quite clear they are not going to stay on because they come from different parties.

As always the Department said they must have the agrément immediately. I think I broke all records and got it for them in three hours. That was done by calling one of my contacts at the office of the President of Ital -- that was the press spokesman to the President and very close to him. He made an end run and personally got President's oral agreement. So within three hours I was able to cable back that agrément had been given. Then we did the more formal trip through the Foreign Office.

When I was in Senior Seminar in 1965-66 I made a trip for the first time ever for me to the Far East. Among the places I visited was Bangkok where Graham Martin at that time was the Ambassador. I remember going to lunch, my wife and I, with the then DCM, Jim Wilson, and his wife. The entire meal was spent first by Mrs. Wilson before her husband returned home and then by both of them at lunch, in telling us what an extremely difficult and disagreeable person Graham Martin was and how impossible it was to work with him.

This meant nothing to me then. I had met Martin briefly when I was In Saigon to write a paper I was preparing for Senior Seminar. But one files these things away in one's memory and so, of course, when I was handed the telegram asking for the agrément for Graham Martin, naturally all of this fluttered back into my memory. My first reaction was, "Oh, Lord, what have I done to deserve this."

And in fact, of course, much of what the DCM in Bangkok said turned out to be true. Although in all fairness, I was there before Martin arrived, I was there during his entire time and I was there after he left and the betting in Washington was about 99 to 1 that I would be out on my ear within a very few days after Martin arrived there. But that didn't turn out to be the case. We had a professional relationship in which we each did our job. But he was an extremely difficult person.

More interesting perhaps than that is the political equations of that time. I think perhaps I mentioned this previously where the view in Washington up until early 1969 was that democracy in Italy would only really be consolidated if somehow the Socialist Party, which in the immediate post-war period was so closely linked with the Communists that we referred to the two parties as the Social Communists. This meant that the Christian Democrats, which was the largest party, at times had an absolute majority but at other times it didn't and depended upon the fortunes, sometimes rather low fortunes, of the three lay parties -- the Social Democrats, the Liberals and the Republicans -- which were all very small parties, but which provided that little bit of margin that was necessary to give the Christian Democrats at least a working majority in the parliament. The feeling was that the opening to the left, which some people, of course,

believed meant moving the Christian Democrats and everybody towards the extreme left, whereas a lot of us, myself included, thought that phrase meant opening the situation to a point where the Socialists would be gradually brought into the democratic camp. You would have, thus, a center/left government where the Socialists would become another version of the Social Democrats.

This had gradually taken place over a period of time and so when I went to Rome in 1969 we had that situation. Previously when I had been in Rome we had virtually no contact with the Socialists, but now we did because they had become players within the democratic arena. We extended, enlarged and improved our contacts with the Italian Socialist Party. It was something that was also agreeable to the Social Democrats with whom we had had a very close relationship.

But the American Republican administration took quite a different view of this thing. In September or early October, 1969, before Graham Martin came but after Gardner Ackley had left, I was for a period of time Chargé d'Affaires. John Volpe, who was then Secretary of Transportation, came to Rome as local boy makes good. He came from the southeastern part of Italy. He came to Rome in a kind of triumph as Secretary of Transportation. They gave him a medal and wined and dined him. He was in seventh heaven. But he was very critical of the policy of the opening to the left. He made it very clear that he didn't think that was the right policy to follow. In his view he was also abetted by a man named Pierre Talenti, an American of Italian origin who lived in Rome and was very wealthy. He had somehow become the representative of the American Republican Party in Italy and had early on in the Administration formed a linkage with the White House through Al Haig [then deputy to Henry Kissinger, who was the National Security Advisor].

Talenti was quite right wing and he assumed a role in Rome with respect to US policy as, curiously enough, an unofficial emissary. He was very critical of me because he believed I was betraying the cause by supporting the notion of this opening to the left.

It turns out that Martin, who had not had an embassy since Bangkok -- he had been in charge of the Alliance for Progress under Johnson which was a sort of effort to improve relationships with the other American republics -- had persuaded the powers that be that he was just the man to be the US Ambassador to Italy because he was tough as nails to bring about a shift in Italian politics and put things back on the track of center/right and to remove the Socialist from their position of participation in the government. He was given the mandate by Nixon apparently to go to Rome and correct the situation. So that was the situation when he arrived at the end of October, 1969.

What happened, of course, was that Martin arrived and he made very clear that that was what his mission was. But he had an unusual way of going about these things. Rather typical of Martin was the fact that he arrived in Italy on an Italian ship while American ships were still going in to Italy. But he was able to wangle it on medical grounds; therefore he claimed permission to travel on an Italian ship. My wife and I went down to meet them. But he was not one given to easy conversation, so what we did was to put them in their car and my wife and I in our car. We didn't ride together. I was able to get up to the Villa Taverna where they were to live, before they arrived, so I was there to greet them when they came.

To continue, his method of operation was to deal with relatively few people. On the whole he sort of kept me informed of what was going on, although there were instances when I was not. He controlled everything even to the point of how had I allowed them to paint the fountains in front of the Chancery some color he didn't like. Actually I had not been consulted about it and made the mistake, for example, of saying that I assumed he had given the approval. Well, he said I shouldn't assume anything.

My point is that he was so involved in certain details that I had every reason to believe that they wouldn't have dared paint without his permission. Martin was the first person to receive the rank of Counselor for Administration in Paris when he worked for Jefferson Caffery, and his one point in life at that point was to make the Ambassador happy. With Caffery it was not always easy. I am very fond of Jefferson Caffery who with his wife had actually retired in Rome and was living at the Grand Hotel at the time we are discussing. Martin was something of a wheeler and dealer and obviously did all sorts of things which made the Ambassador's life in Paris comfortable, etc.

So he was involved in minute details. But on the more important side, the political side, he chose not to learn any Italian; he chose to have very little really to do with the leaders of the political parties. He met the Secretary General of the Christian Democratic Party, who is a person of great importance in Italy, maybe once while he was there and that was in my house. He didn't even want to ask him to the Residence. There was just the three of us and I did the interpreting.

He sort of closed off lots of people to a point I found embarrassing because foreign ambassadors would indeed ask me -- "Are you in fact the ambassador? We think you have an ambassador, but we never see him; so we wonder if perhaps you really are."

He would chose certain people who he thought had particular power in wheeling and dealing basically. And amongst those were Pierre Talenti, whom I have spoken about; Michael Sindono , who was an Italian financier; General Michelli, who was the head of their counterpart to our CIA; and Archbishop Marcincos. Of those people, Pierre Talenti was eventually forced to flee Italy because of involvement in things he shouldn't have been involved in. Sindono was ultimately arrested for financial speculation of one sort or another and then committed suicide. Michelli was arrested and put in jail for illegal activities. Archbishop Marcincos had all sorts of investigations made as some of his dealings with the Vatican Bank of which he was the head at that particular time.

But these were all people who had at that time certain degrees of power. In the case of Talenti, of course, because of his links with the White House, Martin felt it desirable to get close enough to him in order to try to prevent him from doing things behind Martin's back. The fact of the matter was that Martin discovered that he did do things behind his back in the White House, which of course infuriated him.

National elections -- I am jumping ahead but this is sort of the overall picture I am trying to give you -- were held in 1972 -- previous to that there had been elections for the presidency which came out all right. Then there were national parliamentary elections. At this point Martin decided that although we had long since ceased to have any fiduciary relationships with some of the

political parties (there had been from the immediate post-war through the 1960s a very large CIA program in Italy which had come to an end), if he was going to give effect to the President's mandate, then he must have a program.

So he went back to Washington and received authority to commit up to -- I forget the exact figure now -- but I would guess under \$25 million program in Italy. He was able to persuade those who dealt with these things in Washington to give him the sole authority to handle the program. This, of course, was a great blow to CIA which always under previous situations through their station chief had the authority to make the final sign off with, of course, the approval of the ambassador. But in this instance the Chief of Station had nothing to say with respect to the final sign off. That was to be done by the Ambassador. A certain amount, I can't remember how much, was given in a lump sum to Michelli. The others had no role in it -- Sindono and Marcincos. Talenti had no role in that although I am sure that he knew about the program. To what extent he may have been consulted about it, I don't know. But a considerable sum was given to Michelli to be used as he saw fit in trying to influence. Martin's point was that "I am the Ambassador and I am not going to have a subordinate decide where this money is going to go. I am the President's personal representative and I am not going to have them do something and not show me what they have done." As you know that is one of the great problems. If they had had the authority that they normally have they could have decided to give a hundred thousand or two hundred thousand to somebody, report it back to Washington as an operational matter and wouldn't have had to show the message to the Ambassador. What we would do, and I would attend some, if not all, of the meetings, would be to meet in the back room with the Ambassador, myself and the Station Chief. The Ambassador would decide that he wanted this done and that done. Some was given to the parties, some to individuals. Sometimes the Station Chief or myself would recommend something, but it was the Ambassador who would give the approval. It was not the Station Chief who said what we were going to do. The Ambassador directed it all.

So money was distributed around -- quite a lot of it, I may say, going to General Michelli, for whatever uses he felt he should put it to. As luck would have it, and I say luck really in a way because I don't know that the program made all that much difference really, the elections turned out in a way that the majority could be formed by the center/right. In other words, the Christian Democrats formed a government with the Liberals, the Republicans, and the Social Democrats. Andreotti became Prime Minister. He was a person who some people believe was center/right. Others thought that he played in whatever areas were necessary to give him the prime ministership. He happened to be a very good friend of mine. I had known him since the early 1950s when I was in Rome the first time. He is a very astute person.

When I say I knew him in the 1950s, he was influential in the early 1950s with de Gasperi] and we are talking now almost 40 years ago -- he has played an important role in Italian politics for 40 years in one form or another. He plays the game of Italian politics. I have no doubt that all Italian politicians, no matter what their stripe, have had dealings in parliament with the Communist Party.

In any event, Andreotti became Prime Minister. I am only amused by the fact that an American sculptress in Rome who was a medalist making medallions, plaques, sculptured a little plaque

with the Trevi Fountain , one of the monuments of Rome, under a commission from Andreotti. She struck it in gold and silver and Andreotti would give these things to departing ambassadors, etc. I was pleased to note that when Martin left he was given the silver plaque; when I left, Andreotti gave me a gold one.

Just to finish that up, it wasn't very long thereafter that then the situation reverted and that center/right government didn't last a very long time. By the time Volpe came as Ambassador in January, 1973, very shortly thereafter the thing moved back to the center/left, and ultimately, of course, an Italian Socialist became Prime Minister.

After I had left, Michelli was accused of using funds in a scheme involving Masons, and I don't know what, a sort of secret group. Some people were concerned that they might have been involved in trying to pull off a coup d'etat or something of that sort. Actually while I was in Rome there was a bungled effort by an Italian war hero, World War II, Valerio Borghese, who had been awarded the Italian equivalent of our Congressional Medal of Honor. He was very right wing. At one stage, maybe 1972, I don't remember the date now, but we had wind of some plot, some coup organization being put together. It was never very clear to me just exactly what went on there. My recollection is that Pierre Talenti was involved in some way. We, to my knowledge, were not, although Michelli probably knew about it. We also had an Army Attaché by the name of Clavier , who was very close to Martin, and who was close to Michelli and acted as a conduit between Martin and Michelli. It is possible that somehow information concerning this coup came through that channel. It may have been one where these people were trying to involve the Embassy in it because of what they believed to be Martin's right wing tendencies. That cast some questions around as to what exactly we were up to. This never really amounted to anything. The thing was discovered and people were arrested and it came to nothing. But it did raise questions in one's mind as to what people like Michelli and Talenti were up to.

Martin did not depend very much of the advice of the Embassy staff. After all, he had sold himself to Nixon on the basis that he could change things around; so he was going to do that irrespective. He had certain people he listened to. He was not one who easily accepted advise and when he thought he was right, and he indicated to me more than once that he was right. He then moved ahead on his particular political line. It was very difficult to argue with him on the subject because he was determined that this was what he was going to do.

He, of course, also devoted a lot of time to considering and dealing with matters relating to US military presence in Italy. I will say this for him; I learned something from him which I found useful when I became an ambassador. That was how to deal with our military. They soon came to realize that they had better not cross him. He played to the hilt the business of being the President's personal representative. "You may be the military here and under the command of European Command but as long as you are in Italy, I want to know what you are doing and why you are doing it. I am the President's man." This meant that the military were frightened of him and therefore very clearly toed the line when it came to doing things and would not sort of go off the reservation in things that might embarrass him.

I found that very useful. I had a very large military presence in Spain and we on the whole got along very well, but it was necessary to make clear basically to was boss there.

He really didn't see many Italians. I think much of what he understood about Italian politics came to him from his limited contacts. He read the CIA stuff and also the political reporting that was done by his staff and he approved it, etc., although it always conformed to his particular view of what he wanted to do. But this business of being the personal representative of the President had a sort of funny quirk in it too. He would, for example, when he had a dinner party, see to it that at the end of dinner he would leave the dining room first before his guests as the President's personal representative. When Secretary of State Rogers came to Rome the first time there was a little tiff over who would sit on the right seat of the car. The Ambassador believing that as the President's personal representative he should sit on the right, and that Rogers would sit on the left.

This ultimately led to bad blood between the two. One evening when Rogers was in Rome for a NATO meeting, we were in the Italian Government's guest house, for a buffet supper. During the supper Rogers came to me and said, "I thoroughly dislike buffets; can't we go downtown, have dinner in an Italian restaurant." I said, "Sure, just wait a little longer to make your presence known and then you could leave." He said, "Well, that is fine. You make the reservations. I would like to have my wife and myself, Marty and Faith Hillenbrand (Assistant Secretary for European Affairs), and you and your wife." I said, "Well, Mr. Secretary, that is fine but I find it a little awkward because the Ambassador and Mrs. Martin are also at this reception and for me to go off with you like this without inviting them as well is a little difficult." So with much reluctance he said, "Okay, you can ask them too." Eventually we left and got outside and the Secretary's car came up immediately, but Martin's car was nowhere to be found. Finally Rogers said that we should go and the Ambassador could follow. As we drove away I watched the Ambassador standing there looking sort of daggers. The next day Martin said, "I just want you to know one thing. From now on, when the Rogers come to Rome you and Emily will look after them. I will have nothing to do with them." So that was what happened.

What this really meant was that Martin had decided that in the power equation that he would throw his lot in completely with Kissinger, who was then National Security Advisor, and there was a constant back channel flow between him and Kissinger. He basically simply ignored Rogers. The Rogers thoroughly disliked the Martins and that was reciprocated. When the Rogers did come to Rome, my wife and I would look after them and go out to dinner with them or whatever. It was a very weird situation.

Martin had this mandate to change the focus from the center/left to center/right. That as I said led him to have some unsavory Italian contacts, but there was a reason for that situation. Who are the important players in this development who exercise certain levers of power from outside the strictly orthodox political parties? Money talked big -- Sindono. Covert action of one sort or another -- Michelli. The Vatican, although the Vatican by then had very little influence to what was going on, but still they had a traditional role -- here was an American Archbishop close to the Pope, the Vatican bank. Then there was this other element which was not really power structure so much as it was the containment of Pierre Talenti who had certain political relations in Italy with sort of right wingers.

It was these sort of levers that he regarded as important in manipulating what was going on. All

spoke English except Michelli which is why Clavier was useful because he was his sort of contact, interpreter, what not with Michelli -- he was the conduit really to Michelli. So he looked around and sought what he thought were major levers of power-moving and that is why I think he established these particular contacts.

Obviously there were others he knew, but to my knowledge there was no particular effort to meet with a lot of these Italian political people to give the word, so to speak. They hardly knew him. I can't tell you, because I don't know, whether for example in Bangkok this was his way of doing business there.

Martin was not an outgoing individual. He said that he must conserve his energy and not waste his time. This was true of a number of things. Some time after he came I thought it would be nice to give a dinner for the Martins to have some fairly senior Italians to meet them. He said he would be willing to do it. Then I put together a list and sent it in for his approval. Nothing happened. Finally one day he came to my office and asked if he really had to do this. I said that it was entirely up to him. He said he had to conserve his energy and didn't want to do it. And that was the end of that.

There was this constant business of not wanting to deal with people who were in the power structure of Italian political life. But that was not the way of his dealing with things.

I think that he found that I was useful to him because I could do things that he didn't want to do - see people and report to him what they were saying, etc. I wasn't threatening him because he didn't want to do that. I obviously had to keep him very closely informed of what I did because anything that I did and didn't tell him about made him quite angry. We had our run-ins at various times. Something came up once involving my wife and Mrs. Martin. I don't know, but she chose to take something wrong and I finally went in to him and said, "Obviously if it is your belief that we are willfully trying to insult Mrs. Martin, then the best thing to do is to ask for my transfer because if that is the way you view it, we obviously can't survive." Well, that passed over, there was no problem. There was little or no social exchange between us. He had as his Political-Military Counselor a young fellow who had worked for him in Bangkok and whom he had been brought to Rome. Martin and his wife saw a lot of them. This sounds perhaps slightly immodest, but he also had some respect for my professionalism and for the fact that I didn't let grass grow under my feet and that I had a good relationship with the staff and could deal with them -- because he didn't want to, although he wanted to know everything that was going on. He was totally involved with the Administrative Counselor because all of that area he loved. So I suppose one survived because I filled a gap of things that he didn't want to do.

The staff would go ahead and do their reporting. It was something that Martin frequently looked at. He wanted to know what was going on. I don't fault him in that respect at all. I had to make the decision of what I would sign and what I would send on to him. Certainly I sent more on to him than not because I, myself, felt that since it was going out under his name and he was intensely interested in what was going on, both economic and political side, and particularly on the military side, he should see them. We had a lot going on. Trying to sell things to the Italians, problems involving Italians selling American equipment to third parties, that type of activities interested him.

We did all sorts of strange things. I remember one particular instance when there were some question about some military hardware of the Italians. He had to go home to the States and it was important that something be done at a certain time so he then authorized me to deal with it and actually sign his name to it even though he wasn't in the country. We did things like that. He had clearly a certain confidence in me. It was a strange relationship, but it was a professional one. And while I have to tell you that I used to deplore suffering the things that he did under that rubric, he was the Ambassador and I found no particular reason during the time I was there to feel that I simply couldn't accept what the policy was. I mean, if that was what the Administration felt they wanted done, I didn't feel that the national interests of the United States was so threatened by that that I couldn't accept it. The center/right was a perfectly acceptable formula because it was a democratic formula too, so there was nothing wrong with that. What was wrong was only a question of nuance there as to whether you wanted to enlarge the area of democracy and as to whether the Socialists would provide that enlargement in a perfectly safe way. There was a disagreement of view on that, but it was not a question of major adverse effect on national interest.

So we had a working relationship. It was strained though, because at the end, when he left in the latter part of 1972, although he made such a point about administration, he was extraordinarily neglectful of things like efficiency reports. When he left he didn't do one on me. Finally the State Department got after him. I was in the States -- I had come home -- and he was in the States. He called me up and said, "Why don't you just write your efficiency report and send it to me and I will sign it." "Well," I said, "Mr. Ambassador I will think it over." I wrote to him and said, "I attach great importance to the efficiency report system and have spent a lot of time over the years during all the reports I have had to do. I think it is something that one just has to take seriously. I am sorry but I simply cannot accept the notion of my writing my own report. If you feel you do not want to write one, or don't have time to write one, that is up to you. But I am not going to do it." And eventually he did, and it was quite a good one.

Again he got the job in Saigon because he threw his lot in with Kissinger. Kissinger told me later, after the whole Saigon thing was over, that he had intended at one point to make Martin the Deputy Secretary of State. But he said he was glad he didn't because he was clearly a sort of a psychotic case. That was after the whole business of his leaving Saigon.

I had four years in Rome -- the short time with Ackley and then three years with Martin and then a bare three months with Volpe. During the time that Volpe was there I really spent most of my time helping him through the early days and then writing efficiency reports; so I really didn't get much involved in the Volpe administration which had become rather strained in a way because he had brought with him a political appointee as a special assistant who rapidly began playing almost the role of DCM and who was given the apartment in a house usually reserved for the Minister, the Political Counselor, the Economic Counselor and the Consul General. So I really don't have much to say on the Volpe period because I wasn't there that long.

All things considered, I suppose one can't say that Martin did irreparable harm to the US-Italian relations. One can't say, I don't think, that he did them much good either. It was a role of a sort of "the power behind the throne" type of operation and certainly was activist in the sense that he

was trying specifically to coax a political move in the direction opposite to which the situation had been moving. But, as I said before, not one which had any real consequences for US interests one way or another.

On China, again I am a little hazy on the dates, but it seems to me that most of the question as to the business of what the Italians would do with regard to Mainland China occurred during the time I was Chargé d'Affaires. I made a big, but what I knew would be a losing effort, to persuade the Italians not to recognize Communist China. Other countries had already done so -- the British and even the French by then. As long as the Italians had the comfort in numbers it was fairly clear that they were going to do it too, although we did make a valiant effort. I went to see as many people as I could on the subject, but I recognize that they did not think that in light of the recognition by other countries friendly to the United States that their recognition was going to cause them any serious damage when it came to relations with the United States. And they were quite correct in so believing.

That really was sort of a major question at that time. The Italians had, of course, quite good relations with the Soviet Union. Obviously the Communist Party was quite important at that time. I think it reached the largest percentage of the vote at that time -- close to 23 percent. It was frighteningly large. So that had to be taken into account. Although, of course, in that period of time the Communists were, even though their vote was large, less of a threat because they had changed their spots to some extent from where they had been in the 1950s as a result of what had happened in Hungary and then Czechoslovakia. All these incidences had had an effect on the Communist Party, but in terms of percentages it was way up there. Obviously the United States' policy continued to be aimed to try to cut back the influence of the Communist Party. But this wasn't an easy thing to do because some of the best administered cities in Italy were communist administered -- e.g. Bologna. Florence had a Socialist mayor, but he had become more respectable. But these cities were very well administered.

We had a very low key relationship with the Communist Party. Junior political officers had contacts with the Party. I personally met the Secretary of the Communist Party one evening -- Berlinguer -- who was at the National Day of Hungary. The Hungarian Ambassador asked me if I would mind meeting Berlinguer, and I had no problem. So we exchanged a few words. Very shortly thereafter the Hungarian Ambassador defected. He re-defected some time later.

I can't think of any other major things during that time. It was a strange period. I was never totally comfortable because one never quite knew just exactly which way Martin was going to spring -- in terms of personal things too. He had a habit of coming into my office and if I was on the phone he would go to my extension line, put his fingers to his lips and pick up my extension phone and listen to my conversation with whomever it happened to be. This at times was awkward because there were times, at least once or twice, when the person on the line was saying not very complimentary things about Martin and somehow I had to get him off the subject. He considered that to be his absolute right to know what I was doing. The habit of listening in on my phone calls was really unacceptable, but at least he didn't put an extension of my line in his office so he could listen without my knowing -- at least I wasn't aware of such an extension. But he wanted to know what I was doing.

Martin took considerable interest in the consulates. For example, he fought very hard to keep Trieste and Turin going. He won those battles. Homer Byington was in Naples, in sort of his fiefdom really. There wasn't a great deal of exchange there. I would go down every so often. I am not sure that Outerbridge Horsey was still in Palermo. Bob Gordon went up to Florence. I can't remember who was up in Milan. A short fellow.

One of the problems, as Italian used to call them, was the political games and that was what all this business was in the constant shifting around of coalitions and cabinets and prime ministers -- they were political games that were played mostly in Rome. The rest of the country didn't seem terribly interested in what was going on. They had their own political games in their regions. So therefore the consulates were somewhat limited in the sort of information they could product which would perhaps make a lot of difference with respect to the overall assessment of the political situation as seen from Rome.

Their economic reporting was more useful. Every so often the consuls did come down. Martin was basically rather supportive of the consulates. He thought they had a role to play beyond just the role of purely consular work, which was important in itself.

But he also had rather a curious view. The Consul General in Rome was Jack Quinn; he had been on the consular side of things for quite a number of years. I thought that he had done a good job in Rome in running the consulate which was a big one, keeping everybody happy and being on top of what was going on, and providing the services that were required and in such a way that brought credit to the US. He was class-2. I wrote an efficiency report on him which was a very good one and which made the point that this fellow had been in important consular positions and that he merited on the basis of his performance a promotion to class-1. My feeling was very strongly that if you are in that work -- it is important work -- it should be recognized. The chances of him going beyond that were slight, but he should be recognized for what he had done.

Martin in effect said in his reviewing officer report that it would seem too bad to deny to a political officer promotion to class-1 through giving it to this fellow. What could one say? I didn't agree with him, but that was his report and I couldn't do anything about it. I thought that was entirely wrong because I think that the people who do the consular work should be encouraged in every way possible and the only way we have to do it is through promotions. But Martin took a different view.

Walter Stoessel, who had, I think, been named Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, came to Rome, it seems to me, in early 1973 or late 1972. He asked whether I would be interested in going back to Washington as one of his deputies -- Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. That was a good job so I agreed with appreciation.

NORMAN W. GETSINGER
Assistant Personnel/Economic Officer
Rome (1954-1956)

Norman W. Getsinger was born on May 9, 1919 in Detroit, Michigan. He attended Harvard University and served in the US Navy during World War II. His career has included positions in countries such as Egypt, Italy, Taiwan, Turkey, South Korea, and China. Mr. Getsinger was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 19, 2000.

Q: *You went to Rome. You were in Rome from when to when?*

GETSINGER: I was in Rome during the Claire Boothe Luce period.

Q: *This would have been 1953, 1954, or 1955?*

GETSINGER: 1954 to 1956.

Q: *What was your job?*

GETSINGER: Murka Beeton had taken me from Personnel in the Department. I was assistant personnel officer. One of the jobs of the assistant personnel officer was to interview this string of young ladies who had come to Rome and dropped coins in the fountain, and were just in love with Rome. They would come to the embassy and would see if they could get a job at the embassy. We would have to inform them that, of course, they had to go back to the department to be hired as a Foreign Service secretary. But, another group of young ladies that would come to my desk, were the young ladies who had come to Rome as Foreign Service secretaries and had been mistreated by the Italian men. They were so upset with broken love affairs and so forth, they wanted to be sent back home. I couldn't interchange these two groups.

Q: *What did you do? Were you essentially shipping the ladies back?*

GETSINGER: You had to do it, if they were unhappy. Of course, there was an abundant pool of recruits to be sent over. The movement back and forth between Rome and U.S. was accentuated by Mrs. Luce. During her three-year period, she made something like nine different trips back and forth to the United States. But, she was a political figure. She was a famous woman. It was a little difficult to have her sitting as an ambassador in Rome, attending to day to day affairs. Eldridge Durbrow was her DCM.

Q: *Did you get involved at all in Italian affairs?*

GETSINGER: Very much so. Italy was so interesting. Actually after Bertha Beaton left, I asked to be transferred to the economics section, which I did. Shortly thereafter, I was laterally entered into the Foreign Service, and became an FSO. I was reporting on the real beginnings of the attempt to unify Europe. It started with, as you may remember, the coal steel community. I was reporting that back to the department on these developments.

Q: *These were weekly reports and monthly reports, sort of roundups.*

GETSINGER: I was doing all this, Stu, with the background only of economics, an A in

Harvard. I regretted so many times, as I did other times in the Foreign Service, that I had not taken that short course in economics that FSI gives.

Q: *But that only developed, maybe 20 years later.*

GETSINGER: I think that is right. I hope everybody gets a shot at that, because it's so important.

Q: *But, it wasn't really until the 1970s that that course started. It was a very good one. I was an economic officer. I remember in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in 1958 or so, sitting down there in my off-time reading Samuelson's book on economics.*

GETSINGER: Yes.

Q: *I had a year of economics, which I had gotten a D- in.*

GETSINGER: I still refer to Samuelson's book. I think it is the best book ever written. I reported on that for about a year and a half. I was working with a guy by the name of Stan Wolfe, who got divorced and left the post. I became the principal economic reporting officer in Rome, with no real good background.

Q: *Did you have trouble dealing with the Italian economy? You have the official economy. Way back, in the late 1970s, I was consulate general in Naples. We were the leather glove capital of the world. There is not one registered glove factory in the area. It was all sort of under the counter. That is the Italian economic system. I would think in the 1950s it would be very difficult.*

GETSINGER: It was incredible. Of course, during that period, there was the problem with the communists. They were all over the place. It was Farfani who finally got the jeeps running down the sidewalks in order to break up the mob. I think it was Tish Baldwin who told that story.

Q: *Go on, please.*

GETSINGER: About how she is such a beautiful woman and the Italian men all pride themselves on their ability to get along with beautiful women. I think when she was first presenting her credentials... No, it was her first meeting with a foreign officer official. She came in and he was concerned about [some particular issue] at that point. She came in and he had these papers that had the Italian position. He was going to read the riot act to her. She came in in her powdered Beauvais, and criss-crossed her legs and he completely forgot that paper.

Q: *Did you have any dealings with Ambassador Luce, or was that pretty much in a different stratosphere?*

GETSINGER: She was remote. She was over there in Villa de Verna, and she was being poisoned from the ceiling.

Q: *There was arsenic in the paintings.*

GETSINGER: Yes, and it fell down into her large coffee cup. We didn't know but we did know

that your ambassador wasn't there most of the time. If she wasn't in the embassy, and being poisoned in the Villa de Verna, she was traveling back and forth, between the U.S. and home.

Q: Was there any debate with your colleagues on whether we should have contact with the Italian communists, or was this pretty well understood?

GETSINGER: During the period I was there, the communists had become so important and so strong, politically, that they were actually controlling. If you remember, there was a communist mayor of Siena, I think. The administration was communist.

Q: Well, Milan, later on.

GETSINGER: Yes, Milan, of course.

Q: It was the red belt there.

GETSINGER: The red belt, yes. So, you had to deal with the communists because they were the administration, in parts of Tuscany and Lombardy.

Q: But, as far as reporting on the communists, I don't think, at that time, we were allowed to have contact with the political party.

GETSINGER: Yes, that's right. Italy was such a hard place to report on because of so many parties. I remember that the Political Section and the Economic Section would start every morning, going through the Italian press. I remember there were at least five papers that you had to read. There was the Vatican paper, there was the socialist paper and there was a socialist democratic paper, and so forth. It took you the first couple of hours, before you could do anything else, to try and find out which way the parties were leaning, on any particular issue, by going through all those newspapers. Of course, we had to learn to read them.

Q: One of the things that struck me about Italy, later on, which was a different time, that in Rome tremendous emphasis was placed on what the parties were doing, and all this. But, yet you had the Christian democrats who were running the show, the communists were a threat, but nothing really changed for 40 years. Of course, this is early on, but we were reporting, almost at the precinct level, particularly in Rome, and it was sort of city centric.

GETSINGER: That's true. That is the problem you had. You were detoured into this. What else could you do?

Q: Was there, at that time, in the early days, a very obvious insider group. It was in the Foreign Service, people who had been there a lot and it was sort of a little club.

GETSINGER: That can be said about so many countries. I think much less than the China thing. The thing about the China thing is that, of course, language is the door to a culture, more so, I think, in China, than in most other countries. The language is the culture. The Chinese expressions tell you about the country, the people, and what they think. I think the China club is

about the most distinct of any in the Foreign Service.

Q: *At that time, who was head of the Economic Section, do you recall?*

GETSINGER: I don't recall who it was.

Q: *DCM was Durbrow?*

GETSINGER: Yes, Elbridge Durbrow.

Q: *How was he?*

GETSINGER: Oh, good. He was the real ambassador because Mrs. Luce was an ambassador in name only. Remember, Henry Luce was given special diplomatic status, in order when he came over to be with the ambassador, so he would have some kind of position.

Q: *He was president of Time-Life. He was a very significant political and industrial figure in the United States.*

GETSINGER: I don't know how often the department has accorded a diplomatic status to the spouse.

Q: *By this time, how was your family back in Detroit feeling about their younger son?*

GETSINGER: Well, of course, they didn't come to my wedding in Cairo. When I got to a more civilized place, like Rome, my father and mother came over. I took them to Venice. But, my brother, who was Euro-centric, never understood my fascination with China, and never came over, during all those posts that I had there.

1954, 1956, Rome. After I finished Rome, I was no longer a hot property and was put back in Chinese hands. I was sent to Taijung [FSI language school in Taiwan]. I had studied Chinese for a year, at Cornell. I was tested at Taijung to see how much I had retained. I was at the level of six months. So, McCarthy had cost me six months in Taijung, beginning back into the China area.

EILEEN R. DONOVAN
Economic Officer
Milan (1954-1956)

Acting Consul General
Milan (1954)

Ambassador Eileen R. Donovan taught high school history in Boston when World War II began. After the Pearl Harbor incident, Donovan joined the Women's Auxiliary Corps. She was sent to Officer Candidate School in Des Moines, and

came out as a 2nd Lieutenant. After teaching Japanese women for a period, she took the Foreign Service exam and was sent back to Tokyo to begin her career that would culminate with an Ambassador appointment. She has served in Manila, Barbados, and Japan. The interview was conducted by Arthur L. Lowrie on April 7, 1989.

Q: *Did you have to take care of them?*

DONOVAN: Oh, yes. Most of them were friendly enough though. You know, I must have had a way with them. It sounds conceited, but even grouchy old Rooney listened to me when I told him about the Federation of the West Indies that was in the process of forming over in Port of Spain. I gave him my spiel about the importance of the area, which I felt was true. And, he paid a little more attention and eventually, as I say, it was after he left that I got this Administrative Assistant who was an American secretary really, you know. Those were the days. I think if I have had any success, and I guess I have when you look back at it, one of the reasons is because you like people and know how to deal with them. You don't look down at anybody and you're not afraid of anyone either, without being aggressive, you know.

I remember my first inspection as being in charge of a post was in Milano where the former Consul General, a wonderful guy named Paul Tenney, did you ever know him, had gone back to work in the Executive department of EUR. So, I was the Economic Officer but I was also in charge, Acting Consul General for almost a year before they sent someone up. So, we had an inspection. That also was a small post with very few amenities. So, this guy walked in and his name was Brenard Guffler. They used to nickname him "old gruff Guff". He had some things to say to me, too, right at the beginning. He said, it's only fair to tell you that I don't approve of a woman in this kind of a job in this city. And I said, well I'm sorry about that.

I had given him the Consul General's office to sit in and I had moved back to a small office that was the Economic Officer's office that I had held before I moved into the big office. But his visit was a day ahead of schedule so he sat down at the desk and he opened the drawer. I had never used the inside of that desk. I had always just used the top for my in and out stuff. There were a bunch of cards wrapped in an elastic band, calling cards, and he said, what are those? I said, those belong to Paul Tenney, the previous Consul General. He said, how long has he been gone? I said, oh about three months. He said, well you don't need these anymore and he picked them up and threw them in the wastebasket. And I said, well as a matter of fact I do need them. I said, all of his business contacts are on there and I said, that's a very valuable bunch of little cards. It's true I haven't used them yet but I'm sure I will. I went over to the wastebasket and picked them out and said, do you mind if I take these into my own office and he just glared at me.

And, he said, look at all this dust in here in this drawer. You know where they have little pieces of wood with round holes to hold paper clips and things? It's standard in any desk. He picked that out and underneath there sure was dust. I had never opened the drawer. Well, if he'd given me another day I would have sent someone in to wash out the inside of the desk if I'd thought of it -- which I probably wouldn't have. So, he left a little early that day so my secretary and I rushed up and took out the wooden things and scrubbed them all off and scrubbed the inside of the drawer and then went in early the next morning and put them back. He came walking down the corridor

to where I was sitting with these two pieces of wood in his hand. He said, who cleaned these up. I said, well I think some leprechauns must have come in the middle of the night. Well he thought that was funny and he burst into this great loud laugh you could hear all over the office. Well, I think that something changed there you see. He was an Irishman and I think the idea of Leprechauns coming in ...

So then everything went to hell that week. We were having the American traveling group which was doing "Oklahoma" come to Milano. I was having a little dinner party for him and his wife, who was a very nice lady, and a couple of others and then we were going to the theater for "Oklahoma". But, during that day, the husband of the lead girl called me and said his wife couldn't move her legs. She was paralyzed and he thought she had polio. There wasn't any polio in Milano or anywhere else in Italy that I knew of. I said, we'll get a doctor. There's a woman doctor a little farther north here who specialized in polio. Well, they had a very excitable man who was the director of this company. Talk about temperament! When he called me on the phone I was sitting with Gufler. He said, I want an American doctor. I don't want any Italian doctor. I said, there aren't any here. There's a medical doctor in our Rome Embassy. I said, I could call him and ask his advice, which I thereupon did. He said, I can't come up there. That woman doctor knows more about these things than I do anyway. Then he called me again and wanted me to come down to where they were rehearsing. So, I excused myself from Mr. Gufler and went down with a new Administrative Officer who had just come in the day before, Sam Gammon, you knew Sam, with his little notebook writing down notes of whatever the inspector said. So, by that time the whole cast was in a state of hysteria. The director said, I want you to tell me whether we should put the show on tonight. I said, well really that's up to you. You're the director. I said, there's an old slogan, "the show must go on". But, if you want to, cancel it. He said, I'm not going to cancel it, you're going to cancel it. It was not canceled. I did get the doctor from whatever place it was, almost up to Switzerland.

Then at the dinner party I had two little ceramic coffee pots from Japan, one of which I didn't use because it had had a broken handle and it had been glued on. So, it was getting later and later and I said, we're going to really have to go to get down to that theater on time. I asked the date I had, a single man up there that I used to go out with, if he'd pour the coffee and he picked up the wrong pot and he held it over the cup of Mrs. Gufler and, of course, the handle came off and the coffee spilled all over the table and some over the front of her white satin long dress. And I said to myself, well there goes the inspection, right there. Well, it really splattered. It went all over the tablecloth but it splattered on her dress. We got out Kleenex and everything else and she said, "I don't think it will be all that noticeable." She was a very nice lady. So, off we went to the theater. Well, by that time word had gotten out in this crazy cast that the leading lady was not there because maybe she had polio. And, there was a sense of panic all around the theater. Then this director came to me and said, you'll have to explain to this audience what's the matter. My Italian was not very good, but I thought that I probably should do that. So, I went up and in my stumbling Italian -- Guff didn't speak Italian either for which I was very glad -- I explained that there had been an illness but that there was no need for any panic and that this wonderful play would go on just as usual and all those that were milling around the lobby to come back to their seats. We got through that somehow.

The next morning the doctor came down and the next afternoon the girl died. From polio. She

said she must have gotten it in Naples where they were before. Well, there were no more shows. I think there was only one scheduled anyway and then there were all kinds of, you know, I won't describe it to you. Then they said they would have a funeral Mass, a memorial Mass on Saturday. I would have to represent Ambassador Luce who couldn't come up from Rome.

That was the day the inspector was to leave. So, we had planned, half a dozen of the Embassy staff, to go over to Verona to see the outdoor performance of Aida, which is so terrific over there. So, he came in and said I'll be gone before noontime. He was driving his own car. And he said, I want to tell you something. No man could have handled this week any better than you did with all the other things that were going on (really the usual things). He said, I'm going to give you top rating -- which was a four, they went one to four -- and he said, I'm also going to tell you that I have never done this before in my life. He said, I've given the second top rating. Well, after that I got promoted after a long wait, after that report of his. Now you see that was just by luck that he was there and that he changed his mind and that leprechauns came into the act at the beginning.

WILLIAM J. CROCKETT
Counselor for Administration
Rome (1954-1958)

Deputy Under Secretary William J. Crockett was born in Kansas in 1914. He received a degree in business from the University of Nebraska in 1942. Mr. Crockett served in the military in Italy from 1944-1945, assisting with the closure of the War Shipping Administration's program in Naples. He later served from 1954-1958 in Rome as an administrative officer. He subsequently held a number of high level positions in the State Department in Washington, DC, including the positions of Deputy Under Secretary for Administration. Mr. Crockett was interviewed by Thomas Stern in 1990.

CROCKETT: After two years in Karachi, I went to Washington for consultations. I was asked by Bob Ryan, then an Area Personnel officer, what I would like to do in my next tour. I thought I was ready for a bigger and better post. So it was agreed that I would go to Rome as Assistant Administrative Officer under Bill Boswell. Bill had been in Rome for a couple of years and had lost his assistant. I had never met Bill. Verla had left Karachi early and had gone to London to be with her parents in Europe. Our young son Bobby stayed with me in Karachi. So he and I went stopped in Rome on our way back to the States for home leave and Bobby and I met the Boswells. We liked the Boswells. The role of the deputy was pretty loose; neither Bill nor I knew exactly what my functions would be. But we liked each other and trusted each other. Bill Boswell was a hail-well-met-fellow. The first time I met him he took me to lunch with several other men from his section. We had fresh strawberries and fresh asparagus at exorbitant prices. I didn't order any of those items because I knew the condition of our personal budget. When the bill came, we split it; the others laughed and laughed because Crockett had to pay his share of their very expensive lunches while he had a very modest one himself. But Boswell treated me very well. One of the first things that happened that helped our relationship was that the

Embassy's Budget and Fiscal officer went home unexpectedly and no replacement was in sight for several months. I offered to step into the vacuum and I think he was grateful for that. I probably impressed him as being flexible and a good team player and one who didn't stand on formalities. So our relationships were cordial and it continued that way, even later when he worked for me in Washington. He gave me good ratings; he helped me to grow.

After my stint as Budget and Fiscal officer, Boswell went on home leave and I acted as Administrative Counselor in his absence. Soon after that, the Refugee Relief program started in Italy and all the Consulates were beefed up to handle this new workload. Boswell let me do the administrative planning to support this new activity. That took up a great deal of my time. I also did some work with personnel. Generally, as the deputy, I was the trouble shooter with no specific day-to-day responsibilities.

In the State Department, there is always doubt about promotions. It had certainly been my hope and expectation to take Boswell's place, but there were no guarantees. That was clear from my conversations with Ryan before going to Rome. I am sure that Bill Boswell's recommendations carried considerable weight and I know that Bill recommended that I be his replacement. I am sure that the Ambassador also supported my assignment.

My relationship with Ambassador Luce was not close, although she was friendly and cooperative. There was one time when she developed great doubts about me and about our administrative section. She had sent an "Eyes Only" telegram to Washington. The "Eyes Only" reply came back, but the communications unit, for some unknown reason, failed to deliver it to her. She only became aware that the message to her was in the Embassy when she called the person in Washington with whom she was communicating. He told her that he had sent an "Eyes Only" message. We were thoroughly investigated and spent days and days looking for the telegram. There was no record of it having been received at all. The subject of the exchange of communications was the assignment of a new DCM. She always suspected that the Foreign Service or that part of which was running communications had destroyed the incoming message so that she would not act upon the change of DCMs. That of course was not the case, but she, for a long time, was very suspicious of the communication section and of me. She began to use her own channels rather than the Department's. Otherwise, she was supportive of our efforts to bring closer collaboration among various Embassy elements. She did have people to the Residence and I worked closely with her protocol officer -- Matilda Sinclair. Matilda who was very old-school oriented and did not concede, for example, that even American generals, who were assigned to the MAAG, had some status in the American community. It was a somewhat difficult problem to convince her that there was a larger constituency beyond the Foreign Service. Eventually it worked out.

Mrs. Luce was a cruel woman. I remember a staff meeting during which she reduced the AID Director to jelly by her severe questioning and criticism. She took advantage of the fact that she was a woman and the Ambassador, which sharply restricted his ability to respond. She chastised him publicly with no sense of delicacy, with no regard of the feelings of others. I thought that was very cruel. I always viewed her as being on stage, acting out a role to fit varying situations. One day one of the Alitalia airplanes went down during a flight to New York. She had been scheduled to fly to Washington a little bit later. She immediately canceled those reservations and

publicly made new ones on the same Alitalia flight that had gone down. It was a gesture; it may have been a nice gesture, but there was a certain amount of grand-standing in it.

Ed Adams was the Italian country desk officer in Washington and was close to Mrs. Luce personally. He accompanied her on a trip to Rome from Washington. Her plane had to make a refueling stop in Gander and couldn't take off because of weather. So Mrs. Luce and Ed had cocktails and dinner with the military group stationed there. In the group, there was a young military officer who may have had a few too many drinks. He sat near her at dinner and said: "Mrs Luce, besides being the Ambassador, what else do you do?". She responded: "I write occasionally. I am an author, as you may know". The young man remarked that Mr. Luce was a publisher and then commented: "I bet you don't have much trouble getting your works published! Ha, ha.". It was a bad joke. Mrs. Luce became very angry and turned to Adams and asked: "Ed, how do I rank in the military structure?". Ed told her that she ranked with and above the four star generals. Then Mrs. Luce turned to the young officer and said: "I used to relate to people with the stars in my eyes. I now relate to them with the stars on my shoulders and I have four of them on each!". That is the way she was.

Mrs. Luce did not interfere with my work. She had no real interest in administration, except to get what she wanted. During my tenure, the ceiling of her bed-room flaked off and she told the press that she was getting arsenic poisoning from the paint that fell into her breakfast which she often had while in bed. So we covered that ceiling with some kind of sail cloth, repainted and made sure that it wouldn't flake off on her. But she always maintained to the public and the press that she was being poisoned. I am sure it was not the case. No doubt there was lead in the paint, but there was not much evidence to suggest that it was flaking off. It could have happened, but I seriously doubt it. In any case, she always put it in a sinister context, implying that there was a threat against her or that this one of the aggravations she had to put up with for being an Ambassador.

She and John Rooney (the Democratic Congressman from Brooklyn) were ardent enemies -- being ardent partisans on opposing sides of the political fence; she being a woman and he being a man; she being rich and he being from a poor family. Rooney came to the Embassy on one of his visits. With great deal of difficulty, I convinced Mrs. Luce to have Rooney and his party to lunch. At the last minute, Rooney refused to go. He let her go through all the trouble of inviting various people and then after they had arrived, he refused to go. She was not happy!

She took it upon herself to lecture Rooney about his parsimonious treatment of the Embassy and the Department in general. She told about the shortage of secretaries, typewriters, cars -- about which she knew very little -- and made a ridiculous presentation. She knew from reading the press at appropriations time how Rooney had treated the Department; she knew precious little about the Embassy's operations and needs. The Department of course used Rooney's comments on how he had cut the Department as a rationale for denying Ambassadors who wanted too many additional resources!

The first DCM that I worked with was Elbridge Durbrow, who was an old hand in the Foreign Service -- traditional in many ways. He had a very violent temper. He would swear and curse and kick things. I didn't have to deal with him much because through most of Durbrow's tenure, Bill

Boswell was the Administrative Counselor. Boswell had the advantage of also having been on old hand in the Foreign Service, so that he had a different relationship to Durbrow than I did. There was a distinct and obvious different relationships among the old hands than there was between them and the Foreign Service staff or the new members of the "club" like myself. Then old hands had an obvious understanding, trust and rapport among each other that did extend to non-club members.

I did not have the same feeling in Karachi.. The Ambassador was a political appointee and John Emmerson was a wonderful DCM, without any of the traditional Foreign Service attitudes and conceits. He had a wonderful wife who did not carry the Foreign Service aura with her. He was very inclusive in the way he treated people, particularly in the conduct of their social life. The Emmersons and we didn't become social friends, but we became good friends. He was always gracious and nice to me. But in Rome, we ran into the "club" which consisted of the DCM, the Political and Economic Counselors and the CIA Station Chief. They were all old European hands. Boswell was an exception. Although a member of the "club", he paid attention to his staff both at work and at home. I was never in Durbrow's home. It was his departure and replacement that was the subject of Mrs. Luce's "Eyes Only" telegram exchange. She had told the Department that Durbrow should be removed and not appointed as an Ambassador. She was certain that Boswell or I or some member of the "club" had intercepted the return message to protect Durbrow. The relationships between Luce and Durbrow were not very good because she thought that she knew more about being an Ambassador and about US-Italian relations than anyone else. She thought she knew more about the internal Italian political scene than her DCM. She was Catholic and had direct access to the Pope. You remember the story than when she visited the Pope one day, he commented to her after her remarks: "You know, Mrs. Luce, I am a Catholic too". She also had direct access to President Eisenhower. She didn't rely upon a DCM's advice on policy issues. Durbrow certainly wasn't interested in the management of the Embassy. So there was always a tension between the two -- turf fights.

Durbrow showed no interest in management or administration, unless something went wrong -- a car didn't arrive in time, a telegram was delayed, a secretary got something wrong, his apartment wasn't in good enough shape -- then he showed interest -- negative, related essentially to his own self-interest. That unfortunately was too often the case with many of the old Foreign Service Officers.

Durbrow was replaced by John Jernegan. He was a breath of fresh air. He was very relaxed as was Mrs. Jernegan. They didn't pay any attention to rank. He got along well with Mrs. Luce who trusted him. He did what Mrs. Luce wanted and did not interfere in her jurisdiction. He took an interest in management and supported our administrative efforts. He listened and helped when needed, but did not interfere in day-to-day activities. He supported many of our new initiatives after Durbrow and Luce left, especially when Mr. Zellerbach came as Ambassador. We sponsored many activities to try to help the Embassy staff. The Jernegans for example often used the beach club that we developed for all Embassy members -- both Americans and locals -- regardless of Agency affiliations. The Jernegans opened the club; were there with their kids sitting on the beach on their blankets. They talked to the lowest staff and a were a model for effective management. I can't comment on his abilities in the substantive area, but he was superb in his people relationships and in his ability to make things happen.

I might just mention some other innovations that we attempted in Rome. The commissary was already in existence when I arrived, but we increased the range of goods available. Housing in Rome was difficult problem; it was expensive and hard to find. Therefore, new arrivals had to wait in a hotel -- several days at least and sometimes weeks -- until they could find permanent lodging. That was very unsettling and expensive for families with children. So we established a private organization which rented apartments and furnished them. So then the newcomers could move into these apartments while they searched for permanent quarters. The Embassy took the temporary living allowance that the government paid for people in those circumstances and with that we paid the rent. If the family liked the apartment, they could rent it for their stay in Rome; if they didn't like it, it was a base for finding something more suitable. It worked well; it didn't cost the government anything. The organization may have made a small profit, but if it did, it was very small. This employees' organization branched out from there -- if you had a car for sale it would buy it and rent it to the newcomers until they managed to get their own transportation. We also made arrangements for personnel to pay their utility bills at the Embassy rather than having to go to the local offices. The association used to buy opera and theater tickets for resale to the employees. The association also bought some dishes and serving bowls and other necessities in case people had large parties and didn't have enough china of their own. We had forty gallon coffee urns. We would rent out whatever additional housewares they needed. This may have been the first U-rent in any Embassy. We also started a commissary for local employees. That was very controversial. The cost of food was high in Italy. So we found a room in the Embassy that was large and stocked it with cheese, pasta and other basic Italian diet items. We bought them at wholesale and sold them for a small profit -- below the market prices. The local employees appreciated that kind of support, but it was very controversial with many "old line" officers who thought that "hardships made you strong!"

All of this was run by a private employees association controlled by the same board of governors that ran the commissary. These new morale boosting efforts were not popular with every one; the staff people -- secretaries, communicators -- liked it; the American military people liked it, but the old line Foreign Service officers considered these efforts as too much coddling. They felt it took away initiative; they believed that it would have been better for families to spend their first few days or weeks in hotels, even if it impoverished them. It had been good enough for them. I have never understood their logic, but they strongly and vocally opposed efforts to improve the staff's morale. They even went to the Ambassador in an effort to kill some of these initiatives, fortunately to no avail. When we were inspected by the Department, that report really took us apart for taking on all those activities. We were criticized for undertaking activities that had not been specifically authorized; we therefore had no rights to undertake these activities which as long as not having been specifically approved, were wrong and illegal. We were severely reprimanded for doing it, although the Embassy's response, approved by the Ambassador and the DCM, objected strenuously to the inspectors' reasoning. And we didn't change our practices, but my successor changed did.

That is one of the problems of the Foreign Service or any organization for that matter. When actions are taken beyond the strictures of regulations, they become the responsibility of the person who wants to make the extra effort and is willing to take the risk. His or her successor, however, if not so inclined, can dissolve it all. That gives the organization an impermanence

which is very unsettling and in some cases detrimental to the efficiency and effectiveness of that organization.

It may sound corny, but my management philosophy had two aspects: a) to help people and b) to improve the effectiveness of the Embassy. I didn't see how a Foreign Service Officer or US interests were well served if he had to put a wife and two children into a pension or hotel, in small rooms, and then had to spend six weeks looking for a permanent residence. Not only was such living uncomfortable, but it was also expensive since he would have had to pay for all meals in local restaurants. I felt that such an officer would have been a much happier employee, and presumably therefore more productive, if he could place his family in an established living quarters fully furnished with the basic needs and cleaned by a maid. Not only was the family's morale maintained, but the house-hunting time reduced because both the officer and his wife -- mostly the latter -- could spend more time looking for permanent quarters. I still do not understand why providing such support makes an officer weak. It seemed to me that the program was good for husbands, wives and the children and eventually good for the Embassy. An officer who had to constantly worry about his family and his finances could not be as productive or attentive as one who was less concerned about just keeping his family's head above the water. The officer, with his home cares somewhat relieved should have been more productive and at an earlier time. I couldn't see how a program that would be beneficial to an officer and the institution could be considered detrimental. But as I said, the program was not universally accepted; many people objected strenuously.

There were two programs through which we hoped to improve the lot of the local employees. One was the beach club, which was open to all Embassy employees. I had hoped that such a collective meeting ground would bring all people closer together to share experiences. The interesting part of this program was the negative reaction of the senior Italian employees, who came to me after we decided on a beach club. They praised the idea for the opportunity it would give them to mingle with Americans in an informal setting. But they were very disturbed that lower ranking Italian employees, like drivers and cleaning people should have access to the club. But we did permit the use of the facilities by all employees as a real lesson in democracy.

The commissary, on the other hand, was done for morale and financial considerations. It helped the locals' morale because they could their staples at more reasonable prices. It was also the custom of the country; almost every government agency, almost all large enterprises had their own commissaries. So our people asked why the Embassy couldn't have one as well and I knew of no good reason why it shouldn't. It wasn't authorized by any regulation, but that didn't make it wrong. Of course, there were a number of Foreign Service officers, mostly the traditionalists, who objected to this facility as well. There were some young Foreign Service officers who also opposed these innovations. One of them wrote me about two years ago, upon his retirement, saying that he apologized for all the opposition he provided during our days in Rome and recognized that he had been wrong.

An interesting aspect of all of this fuss which was highlighted by the Inspection Report was that soon after the Embassy made its appeal on the report I was transferred back to Washington. There I found that one of our strongest supporters was Loy Henderson, the Deputy Under Secretary for Administration. As an old hand, he would have seemed to be an unlikely supporter.

He brought me together with the Chief Inspector and we buried our differences and the Inspection Report -- at least that part pertaining to administration -- at the same time.

I first met John Rooney when he visited Italy after I had become Counselor for Administration. He arrived on a ship. He preferred to travel by ship. So Verla and I went to Naples to meet Rooney and his party and brought them to Rome. I had never met a Congressman, much less one like Rooney. I didn't know why he was there or what I was supposed to do. Mrs. Luce directed me to be the "control" officer. My own concept was to present the Embassy in the best light possible. I wanted to make sure Rooney understood our needs -- as subtly as possible -- and that he and his party had a good time. So Verla and I treated them as our guests and showed them Rome by day and night. Frankly, I soon found out that his interests in the Embassy were marginal, unlike his interest in having a good time. So that is the way the visit was conducted.

His day didn't start until late lunch because we would stay up late; he would drink hard and then he slept very late. But after lunch, he would be ready to go out. One of Rooney's interests was Embassy housing because that was a large part of the Department's budget which was under the jurisdiction of his Committee. One of the items that he looked at most overseas establishment was housing. In those days, the Crocketts lived in a State Department house which was on the same compound with a large multi-story house in which the DCM and the Political and Economic Counselors lived. Our house had been the gate-keeper's house for this palazzo. It was a nice enough house, but it was run-down. One of my philosophies was that the administrator had to get everybody else's house fixed before he fixed his own. An administrator should never have something in his or her house that is not available to other senior officers first. That is one way to avoid animosities and envy. So our house was not very fit, but we didn't mind. It was comfortable. John Rooney wanted to see the house, so we invited him and his party in for after dinner drinks one night. There was a lot of hilarity and loud talk, which finally awoke our son Bobby. He was a little boy of about six and he came downstairs, carrying a stuffed dog. He was not afraid and Rooney fussed over him in a big way. Rooney immediately liked this cute, bright tow-headed little boy. Finally, I heard the Congressman say to Bobby: "How do you like the house you live in?". I was horrified when Bobby responded: "Oh, we don't like it at all. It is small and dirty and doesn't have nice furniture. I would like to live in a nice house like my friend Jenny Freeman has!". (Freeman was the Political Counselor). We had never talked to Bobby or in front of him about the house. Then Rooney said: "Did your father tell you to tell me that?" and without hesitation Bobby responded: "Yes, he did". By this time, the whole group was paying rapt attention to the conversation. Rooney said: "Thank you, Bobby, for telling me. Maybe we can get the house fixed up". He flashed a leering smile at me. Bobby was bundled off to bed before he could do anymore damage. The crowd awaited Rooney's reaction. He said: "Well, I'll be damned! I have seen some low down tricks pulled on me, but never would I expect to have a man try to influence me through his six year old son. That is the way of the Foreign Service -- deceitful, dishonest; they will anything to get their way. You are something else, Bill Crockett!". I protested my innocence but neither Rooney nor any of the other guests would ever let me forget the incident. He roared at my obvious sincerity and discomfiture. He liked nothing better than to have a "little skin that he could twist" and he twisted mine continuously and the crowd loved it. After Rooney parted I wondered whether my Foreign Service career was finished. Years later I thought that episode might really have launched it. Rooney may not have remembered me or Verla, but he certainly remembered Bobby. I will never know. In general, the

visit was a successful one with the exception of Rooney's snub of Mrs. Luce, for which I paid later -- I had to explain why I didn't get him there. I had to apologize. But it was a good visit -- the party had a good time and things went well. Rooney only had a brief conversation with Mrs. Luce and that was the extent of his substantive briefings -- actually most of the meeting was devoted to her criticisms of his parsimoniousness.

Rooney always traveled with his principal staff aide, Jay Howe, who was narrow-minded, touchy, sensitive person who hated the Foreign Service. He was suspicious of the Service and very critical of it. He hated USIA even more. Howe was always with him whispering in Rooney's ear questions to ask or things to see. Mrs. Rooney was always with the party. Jay Farrell, who later became Commissioner for Immigration and at the time of the Rome visit was probably the Assistant Commissioner always traveled with Rooney. He was a long time friend. Later on, when I traveled with him, Mich Cieplinski also went along. He never traveled with another Congressmen. The ranking minority member of the subcommittee, Congressman Frank Bow would also travel and often to the same places that Rooney visited, but always separately. Rooney's ego demanded all the attention and service; he couldn't share it with anyone else.

The Rome Embassy's administrative staff was relatively large. The quality was mixed. We had a personnel officer -- Bertha Beaton -- who was a dreadful human being. She was terrible with her staff. She was an awful supervisor and therefore the section was very ineffective. Her supervisory skills were so bad that the staff was basically non-functioning. At one time, we had a very ineffective General Services officer. Later he was replaced by John Bacon, who was a good General Services officer. He had under him a young officer by the name of Larry Roberts, who was responsible for the maintenance of US government owned residences and buildings. He was very good and cooperative and very efficient. My first security officer was Chuck Johnson, who was difficult to deal with. His attitude was that security was not a part of administration; he thought he should report directly to the Ambassador which he did frequently over the head of the Administrative Counselor. It was a very difficult official relationships although we were socially friendly. He was very efficient. So it was a mixed bag. The clerical staff in the Administrative Section were better than the officers. In those days, none of my staff received any training. The Department didn't provide any administrative training except perhaps to Budget and Fiscal Officers who were instructed what to pay and what not to pay and what would send them to jail. But I don't remember the Department providing any training in the other administrative areas. I think that has improved, although I don't know whether such vital skills as supervision of local staffs are taught.

The local staff was good and that is the saving grace of Foreign Service administration. In most Embassies around the world, the local staff provides the continuity. They know their jobs, know how to get things done and do their jobs pretty well. It is sad when incompetent FSOs try to supervise them!

The Rome local staff was considerably different from the Karachi staff. The Italian staff was very professional. Most of them had all been with the Embassy for many years dating back to the end of the War. They knew their jobs well; the Americans come and go. The quality, ethics and values were high. To my knowledge, we never a problem with a local staff member. The Karachi staff was new and not very effective.

There was always the possibility that the American supervisor might have a negative impact; there was always the possibility of revoking delegations of authority to the local staff, making the locals bring all decisions to the American supervisor before any action was to be taken. The less able and less secure the supervisor was, the greater the risk that decisions would be made by him or her. Those supervisors tended to distrust the locals. The possibility of negative influence was very great. There wasn't too much positive influence. It was my view then and now that many Embassies, particularly in Europe, didn't need American supervisors in the administrative sections because the locals were honest and efficient enough to get the job done. This may not be true in Third World Embassies or some of the more difficult posts, but in Western Europe, I believe we could have operated effectively with a much smaller American presence in the administrative sections. I am not sure that anybody else agrees with that, but I firmly believed it.

The American supervisors probably grew in their jobs in Rome. My attitude toward bureaucracy enabled them to do things and undertake activities which might not have been permitted under other administrative officers. That should have made them grow. It may have caused them trouble later on, but I believe that they grew in terms of attitude. I always maintained that administration was to serve and not to control. That was a difficult message to get across to people. Many of them, if they gave out pencils, would wish to control the use by not issuing new ones until the stubs of the old ones were turned back in! It is very hard to keep people who have support functions to remember that the operative word is "support". It is not control. I hope therefore that the staff in Rome grew in attitude at least with a better appreciation of the meaning of support and with a better appreciation of the role of an administrative section in a larger institution, such as an Embassy. Even though supported by a strong local staff, the Americans did not devote much thought to "management" as contrasted to "administration". They did not do enough planning and that may have been my fault stemming from my lack of experience in the Foreign Service and my lack of understanding of management opportunities at an Embassy. I should take the blame for that and not they. There were opportunities for us to do more in the Embassy in terms of such things as local training and development for managers. That was my fault. I and they were too devoted to details, which could have been left in competent local hands.

After I was promoted to Counselor, Joe Eggert became my deputy. He came some months after Bill Boswell had left. I am not sure that I wanted one, but I got one. Joe turned out to be an excellent deputy -- loyal, supportive and with the same attitude towards support of people as I had. He had the same attitude as I did when it came to trying to develop a sense of community. If I did anything in any Embassy where I served, it was to develop that sense of community among the American employees as well as the locals. By community, I mean a sense of oneness not as a force against any other group, but to foster a sense of cooperation and collaboration and not competition which often destroys the cohesiveness of an organization.

Rome was one vivid illustration of a situation in which Americans for the most lived in "ghettoes". That was true for the senior officers as some of the lower ranking staff. I think the "ghetto" concept is poor policy. It was probably driven by financial considerations and not by substantive policy, but I think it is a bad policy. Our personnel should have lived among Italians, although even if you lived "on the economy", that was no guarantee that you would have become

acquainted with your neighbors. It is hard to become neighborly in foreign communities. My comments are relevant to when I was in Rome. Today the situation is changed with terrorism and overt actions against Americans -- and a "ghetto" may be more justified.

H. FREEMAN MATHEWS, JR.
Vice Consul
Palermo (1954-1955)

H. Freeman Mathews, Jr. was born in Colombia to American parents on December 31, 1927. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University in 1952 and joined the Foreign Service in 1954. Mr. Mathews' career included positions in Switzerland, Spain, Vietnam, and Mexico. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 20, 1993.

MATHEWS: Then all of a sudden, out of the blue in May 1954 came a query from Personnel as to what would I think about going to Palermo as vice-consul in the foreign service. I thought that'd be great, wonderful, when do you want me there? They said, in 10 days. This had come after waiting for something like 18 months or so, checking almost every week where things stood foreign service appointments. Anyway, what had happened was the Refugee Relief Program of 1953 had come along and the Department got some money and authority to appoint new people. My wife was expecting our second child in two months. We decided to go via the Hague where my father was the Ambassador. She stopped in the Hague with our oldest son, who was then about 2, to have our second son who was born in Holland in August '54.

I went straight on to Palermo in June '54 and when I got there I found to my astonishment that there were something like 8 or 10 other brand new foreign service officers who had come there from various places around the States. A number of them had also left their wives in one place or another to have babies. So there was quite a crew of us who arrived in Palermo to work in the Refugee Relief Program.

Q: I know the answer but I'm asking for the record. The Refugee Relief Program, there were no real refugees in Sicily, what was this?

MATHEWS: The Refugee Relief Program of 1953 was, I think in essence, was based on a false assumption that there were a lot of refugees left after World War II. This is after all 7 or 8 years after World War II ended, so the refugees who were still unsettled were pretty hard core. There were not that many of them who were still around. But the Act also provided for a certain number of immigrant visas to be issued. And if you couldn't get enough refugees, then they could be used for relatives of American citizens, especially brothers, sisters and parents. And that was what we ended up issuing the visas to in Sicily -- large numbers of brothers and sisters of American citizens.

The Consulate, which was headed by Consul General James Keeley, had gone from a very sleepy place with a total of 6 or 7 Americans to something like 75 as a result of the R.R.P. There

was a large contingent of investigators that came to look into the backgrounds of the people that we were issuing visas to. And there was a medical unit that was there, including a doctor who ended up serving a term in Fort Leavenworth for embezzling funds and taking bribes. There were also some immigration people. It was a very sizeable establishment.

Q: I was a Refugee Relief officer in Frankfurt, Germany where we were getting real refugees up there. My understanding was that this program, the initial thing was designed to get Italians into the United States.

MATHEWS: Italians and Greeks.

Q: It was sort of worked around to make it more palatable. It was turned into a refugee program when it really wasn't. The political impulse was basically to get the Italians in. We also had refugees coming in from the Netherlands.

MATHEWS: The only refugees that we had were people who'd been refugees as a result of natural disasters, floods and other kinds of problems in the area. There were primarily Greeks and Italians as well as some Germans.

Q: What about the Mafia?

MATHEWS: That was very interesting. Our personal contacts with the Mafia in Sicily were in essence very amicable. They seemed more a local vigilante group.

The place that we rented in a village called Mondello, sort of a beach resort for Palermo, was a very pretty little house, and the garden was postage stamp size. But when we rented it, the owner said, there's one condition, you have to hire these two gardeners, Salvatore and Giovanni. I remonstrated and said, there doesn't look like there'll be enough work here for half a gardener let alone two. He said, that's all right, you're going to be very happy with them and that's the condition under which you take the house.

It turned out of course that they were very low level local members of the Mafia, but very nice men. The result was, that we were only robbed once, when somebody stole some Dr. Dentons (baby pajamas with feet in them), off the clothesline. These guys were horrified that somebody had the nerve to steal them, so they posted a man with a shotgun in our garage for the next several weeks. That was about the extent of our own direct involvement with the Mafia.

But there was no doubt they were very influential in Sicily. In terms of what we did, in issuing and denying visas, it was very hard to detect Mafiosi. Anybody who was convicted of course we were able to exclude. But there were a lot of people who were simply under suspicion and it was hard to tell if they were truly Mafia or not.

Q: But the investigators, I mean here you had, I know it was a huge operation all over, and you had these people running around doing investigations in essentially a crime ridden area. Did they turn up anything or were they sort of learning to avoid asking or getting into the wrong places or something like that?

MATHEWS: We were always a bit puzzled as to what these investigators did. Many of them were of questionable background and qualifications.

Q: Mostly Italian-American weren't they?

MATHEWS: A lot of Italian-Americans. As brand new FSOs, I'm afraid we tended to look down on these less qualified people who were not foreign service officers. I can't recall that they produced anything of great moment or great use. But there certainly were a lot of them and they were running all over Sicily, all over Italy for that matter Naples and Genoa also had substantial programs.

The head of the investigators in Palermo was a very ostentatious fellow, I think his name was Wilfred V. Duke, I don't know what became of him. He cruised around in a bright red convertible. Sicily in those days had nothing but small Fiats. And here he had this bright red convertible. He was supposed to be sort of, undercover, not CIA, but he was supposed to be discreet.

They had quite a collection of characters that were there. The head of the visa section, a fellow named George Palmer, whose father had been Minister in Afghanistan at some point, was kind of a character himself. He and the head of the investigators, Mr. Duke, became fervent enemies, with big disagreements on everything.

Q: If it was the way it was when I was dealing with it, about a year later up in Frankfurt, they would make a report which you would get and the immigration service would get. Both of you would then interview the people and if the immigration officer and you made the decision to give them the visa, they were given the visa.

MATHEWS: It wasn't that formalized in Palermo. I think the way it worked was if the investigators turned something up they would provide a report on what it was. But that was fairly rare. My impression was they didn't get involved in the visa issuing process unless they had something on the individual. But I guess what we did was to run names past them and they'd check with the police or whoever they could find. The applicants were interviewed by the visa issuing officer and I suppose by the immigration person too. I have the feeling they would mostly handle it on paper, and would sign off. If the vice consul approved the visa, then I think the immigration people tended to go along.

Q: We had joint -- one would interview then the other -- technically we would interview them first and immigration interviews them afterwards. Well then, you did that for about a year and a half or so?

MATHEWS: I got there in June 1954. In August my second son was born in Holland, and my wife brought John and Luke, the older boy, to Palermo. I, in the meantime, looked for a house in Mandello and at the urging of some of the old timers who had already been there, I found a house that had central heating. They said this was really needed in the winter because it got quite cold. It was the only place I could find that had heating.

Well, it turned out to be a disaster, a terrible house. My poor wife arrived with this little bitty baby, she probably shouldn't have traveled that early with him, and with the older boy who was two. She didn't speak Italian, none of us spoke Italian when we got there. And here we were in this awful house and she was very unhappy. All we ate was spaghetti for weeks, it seemed like. She finally said that she had enough and she wanted to go home. I said no, I can't do that, we have to stick it out here for a little bit longer. We're going to find another house.

So I went to the landlady who spoke French. I had a long talk with her and she was very disappointed. But I said that it just was not working out, the house was decrepit, the plumbing didn't work, a variety of things. In addition, I'd inspected it in the daytime and the first night we were there all of a sudden we heard all these police sirens, gun fire, a tremendous racket. I stepped out on the balcony and saw were across the street from an open-air movie theater showing a spaghetti western movie.

Anyway, we did manage to break the lease and found another more appropriate house complete with Salvatore and Giovanni. Then things improved and we were a whole lot happier. We had visits from both our parents, and traveled all over that fascinating island. We left Palermo in December 1955.

WILLIAM C. HARROP
Consular Officer
Palermo (1954-1955)

Assistant Commercial Officer/Economic Officer
Rome (1955-1958)

Ambassador William C. Harrop was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1929. He received a bachelor's degree in English literature and a master's degree in journalism from Harvard University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1954. Ambassador Harrop's career included positions in Italy and Australia, and ambassadorships to Guinea, Kenya, and Zaire. He was interviewed in 1993 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

HARROP: We did not attend the standard A-100 Course at the Foreign Service Institute. There was no orientation course for this whole group. Accepting the appointment was a difficult decision for me. I had heard nothing from the Department for months, and was suddenly told over the phone that if I would appear within nine days in Washington I would receive an appointment and would go to Palermo. I was within about two weeks of examinations in graduate school [at the University of Missouri]. I decided to do it. My wife and I were expecting a baby at the time. We packed up and flew back to the East Coast. I left my wife with her parents in the Finger Lakes area of New York and went down to Washington. The baby was born, by good luck, the day before I was to leave for Italy. I spent a matter of hours in Washington, checking in, and left for Palermo.

We really were sent out without any briefing or preparation at all and had to make our way overseas. Making our way wasn't easy because the Consulate General in Palermo in 1953 was a post which normally would have had about 12 people, which seems large. Then, with the Refugee Relief Act, it just exploded to almost 100. There were 75 or 80 people assigned, including about eight or nine vice consuls. I remember that Samuel Gammon's in-laws, whose name was Renwick, and my in-laws, whose name was Delavan, happened to take the same boat to visit us in Palermo. One couple said to the other, "Where are you going?" The others said, "Well, we're going to visit our son-in-law who is the American Vice Consul in Palermo." The first pair took great umbrage at that, replying, "No, our son-in-law is the American Vice-Consul in Palermo." So there was a large group of us, issuing visas almost entirely to mothers, sisters, and parents of American citizens or holders of green cards permanent residents of the U. S.

We arrived in Palermo just after the era of Salvatore Giuliano. Giuliano was the great, supposedly "Robin Hood" outlaw who came from a nearby town named Partinico. He became a living legend after WW II, idolized and feared. Sicily was a very poor island, indeed, at that time -- it still is relatively poor, although "relative" is an important word. One thing I recall is that on visiting the marketplace a few days after arriving, we experienced "culture shock." When we saw great chunks of meat hanging in the open air and covered by flies. Interestingly enough, in later years, when we went to truly under-developed areas of Africa, we never again experienced such a sense of culture shock. We had been through that in Southern Italy in the 1950's. Sicily is a beautiful island. The wonderful Greek ruins are really some of the finest in the world. I think that it was a blessing to this very compatible group of young Foreign Service Officers, all coming in together, all with young children. Some of our best friends still are the people who were with us in Palermo.

The Mafia, at that time, was a very active organization. Its role in World War II in connection with the landings in Sicily has been well recorded, but the every day presence of the Mafia was something which we hadn't quite expected. I don't mean that in the sense that one felt a concern for physical security, as you would in Central Park in New York or in parts of Washington, D.C., today, but non-violent crime was common. For instance, one officer's home was robbed. All the goods in it were stolen, including the furniture, while he and his family were away. The police and security forces, who were interested in having good relations with the United States, wanted to resolve the case quickly. So they arrested the local Mafia leader, whose identity was no secret. Within about 18 hours the real criminals came forward and all of the booty was recovered. I don't think that the Mafia had had anything to do with the theft at all, but the power of the organization was such that the police could use them to find the real thieves.

The security investigation required by the Refugee Relief Act was a major part of the operation - - the extreme sensitivity toward communism. A sizeable organization called the IRP, or Investigations, Refugee Program, was formed. In fact, that was the beginning of the role of Scott McLeod, who later became -- I would have to use the word, "notorious," as a security officer in the State Department. He ran that operation which included some 50 people in Palermo alone, performing investigations in some depth of every applicant for a visa, trying to find some linkage to the Communist Party, which was, of course, a major party in Italy at the time and had a strong following among the poor Sicilians. I don't recall that the Mafia question being an important

issue in regard to the visa applications, although a criminal record was disqualifying.

Our "clients" were really not refugees in the usual sense of the word. When I mentioned that the largest part of the program was located in Southern Europe, I was thinking of the fact that most of the visas granted under it were issued in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Yugoslavia -- the sources of American immigrants over the past couple of generations.

There were also offices under this program in Central and Eastern Europe. However, I would estimate that no more than 10% of visas issued under the program throughout Europe involved people who actually were refugees. The great bulk came from Italy, and were relatives of those already in America.

We had one interesting experience when Congressman Celler visited Palermo to review the program on the ground. He came from a heavily Italian district in New York. I remember when he came through Palermo. I was a rather outspoken young man at the time, in fact a callous young man and I said, "You know, Mr. Celler, I am concerned that very few of the people that we are granting visas under your Act are really refugees. I am also concerned that we may not be attracting to America the highest quality of Italians that we could bring. Most of the applicants are not among the better educated or more ambitious or more promising." He was absolutely furious at that. He said, "You should know that Italian-Americans are among the finest people in our country, and I am shocked to hear such prejudice and, I would say, even racism among young officers. It is just unacceptable." I was chastened. Then when Congressman Celler left, we were lined up at the airplane to see him off and he went along, shaking hands. To my delight, he came to me and said, "Well, all right. Goodbye to you, Mr. Matthews. I hope you can make a success of your career despite your obvious faults." My colleague Freeman Matthews was considerably less amused by the mix up.

After about one year, I was transferred to Rome. What happened was that Bill Boswell, who was later Director of Security for some time and Deputy Chief of Mission in Cairo, was at that point the Administrative Counselor in the Embassy in Rome. Boswell got the idea -- and part of it came from Bill Crockett, who was his deputy -- of using promising young officers, who had just come into the Service, and give them a chance to move up into other positions in Italy. He thought, "Why don't we use them in other work where we need staff and train them in the process?" So there was quite a migration of these new officers, after a year or a year and a half in Palermo and Naples, to other positions in Italy. I went to Rome to be Assistant Commercial Attache. I was later replaced in that job by Nick Veliotis who had come to Naples some time after we arrived in Palermo. Sam Gammon went to the Consulate General in Milan. Sam Lewis went to Florence. I think that one or two others came up to the Embassy in Rome. Freeman Matthews went to the Consulate in Zurich.

There was a USIS [United States Information Service] officer, a very excellent man, Paul Wheeler, who went to the Consulate in Trieste. Sam Wise, who was one of the young officers in Palermo, has since retired and become the director of the Congressional side of the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] operation. He has been doing that for 10 years or so. He also went to Trieste from Palermo.

My first ambassador in Rome was Clare Boothe Luce and then, subsequently, David Zellerbach, of Crown-Zellerbach, the paper company. It was a fascinating time in Rome, too, because Mrs. Luce was so committed to a direct confrontation with and opposition to communism in Italy. She spent a lot of her time opposing the CGIL [Italian General Confederation of Labor], the labor union controlled by the Left. She was a remarkable woman, really -- a person of extraordinary presence, the very definition of the word "charisma." She was exciting to work for, although I think, in retrospect, as we now look back more objectively at the Cold War, that she was almost a caricature of our pervasive American phobia over Communism.

I began doing straight commercial work and took American trade missions around the country. It was very interesting. We had a number of trade missions of experienced, American business people came to Italy. Our concern, which seems bizarre today in the 1990s, was to help them export to America. We would take buyers from U.S. department stores, Americans expert with various types of specialized equipment, managers from our steel industry. They would meet with Italian industrialists and manufacturers, farmers, and others, and advise them on how they could best gain access to the American market to earn dollars for Italy. Of course, in later years, all of the experience I have had with commercial matters has been exactly in the opposite direction. I was in that work in Rome for, perhaps, 10 months. Then for the next two years I was an economic officer with main responsibility for a very interesting sector, energy, at a time when the first internationally financed nuclear reactor was being built. The World Bank invited bids on a nuclear reactor for Italy, and American, British and French firms competed -- a most interesting thing for me to be engaged in. It was also the era when a man named Enrico Mattei was the very energetic, activist head of the Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi. The Italian energy and petroleum industry was shattering the historic "50-50" split in the Middle East by offering a much larger percentage of the proceeds and ownership of oil exploration to Arab governments.

Our perception was largely one of self interest, trying to protect the American oil industry against Mattei, feeling that he was opening a kind of "Pandora's Box" in these Gulf, Middle Eastern, and Maghreb countries. We thought that it was going to be very hard to close this box and that the future of Western energy economics was likely to suffer some mighty buffets from Mattei. So we regarded ourselves as opposed to him, and I spent much time endeavoring to frustrate his operations.

Nuclear energy was so new that I do not recall any major opposition to it in Italy. Certainly, there were no significant public environmental or radiation concerns. The focus was mostly on the cost of nuclear energy, which was considered very questionable. This was a time, of course, when atomic energy was regarded with great optimism. Later on, I was more involved with nuclear energy while working with EURATOM [European Atomic Energy Commission] as the European Community first began to pick up speed. There was even more this sense that the technology was going to leap forward and that we were at the threshold of a marvelous new era - - an era which has not to this day, 35 years later, really unfolded. France is the only major country today which has a large proportion of its energy provided by nuclear power. But I do not recall that there were serious social or political objections to nuclear energy, as such.

To my recollection, there was no concern that the CGIL would try to close the nuclear plant. The Edison Company, a private Italian firm, was very important in electric power in Italy, and the

chemicals giant Montecatini (which later merged with Edison) engaged in the nuclear industry. ENI [National Hydrocarbons Agency] had not been involved in electricity, but moved energetically into nuclear energy. The CGIL was most active in automotive, heavy equipment, and manufacturing sectors.

This World Bank nuclear reactor project came along very well. The major American bidders turned out to be General Electric and Westinghouse, the two companies that were most advanced at the time. A French consortium was trying hard to compete, as well as a British consortium. So there were four serious competitors for this first, major, world contract, which was thought of as being a milestone in the industry and a tremendous leg-up for whoever won it -- and for the type of reactor. Each company had a different type of reactor: water and heavy water and gas cooled reactors of different types, requiring different degrees of uranium enrichment. The American companies finally won the bid, although, as I have mentioned, the French have since done more than anyone else to develop this energy source.

We really did not speak to Communists -- hardly at all. I think that a few people in the Political Section were authorized to do that, but, by and large, we didn't do it. The Political Section was quite active. Our Political Counselor at the time was a man named V. Lansing Collins. There was one officer who was responsible for dealings with the Socialists and with the Left. I think that he felt a little bit under constraint from Mrs. Luce more than from David Zellerbach. The Deputy Chief of the CIA Station in Rome at the time was Bill Colby, who later went on to be the Director of Central Intelligence.

Although a junior officer at the time, I felt that we were "meddling" very arrogantly in the politics of Italy -- to an unusual degree. I was not involved in that. As a junior officer on the economic side I was more involved in working on economic and commercial relations. An interesting phenomenon was the tremendous importance of the United States. Any official American could have the ear of any Italian official. In economic matters there was a fascination with American management techniques, a scramble, a search for American investors and American markets. There was, I think, a very real gratitude for the concern which the United States showed in the redevelopment and rebuilding of Italy -- the Marshall Plan and all the rest.

Zellerbach was not an activist ambassador. He personally played a modest role in the relations between the two countries. He was a very sharp contrast to the assertive, incisive, and energetic Mrs. Luce. The head of the Economic Section was a man named Henry Tasca, who later became Ambassador to Morocco and to Greece. I thought he was a rather manipulative man, a very charming person. I felt the same about him subsequently in Morocco, where he seemed sometimes more engaged in representing King Hassen in Washington than vice versa. I was not involved in his work in Greece.

He was the Director of the very large USOM [United States Operations Mission], the foreign assistance mission, as well as of the very large Economic Section. He was later replaced by a man named Francis Deak, who was promoted from within. The Economic Section of the American Embassy was an extremely important and large operation at that time. The assistance organization was not called AID [Agency for International Development] at the time, but ICA [International Cooperation Administration]. I have forgotten all the different names we've gone

through to refer to foreign assistance, which has been frequently redesigned in response to its unpopularity with voters. In the 1950s we had productivity experts and all sorts of technical people doing much the same kind of work in Italy that AID has subsequently done in the developing world.

I left Rome in the late fall of 1958 to come back to Washington. I came back under protest because by that time I had become fascinated with energy questions and with the politics of energy -- atomic energy particularly. I was asked to come back to be in the Office of Personnel in the State Department, handling personnel assignments. I sent back an imprudent cable to say that if I had wanted to be in personnel work I would have joined Westinghouse, not the State Department. I said that I wasn't interested in that. I was told in no uncertain terms that if I wanted to continue my career in the State Department, I should come back and work in Personnel. So I did.

ROBERT L. NICHOLS
Information Officer, USIS
Milan (1954-1956)

Robert L. Nichols was born in Wisconsin on August 4, 1924. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II in China and Asia. He received a bachelor's degree from Tufts University and a master's degree from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. His Foreign Service career included positions in The Philippines, The Netherlands, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore. This interview was conducted by Robert Amerson on August 30, 1988.

Q: Sophisticated and bustling Milan, Italy, was a far cry from your one-man post in the Philippines.

NICHOLS: It sure was. It was a very different experience. It was a four-American staff post, and I went there as the information officer. It was a completely new experience, different than being in the Philippines, certainly. One of the first things I had to do was contend with another language, Italian.

Q: Had you known any Italian before?

NICHOLS: I had two weeks' training in Washington. That's all they gave you at that time. I arrived in Genoa by boat, drove my car from Genoa to Milan, and had to find a place to stay. I got a good introduction that way. I worked with a staff in Milan, where the meetings and everything were conducted in Italian. The PAO was Marjorie Ferguson, who always conducted her staff meetings in Italian. So I had to learn the hard way.

I commuted when I was in Italy. I lived in Como, and I commuted to Milan by train, which was a marvelous place to have my daily Italian lesson.

Q: The type of staff in Milan was quite different from what you had been accustomed in the boondocks in the Philippines?

NICHOLS: Very much so, although I had a couple of very well-educated staff members in the Philippines. But in Milan, I had people with doctorates running sections, the press section, and what we called the social-economic section. A man named Arturo Bassi, who was a very impressive individual. Then there was Giovanni Pini, another impressive individual, the former editor of the leading socialist daily paper in Italy. So this was a new experience, and I was still pretty wet behind the ears.

Q: Who was ambassador at the time?

NICHOLS: Mrs. Luce. Clare Boothe Luce was ambassador. She was a person who made an impression on everyone, the Italians, her staff and all of us, no question about it.

Q: Did you get acquainted with the opera at La Scala nearby?

NICHOLS: Yes, and one of my great memories is going to see "Porgy and Bess" there, with the first American company that had ever played at La Scala. La Scala was making an exception. This was the same American company that had traveled to the Soviet Union, and was a very talent-rich group because it had three Porgies and three Besses. Mrs. Ira Gershwin was traveling with them, and Rubin Mamoulian was the director/producer. Gloria Davy was the lead Bess. She later ended up at the Met. Mrs. Luce came to Milan for opening night, escorted by our cultural attaché, the former dean of liberal arts at Howard University, Frank Snowden. Frank is a handsome black man, and very distinguished-looking, while Mrs. Luce, with her blond hair and good looks . . . They sat in the "royal" box in the center of the theater. My wife and I were sitting just in back of them. Everybody in that theater looked at them that night.

Q: That must have made quite an impression.

NICHOLS: It certainly did.

Q: After Milan, two years in Italy, and then on to Amsterdam, wasn't it?

PAUL K. STAHNKE
Special Officer, Refugee Relief Program
Palermo (1954)

Vice Consul, Italian Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs
Washington, DC (1954)

Consular Officer
Venice (1955-1956)

Paul K. Stahnke was born on April 21, 1923 in Illinois. He received a bachelor's degree from Roosevelt College and a master's degree in international relations from the University of Chicago. He served in the U.S. Army from 1943-1946. His Foreign Service career included positions in Hamburg, Kiel, Tokyo, Mogadishu, Copenhagen, Paris, and Bangkok. This interview was conducted by Thomas Dunnigan on June 1, 1994.

Q: Now, Palermo. Is that where you were in the Refugee Relief Program?

STAHNKE: Yes.

Q: Tell us a little about that and how it worked in Sicily.

STAHNKE: It was called the Refugee Relief Program (RRP), but actually the visas issued to refugees were very few. By far the majority of visas issued in the several posts in Italy that had active programs, primarily Palermo and Naples, and to a very much smaller extent one or two of the northern Italian posts, were to relatives of Italians living in the United States as permitted under the law. Since Sicily had been a major source of Italian emigration to the US, we were inundated with applications. Though a part of the Consulate General in Palermo, the RRP operated with considerable autonomy. As in Hamburg, we had separate groups of visa issuing and visa security screening officers. I was in the latter group and the first to arrive, after receiving a briefing at the Embassy in Rome on my way down. Being the first, I set up the investigative program which was considerably more elaborate than in Hamburg. Together with an official of the Italian Ministry of Interior, I visited all nine of the provinces in Sicily to brief the police chiefs (Questore) on our program and the nature of the reports we expected from them. These were primarily all information on visa applicants they had on file, particularly criminal records.

Q: I was wondering who the refugees would be in a place like Sicily. Would the fact that a person had been a member of the Fascist Party disqualify them?

STAHNKE: The Internal Security Act still applied. It was a lesser factor in Italy than it had been and continued to be in Germany. It was easier, partly because the Italians were less perhaps diligent in being truthful when they claimed to have been involuntary members of the Fascist Party.

Q: I see. Was there a strong Communist influence at that time in Sicily?

STAHNKE: No, Communism never gained much support in Sicily. While workers in the rest of Italy found in the Communist party a source of support and help; in Sicily, this was primarily provided by the Mafia. While we regard the Mafia primarily as a criminal organization which it now is also in Sicily, while I was there, it still was truer to its original purpose - a vehicle for the common man in protecting him against the landowners and "foreign" authorities, the latter being Naples when Sicily was part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and later Rome after Italy was unified. While the Sicilians didn't much like the Rome authorities, they were strongly attached to the monarchy, hence Sicily was a stronghold of the Monarchist party, even after the monarchy

was abolished.

Q: Was there much visible indication of US aid there and how they regarded it, or were we giving much aid at that time?

STAHNKE: We were not giving much aid directly at that point. The Italian government had been involved for some years in trying to industrialize the south through the Fund for the South, which had received some support from the Marshall Plan. Though it had some success, on the whole, the Fund for the South was a failure. Its intent was to provide jobs for the South (including Sicily) but emigration to the North of Italy (primarily to the industrial triangle of Genoa-Milan-Turin) continued unabated. Several of the projects, especially a steel plant in Taranto (not in Sicily), became white elephants but the oil refineries and petrochemical complexes in Sicily around Gela remain ongoing concerns, although not providing much new local employment.

Q: And as we gather from our movies, there has always been a Mafia in Sicily.

STAHNKE: Yes, since the 19th century. As I've suggested, the Mafia while I was there was a far more benevolent group than it was in the States and has now become in Sicily. It had originally been created as something like a citizens benevolence society and I saw much of that side while I was in Sicily. My gardener, as I soon learned, was the head (godfather) of the local Mafia and therefore I never had any thievery, never had to lock the door to our house. I talked with him often about the Mafia. He was pessimistic about its future, seeing the younger generation more interested in making money, usually through criminal activities, than in protecting the interests of the peasants and workers and maintaining the once strict code of honor of the organization. While the Mafia elsewhere had become much less a benevolence society, my gardener's district retained its original focus. An example: When a local tradesman was killed by lightning, leaving a wife and three children, the local Mafia took up a collection for them, assuring the family that they would never want. Of course, one risked reprisal if one did not contribute but the cause was a good one. A hasty disclaimer: I was not then, nor am now, a supporter of the Mafia which even during my time in Sicily was primarily a criminal organization; however, the small world of the Godfather I knew well and with whom I formed a strong friendship was the better for his presence.

Q: Did you get many visits from Ambassador Luce while you were there?

STAHNKE: No, not in Palermo, but in Venice where I went next.

Q: Well, now you moved on in 1955 to Venice. Had you been sworn into the Foreign Service as an officer by that time?

STAHNKE: I finally became a Foreign Service Officer in July, 1954. I was one of a number of people who had been in the same holding pattern in RRP programs in both Palermo and Naples and who then went on to various careers in the Foreign Service, some of them quite distinguished. Sam Lewis, Bill Harrop, Nick Veliotos to name a few. So, after we became full fledged Foreign Service officers, we were all moved out gradually from the Refugee Relief

Program. There was a certain amount of competition in getting assignments. I had really wanted Rome but was beat out by a colleague and then was offered Venice. It sounded fascinating enough to me, but not really the thing I wanted to do. I wanted to get out of consular work. Still, Venice was such a charming city that I couldn't resist the opportunity. It exceeded my expectations primarily because I had a friend, Count Andrea di Robilant, descendant of three Doges, who was kind enough to rent me one of his palatial apartments on the Grand Canal at a cut-rate price that was within my meager housing allowance. So, we lived like Venetian nobility during our year in that unique city.

Q: Yes, I imagine it was, but what does one do there? Is it consular work?

STAHNKE: It was basically consular work. I tried to do some work on the political side and was somewhat discouraged in that regard by the principal officer who thought he ought to do this work himself. The Venice consular district had really only one issue of political importance: the long-standing conflict between Italy and Austria about the rights of the German (i.e., Austrian) minority in the region the Italians called Alto Adige and the Austrians called Sued Tyrol (South Tyrol). Given my earlier experience with the Danish minority issue in Schleswig-Holstein I was fascinated with this issue but was not permitted to do much regarding it while in Venice. However, I did work on the issue later while on the Italian desk when it had become a matter of UN concern.

Q: Was the Yugoslav border issue involving Trieste settled at that time?

STAHNKE: At that point we had a consulate in Trieste that was handling that matter. I became involved in the whole Trieste question a year or two later when I was on the Italian desk.

Q: After that year plus in Venice, you were brought back to the Department and spend four years back here.

STAHNKE: Yes, I was brought back to the Department and unfortunately had almost a year out because they discovered I had a lesion on my lung which was diagnosed as tuberculosis directly related to my exposure to visa applicants in Palermo, as many as 50 interviews a day, of whom circa 50% were rejected for tuberculosis. I shall be eternally grateful to our medical branch for discovering the problem in its infancy during the routine exam I took upon return to the States. I spent about six months in a sanitarium and then came back to the Department and worked half time for about three months on the Italian desk as assistant desk officer. I was on the desk for three very interesting years. Politics in Italy were always interesting because of their often very chaotic nature. We spent a lot of our time trying to explain the peculiarities of Italian politics to our bosses in Washington.

Q: Yes, and of course there is a large colony of interest in this country in things that go on in Italy.

STAHNKE: Yes, it was the southern bulwark of NATO, so political stability in Italy was important to us and the Communist threat was generally very strong. It was not strong in Sicily, which was Monarchist, but certainly it was strong elsewhere in the country.

Q: This was also during the period that the Italian prime minister, as I recall, kept turning over regularly.

STAHNKE: Not exactly. De Gasperi was Prime Minister continuously from 1945 to 1953 but changed Cabinets 8 or 9 times during that period, with his ministers mostly the same - a kind of musical chairs game. I came to the desk after de Gasperi had died and the musical chair game continued, this time including the prime ministers. As I recall, we had something like six changes of government during the three years I was on the Italian desk. Fortunately, because most of the ministers just changed portfolios, we didn't have to do much research on anyone new.

Q: Were there any particular things that happened of interest during that assignment that you would like to mention?

STAHNKE: First off, since we mentioned Trieste, I was involved in a fascinating series of discussions with the Department geographer who was trying to draw a new map of that area, and was uncertain as to what to do with the border between Italy and Yugoslavia. We had a lengthy debate on whether we should still identify the Trieste Free Zone, which was always fictional right from the start. We decided, ultimately, to draw with a dotted line the de facto boundary between Italy and Yugoslavia as it then existed and then put in a footnote stating the de facto status. So I felt responsible for having helped draw the new map of the Italian/Yugoslav border, which, indeed, is the border today.

Q: Well, I guess you did it successfully because it hasn't exploded again in the last 30 years.

STAHNKE: That's true, it is the one part of Yugoslavia that hasn't.

Q: You were there on the Italian desk until 1960.

STAHNKE: Yes. The desk was very active. One of our largest, ongoing issues was that of determining what role, if any, we should play in encouraging an "opening to the left", i.e., whether the ruling coalition since World War II, led by the Christian Democrats, should broaden its base to include the Socialists (led by Pietro Nenni), a party which had been closely allied with the Communist party, an alliance that showed signs of breaking down if for no other reason than that the leaders of the Socialist party were tired of being in the opposition and wanted some of gravy which went with ministerial posts. This issue was being debated fiercely in Italy and equally so within the Department and with CIA. Several officers in INR (State's research branch), particularly my old friend John Di Sciullo, were all for the "opening" and for the US to push the Christian Democrats (with whom we had much influence) to that end. The desk was more reserved, in part because we knew the White House was opposed to any steps that suggested support, even if indirectly, of anyone allied with the Communists. The breakthrough came shortly after I left the desk. The new Kennedy administration (particularly Arthur Schlesinger) saw such step (rightly, I believe) as not only broadening the coalition but weakening the Communists. The "opening to the left" didn't produce all the benefits its protagonists expected but it was, in my view, historically necessary.

During my time on the desk, we had two visits by Italian prime ministers. The first was by Pella, a distinguished, though not brilliant, man who came for the funeral of John Foster Dulles. I was his guide during the visit (he came alone, without any staff, contrary to American practice) and we went through the whole somber ceremony of funeral service at the Washington Cathedral, the long, slow procession to Arlington cemetery and the colorful burial ceremony. The other visit was by Fanfani whom my Italian-born wife had known since they both came from Arezzo. Fanfani was a very astute politician, having survived many cabinet upheavals to end up as prime minister several times.

I worked on the desk until 1960 at which time I had to make a decision as to whether I wanted to continue with political work or go into the economic side. At that time I made, possibly, a mistake in choosing the economic, having been encouraged to do so by some of my friends in Personnel at that point because the Department was short of people who had had academic training in economics. Much of my training at the University of Chicago graduate program and others, had been economic, although not purely that. It was political, economic, social, geographic, etc. I say, in retrospect, that it was possibly a mistake because the Department continued to give priority to political officers on the path to ambassadorships. That seems to be less the case now.

BETTY JANE JONES

Vice Consul

Venice (1954-1957)

Consular Officer

Palermo (1962-1964)

Betty Jane Jones was born and raised in Wisconsin. She received a bachelor's degree in government from Beloit College in 1946. Ms. Jones entered the Foreign Service in 1954. Her career included positions in Berlin, Calcutta, and Jerusalem. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 8, 1993.

Q: So, you came into the Foreign Service in 1955 and were sent right out. Where did you go?

JONES: Yes, I actually was sworn in in September, 1954, and I went to Venice, Italy.

Q: Sounds like a crisis post?

JONES: At that time, they didn't have the extensive training that they now have at FSI and I went without any consular training at all. I had taken some Italian, and I had what was then called the mid-career course, but it wasn't anything like the present program. So, when I got to Venice, I arrived on a Friday, I guess, it was rather late, so I went over to the Consulate on Saturday morning to meet the Consul. One of the local employees was on duty also, Saturday morning. He came and asked me if I could do a notarial, because someone had come some long distance, and

needed an "acknowledgment." Could I do an acknowledgment? And I looked at him and said: "What's an acknowledgment?" So, he very carefully explained what was involved which of course was nothing at all complicated, just witnessing a signature. So, that was my first service for the government of the United States. Well, I learned a great deal during my two years and three months there, because it was a small post. In fact, it no longer exists. We had three officers, a Consul and two Vice Consuls, an American secretary and sort of general administrative assistant, and nine local employees. I was called upon to do a little of everything and I learned a tremendous amount about what goes on in a consular office.

Q: What were the major types of consular problems you had there?

JONES: Well, we had lots of tourist problems, especially during the summer. Lost passports, lost travelers' checks, that sort of thing. But also, there were a fair number of Italo-Americans who had retired, after being in the United States, had retired to Italy, and they had various and sundry services they needed to have performed. Passports, citizenship services. At that time, naturalized American citizens, in order to retain their citizenship had to return to the United States periodically to show they hadn't abandoned the United States. That no longer is the case, but at that time, the principal reason that people gave for not going back, and for which they were then permitted to remain, was health reasons.

Q: You're talking about the problems of medical...?

JONES: That's right. Naturalized citizens who wanted to continue to reside abroad and most of them, as I said, claimed ill health, and came in with medical certificates, and so forth. We also had some complicated citizenship cases, although I had many more of those later on when I was in Palermo, Sicily, of Americans born abroad who had some claim to American citizenship. But it was a miscellaneous assortment of consular services to American citizens.

Q: Any horrible protection and welfare cases?

JONES: Occasionally, but not too many. Oh, claims, you know, when you purchase something abroad and it comes broken, there is a term we use -- trade complaints. Because of Venice being a tourist place, and there is lots of glass for sale. We had quite a few of those to deal with. I never had a great deal to do with it, because the Consul pretty much handled it, but Venice did have in its consular district one of the political disputes, what the Italians call the "Alto Adige" and the Austrians call the "South Tyrol." We did some reporting on that situation. I was also the administrative officer, so I handled that routine. I remember, I felt a great triumph one day when I had to write a contract for the building of a new boat dock, because we were on the Grand Canal and we had a motor boat, and the dock needed to be repaired or replaced. I didn't know anything, of course, about writing a contract, and I looked in the regulations, and did what I thought was right. There was a question whether it ought to be a numbered contract or an unnumbered contract. So I read everything six times and decided it should be one or the other. Then I had to send it to the Embassy in Rome for approval. They wrote back and said it should be the one that I hadn't chosen. So I looked at all the regulations again, and I still thought I was right, and I wrote them back explaining why I thought I was right, and they came back and said: "Sorry, we were wrong. You're correct." I felt that I had won a great triumph.

Q: Such things one remembers, I mean these are small victories.

JONES: Also, those were the days when you wrote out, long hand, new passports. The local employee who handled that was very adept at doing this. We had some rather interesting cases. I remember, we issued a passport to Truman Capote. I once was in an airplane, and the man next to me said: "Did I remember him," which of course I didn't, and he pulled out his passport and it was one that I had signed. So you never know when things like that will turn up.

Q: You left in 1962 and went back to Italy?

JONES: Yes, I went to Palermo in Sicily.

Q: What were you doing there?

JONES: There I did basically all the consular services except visas. We had a lot of very complicated citizenship cases at the time because of a court decision that had made it possible for various people who had not thought that they had a claim to American citizenship to possibly make a claim. There were adults who had been born, grown up in Italy, and who suddenly discovered that by virtue of a parent they might have a claim to citizenship. Of course, when they learned this, many of them came in to try and do that, and it was fascinating because it was a complicated business of trying to ascertain the history and what they had thought or known about their possible claim to American citizenship. I remember there was a family where there were four sons, and they all were married and had children. They all got American citizenship, and all of their families therefore were eligible for non-quota visas, and this whole group got passports and visas and all went to the United States. It was about sixteen or twenty people. They were all really solid types. These fellows were hard workers, they all had jobs, and I thought: 'This group is going to do well in the United States.'

Q: Did you feel the problem of the mafia there at that time? Was it much of a presence?

JONES: Palermo of course is one of the places, and it still is, where they are pretty active. During the last year I was there, they were having a bit of a family warfare. There were a number of incidents of blown up cars. I remember there was another one of our people who lived a couple of blocks away from me, and there was a car blown up in front of her apartment building. None of this was aimed at us foreigners. They were really fighting each other for control. But it was disturbing in a way, but I was never afraid, because it was not something that was aimed at Americans or any other foreigners, but it was certainly something that you didn't expect.

SAMUEL R. GAMMON, III
Junior Officer
Rome (1954-1956)

Political Counselor

Rome (1963-1969)

Ambassador Samuel R. Gammon, III served as Ambassador to Mauritius after having worked on Italian affairs for many years, both in Italy and in Washington. He served as Political Counselor in Rome from 1963 to 1969, then as DCM in Paris. He also worked as a special assistant for NSC matters for the Vice-President. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1993.

GAMMON: I was sent to Italy for my first posting. I learned the language on the scene; I couldn't even say "buon giorno" when I arrived. As a result of that, I was transferred out of the Refugee Relief Program to a posting in Milan doing basically administrative and economic work. I had had a two-month's fill-in as a political officer in Palermo on loan from the Refugee Relief Program, my first post. So that was how the Italian thing came into being. It was happenstance.

Many years later, a good friend of mine found a memorandum listing the 1954 about-to-be junior officers and suggested assignments, and I was down to go to Kuala Lumpur. That would have changed my whole career. I never did the Far East; you went with the flow.

I came back in 1963 as Political Counselor due to more networking because the DCM and frequent chargé was Frank Meloy, who was a friend of Korry's and a not so close friend of ours; so this was the process. The alternative would have been the senior seminar, and I ducked senior training in favor of going to the embassy as political counselor. In fact, I never did have a senior training, nor mid-career, nor junior training stint -- I was the least trained officer in the service.

As Political Counselor I had the usual oversight of the political section, including the extremely large tail, the CIA station. I tried to stay as familiar as possible with their activities, which is difficult as a political counselor. Normally the station chief deals only with the ambassador, and, when necessary, with the DCM in his potential chargé capacity.

Of course I had responsibility for the section, for the political reporting and whatever minor ongoing negotiations might be going on with the Italian government. A lot of this is exchange of information, i.e., Italy is an ally, though they are the most junior of the major allies. We would say, "Well, we are up to this or we are concerned about such and so in the U.N. or Africa looks disturbing or the Cold War is thus and so." The ebb and flow of information exchange is the be all and end all of much reporting in friendly countries.

Plus of course, internal political reporting, because Italy, though the economic miracle had already long since taken place on the economic side, still had an extremely large indigenous communist party which was always perceived as a potential threat.

Old soldiers never die, they just fade away. Italian politicians not only never die, they never fade away. One prime minister had a stroke and another died, but I guess all the rest are still going!

I served under three ambassadors. The first one was Freddie Reinhardt, who when I arrived was at the end of a very, very long stint -- seven or eight years as an ambassador; he could do it in his sleep. He grew up on Italian. His mother was a great Dante scholar. Freddie was away an awful

lot. Splendid ambassador, marvelous. Meloy was chargé a lot of times.

In my second week in Rome, coming on direct transfer from Asmara, Eritrea, I was chargé d'affaires, because Meloy went off on an out of country trip, Reinhardt was away, there was a vacancy in the economic section so I -- though not the most senior person in the embassy -- I was designated chargé and had the infinite pleasure of having a routine telegram go to my previous post. Imagine the pleasure of having my last post receive a message over my name from Embassy Rome. It is equivalent to a vice consul being piped aboard an aircraft carrier, I would say!

Reinhardt was succeeded by H. Gardner Ackley was a fine economist; he had previously been the economic advisor to the president and had been a Fulbrighter in Italy. Gard's handicap was that he didn't really speak Italian, even though he spent a year in Italy earlier and then eighteen months as ambassador. He had a tin ear, I am afraid, for languages, and never did master Italian which is a distinct handicap -- particularly with a fairly easy language like Italian. So I would say that his ambassadorship of about eighteen months was okay, but not very distinguished. He was an intelligent man, a very nice chap and an adequate ambassador, but not in class with a superb old pro like Freddie Reinhardt or one of the new breed of old pros like Graham Martin who succeeded him.

I was with Martin for about two and a half to three months. I already had my assignment when he came. I had been kidnapped to come back on loan to USIA. He was Louis XI brought back to life.

First of all I wasn't frightened of him as many people justly were. He was there -- the gray ghost who could be very devious and who knew how to milk the system. He beat out Doug MacArthur for the ambassadorship to Italy. As far as he was concerned, getting there was most of the pleasure! Graham was a pure power type and he did it for the fun of it. He used to be rude to Williams Rogers, the Secretary of State, when Rogers would come through Rome, because he knew Rogers had no power in Washington. It was all Kissinger and Nixon, which was not very good for him in the long run, shall we say. It was rude and gratuitously so because he could get away with it. I am sure he gave his DCM, Wells Stabler, an ulcer!

Graham would pull the wings off flies with relish if it were necessary as a power operation. But since I was a short timer, I felt I could speak to him frankly on the most sensitive matters. I said in fact that I thought it might be good to have a strong career man on the scene following a relatively low key, not too professional, political ambassador following the last years of an old pro who was frequently absent. I said I thought that the embassy needed a little pulling together and that he had very much the reputation for doing that. I thought it probably would be a healthy exercise.

If you are doing an oral history with Graham Martin, you will get undoubtedly het into US involvement with domestic Italian politics. Martin was an aggressive type; the U.S. administration he represented, shall we say, had a forward policy. I think that is as far as I should go.

SAMUEL W. LEWIS
Consular Officer
Naples (1954-1955)

Political Officer
Florence (1955-1959)

Italian Desk
Washington, DC (1959-1963)

Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis was born and raised in Houston, Texas. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Yale University and a master's degree in international relations from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Ambassador Lewis' career included positions in Italy, Brazil, Afghanistan, Israel, and Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by Peter Jessup August 9, 1988.

Q: *Was that just a rank rating, or did that automatically shove you into the consular service?*

LEWIS: We were originally hired as staff officers, vice consuls, but since we were ready to be appointed as regular FSOs, within a month or two after I got to Naples, my regular appointment as an FSO Class 6 came through, and my assignment was vice consul.

I never will forget our arrival in Naples, Peter, because my wife and I had been married about a year and had been so excited about going out to our first Foreign Service post. We'd been living in Washington, hand to mouth, trying to wait out until finally the Department would get around to appointing us. I was working nights, proofreading, going to school in the daytime. My wife was sick most of the time, so she wasn't able to support us as we had anticipated.

In any case, we arrived in Naples, the first time either one of us had been overseas or out of the country, so it was a very exciting moment. We went to the old Parker Hotel up on the Vomero in Naples, and the next morning, went down to Consulate General there at Mergelina on the waterfront, to report in for duty. Since there had been this great talk in Washington about this huge workload and how eager they were to get us out there, we were, of course, run through with one week's orientation in Washington, no language training, no nothing; just "get there and get to work."

We walked into the administrative officer's office, dressed to the nines, and a fellow named Bob [Robert W.] Ross was administrative officer. He looked up from his desk and said, "Oh, my God, another one!" It was a rather deflating experience, to say the least, especially for Sallie. It turned out there were 24 new vice consuls just appointed; all of us arrived in Naples within three weeks of one another.

Q: *To be based in Naples?*

LEWIS: Just for Naples. They moved the visa section to a separate building in an old abandoned apartment house. There wasn't room, obviously, in the consulate. We were up on a hill, rather second-class citizens to the rest of the consulate. But it turned out to be, in retrospect, really a nice experience. Visa work is not the most exciting in the world, but it gave you a good chance to practice your Italian.

We had so many visa officers that they had to divide up the jobs in such a way, it was kind of like a production line. Each person did one little piece of document screening, interviewing, and so forth, and the approximately 15 months, I guess, that I spent in Naples in that job, would have been pretty grim, except that because there was this whole bunch of young officers, many single, some with new wives, all there kind of in the same boat, we really had a lot of fun. It turned out to be socially a kind of nice experience, in retrospect. We hadn't been through a Foreign Service course. Most new officers come in with a class; go to an introductory officers' course. We didn't have any class, so we had our own, in effect, in Naples, in the visa section.

Q: Anyone from your class at Yale?

LEWIS: No, no. No one from Yale. There were seven of us that had been the first appointed to arrive on the same day, and then many others came the next two weeks thereafter.

Q: What would your comment be on the value in that particular place and later on, of local employees? Some of the work was impossible without them, wasn't it?

LEWIS: Absolutely crucial. Of course, the local employees were doing nine-tenths of the work, and being tolerant and really quite helpful in supporting the young officers. But that consulate, like every other place I've served in the Foreign Service, wouldn't run for ten minutes without dedicated local staff. We're so darn lucky to have these staffs around the world. We don't treat them terribly well as a service, but nonetheless, they're extraordinarily loyal.

We were living down on the sea, and from the point of view of personal satisfactions, Naples, in those days, was a fascinating place, still close enough to the war that there was a lot of destruction still that hadn't been cleaned up, and it was a very poor place. Tourists regarded it rather with a jaundiced eye, but living there, the spirit of the Neapolitans came through, and it's a wonderful spirit, one that you can't help but admire. And the physical beauty of the place was fantastic. We had an apartment right down on the sea, an old palazzo, 16th century palazzo, that was turned into a lot of apartments. We had a big living room and big bedroom and a terrace, basically, all looking right out at Vesuvius and Capri, and with the sea about 15 feet below us. So it had its compensations.

Q: Was there a NATO sea command there?

LEWIS: Yes. The NATO command in Naples was very large in the life of the city, and there was a commissary out there, an officers' club, and that also made life a lot nicer for the families, particularly. But there's so much to do around the Naples area, so many wonderful places to go and explore, tourism and history and the rest, sailing, that we didn't spend much time, really, in

Pozzuoli, where the NATO command was, except in one sense. Both my wife and I were and are very avid amateur thespians, and we got involved with the drama group out at NATO headquarters where we acted in some plays with a rather international cast. The Navy, on one occasion, flew our company down to Malta to entertain the troops. We took a production of "The Hasty Heart" by John Patrick for several performances on British and American bases on Malta, and had great fun being flown there in a Navy plane, getting tours of the island, and so forth. So NATO was useful from that dimension.

Q: What made you move after 15 months -- requirements to the north?

LEWIS: The general career idea was in assigning all these vice consuls to the visa refugee program, which was a specialized out-of-the-ordinary kind of visa work and not even regular visa work, and they made an effort to have you spend a year or so in that, and then to move you to a regular Foreign Service post so you'd get more typical Foreign Service experience. So after about a year, the group began to move out elsewhere in Europe, and other people came in. We had no idea we'd be staying in Italy, but lo and behold, we were transferred to Florence, which was a four-man post in those days with two secretaries.

A very interesting place, too, because it was the very center of the so-called "red belt" in Italian politics, governed by Communist provincial council, though the mayor at that time was a rather unusual left-wing Christian Democrat named Giorgio LaPira. But the Communist-Socialist influence was very heavy in Tuscany and in Emilia Romano, the two regions that were under the jurisdiction of the consulate in Florence.

I went up there initially as the number-four junior officer, so I was the administrative officer and did some consular work, as well, though there was a more senior consul who actually was in charge of the consular section.

We stayed in Florence for three and a half years, and in the course of that, I gradually moved up in the place as people got transferred, and I got a promotion.

Q: You must have absorbed an enormous amount of culture. Not many people have three years.

LEWIS: We had a total of over five years in Italy. It was really fabulous. I was the deputy principal officer and political officer the last two years I was there, and was in charge of the consulate for several months. It was a very interesting place for political reporting, not like an embassy, in the sense that we weren't dealing with the government, but there was a lot of local politics with national significance going on. So I had a chance to do a lot of think pieces and research-type reports that give you a lot of satisfaction, though I know now that they're not as useful to the State Department as the people who write them think they ought to be.

Q: Did reports from smaller places like Florence, no matter how brilliantly written, get beyond the Italian desk officer in the Department?

LEWIS: Not beyond the desk officer.

Q: But there has been some brilliant reporting from small posts.

LEWIS: Absolutely, and I think we did some good reporting from Florence. The big issue in Italy in those days for the United States was a continuing fear in Washington that the Socialists, who were then closely aligned with the Communists, would somehow or other get into the government, and the big struggle for about a decade was "How will the Christian Democrats keep the Socialists out of government coalitions and retain a kind of centrist coalition sufficiently strong to stay in power?"

There were many, many arguments over those years as to what the Socialists were like and whether they were really people that you might entrust Italy to, even in part. Big disagreements. We were reporting on Socialist activities, and those of us, particularly in areas like Florence, had a chance to talk politics a lot with Socialist Party members and sometimes with Communist Party members, but particularly with the Socialists that in Rome, the reporting officers were warned off of. This was too touchy politically to do, although there was one officer in Rome always who was charged with following the left. Therefore, the reporting from Florence, in particular, and one or two of the other posts, on the strength and the attitudes of the Socialists and their allies, was of great interest to the embassy in Rome and also to the desk in Washington, and had some role to play in the question of how you assess broader U.S. policy toward Italy.

But we had also a kind of interesting diplomatic problem in Florence that's quite unique. Florence happens to be responsible for San Marino, not just as a consulate, but it's always been the diplomatic representative of the United States toward the Republic of San Marino, which is over on the Adriatic, in our consul district. San Marino is one of those tiny little independent countries that had, I think, 15,000 people, totally surrounded by Italy, had a Communist-Socialist government, and it was the only one outside of the Eastern Bloc that was even allegedly elected, brought into power by an election.

The agreement between the Italian Government and the San Marino Government back in the early Thirties, which established a protectorate relationship, had specified that no embassies in Rome could be the diplomatic channels to San Marino. That's why our consulate in Florence was the diplomatic representative to San Marino.

What that meant for me was that twice a year, we got a chance to go over to San Marino and take part in a wonderful medieval ceremony which goes back to the 15th century. San Marino is governed by a Grand and General Council which is popularly elected, and the executive powers held by two individuals who served together, the "Captains Regent"; they're elected by the General Council. The Captains Regent served for six months, based on a model from the Venetian times and it's come down to the present day. They have a huge inauguration ceremony twice a year, with a little, marvelous medieval army and 25 people parading around this little hill town. So we'd go over for the ceremony, dressed up in our striped pants. Since I was Charge quite a bit of the time, I went to a number of these ceremonies.

But what was really going on was we were meeting, after the ceremony and before it, semi-clandestinely in a kind of fishbowl atmosphere, with the Christian Democratic leaders who were in opposition, helping to encourage them in their efforts to get into power and to throw out the

Communists and Socialists. Eventually, in fact, that did happen while I was there, the first time in post-war history that the Communist Party had been gotten out of power democratically. This was a great achievement for American diplomacy in our eyes, anyway, and rated a few paragraphs in Time magazine. But that was kind of a fun dimension of the job in Florence. It's a little unusual for a consulate.

Q: I remember on the NSC, McGeorge Bundy used to call the covert support of the Christian Democratic Party and their allies "our annual shame," and finally got it sort of quashed. Then lo and behold, later on, when Graham Martin was there, he tried to revive it.

LEWIS: Yes, that's right. I was back in Washington by that time. I stayed involved with Italian affairs for a long time.

Q: You went on to the desk.

LEWIS: I went from Florence to the desk, first as assistant desk officer, then as desk officer. So I really had my first seven and a half years in the Foreign Service was all Italy. I didn't even mention that in the middle there, while I was in Florence, they had a big gap in Rome in the administrative area and the consular area, and I went down and spent six months TDY, first in the consular section, then as general service officer. So we had six delightful months in Rome, my wife and I, in either 1957 or 1958.

Q: (John) Reinhardt was ambassador?

LEWIS: Yes, he was. I served first under Clare Boothe Luce. She was ambassador when I went to Naples. That was the period when she had the famous arsenic-in-the-ceiling affair. You remember?

Q: Yes.

LEWIS: Her hair started to fall out, and she was wasting away, and they couldn't figure out what in the world was going on. Finally they diagnosed the fact that she was being slowly poisoned with arsenic. Then they concluded, allegedly, at least, that it was the paint from the ceiling of her bedroom. She always spent a lot of time in bed, reading, working, drinking coffee. The story was that this old medieval paint, which was heavily loaded with arsenic, in the Villa Taverna, flakes of it were falling off in her coffee and food, and that's how she was being poisoned.

Q: That's hard to believe enough could...

LEWIS: This was the official version. It may be that, indeed, there was much more to it, and she was really being slowly poisoned by the cook or somebody else. But the fact that she had arsenic poisoning, I think was quite well substantiated.

Q: But she apparently recovered.

LEWIS: She recovered after they finally redecorated the room and diagnosed it. Jim Zellerbach,

who was a Crown Zellerbach executive, succeeded her.

Q: So you had one career and two politicians?

LEWIS: Those were both politicians of a very different sort. Zellerbach was a much less political politician; Luce was very much into party politics. She was, I must say, a delightful, impressive person, though she was very tough ideologically. She was a real lady, and everybody who worked closely with her -- I didn't, obviously, but I saw her every now and then.

Q: Did she keep one DCM or have several?

LEWIS: She had Jim Jernigan as her DCM for quite a long time. I think maybe she had somebody else. She had two DCMs, I think. I've forgotten who the other one was, who went on to Singapore.

Q: She got along with them?

LEWIS: She got along pretty well with her staff. Zellerbach did, too. Mrs. Zellerbach was a real trial to everyone, but he was a very nice, unassuming, undemanding sort of fellow. Then Reinhardt succeeded him. I must have still been in Florence when Reinhardt came in. He was a delightful and able person, and it was a great relief to the staff to have a career officer in the job.

Then I came back to Washington to the desk, and he was Ambassador part of that period, 1959 to '61.

Q: Was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs Alexis Johnson then?

LEWIS: No. I've forgotten who it was, but Alex took that job at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration and had it for several years thereafter.

I was, as I say, very much immersed in Italian affairs, totally, engaged in a huge running battle from the desk with Outerbridge Horsey, who by this time had become DCM in Rome. "Outer" was convinced that if the Socialists ever got into the government, that the world would come to an end, and if he ever talked to them in any encouraging way, that that would lead to them coming into government. So he tried to cut off even those rather tenuous contacts that the embassy had with the Socialists before he arrived in the department, in the Office of West European Affairs, we were very anxious to get the reporting on Socialist and Communist affairs, and were reduced to encouraging the political officers out there with the contacts to send us back-channel "official-informal" letters, because "Outer" would never allow their dispatches, much less their telegrams, to get out of the embassy. We had quite a running debate with the embassy in Rome all during "Outer"'s period.

Q: Was the Agency also under that blanket business of not talking to the left?

LEWIS: No, no. The Agency was talking to the left, and the Agency was talking to everybody. They had a huge station in Rome in those days, and they had big covert action programs with the

free trade unions. They did have contacts with both the Communists and the Socialists.

Q: But was their reporting helpful to the Department?

LEWIS: Yes. On the other hand, actually, I'm not sure of that, Peter, because I wasn't cleared to see their reporting. I wasn't high enough in the bureau at the time. The agency reporting went to the deputy office director and office director for West European Affairs, so I really had only occasional glimpses and conversations about it. So I don't know how it was, but they were definitely reporting on this topic, yes.

We had, I guess, by that time, a lot more involvement in Italian politics than we needed. It started back in the Forties, when the threat of a Communist takeover was very real, and we developed all of these relationships, particularly with the free trade unions and with the Social Democratic Party, the Christian Democrats, and those were still being maintained, and there were some covert subsidies involved for newspapers and that sort of thing. I think by the late Fifties, it was all very much unnecessary and should have been gradually phased out, but bureaucracies, of course, have their momentum that's rather hard to kill.

Q: So Outerbridge Horsey was linked up with the same people who held that phobia in Washington for so long.

LEWIS: Oh, yes. He was a real Cold Warrior. He had been in Italy, of course, as political counselor in the early Fifties. I think this was his third tour when he was DCM and I was on the desk. He was a real expert on Italy, he really knew the society and the politics better than any of his political officers ever hoped to, and he was a very powerful advocate and antagonist. Therefore, he pretty much ran the show, despite the Department's desire to shift the policy ten or 15 or 20 degrees. As long as "Outer" was there, the Socialists weren't going to get their nose into the tent. We wasted so much energy trying to keep the Socialists out of the government of Italy.

When they finally did come into a coalition some years later they proved to be very toothless tigers. The irony was that many of the Socialists were very pro-American, very admiring of the United States, and anxious to get away from their long alliance with the Communists, in which they'd been the junior partner and stepped on repeatedly over the decades.

Q: One non-political question. Did you see a great difference between the northern Italian and the Neapolitan, both in language and attitude?

LEWIS: And food.

Q: Has that been exaggerated?

LEWIS: No, I think it's certainly there, but they're all Italians. The southerners are a lot more emotional and maybe a little more corrupt, in some ways more fun. If you let yourself go, you can enjoy the southerners enormously. If you are too Anglo-Saxon in your own personal style, you'll find the southerners very messy and unpleasant. We enjoyed Naples as much as any place we ever lived, but we became much more involved with the society, both political and cultural

individuals, in Florence. One thing, we were there longer. Our Italian was much better by that time, and Florence is a very interesting, lively place intellectually, though it had its precious qualities.

I rather think that both the northerners and the southerners are, in different ways, better than the Romans, who are neither and both, but have their own personality as a group.

Q: Do you still pore over certain data on the Italian scene with interest?

LEWIS: With interest, sure. We love Italy. It's the first place we ever lived outside of the United States, and being there so long and having a lot of good friends, we have that special place in our heart for Italy that we'll never get rid of. We get back every two or three years to visit friends in Florence, in particular, where we still have friends who are quite active.

By odd chance, the third day I was in the consulate in Florence, I was temporarily sitting in the consular office, because the consul was on vacation or something, and I heard a fellow outside talking to the Italian assistant about wanting to register his child's birth. It had a kind of funny ring to it. I stuck my head out the door and discovered it was a Yale classmate named Bert Fantacci, who was an Italo-American who had been in my class at Yale, and had gone back to work in his father's business in Florence. He'd been raised, basically, in the United States and Italy both, and he was truly a binational personality. I hadn't seen him since we'd graduated, but he was a pretty good friend at Yale. So through Bert and his American wife, Penny, who was a daughter of Frederic March and Florence Eldredge, who just died, we got introduced through them to a lot of Florentines early on, and they remain very close friends to this day.

Q: Then how did you get the switch to Brazil?

LEWIS: What really happened was that after seven and a half years, by the beginning of '61, Kennedy was elected. I was thoroughly an EUR type. My whole career had been in Italy and in the European bureau, and I'd absorbed, I think, all of the prejudices and blinders of the European specialists in the State Department: "That's the only place that matters. The rest of the world has just a bunch of uncivilized problems."

I had a great break. Dean Rusk was appointed Secretary of State, and Chester Bowles was Under Secretary (i.e. deputy Secretary). "Chet" Bowles was, of course, a politician who had been governor of Connecticut, a member of Congress, ambassador to India back in the Truman Administration, and a great, powerful figure in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, and Kennedy's foreign policy advisor during the campaign, and aspired to be Secretary of State. He really thought he would be. For a variety of reasons which are kind of complicated, Bowles was an old New Dealer from the Roosevelt era, really, and a very talkative and very creative person. His personality didn't jive very well with Kennedy's or the Kennedy crowd that came into the White House with Kennedy, the "Boston mafia."

Q: A little generation gap.

LEWIS: A huge generation gap, too garrulous, too idealistic, not hard, tough-minded enough in

their lingo. But he was too powerful in the party to be ignored, so he became Under Secretary. He was a friend of Dean Rusk's. In fact, oddly enough, it was he who had suggested Rusk to Kennedy, to be Under Secretary, thinking that he would be Secretary. He wasn't the only one who suggested Rusk, but he was stunned when Rusk ended up Secretary and he was deputy. But he came into the State Department, brought two people with him from his congressional staff. He was in Congress at the time. One was Tom Hughes, his chief administrative assistant on the Hill, and the other was Jim Thomson. Jim was a junior staffer in his congressional office, a China scholar from Harvard.

So the Under Secretary's office was staffed with these two outsiders, and Bowles, a real wild man for the bureaucracy, with all sorts of ideas about changing the role of the career versus the outsiders, bringing in a lot of fresh blood, sweeping out some of the tired blood and the State Department bureaucracy was horrified at the sight of Bowles in the Under Secretary's office.

Luke Battle, who was appointed as executive secretary by Rusk, and Bill Brubeck, who was one of his deputies from politics and academia, who came in, really, with the Bowles team, realized that they needed somehow to connect Bowles up better with the system. He was extremely busy, churning around with all sorts of ideas and projects which just didn't fit the way the system worked. So they set out to find a Foreign Service officer to put in Bowles' staff, as a staff assistant, to try to get his paper flow and his activities meshed a little better with the bureaucracy.

They interviewed several people. Somebody in EUR suggested me. I don't know why, to this day, my name was thrown up to them, along with another fellow, Bob Burns. There were two of us from EUR that were interviewed by Luke Battle for this position.

Then afterwards, we were asked were we interested in the position. Well, Bob said, "Frankly, no." He didn't want to be "out of the mainstream;" he wanted to stay in the system, he heard bad things about Bowles from everybody. He'd like to pass it, if he possibly could. I was, by this time, feeling it was time for a change, and it sounded like an interesting way to learn something different about the system and especially the Seventh Floor. So I said, "Sure, I'd be delighted."

Q: Sounds fascinating to me.

LEWIS: All of my friends in EUR thought I was absolutely bananas to go up and get into this political atmosphere of this Bowles office, where you will be chopped to ribbons by these politicians. But I went up as a staff assistant, and I stayed, then, with "Chet" throughout the rest of his State Department career.

Tom Hughes, very soon thereafter, moved over to INR and became deputy director, first, then later director. He remained close to "Chet," but he got himself out of his immediate staff. Jim Thomson and I then shared the office for a while. Later on, we brought in two more people, Andrew Rice, who was an economic development specialist from outside the Department, and Phil Merrill, who is now the publisher of The Washingtonian magazine. Phil came into our office in 1961 or '62, almost directly out of Cornell, as a speech writer. Then there was Brandon Grove, who was the fifth member of this entourage. Brandon is now the new Director of the Foreign Service Institute. Some time not too many years ago, he turned up as our consul general in

Jerusalem while I was ambassador in Tel Aviv. In any case, there were three to four of us there at any one time, along with a couple of secretaries.

Bowles had an extraordinary effect on my life. He was truly one of the most interesting and, I think, admirable figures of this century, much underrated by many, not by everybody. He wrote a whole slew of books about foreign policy in the course of his career. He was an extraordinarily eloquent spokesman for a liberal foreign policy perspective, and particularly his preoccupation was with the Third World at a time when it was still very unfashionable to pay any attention to it. Because that's where his interests lay, he concentrated throughout his time on African, Asian, and Latin American issues, leaving Europe pretty much to George Ball, who was number three, the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, an Europeanist, and Alex Johnson, who was Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Alex technically reported to Bowles. In fact, in temperament and style and background, he was very close to Rusk, so before long, the fact that Alex was Bowles' deputy became more fiction than a fact.

Bowles only lasted as Under Secretary about ten or eleven months. There was a cabal in the White House that decided he was too fuzzy-minded and they had to get rid of him. Bobby Kennedy didn't like him at all, and Ted Sorenson was about his only defender in that Kennedy entourage. More importantly, he and Rusk really didn't hit it off. Rusk was a very careful and different kind of leader. Bowles was very loyal to Rusk, in some ways maybe too loyal for his own good, because he had lots of political allies outside that he was reluctant to go to. He felt he should try to be a loyal deputy. But they just didn't mesh. Bowles had never been number two to anybody in his whole life. He'd run his own advertising business, had been head of Roosevelt's Office of Price Administration, and so forth and so on.

Q: Benton & Bowles.

LEWIS: Yes. Being the deputy is a special kind of role, and he really wasn't temperamentally fitted for it. But his ideas and his memoranda to Kennedy and to Rusk, all of which were later on published in a book that I happened to edit for him, revealed a great far-sightedness about American interests and the dangers of some of the courses Kennedy was embarked on. They were really prescient. If you look back at those memos today about Vietnam, about Cuba, about Africa, about approaches toward Asia, you see that if only Kennedy and Rusk had known how to make use of Bowles' vision and his eloquence and his management experience, for that matter, Kennedy would have avoided some of the mistakes of that administration. But it just didn't work in terms of temperament.

Q: How many people in any administration, particularly now, have time for vision? It's day to day, crisis on top of crisis.

LEWIS: That's true. There only rarely are moments when long-range thinking finds any audience in the State Department or the White House.

It takes a very special kind of Secretary of State or President to be able to use the sort of thinking and creativity that Bowles had to offer. In my experience, really only Henry Kissinger knew how to use ideas and to turn them into diplomatic strategy. He would not have been able to use

Bowles either, because their personalities would never have meshed, but the ideas he would have used. Anyway, Bowles was kicked upstairs.

Q: I was wondering about that.

LEWIS: What happened was in November of '61, Kennedy finally concluded he had to make a series of shifts in the State Department. He wasn't happy with the way State was performing, and it was all blamed on Bowles, quite unfairly, in my view. I wrote an article about this years ago, which appears in an appendix in a book by Bowles.

Q: Which book is that?

LEWIS: It's called Promises to Keep, and it really is a compilation of his speeches and writings of that period. Jim Thomson and I separately did memos for a project which never was carried out by another author, analyzing what went wrong in the State Department in the Bowles-Rusk era. My memo appears in this appendix.

In any case, "Chet" still had too much political clout in the party just to be thrown aside, so there was a big shakeup. Bowles was named special advisor to the President for Asia, Africa, and Latin America, a kind of super roving ambassador, if you will, but with an office, which he insisted on, in the White House, or at least in the old Executive Office Building, as well as an office in the State Department. He kept his staff, and he had, supposedly, full access to feed his ideas to Kennedy and to Rusk, and to carry out special missions, which is the way they sold him on it.

George Ball was promoted to be the Under Secretary, from being the second Under Secretary. Averell Harriman was persuaded to come in as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, quite a come-down in title for somebody who had been governor and Cabinet member and so on, but he was terrific, incidentally. It was a great coup getting Averell in that kind of role during that period. There were several other shifts. It was called the "Thanksgiving Day Massacre" in 1961.

Bowles asked whether I wanted to stay with him or to go back to a Foreign Service career, a normal Foreign Service career. I said that I wanted to stay with him as long as he was going to be doing this job. I felt that he had been very badly used, and that he was a great national asset. I had learned an awful lot from him about the world in those first few months. I was once again advised by all my Foreign Service friends, "Get out of there as fast as you can. You're tied to a dying horse. Don't be ridiculous. Get back to a regular job." But I didn't.

I stayed with "Chet" for the remainder of his time in the administration, until in the summer of '63, that is, almost two years later, he was persuaded to go back to India a second time as ambassador. By that time, he had realized that the job was really kind of -- it wasn't a phony job, but he wasn't being listened to. He wasn't being taken seriously. He was given some missions to undertake, and he did his best to come back with the kind of reports and recommendations that made a lot of sense, but which basically neither Rusk nor Kennedy cared very much to read. So for his own self-respect, in fact, he didn't want to get out of government; he was too committed. So he went back to India. He had always felt India was of enormous importance in American

foreign policy and had had a very successful stint there as Ambassador once before.

He asked me to go to India with him as special assistant, but I decided I should move on after two years in this kind of role, writing speeches, helping to write memos on every subject from Vietnam to Iran, to Africa, to Latin America, traveling to some 65 countries with him on various missions. I had learned an enormous amount about the world, and the Third World in particular, and my whole horizon had just totally opened for me, particularly the developing world. "Chet" was very much involved with the Peace Corps and AID's economic development projects and philosophy. I worked on a number of studies for him on those subjects. And I felt that it was time that I got away from "Chet" professionally, because I was sort of losing track of who I was. I was too much immersed as an extension of him, professionally and psychologically, probably for my own good.

Q: How old was Bowles when he went back to India?

LEWIS: I would say he was around 65. I don't remember exactly, but something like that.

By chance, at this time, I was nominated to be a Princeton Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton for a year. They had a series of mid-career fellowships for people in various government agencies, and I was selected to be the State Department representative for that year. That was a graceful way to disengage from "Chet." Professionally and personally though, I remained an enormous admirer of him and his family and what he did. He could have done much for the Kennedy Administration if they had only listened more to him -- for instance, about staying out of Vietnam.

I went to Princeton with the idea of studying more economics and improving my economic skills, because I wanted to try doing some work in the development field. I figured that the traditional Foreign Service route of political officer was too narrow though, basically, I am a political officer, and politics is what fascinates me. But working with Bowles, I had come to appreciate much more the interaction between the development issues and political issues.

I also became very much immersed in inter-agency problems. He took that on as a serious part of his mandate, to try to make our inter-agency process work better. One of the things he did as special representative of the President was to chair a series of chiefs of missions meetings all over the developing world, about half a dozen of them over the course of a year and a half. They were very different kinds of chiefs of missions meetings. In the usual kind, you just have ambassadors. Bowles insisted that we invite the head of each major government agency component, along with ambassadors, so you had the country teams from each place at these conferences, as well as many senior Washington officials from the various agencies. And the agendas were much broader. They were political in strategy, but they were also development agendas, information agendas, and the rest. I organized all those conferences for "Chet," and went with him to all of them. I was his chief staff guy.

Q: How many?

LEWIS: There were about a half a dozen, a couple in Latin America, a couple in Asia, a couple

in Africa. In the course of going to those, we did a lot of other special missions. I got to see about 60 or 70 of our ambassadors in action at these meetings, along with their country teams, and I formed some very clear views of how ambassadors ought to operate and how they shouldn't. I also saw about 65 different embassies, and I had well implanted in my mind places I really didn't ever want to be assigned. (Laughs) As well as some to which I would like to be assigned.

It was a great experience for a young officer. In 1962, I was 32. I entered the Service at age 23, quite young.

But that Bowlesian era, those two years, basically, two and a half years, I guess, was really the watershed of my professional life. It really changed my whole view of the Service, of the inter-agency world, of the way in which diplomacy is conducted, of the way in which the White House and the State Department relate to each other. The vantage point of being on the seventh floor, and in the middle, if you will, of this rather titanic series of policy and personality clashes that went on in the Kennedy Administration, being in meetings with all of these historic figures gave me some insights into government that were just absolutely something you could never have even bargained for or gotten in any other fashion.

It's one of the things that's always convinced me it's very important to try to get a seventh floor staff position early in your career, if you can. You get to understand so much better the way Washington really operates and what's then relevant when you're in the field to send to Washington, how to make it effective.

Q: *Very important.*

LEWIS: You can't ever explain it to anybody; you have to observe it and live with it in order to absorb it.

Q: *If you know the seventh floor, if you send a cable, as an ambassador, you know where it's going to move.*

LEWIS: You learn the importance of timing, of coming in with recommendations at moments when there is a receptivity and a need for them, what will happen to them if you send them at other moments when there's no such felt need, and so forth. And you learn how to use the back channel, and you find out about the political bureaucratic interface and how a career officer has to understand the political side of the government, take it seriously, and not just reject it.

One thing that's really troubled me over the years, Peter, in my career, is how many career people resent the fact that politicians meddle in our business, and reject learning how to work with them and make the thing work. After all, government is politics. Presidents have a right to employ many people from outside the career, and sometimes they're damn good and sometimes they're better than a careerist in certain spots. There are also some terrible cases. But I never felt that we ought to have only career ambassadors. I really got that sense from my time with Bowles.

One of the projects that I ran for Bowles who carried it out for Kennedy, was a very thorough assessment of every ambassador then serving, how he was doing his job, how his country team

thought he was doing in his job, how he worked with his senior staff, and how he worked with the policy mechanism. We prepared a huge review of every embassy in the world for the President, quite outside the system. It involved a lot of travel, a lot of very confidential interviews, and the result was a number of changes in ambassadors -- not punitive changes, but fitting better people into the right places. Often they're in the wrong holes, the wrong pegs in the wrong holes.

I saw that some of the career people were lousy, and some of the political people were very good, and then vice versa. You couldn't generalize based on backgrounds, except somebody who had no foreign affairs experience was not likely to be much good. You take a fellow like Bowles himself in India, or like Jim Loeb, who was ambassador in Peru at the time, somebody Bowles had picked, who came from a journalistic background, Bill Attwood in Guinea, a journalist. Businessmen with international experience, journalists, and academics were the "political" appointees that the Kennedy Administration sent out. One of the jobs Bowles did have under the Rusk era was to select ambassadors, basically to run the ambassadorial selection. Rusk got involved on a few that he was particularly interested in, particularly East Asia. Otherwise, he left it pretty much to Bowles, and Bowles worked with the White House staff.

We had a high percentage of career people, but we also had a lot of non-career who came from disciplines which are aligned professionally, have international dimensions, and some very good ones came out of that process. So ever since, I've been very testy and not very tolerant of the traditional Foreign Service view that the Foreign Service owns all the ambassadors' jobs, and any that go elsewhere are only for political payoffs. I think it's clear that from a career standpoint, we need to have a high percentage of ambassadorships of career, because you have to have career goals for people to aspire to. But if you can pick up a David Bruce or a "Chet" Bowles or many others, or Mike Mansfield in Tokyo today, with different backgrounds and something very important to contribute that a career man can't necessarily have, including the personal relationship with the President, that strengthens our diplomacy; it doesn't weaken it. That's one of the main things I learned from "Chet."

I went to Princeton, I spent a year there, and then I worked out a "detail assignment" to AID. I wanted to find out what economic development was really like in our AID missions. I had been writing speeches for "Chet" about development and looking at the big picture of development policy, but I didn't have any real sense of how it really worked on the ground. So I volunteered for the then-called Alliance for Progress in Latin America, where the interface between politics and economics was very consciously up front and where the AID programs were being carried out in Latin America in those very idealistic first years of the Kennedy period.

JOHN P. OWENS
Vice Consul
Naples (1955-1956)

John P. Owens was born and raised in Washington, D.C. He received his BA from American University and his MA from Georgetown University. His served in the

US Air Force until joining the Foreign Service in 1955. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Italy, Venezuela, Greece, Finland, Sweden, and Bermuda. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 19 and July 14, 1992.

OWENS: I was one of those who unfortunately did not join a class. There was a need for officers, junior officers in the refugee relief program which was going on at that time, and there was a clamor from Germany, from Italy, and from other places, for officers to come out and issue visas. So I was immediately dispatched. I had about a maximum of three weeks in the Department, just going through processing, then was immediately sent to Naples into the "visa factory."

Q: Could you explain a bit about what the refugee program was and the atmosphere of how you were dealing with it in Italy which was not a site of major escaping from other places?

OWENS: That's true. Italy, as you know, had suffered terribly during World War II. The US and German forces fought over Italy in 1944, and into 1945. I guess '43 was the invasion of Sicily, if I'm not mistaken. It seemed to us who were young American consular officers, that, if they could, the entire population of Italy would have moved to the United States. It seems strange to look back at it from the vantage point of 1992, it is a very prosperous country, very high standard of living, able to offer its citizens pretty much everything the United States can today. But at that point, Italy was still not completely recovered from the damage of war. The economy, although already starting to improve significantly by the mid-nineteen fifties when I went there, was nevertheless still not completely over from the wartime sufferings. So that we were working with...actually there were thirty-five Vice Consuls assigned to Naples. I remember a friend of my family's who lived in France, came to Naples. My family was very proud that I'd become a Vice Consul in the US Foreign Service, and asked for the Vice Consul, thinking that there was a Vice Consul, a Consul, a Consul General...So the Italian receptionist looked at them and in a bored voice said: "Well, which one of the thirty-five do you mean, Sir?" which he related when he came into my office. And I say my office...we all had desks in large offices. We were not in the main consular building, which you later...

Q: I don't think it was even built at that time...

OWENS: Yes, I think it was, it was just about that time. We were up on Via Orazio at that time, in something called the visa annex, which was a several story building set up against the hills quite up the Via Orazio, and there we interviewed the Italians who were hoping to go to the United States...

Q: This was called the Refugee Relief Program, and I speak from the historian's viewpoint, because I was doing exactly the same work in Frankfurt at this time. It implies that these people were refugees from some place. How did you rationalize...you were in Italy and these were people who were refugees, and they were in Italy?

OWENS: That's true, and as was the case in Germany, so many homes had been destroyed that it was easy to get ... this was a requirement that you submit an affidavit that your home, or farm, or

rooms, in which you lived had been destroyed during the war, and that you were not able to recover that property intact.

Q: Did you have the feeling that you were taking a law which was designed essentially for refugees, really talking about people who were fleeing the Soviet behind the Iron Curtain, and were twisting it in order to meet the imperatives of political life in the United States, i.e. a Congressman who had Italian constituents and all that...

OWENS: I think in retrospect, yes. At the time, I was not particularly conscious of that. It just seemed that it was the job we were assigned to do and we wanted to carry it out in the most effective way possible. We all, I think, knew that we would not be in the program for too long because it had an expiration date, and as a matter of fact by 1956 most of the junior officers at the Consulate were transferred, as I was. By the end of '56 we all received orders to more normal Foreign Service assignments. But, at that time, I would say at least for myself, we weren't thinking in those broader foreign policy and domestic policy terms.

Q: Maybe it was more obvious, when I was in Frankfurt or maybe the spirit was, but I developed, it probably is not the right term, a certain, if not contempt for the law, at least a feeling, well there are laws and laws, and I thought we were doing good work, because I thought these were obviously people who needed to go somewhere, but at the same time you didn't look too closely at the letter of the law and in a way it served me well later on, but you can always lead to trouble, if you...

OWENS: That's very true. But, as I say, at least I didn't think too much...

SAMUEL G. WISE, Jr.
Visa Officer
Palermo (1955-1956)

Deputy Principle Officer
Trieste (1963-1966)

Political Officer
Rome (1971-1974)

Samuel G. Wise, Jr. was born in Illinois on May 11, 1928. He received his BA from the University of Virginia in 1951 and his MIA from Columbia University in 1953. He served in the US Marine Corps from 1946 to 1948. His career has included positions in Italy, Russia, and Czechoslovakia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

Q: So, you got out of the Marine Corps in 1948?

WISE: In 1948, right, in spring of '48.

Q: And you went off to University of Virginia?

WISE: Well, yeah, I worked my way over to Europe on a ship with a couple of friends - spent a year, or a summer, rather in Europe. It was the first time I had been over. I ran into all sorts of problems, which eventually ended up getting me into The Foreign Service.

Q: How did that happen?

WISE: Well, I was on a ship - a Norwegian line called the "Nordkin." We arrived, three friends and I, in Genoa, just at the time that there were disturbances against the Communists in Italy. And their leader...

Q: This was during the election of '48?

WISE: Right, exactly. Taglioni was shot and that caused a great stir. These people I was with were sons of a doctor and they had been over to Europe before. They took some medicaments, not drugs in the sense that we use them today, but penicillin and things like that, which, right after the war, you could sell over there. And so, when we arrived, we got in touch with a gang of people, who turned out to be Mafia types that took us to a hotel and the police took all of our medicaments off of us and so left us there. In the meantime, I'd lost my passport, so I had to go to the Consulate in Genoa. In the process of applying for a new passport and making several visits to the Consul, I got to know the Vice Consul. I asked about his work and, in the course of it, became interested in The Foreign Service. So, when I returned to Virginia and began college in the Fall in Charlottesville, I registered for the Foreign Affairs Program, which they had set up there.

Q: Yeah. It was almost three months with language. You probably came just behind. What was your group like?

WISE: Well, you didn't have a terrific sense of group because it was a short period of time. The main things I remember are that we, almost without exception, were being assigned to visa duty. They had a special visa program at the time... The Refugee Relief Program. You were either going to Italy, as I ended up doing, or to Germany or some other place in Europe. They had an urgent need for Vice Consul "fodder" to get over and process these visas. There was always some competition or hope that you would get into one program, say to Germany, where you could take a ship over there. Or if you got sent to Italy, you had to fly. So, I had friends that fell in both camps. But I do remember some people from that era. I don't think it's the same...

Q: It's not the same bonding that takes place...

WISE: No, I don't think so.

Q: Your first posting was where?

WISE: Palermo.

Q: You were there from when to when?

WISE: Summer - it must have been about July '55 until summer or fall of the next year. About one year.

The Department had made a promise, which they pretty much held to, to all the young officers that were sent out to these visa mills. After a year, recognizing this was an unusual assignment, you would be assigned to a post in a regular Foreign Service position in Europe. And so, after a year, all my friends were assigned to Bern or Rome or Zurich or wherever. When my turn came up, I was assigned to New Caledonia, which at that time, you may remember, was considered in the European Bureau, although it's out South of France. My Consulate General, a guy named Jim Keeley, he thought that was good stuff. He thought the fact that I wouldn't put up any resistance or anything (I didn't know any better, to do it or not) was good.

Q: Tell me a little, before we leave and go to New Caledonia, what were you doing in the Refugee Relief Program in Palermo?

WISE: It was set up in a way that there were different sections. As I say, a real visa mill. They issued a lot of visas under this program. There was an issuance section: two or three officers that did nothing but issue the visas on the final day. And there was a correspondence section that responded to constituents of Congress and people that wrote about different applicants. There was what was called the "DSR-11 Section." The DSR-11 was affidavit support to show that the person coming to the United States would be supported all right. Well, in this year, or the little over a year that I was there, in various sections, but I never actually issued a visa. I never got into the issuing section. But I did all kinds of other parts of the visa operation. Actually, I found the whole experience very interesting.

Q: To some extent, I was a Refugee Relief Officer up in Frankfurt at pretty much the same time. Particularly down in Italy, this was essentially a fraudulent program. I mean, they weren't refugees. They were Italians living in Italy who hadn't been thrown out of another country and were there. I understand the background of this was that the program was designed almost from the beginning to help the Italians. To have a special program, they came up with the Refugee Relief Program, which... Up in Germany, we were dealing with real refugees. But down in Italy and also in the Netherlands, there were these people within their same country, but they were considered refugees. Did this dealing with a program which, on the face of it, didn't make sense, get to the young officers?

WISE: I don't know about the others. I guess I was aware that this was sort of a misnomer. They had tacked this name on some legislation and it was, as you say, designed to let a lot of Italians come into the United States. Refugees from what, I don't know. I don't even remember what the definition was. But they had the different categories, as you remember, different priorities. I think fourth priority was brother and sister or something like that. There were an awful lot of them that were trying to get visas. But I might just tell you one experience. I don't know if in Germany you had this sort of thing. It was quite a discerning experience for someone who was

new in the Foreign Service. I had been in about three weeks before they flew me over to Palermo, brand spanking new. I think I'd been there two days when I got a call from the Consulate General's Office, which was located in a different building, saying that there was this gentleman coming over to inquire about his brother's visa application: He was an American citizen, who had a letter from a Congressman, and could I please give this attention? I said, "Of course, I'll be ready." And he came over to talk to me and mentioned that he was trying to get his brother to the States and he laid \$10,000 on the table. Clearly, if I'd accepted his \$10,000 and gotten his visa, he would have had a deal! That was the first temptation... But, as I said, I really enjoyed doing the consulate work there. We had a great group of Vice Consuls. You talk about did I have some bonding with my entering class. No, but with this group in Palermo, we've kept together...

Q: Who were some of them?

WISE: There was a fellow named Freeman Matthews, Sam Gammon, Don Junior, Bill Harris. There are others that are still around. The experience in Sicily and in Palermo in those days was something that stayed with you. A loftier atmosphere was certainly there. Just after we arrived, we didn't have our household effects...

Q: Were you married?

WISE: Just married. We just had furniture and a few things together when this assignment came up. When we arrived, we did rent a place out in a suburb, near the beach, in a very nice area called Mondello. We rented a little house in an orchard, in a citrus grove. It had a dirt road leading up to it. The wonderful day arrived, finally, when our furniture came. We were waiting in the house, looking down the dirt road and here comes this ox cart, pulled not by ox, but a donkey. It finally gets to the house and backs this thing up and the workmen take off the side of this wooden van, and it's empty, totally empty. We were devastated, to be sure. We had lost just about everything we owned. We made the usual reports, the Consulate did, and the police told us, "Well, it's gone. Sicilians are very clever. It's probably up in Milan now." Anyway, this went on for a few weeks and, all of a sudden, our Administrative Officer called me and he said, "Sam, I have one more report for you to sign here." What had happened was, they had recovered the things. They took me into a room, a storehouse room. I saw these things around and half of them I didn't recognize, even though they were my own. All these Italian police were standing around, waiting for this great emotional outburst from me. I guess I disappointed them a little bit. We did get practically everything back. The guy who was guarding them took them up to Partenito, which is a Mafia hangout, and put them in his own home and, somehow, they'd gotten word of it. They caught this fellow and his wife claimed that the picture of my wife and me in our wedding... Well, they were relatives of theirs.

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

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

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

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

Q: How big was the Consulate?

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

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

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

Q: What was your position in the Consulate?

WISE: I was Deputy Principal Officer.

Q: Who was the head of it then?

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

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

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

Q: No, Zagreb.

WISE: Excuse me. Of course, Zagreb. There was nothing in Ljubljana. I think there might have been a USIA post: a library or something like that. It was a fairly stable situation. The press would try to fire up some things. On the Italian side, the Messini, the so-called "MSI," the ex-fascist types. And then there were some on the Slovenian side: newspapers that would try to heat up the scene. But, in general, the situation during my time there was fairly quiet. I did have one or two experiences that might be useful to mention. When I first arrived from Moscow (I arrived in the summertime), as is the custom, people were taking leave and transfers. I found myself, I think maybe from the first day or shortly thereafter, as Acting Principal Officer. About the first thing that happened, a month after my arrival, we had this tremendous disaster in our Consular

District: a dam disaster, where a couple of thousand people were wiped away in a couple of seconds, or a couple of minutes at most, including a few American citizens, so I got involved in that and had to up and deal with the situation, and keep in touch with the Embassy in Rome. Of course, they were very interested in it. It was quite an experience just to be arriving at post.

Q: I ask as a former Consulate General down in Naples during a very bad earthquake in 1980, there were a lot of complaints about how the Italian government responded to their tragedy. How did you find the Italians dealt with this tragedy?

WISE: On balance, I think not too badly. Emergencies, tragic situations like this, always catch people by surprise and there's a certain amount of confusion. I thought they regrouped and began to deal with the situation before too long fairly well. There were, in the newspapers later, recriminations about whether it was done right or could have been done later, as there always are. But I didn't think it was done too badly.

Q: As you were looking at the scene within the Trieste area, did you find any indigenous desire on the part of the people to go back and become part of Yugoslavia in those days?

WISE: Not at all. I had the feeling Trieste was, in those days, like an old [dowager]: the port emporium of the Hungarian Empire, you remember, in those years. It had fallen on hard times. Its major economic activity was its shipbuilding industry in Trieste proper and [Monfalcone]. Times were hard. One of the big concerns that the people had there was that all the young people were leaving, going to Milan or other areas where economic prospects were better. The older people were always claiming that the economic situation was terrible, that they didn't have enough money, but they always went around very well-dressed and ate in the best restaurants. That was something of a permanence that continued with the place.

Q: I assume you were reporting on the economy of the place.

WISE: Yes, of course.

Q: Was there any effort on the part of the United States to sort of "buck up" the economy by giving them military contracts or anything like that?

WISE: Not really. I think we would have know if there were special contracts or things. In those days, the concern for assistance to Italy was more in the Mezzogiorno, in the South, than it was in the North. The expectation on Washington's part was that this was something that the Italians themselves should look out for more. And the Italians would get some business occasionally and, if they landed a big contract, it would be big news for a while. But, overall, the area was not booming economically. But, as I say, people certainly were getting along alright.

Q: During all of this period, I was in Belgrade, running the Consular Section. We were almost inundated by East Europeans, coming to Yugoslavia to seek asylum. They'd come to the Embassy and we'd say, "We can't do a thing for you, but if you get to Italy, they'll be happy to take care of you." How about the refugee situation at that point?

WISE: We had some that came through. We had another person that was doing the Consular work, Jack

Gillespie, doing the immigrant visa work, and he was fairly busy. It wasn't a flood though. We just had the one man doing it. So, obviously, the Yugoslavs must have prevented a lot of people from coming across the border. And we'd hear of some harrowing escapes sometimes.

Q: Did you find that the Yugoslavs opened and shut the border from time to time? Were there problems on either side of the border - gas was cheaper on one side than the other and that sort of thing? Were there border problems?

WISE: Yes, mainly for the Italians going back and forth. They would go for cheaper gas. In those days, you went over to Yugoslavia for three things: gas, meat and women. But for purchases, it was a lot cheaper, and the Italians would zip over the border and there would be long lines at the border. But we did get a number of Yugoslavs that would come over, Slovenians primarily. Around the Trieste railroad station, there used to be this huge market of stuffed, life-sized dolls. For some reason, the Yugoslavs loved these things. They would buy these things and take them back to Yugoslavia.

Q: You were mentioning one of the things that you had to do was close the Consulate in Venice?

WISE: Yes, that also came very close after my arrival from Moscow. Orders came from the Department to close the Consulate, which had been in operation for a very long time. I had to close one in Tahiti, so I began to feel fated at this point. When I went down and investigated the situation, I had to acknowledge that the Consulate was there for sentimental reasons more than anything else. It was being treated by Americans as an adjunct of American Express. They would go for lost passports and this and that. And we were only two hours away, so it was reasonable. Still, it's sort of painful to have to go to the city authorities and tell them that you're leaving and they get down practically on their knees and plead for the United States to stay. And we also had a lovely Consulate building, given to us by Barbara Hutton, on the Grand Canal. So that was another interesting but painful experience. One of my more interesting personal ventures when I was in Trieste was a case where we received a telegram from an American union in the United States, informing us that there was an American ship in port that did not comply with the crew requirement. Namely, the crew was primarily Indian and the officers, except for one American captain, were all Greek. The union urged us to stop this ship from proceeding, which we did. There was some consultation with the Department, but they basically left it in our hands. We had quite a standoff for several months, where the ship tried to escape the port. I'd call up the patrol people and they'd catch him. The owner came over from the United States twice to try to persuade us to see things his way. Eventually, the owner - and it must have been painful for him, financially - changed the flag of the ship to a Panamanian flag. It was useful to have an American flag on that ship because there was useful trade to war areas on American carriers, where American supplies were going to certain areas.

Q: Did the Italian authorities give you full support on that?

WISE: They were very cooperative. We all had a wonderful time! The guy was clearly wrong:

he just did not have the requisite number of American citizens on board.

Q: Were the Italians concerned that the Yugoslavs might make a grab for them? Was there any siege mentality, or had it pretty well dissipated by the time you were there?

WISE: I don't recall any siege mentality. There was a certain amount of grumbling on both sides, and effort by the extremists on both sides to stir up things, but I don't remember any crisis feeling. I think there was a general feeling that the situation would stay as it was for many years, and it has. The zone A and B problem was eventually solved. By the time I got to Rome, later in my career, there was agreement. So often, you don't see these things coming down the road. You get so used to the status quo that you can't think of anything that would change it.

Q: When Venice was closed down, did you take part of the Venetian work?

WISE: Yes, we took over the Consular District.

Q: Did this include the Brenner Pass, the German area?

WISE: Yes, it went up to the Brenner Pass and then down below Venice.

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

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

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

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

Q: You left there in '67. Where did you go?

WISE: From Trieste, I came to Washington and spent some time in the State Department, from 1967 to 1970.

Q: Doing what?

WISE: I spent one year in the European Bureau front office as a Staff Assistant. And a year in the operations center as a Senior Watch Officer. And then a year at the Soviet Desk.

Q: Who was the Assistant Secretary in the European Bureau?

WISE: John Leddy was the Assistant Secretary. It was getting in early in the morning, going through gobs of cables, marking them up, and trying to get them to your bosses when they came into work a little bit later. During the course of the day, there were several batches that came in, so this process was repeated.

Other parts of the job included getting clearances and making sure that everything that went out that need a

Front Office clearance had that clearance from one of the Principals. So it was an active job. It got you positioned to know how the Bureau operates and to know how things operate at that level.

Q: Then you moved over to the Op Center. Were you there during any crisis times?

WISE: We had Vietnam rumbling in the background. Particularly if you had the night shift, you had calls from Vietnam coming in and things that you had to relate to whoever would be responsible at a particular level. That was a constant thing. There was a coup in Greece, in April 1967. There was some suspicion that some corridors of the United States were behind this and those sorts of accusations that flew back and forth. One of my subsequent bosses, Senator Pell, chairman of the Helsinki Commission, was quite friendly with the King. He, in particular, had an interest in knowing if there was any effort to assist Papadopoulos.

Q: Did you get any glimmers of that whole business?

WISE: Not really, I couldn't add much to the historical record.

Q: I served in Greece from 1970 to 1974 and the general feeling was, and I think most historians agree, that the coup actually came as a surprise. The coup was expected, but it was supposed to be by some Generals. This caught everybody off guard. You were in the Soviet Desk when?

WISE: 1968 to 1970. In those days, the Soviet Office was divided into three parts: Bilateral questions, economic matters and multilateral questions. I started out in the multilateral section, under a fellow named Vlad Toumanoff, who was the head of that Section. I worked on Soviet-European policy. The job then was somewhat similar to what we had done in INR. We had a lot of reading papers, reading cable traffic and other sources and trying to give the State Department some sense of what Soviet policy in any particular area - mine was Europe - was likely to be. So there was a lot of preparation of position sort of papers. Then I moved over to the Bilateral Section and became head of the Bilateral Section. The head of Soviet Affairs in those days was a fellow name Spike Dubbs. And Tom Buchanan was the Deputy. There, it was a much more action oriented operation. You were dealing with the Soviet Embassy directly and with bilateral problems, such as they were in those days. Not nuclear and military policy, but how you enforce certain regulation, such as our closed area regime to Soviet diplomats. In those days, the Soviet Union closed off a tremendous part of it's territory to the outside world, including the United States. In retaliation, the United States and other countries set certain areas that the Soviets couldn't come to. The Soviet diplomats were always trying to break this system. And they would get themselves invited by well-meaning Americans around the country (professors or business

establishments) to come and speak in a closed area. And then, to travel in those days, they had to submit an itinerary to the State Department, and we'd see where they were going and see if the place was open or closed. A lot of these place were closed in our country arbitrarily. And so the Americans involved in giving the invitation could not understand why a Soviet diplomat couldn't come to Dubuque, Iowa, for example. So the pressure came back on us at the desk to do something, to make an exception. And we'd say that we would make an exception if they would make an exception for us in Moscow. We were trying to help our situation in Moscow, and those of us who had served there previously had a special interest in this whole operation. Another interesting experience involved Soviet planes flying from Moscow to Cuba, which was regular traffic in those days. The Soviet Union supplied a lot of things to Cuba that Cuba needed very badly. They had gotten into the habit, we were informed by the U.S. Air Force, of flying across the Atlantic and then stopping in Bermuda and being refueled at the U.S.-U.K. Airbase. They always pleaded that this was an emergency landing, but then it became a regular routine. What they were trying to do was to save on fuel and be able to carry more cargo. The Air Force asked us if there was something we could do about this. So, we called the DCM in and he said that this was not something that we could see continue. Well, the Soviets gave us assurances that they would look into it, but it did continue. Obviously, they were seeing if we were bluffing or not. I was the Action Officer of putting together a plan that eventually stopped this practice. We got together with our Air Force people and when the next plane came in, we held it there for five days, doing an inspection. We did that a couple times and the whole practice stopped.

Q: What was the impression of the Soviet Embassy at that time? This was during the Nixon period and Kissinger was having consultations with the National Security Advisor and Bill [Greenan]. Were the relations well-developed at that time between Bill Greenan and Kissinger at that point?

WISE: As far as the rest of us could determine at the time, Kissinger kept things pretty much to himself.

We would often hear about things afterwards. You remember the story of Kissinger and Jake Beam in Moscow: Kissinger would make trips to Moscow and not even tell the Ambassador that he was there and that sort of thing. I wasn't there at the time, but I imagine that that could be the case. There was quite a bit of activity from the White House - probably more there than from the State Department.

Q: Did you all feel cut out?

WISE: I think we felt cut out as an institution. Our relations with the Soviet Embassy were always quite formal and quite stiff and not terribly frequent. We didn't socialize with them. Had we tried, I don't know whether they would have been willing or not. It was a fairly stilted relationship in terms of action sort of things. You did business with them and that was all.

WILLIAM G. BRADFORD
Visa Officer
Naples (1955-1958)

Ambassador William G. Bradford was born in Illinois in 1925. He served in the U.S. Army and later received a bachelor's degree from the University of Indiana. He entered the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Berlin, Saigon, Kinshasa, Freetown, and an ambassadorship to Chad. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: Moving rather quickly on, you were then a visa officer in Naples. How did you find that? What type of work were you doing?

BRADFORD: Actually, I moved from public safety in Berlin into the consular section, and I was a visa officer there in Berlin for a while. Then I moved to Naples, and this was during the days of the Refugee Relief Act.

Q: 1955 to '58.

BRADFORD: Correct. It was something to be expected. In those days, we all went through the consular work, a little bit of everything. It was not terribly fascinating in itself. However, in Naples I ran into a situation in which a huge operation was going on. Visas were being really ground out -- that's the right term. We were expected to issue lots of visas every day. Congress expected it. They passed a law. They wanted these people to go to the United States. There was tremendous pressure on them.

I found that I had a flair for management that I didn't know I had, which was that I was able to put together how you made this thing happen with lots of red tape and so forth, but how you got through that to issue a lot of visas every day. I started out at the bottom of the totem pole, and by 1958, I was in charge of the section. It was a very large section. We were issuing well over 300 immigrant visas a day, and I had a staff of approximately 50 Americans.

Q: This was the same development that happened in Frankfurt, I know. I was involved in that. This is a refugee program, and you're in Italy. Who were the refugees?

BRADFORD: If you remember, the refugee program had two parts to it. One was a refugee portion, and there were a lot of East Europeans that were handled there. Naples, while it's on the southern end of Italy, no immigrant visas were issued in Rome. So therefore, most of what happened in the immigrant field happened down in southern Italy, and we were geared to handle it. We handled a great many Hungarians, Bulgarians, and that kind of thing.

However, the biggest part of the act was that it increased the quota for relatives of people already in the United States, and this included thousands and thousands of Italians, particularly southern Italians.

Q: With your management experience, then, is this really what set you off in the administrative field?

BRADFORD: In a way, it was, but in a way that I think was peculiar to the Foreign Service,

which is so much in the Foreign Service, that is personal. In those days, Bill Crockett was the administrative counselor in Rome. Crockett became familiar with my work in Naples, and we knew each other, not well, but from time to time, and he liked what he saw. Later on, he asked me to join him when he was Assistant Secretary for Administration, which is one step removed, really. When I left Naples, I came back and worked in the Secretariat for a couple of years.

NICHOLAS A. VELIOTES
Consular Officer
Naples (1955-1957)

Commercial Attaché
Rome (1957-1960)

Ambassador Nicholas A. Veliotes was born in Oakland, California. Upon graduation from high school, he joined the U.S. Army. Upon completion of his military service, he received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from The University of California at Berkeley. Ambassador Veliotes entered the Foreign Service in 1955. His career included positions in New Delhi, Vientiane, Tel Aviv, Amman, and Cairo. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 29, 1990.

Q: Obviously, we're going to concentrate more on the latter part of your career, but you served in Naples from '55 to '57, and then in Rome from '57 to '60. I wonder if you could talk a bit about your experience in Italy. This was the first time you had really seen the Foreign Service in action, although you started off in the Refugee Relief Program, which was sort of a unique program. What were your impressions and what were you doing?

VELIOTES: Well, the Refugee Relief Program was a large bureaucracy for an overseas post. You used the Army analogy; it continued at the post. We had far too many people, much too qualified for the kinds of clerical work that we were doing in the Refugee Relief Program. But it did give me a terrific opportunity to learn Italian, because that was one thing we did, was interact.

Q: You were talking to Italians all day long.

VELIOTES: Yes. The work itself was awful; the people were terrific. I realized early on that here I was at a post with about thirty peers, all of us thrown together, not only because of our age and commonality of experiences before coming in (most of us had been in the armed services and things like this), but we were also thrown together through adversity -- we all hated the work we were doing. But we saw it in perspective: we had a good sense of humor; we knew it wouldn't last forever. It wasn't the kind of an experience that led you to have great respect for the Foreign Service as an administrative institution. There was a certain maturity, however, on the part of most people who...

Q: I think it's hard for people to understand today, but back in the fifties almost everyone had had one to four or five or even more years of military experience, so they were used to dealing with a bureaucracy.

VELIOTES: That's right, and used to being in sort of Catch 22 situations. And we figured we could somehow beat the system and wait them out. And I'll say this, the lasting legacy of that was that my dearest personal friends, in the last thirty-five years, all came from Naples: Bill Bradford, Sam Lewis, the rest of them over there.

Q: Basically it's a bonding situation, as we call it today.

VELIOTES: It was a bonding situation, and we came out...

Italy, of course, itself, was fascinating. It was just recovering from the ravages of the war. And the four and a half years we were in Naples and Rome saw it go from barely beginning to recover to being the leading advocate of what became the European Community.

The experiences I had in Naples, I want to comment on them, because I've said a lot of negative things about that experience. There was an opportunity to demonstrate that you could get things done. Everyone knew we were smart -- you don't get in unless you're smart -- but could you make anything happen? Could you do anything? Even if it were on a principle of visa law, were you willing to make your voice heard? And then when we rotated into administration, a terrific opportunity, because it was such a mess, to pull it together, to look at the business side of an overseas post, and to make it better. So I learned a lot, and I got a lot of experience.

Q: Who was the consul general at the time?

VELIOTES: James Henderson, who was a career consular officer, really, and one of these marvelous people. He's a very decent person. Maybe he was ahead of his time, but, you know, you could run into Captain Queegs easily in the Foreign Service in those days. James Henderson was a good man, I thought. He worried about all these young officers, how could he help them, how could he work with them. It wasn't easy because of the generation gap, but we all respected him and we felt he was fair. You went into a job and he let you do it. So I appreciated that very much. The combination of Naples, which had tremendous external attractions...there's one of them right there.

Q: My last position abroad was consul general in Naples.

VELIOTES: Well, then I need not go into that. The opportunity to learn Italian, the sense of bonding that came out of it, and the opportunity to learn.

Q: Well, then you went up to Rome.

VELIOTES: Well, that was because of a remarkable administrative counselor called William Crockett, who ended his career as under secretary for management.

Q: And a man who put quite a stamp on the administration of the Foreign Service.

VELIOTES: Right, he really was a manager. And he talked the Department into allowing the embassy to take advantage of this very large pool of manpower in Italy in less desirable jobs, to pick out officers who really did their jobs under difficult circumstances (as these jobs were not the best jobs in the world), and if you learned Italian, to offer you another assignment in Italy. Because Italy at that time had six or seven consulates.

Q: It still has, I think, seven posts. Of course, also, the Refugee Relief Act ran out, I think, on the 31st of December of '57, so that they...

VELIOTES: It was running out, and Bill Crockett, as I say, talked the Department into letting the embassy offer to a number of officers a second post in Italy, on the grounds that we'd learned Italian and, frankly, we'd produced and we deserved something else. That's how I got to Rome in the Economic Section.

Q: And you were doing what, in the Economic Section?

VELIOTES: I was assistant commercial attaché. I did it for two years, and I very much regret that a young Foreign Service officer cannot do that today. It was another great learning experience, another kind of experience in a big bureaucracy where you could actually express yourself professionally. You could go out and work, and you weren't under the same constraints as the junior officers in the Political Section, for example.

Q: What were you doing as a commercial officer at that time? These interviews are designed really for somebody doing research who is not overly familiar with this.

VELIOTES: My basic function at that time was to help American businessmen who were interested in investing in Italy, or selling in Italy, or those businessmen who were already in Italy and had problems with the Italian government.

And remember, at the time, we used to talk about the dollar overhang, which meant that we were trying to get people to sell to us so we could buy their products abroad and reduce this enormous so-called dollar overhang that existed in Europe, bring some of the dollars back. That changed as the circumstances changed, in the late fifties, and we started to worry about American exports abroad.

The most interesting part of the job was getting in on the Common Market, when American business woke up to the fact that Europe had recovered and it wasn't sufficient to just count on exporting to Europe, because the Europeans were going to be tough competitors everywhere, including in their own markets. The most creative part of the job was that, working with the Americans who came there.

You had your own world of Italian contacts, both governmental -- interagency, as well as private -- trade associations, business people. It was an area in which you could do a lot and get a lot of satisfaction.

Q: Did you find American business responsive? You would make trade-opportunity reports, but did you find that there was a good response on the part of American business?

VELIOTES: Not really. Many of the problems are the problems that you have today. American business had gotten used to being in the driver's seat and would not go after the contracts.

To some extent we had responsibility, working with our new embassy in Libya, for example, for Libya. I remember a case where someone in Libya wanted to buy a million tires, and the American tire manufacturer didn't think that was worth the time to respond to this, whereas the foreign competitors sent representatives, saying, hey, this could be the beginning of something. There was no sensitivity on the price, and service concepts were far behind what the Europeans were starting to develop at that time.

Q: How did you feel at that time about how responsive and how much cooperation was there with the Department of Commerce?

VELIOTES: Well, I thought there was enough cooperation. It depends on what you mean by cooperation. Your work was primarily with Commerce back in Washington. I found very quickly that no matter how good a job I was doing (and I was doing a hell of a good job; I ended up for a year as acting commercial attaché at a crucial point in the Common Market), the Commerce people and the Bureau of Foreign Commerce would never give you a top rating for your work, because it ran against what they saw as their own bureaucratic interest -- to create their own commercial service, and if Foreign Service officers were doing a good job, and they said they were doing a good job, that would act against this. As a matter of fact, the only people the Department of Commerce sent out as commercial attachés at that time were duds (our top Italian told me, when I left I was replaced by three senior people out from Commerce); they detracted from the work. This was a disappointment to me. And yet, when I came back to Commerce, I was romanced and I was asked why don't I come to Commerce and work for two years. And I told them very frankly why. I said, "If I was that good, why didn't you say so? I can't see where my career can be enhanced by my putting in two more years..." So I went over to State.

Q: Within the embassy, how much interest at the top? Most of the time was what, Ambassador James Zellerbach? How much interest was there in the promotion of American commerce?

VELIOTES: Well, you know, Zellerbach, of course, he was a businessman, he took it seriously. But basically, in the bureaucracy, they left us alone. That was the fun of it. I never objected to it. I was able to go and do things that other officers of my rank and experience would never get into. I negotiated an international agreement with half a dozen Italian ministries on war risk insurance. It was great; I was able to do these things. I found that being a commercial attaché abroad at that time was a little bit like working in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the early sixties: basically your bosses didn't want problems, so they'd let you do almost anything on your own as long as no one was complaining.

AUGUST VELLETRI
Political Officer
Rome (1955-1960)

August Velletri was born in Ithaca, New York in 1916 and raised in Italy. Upon completion of high school, Mr. Velletri returned to the United States and received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Ohio State University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1955. His career included positions in Rome, Athens, and Peshawar. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 12, 1993.

Q: It is hard to recall, but at the time there was great concern of church relations...

VELLETRI: At the time, I believe, The Washington Post was somewhat anti-clerical, and anti-church. Also, there were a number of liberal refugees from Italy, who still were fundamentally anti-clerical and viewed the Christian Democratic Party and the Vatican in a very negative sense. They heard that the Vatican would eventually dominate the Italian political scene.

I think I made a mistake in accepting an assignment in Italy, because at the time, the sending of a Foreign Service officer with antecedents in that particular country was not looked upon favorably.

Q: So the fact you were of Italian background was...

VELLETRI: Of course my assignment was not to the political section of the Embassy but as deputy to the political counselor who headed the Rome Liaison Group.

Q: We had these different groups. I was in the Dhahran Liaison Group, which was evacuations from the Middle East. You would be doing this with southern Europe.

VELLETRI: This is correct. The Rome Liaison Group was responsible for the evacuation of American citizens in North Africa, Egypt and the Middle East in general during a war. After the Suez War in 1956, I moved into the political section as a political officer.

Q: Did you get involved while in the Rome Liaison Group during the 1956 war in getting people out?

VELLETRI: Oh yes, indeed. Lansing Collins as chairman of the Group, and I worked with Admiral "Cat" Brown, the head of the Sixth Fleet. We tried to "pressure" the Admiral into using the Sixth Fleet to get the Americans out from the Middle East. The Admiral, was somewhat reluctant, because as he was trying to point out, the Sixth Fleet had the primary responsibility of watching the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. He reminded us that he could not spare ships and men to get the Americans out of all those countries affected by the war. Yet, he did help us a great deal.

Q: Well, let's talk about the Christian Democratic Party. Who was the leader of the Party then?

VELLETRI: The principal players in those days were Amintore Fanfani, Segni from Sardinia, and Andreotti.

Q: In later years the bloom is off the Christian Party and the problem of corruption has really surfaced. Were we feeling that at the time or was there a different spirit?

VELLETRI: The political section in Rome was plugging very arduously for an opening to the Left so that the Socialists could join the Government. The decision was made, of course, by President Kennedy. The administration finally accepted the idea of bringing the Socialists and the Christian Democratic Party together. The Socialists at the time were in the opposition and had shared no government power since the end of the war. With the assumption of power, however, the Socialists became as corrupt as the Christian Democratic Party. Today we learn that a large number of Socialist leaders are being prosecuted for corruption.

Q: When you first arrived there was Clare Boothe Luce ambassador?

VELLETRI: Yes, I served under her.

Q: What was your impression of her in the role of ambassador?

VELLETRI: Mrs. Luce was a very intelligent woman. However, she was very conservative. Her relationship with the Italians, to some extent, was limited to that sphere in the government where the Rightist people held sway. I did not get along with her at all on this question. But, as I say, she was highly intelligent. She knew what she was doing, except that she had different ideas for Italy. A "left turn" was not to her liking. Eventually she left Italy under a cloud due to reports that she was being poisoned, which was not true.

Q: Was the Embassy then divided with a very conservative ambassador and a political section which was generally looking towards our opening to the Left a bit and all that?

VELLETRI: In my view there was a division.

Q: Who was the political counselor?

VELLETRI: The political counselor, if I remember correctly, was H.G. Torbert. The Minister was Outerbridge Horsey who was opposed to the idea of bringing the Socialists in the government.

Q: Well, this was a very big debate in the United States. This is all very nice but here are people in the United States debating about whether the Socialists should join the Christian Democratic government in Italy. What the hell were we doing talking like that? What control did we have over this at that time?

VELLETRI: Well we had a lot of control over Italy, there is no question. The United States had tremendous influence over the Italian government and even the average Italian looked upon the United States with a good deal of admiration and respect. Also, they were thankful for all the

material we gave.

Q: Did you have the feeling that some of the Ministers in the Italian government were more or less dependent financially on the largesse of the United States?

VELLETRI: To some extent yes. Of course they did not admit it officially. I felt that our intelligence agencies had penetrated most of the government. They exercised a great deal of influence and gave a lot of money to groups and individuals.

Q: Then you got involved with San Marino. What were we doing in San Marino that you got involved with?

VELLETRI: San Marino had the only communist government in Western Europe. Washington and Rome decided to get rid of it by hiring and arming about 100 retired Carabinieri (Italian National Police) with the aim of dispatching them to "invade" San Marino and overthrow the leftist government. To some extent it was a comic opera but it worked and San Marino was handed over to the Christian Democratic Party.

Q: How did we analyze San Marino at that time? My impression of Italian politics are that people often vote because they are bloody minded rather than...so they might be communists but it has nothing to do solely with ideology.

VELLETRI: San Marino, whether or not it was communist dominated, presented no danger to Italy. The little country is surrounded by Italy and in no position to cause any real trouble. At the time however, any communist regime in Western Europe would be a cause of apprehension.

Q: Did you get involved in it?

VELLETRI: Yes, I was the liaison officer in the Embassy. I was following the situation. The Christian Democratic Party member who was involved actually had a desk in my office. He was giving us ideas of what to do and what not to do, etc. These were then passed down to CIA and that was it.

Q: Do you have the feeling that it was our instigation, telling the Christian Democrats to get rid of this thing or did they say they wanted to get rid of it and asked for our help?

VELLETRI: That I do not know.

Q: Then let's move to Vatican relations. When did you start this and how long were you dealing with that in Italy? What had the situation been prior to your taking over?

VELLETRI: Well, as I said, Roosevelt's personal representative, Taylor, left Rome after the war and all diplomatic contact with the Vatican was cut off. Pius XII was a true diplomat and refused to do business with the American Embassy because he always felt that the American Embassy was accredited to the state of Italy. Pius insisted on an Embassy official duly accredited to the Vatican if the U.S. wished to maintain any contact with him.

Q: There was a strong anti-Catholic Church feeling at the time in the United States.

VELLETRI: Especially in the south.

Q: They felt that the Pope was a subversive element, etc.

VELLETRI: Today I read that some religious people in the South are asking President Clinton not to appoint an ambassador to the Holy See. Suspicion of the Vatican still exists. With the departure of Taylor establishing contact with the Vatican was done through the Vatican Secretary of State. At the time this office was headed by a substitute Secretary of State whose name was Dell'Acqua. Archbishop Dell'Acqua was assisted by Iginio Cardinale, a second cousin of mine.

Q: Who was Iginio Cardinale?

VELLETRI: He was born in this country. His parents who had emigrated to this country early in the 1900's returned to Italy during the depression. I knew him in Italy when he came back. We were just about the same age. In fact, he was teaching me some English at the time because I had forgotten all my English. Lansing Collins, the political counselor learned about my relationship with Cardinale and he thought I might be of some use in renewing State-Vatican contacts. There was, of course, Pius's initial reluctance to allow this sort of informal diplomacy, but I was told by Cardinale that Pius had been won over by Archbishop Dell'Acqua. CIA objected to all this but their objection was dismissed by Robert Murphy.

Q: Oh, yes.

VELLETRI: As you know, he was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and had the authority to decide in favor of the Embassy.

Q: What were we getting out of it and what were we getting out of these conversations?

VELLETRI: I used to meet with Dell'Acqua twice a week and we talked about American policies; worldwide and also towards Italy. Dell'Acqua kept us informed about the problems Italy was experiencing in Italy as well as in other countries. I think the situation worked to our mutual satisfaction. I cannot tell you in detail what was discussed at the time, but there is a record in the Department of State as well as in the Vatican archives.

Q: I am sure. Looking back on it how valuable did you find the Vatican approach to things? Did they have a good intelligence service? Did they have a different view of the world than we did or not?

VELLETRI: The "intelligence" was provided primarily by the Bishops throughout the world. The Bishop, as I understand, is required every three or four years, maybe five, I don't know exactly, to inform the Vatican on the political, economic and social conditions in his diocese. Probably, the various orders, like the Jesuits, may also provide some intelligence.

Q: What were we getting out of this? Were we finding out things that we could use?

VELLETRI: I don't know what the Department was doing with it. I have no idea. But I do know that the Church was our ally, not only in Italy, but in other countries where Church influence was considerable. To that extent if the Department knew what the Church was thinking in general or in particular, it benefitted us to a great extent.

When Pius XII died, the Cardinals organizing the consistory which elected John XXIII, invited Cardinal Mindszenty, who was "our guest" in our Embassy in Budapest, to come to Rome to participate in the elections. The Embassy had also made a suggestion to the Vatican to invite Mindszenty knowing full well that Vatican was not happy with Mindszenty living in our Embassy.

Q: Yes, he was a pain to everyone, including the people in our Embassy.

VELLETRI: He also was a source of irritation. The Vatican was interested in maintaining proper relations with Hungary. They could not appoint Bishops, train priests, etc. The Vatican was interested in the welfare of the Catholic Church generally, and Mindszenty was interested in Mindszenty. He was still dreaming of being the Primate of Hungary and claimed that under the old constitution he was the legitimate leader of Hungary. They tried to get him out of there by inviting him to the Consistory. He accepted provided that he was guaranteed passage back to the Embassy. The government of Hungary refused to do that. The Hungarians also wanted him out of the Embassy and out of Hungary. Unfortunately it was not the course of action which would be approved by Under Secretary, Robert Murphy. When Mr. Murphy came to Rome, accompanying Eisenhower on his last visit before he left the Presidency, Mr. Murphy told us that the idea of getting the Cardinal out of Hungary was not a wise course of action since the Department was looking upon Mindszenty's movement out of the Embassy as a bargaining chip in our relationship with Hungary. Mindszenty would be pulled out if the Hungarians made some concessions. We tolerated Mindszenty. He apparently was useful.

Q: We must have been reporting back to Washington what was going on?

VELLETRI: yes.

Q: But nobody told you don't...?

VELLETRI: Nobody told us anything.

THERESA HEALY
Refugee Relief Officer/Visa Officer
Naples (1956)

Consular/Administrative Officer

Milan (1950s-1960)

Ambassador Theresa Healy was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1932. She attended St. John's University. As a member of the Foreign Service, she served in countries including Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, New Zealand, and Sierra Leone. The Ambassador was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin on May 10, 1985.

HEALY: And I was very pleased when I was told I was being assigned to Naples, Italy as a refugee relief officer. I didn't know at all what this meant, but Italy sounded delightful. It was Europe, my first choice. I didn't think my parents would be as shaken by an assignment to Italy as one to... I remember one of the young men went to a place we had never even heard of, Medellin, Colombia.

Then the last month of the three-month training was devoted to language. This was before the Foreign Service Institute had really geared up its language school to the point where we find it today. I felt myself lucky to get four hours a day for four weeks of Italian. I loved learning the language. I just thought it was great fun. I hadn't realized that, but apparently I do have a talent for learning languages.

Then I did everything that the little instruction sheet said I should do, including arranging to take a ship to Europe, and notified my family that shortly after the New Year, I would be climbing on board a ship going to Italy. I think from what my sister has told me over the years, my parents were really a bit shaken up by all this. In retrospect, I marvel that I, after having never, never, never left Brooklyn in my life, I could face with equanimity this whole idea going off on a ship to Europe.

Q: It's amazing.

HEALY: It amazes me now, but nevertheless, I climbed on board the ship with the whole family in tow and we drank champagne in my tiny, tiny, little four-bunk cabin. That was it, they climbed off the ship and off I went.

Q: What ship were you on?

HEALY: I was on the Constitution.

Q: That went to Naples?

HEALY: It went to Naples via Barcelona and Genoa. There were two other people from my class on the ship with me. One was proceeding on route by car to Palermo and one had been assigned to Naples with me. I enjoyed the ship tremendously. This was my idea of the foreign service life. Here I was in first class on board a ship crossing the Atlantic and all at somebody else's expense, too.

And I was also very fortunate to have met a young man who had just finished a year taking a master's degree at Brooklyn Polytech, which was a graduate engineering school in Brooklyn,

New York. GG had taken his bachelor's degree at the University of Naples and was returning to his family in Naples to eventually take a Ph.D. in what I seem to recollect was aeronautical engineering, but which turns out, from something I read in the paper this past year about him, to involve the Italian space effort, because he was over here for one of the launchings, which involved the Italian government in some way, or the European space agency or whatever. So it was quite amusing to run across his name again. I'm sure there could only be one Dr. Luigi Napolitano from Naples, Italy, involved in something like this.

Anyway, GG did introduce me to his parents and his sisters and through them I came to know a group of young Italians and sopped up Italian just as fast as I could hear it spoken, which was a big help to me.

Q: You had already known French, had you, at university?

HEALY: Oh-ho-ho, I had had high school French and I had had college French, which doesn't teach you to speak two words of it. In fact I had failed when I first took the foreign service exam. the only one of the many tests we took you were allowed to fail was the language test. I failed it. Fortunately during that training period in Washington, I was able to take the French test again and squeak through. So theoretically I was not a language probationer, but I didn't consider that I spoke French. But Italian was my first spoken foreign language.

I enjoyed the work although it seemed rather pointless to me. An Italian clerk went through a refugee's file and certified it for final clearance, turned it over to me. I proceeded to do exactly the same thing and certified it for final clearance. Then Alice Griffith, who headed up the section, would put her final chalk on it as ready for final clearance. Since I had been a school teacher for four years, I thought this was rather stupid clerical work, but I thought, well, they say in the beginning junior officers have pretty pointless tasks.

After about four or five months, the refugee relief program was winding down. We had dozens of people in Germany, Italy, Greece, I think, still handling war refugees, but refugees from natural disasters, like earthquakes and floods. But we were running down on the legislation that permitted us to bring these people into the United States as refugees.

By the end of that first year, I had been transferred to the main building via a very disagreeable two or three weeks of sorting out dirty old files. That was when I first noticed that the young men got to be special assistants to the consul general and the young women got to clean out the dirty old files. But eventually I was transferred down to the main building and placed in charge of... Well, I was the initial officer who made the initial decision on non-immigrant visas. And the rule, of course, in Naples for non-immigrant visas was, you don't give anyone a visitor's visa unless he happens to be the mayor of the city or somebody else whose bone fides are absolutely unquestionable.

But I enjoyed the work. And there was an exciting time when we had some American refugees from troubles, I guess it would have been in the Suez Canal area, leaving the Middle East via US Army troop ships. A group of us from Naples were flown down to Sicily and boarded the General Patton in the middle of the Straits of Messina in the middle of the night. I thought that

was really very exciting. This was what I joined the Foreign Service for. Even if the actual work was simply processing passports and assigning people to hotel rooms, it was still nevertheless, pretty exciting.

By the time I got back from a short weekend in Rome in October, I had learned two things, which came as a bit of a surprise. First of all, we were losing a number of positions in Naples and I was being transferred to Milan. That didn't trouble me too much, it was still Italy - One poor young man was transferred from Naples to Venezuela, as I recollect - but that before I could be transferred to Milan, my useful services, my warm body, my useful pair of hands were needed in Vienna because we had the Hungarian revolution and we had refugees pouring out of Hungary into Vienna. So, I just went up to Vienna and spent four weeks up there trying to help many others, pulled in from other places in Europe, deal with this flood of refugees. Got back to Naples in time to spend Christmas in a friend's apartment and then started the drive up to Milan.

Q: You had your own car?

HEALY: Oh, yes. First thing I did when I landed in Naples was buy a Volkswagen, a brand new Volkswagen. I don't think it could have cost more than \$500. We had all been trained properly in foreign service procedures. Before we left Washington, we had all borrowed money from the credit union, so I had money to buy my Volkswagen.

I drove up to Milan where I spent the next three years with home leave after one year and a return for two more years. I loved that assignment. I loved the people. Bill Boswell was my first consul general, Charlie Rogers my second, Sam Gammon was there, Parker Wyman. Harold Swope, and, of course, all my Italian friends on the staff of the consulate. When I was over in Milan just two months ago, I had a very happy time speaking to Maria Lousia on the telephone. She's retired and was living in Parma. And having dinner with Laurie... So the ties I developed in Milan are probably the strongest.

The first year I was there I did general consular work, and I enjoyed that very much because it was a bit of everything. It was citizenship, passports, visa work, protection and welfare, which was fascinating. I came in contact with such people as the Princess della Torre e Taxis who wanted to sound out the consul general for ideas on what she should do with her villa up in Bellagio. As it turned out she decided to leave it to the Rockefeller Foundation. J. Paul Getty came in to sign his will and I discovered when he died a few years back that that will was the will that survived all these years. I had to deal with poor Americans who lost all their money, one poor woman whose mental balance was impaired. It was just great fun. I enjoyed it.

Then I went on home leave, saw my family, and when I left to come back to Italy, I think I was very much in the balance as between do I really want to do this again? Probably if I hadn't enjoyed Milan so much, the risk there was I would have said, "I don't want to do this any more, I want to stay home with the family." But I loved Milan, so I was able to, with much weeping and wailing, climb on board my first - it wasn't my first airplane, but it was my first long commercial - journey from New York to Boston to Ireland, where I visited my Irish relatives for the very first time ever, to London, and so on back to Milan. That was a very, very enjoyable trip.

I had two more years in Milan, this time as administrative officer, and I very much enjoyed that too. It was just a great deal of fun. I guess I'm leaving out the one month when I was sent down to Genoa, because Genoa needed help in closing out its refugee relief program. Genoa never told Rome or Bill Boswell in Milan that my services were needed to clean out their dirty old files. These were the things that really soured me on the Foreign Service. But then something good would come along, you see. I know I never told Bill Boswell, because I did tell Sam and Mary Gammon, and Sam said, "If Bill Boswell knew that that's why he had to send you down to Genoa for four weeks, he'd have blown his stack.

But at the end of the two years in Milan I asked for a Washington assignment. I thought, "Four years is enough. Now I want to go back home and be able to see the family all the time." My sister was married before I joined the Foreign Service and by 1960 she had three children and I wanted to see them, and my brother was getting married shortly after I got back from Italy.

So I was assigned to be one of the assistants on the Italian desk in the Bureau of European Affairs. This was a political job, a political assignment in the sense of doing political work, which I was pleased about because I had picked up the mystique in the Foreign Service about admin work and consular work, and I had learned to conceal the fact that I quite enjoyed doing both those jobs in Milan. But I was pleased to be doing what amounted to political reporting as assistant on the Italian desk. My language was good, my knowledge of Italian political affairs was pretty scanty, despite my years of living there, but I learned a great deal. That's where I met Ed Williams. He was the other assistant.

Well, again we were going through reductions in force and they abolished both the assistant positions on the Italian desk. I remember thinking, "Well, now what?"

MAX W. KRAUS
Program/Policy Officer, USIS
Rome (1956-1957)

Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Milan (1957-1961)

Max W. Kraus immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1937 as a teenager. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1941 and subsequently entered the U.S. Army. Upon completion of his military service, Mr. Kraus began working for the Overseas Information Program. He also held positions in Phnom Penh, Stanleyville, Leopoldville, and Geneva. This interview was conducted by Cliff Groce in 1988.

KRAUS: My first assignment was as program and policy officer in Rome.

Q: That is a nice place to start.

KRAUS: That was a nice place to start. Walter Roberts was the deputy assistant director for Europe and he -- sort of -- was my rabbi for much of my career. I think that he got me that job.

In that job, incidentally, I succeeded Barbara White who had moved up to Turin as branch PAO. I, myself, cordially disliked this program and policy officer's job in Rome, because it was a pure paper-pushing job.

I keep on telling people that, unless I looked out my window and saw the palm trees in the embassy yard, I had the feeling I was still in Washington, and somebody had simply switched my in-box and my out-box around.

I never had any contact with Italians other than members of the local staff, except on one occasion when a genuine Italian contact wandered into my office. He was looking for somebody else, but I grabbed him and held onto him for dear life. This was my only real Italian contact.

Q: That must be very frustrating?

KRAUS: Yes, but in 1957 -- as you may remember -- when Arthur Larson was director of USIA, he had the good taste and judgement of making a statement, in Hawaii, in which he called the democrats, the party of treason -- which did not sit very well with Lyndon Johnson who was chairman of the Senate subcommittee that handled State and USIA appropriations.

And, who was the other one on the House side? Oh, Congressman Rooney.

Q: Oh, Rooney, yes.

KRAUS: Did not sit very well with them and there was the first meat axe budget cut. My job as program and policy officer was abolished. Ned Nordness was my PAO at that time.

Now, Ned was a sweet guy who hated to break bad news to people. He left that mainly to Chuck Blackman, his deputy, who was his hatchet man. Ned somehow felt that this was something he had to do himself and he called me up to his office and said he was sorry, but my job had been abolished.

However, if I was willing to make another move so soon again, he could offer me the branch PAO job in Milan. Well, I mean, I had been in Italy long enough by that time to know that the branch PAO in Milan was the best job in USIS Italy, because, except for the fact that the government sits in Rome, Milan, in every other respect, was the capital of Italy -- financial, industrial, cultural, publication, and so on.

Q: Design?

KRAUS: Yes, you name it. It was there. I had a very hard time refraining from jumping up and down with joy and kissing Ned Nordness on both cheeks, but simply said, yes, of course, I would be willing to accept this job.

So, I was transferred to Milan in September of 1956 and stayed there until November of 1961. This, I think, was, in retrospect, probably the most satisfying assignment that I every had in USIA, because I had an absolutely superb local staff.

Milan was 400 miles from Rome and, as long as I did not pull some outrageous boo-boos which caused screams audible in Rome, I could run my own program just as I saw fit.

Q: And you could certainly deal with the Italians?

KRAUS: I certainly could deal with the Italians. By that time, I had mastered Italian sufficiently well so that I could even speak publicly without a script and be interviewed on radio and television and so on.

Q: That is quite an accomplishment.

KRAUS: Well, you know, I had, between school in Germany and college, eleven years of Latin. So, that helps a lot in learning Italian. I do have a certain gift for languages which goes along with an absolute inability to cope with exact sciences and techniques.

I am one of these people who experiences a mild sense of triumph if he can change a fuse. So, that was a marvelous tour. The best I had during my whole career. But, then --

Q: That was three years?

KRAUS: Four years. From September of 1957 to November of 1961. But in August, 1961, I was spending a week of vacation in Cortina D'Ampezzo.

Q: Beautiful place.

KRAUS: Beautiful place. I had gone for a long walk on a cloudless summer day surrounded by the majesty of the dolomites and came back to the hotel and found a message to call USIS, Rome. I did call USIS, Rome.

**NILES W. BOND
Political Counselor
Rome (1956-1958)**

Niles W. Bond was born on February 25, 1998 in West Newton, Massachusetts. He attended the University of North Carolina and the Fletcher School. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Cuba, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, South Korea, Italy, and Brazil. Mr. Bond was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 14, 1998.

Q: You left this UN job in 1956 and you went to Rome.

BOND: That's right.

Q: You were in Rome until '58.

BOND: Yes, 1958. Two years.

Q: What were you doing in Rome?

BOND: I was political counselor, number three in the official ranking after the Ambassador and the DCM. I was head of the political section and also the contact with the CIA. They were part of the political section but would never admit it in-house, of course. One might say that the CIA element in the embassy was in, but not of, the political section. We had trouble finding out what the CIA was doing because we had a station chief and a deputy station chief who were dedicated to keeping us in the dark about what they were up to. The only way we found out... I had daily meetings with the political section and CIA finally started sending Bill Colby instead of the deputy stations chief. Bill Colby saw to it that we were kept *au courant* about CIA activities, to the extent that we needed to know.

Q: It was common fodder in the streets of Italy for years, from 1948 on. I'm thinking of those early years when the CIA was particularly paying off the CDU.

BOND: They still were, yes. They still were. The money was still being bagged in. We didn't have anything to do with that. I didn't want anything to do with it. But one of my best friends in the Foreign Office in Rome, who later became Ambassador in London, used to tell me stories about picking up the bag from the CIA guy and that sort of thing. I'm sure it was still going on when I was there. He was one of Fanfani's lieutenants. He was a career diplomat and a very good one. That's was when Mrs. Luce was Ambassador. Later, she was succeeded by David Zellerbach. You know, Zellerbach was not a great success, although he was a gentleman and a hard worker.

Q: No.

BOND: But he was aware of his own shortcomings as a diplomat and leaned heavily on his career staff for guidance.

Q: He was really a very small man.

BOND: Very small. He had been there about a month. I was DCM at the time because Jack Jernegan, who was the regular DCM, had been seconded to go to Cairo for some discussions out there. So the ambassador decided that he and his wife would take a little vacation. He called me and said, "We're going to Paris. We haven't been away from the post since we got here. You'll be in charge. There's just one warning I want to give you: don't let the Segni government be overthrown. Don't let it fall. We have to support the Segni government." He hadn't been in Paris two days when the Segni government fell and I got a really rude telegram from him saying, "I thought I told you not to let the Segni government fall!" (*Laughter*)

Q: How was Claire Booth Luce as an ambassador?

BOND: She was very good. Although, for political reasons, I was not enthusiastic about serving with her when it was first mentioned to me. She was the ambassador when I was assigned to Rome and, as she would not accept any senior officer candidates until she had talked to them personally, I had to stay on in Washington until she came back, but she used to come back fairly frequently. But I had a very pleasant session with her. She couldn't have been nicer and we agreed on things that I would have thought we'd have disagreed on. Yes, she was very good.

I hadn't been there more than a few weeks when she invited me to go to Venice with her. They were launching a NATO ship that was going to the Dutch and she had to go up for the inauguration. It was a Coast Guard type ship. It was going to the Dutch but had been built with American money through NATO. Anyway, she had to deliver a speech there and she suggested that, since I hadn't been to Venice, I meet her there and attend the ceremony. She was giving a speech in Milan the night before, so I went up by myself.

She had to return to Rome as soon as the ceremony was over, and I was walking her back to the car. It was a Friday and she said to me "Why don't you stay in Venice over the weekend? There's a lot to see in Venice and you haven't had a chance yet, so why not stay here." I did, and had a wonderful weekend. She was nice that way and her staff really loved her. When she left, we gave a big party for her and re-wrote the words to the song "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face..."

Q: From the musical "My Fair Lady."

BOND: Yes. We sang it for her, and she was pleased. After she left the job and went back to Washington, she lived at the Watergate. My wife and I were living just up the hill from there, in the Columbia Plaza. For several years afterwards, she gave a party every year in her apartment for those staff members who had been with her in Rome. It was a very nice gesture on her part, and brought back fond memories.

Q: How about when Zellerbach came? Did he bring anything with him?

BOND: I don't think so, no. He certainly wasn't stupid, but he wasn't experienced in the ways of diplomacy. But he was not like MacArthur as far as political advice was concerned. He asked questions and checked things with you: "Did you ever know President Segni?" Segni was called The White Mouse. He was about Zellerbach's size.

Q: We're talking about people not quite five feet tall or so?

BOND: Yes. Segni was thinner than Zellerbach. He was a very slim man with white, white hair and a white complexion. Everything about him was white. That's why he was known as The White Mouse. Before his government fell, he was in the Parliament one day and he got up to make a speech that nobody liked. They were booing him and calling him names, calling him "Nano, nano," the Italian word for dwarf. His son was there, at the back of the Prime Minister's box, a lad over six feet tall. So, when they were all yelling "Nano," he summoned the boy to the

front of the box and pointed at him. At that, everybody started shouting, “Cornuto! Cornuto!”
(*Laughter*)

Q: Meaning he wasn't the father?

BOND: Yes.

Q: Horns.

BOND: That's right. So he couldn't win either way.

Q: No..

BOND: It's a true story. The incident, I mean.

Q: You were in Rome until 1958.

BOND: Yes, until late summer of 1958.

Q: You were there at a very interesting time, during the dual crises; during the crisis of the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis.

BOND: Yes.

Q: How did this hit Italy and did we have any involvement in it?

BOND: It may be that the one for whom I was standing in as DCM had been called to Cairo about the Suez thing.

Q: Jernegan.

BOND: Jack Jernegan, yes. He was a Middle East type. What was the other thing you mentioned?

Q: The Hungarian Revolution. They both happened in October of 1956.

BOND: Yes. I remember more about the Hungarian revolution because the Hungarian chargé was a good friend of mine. But I don't remember getting involved in it politically in any way. We had a lot of Hungarians in Italy. I like the Hungarians.

Q: What about the labor union movement in Italy? Did that involve us at all?

BOND: Well, we had a couple of very active Labor attaché s while I was there, and I'm sure they were very much mixed up in it. One of them particularly. I'd known him for years and years. He used to go to labor union meetings and speak at labor union meetings. He was really too much involved in the labor movement. But I don't remember anything of crisis proportions

resulting from that.

Q: What was your impression of all the consular posts in Italy? Did they serve much of a purpose?

BOND: Well, I visited Naples first. When were you in Naples?

Q: I was there from '79 to '81.

BOND: I forget who the consul general was. I met him in Naples, I guess he was the first one I met. I'd heard nothing but good about him. Then, we had a very good consul in Florence who was killed in an airplane crash not long after I knew him. I forget his name but his wife still works for the State Department. In Milan, I don't remember who the consul general was in Milan.

Q: I was wondering not so much about the people, but did you find it useful to have so many Consulates in Italy?

BOND: Yes. Of course, it was very convenient as you were traveling around Italy to have a consulate where you could hang your hat. I think they are useful if they are good people who are willing to go out and meet the local people and get to know them. There are such great differences between northern Italians and southern Italians. Their views are different. Their ways of looking at life are different.

The only consul I saw whom I really didn't think was worth his salt was the man in Venice. He had been a non-career vice-consul and then, after the 1956 change in rules and that sort of thing, he became a consul. He was there when I was in Rome. And I had met him previously when he was in Turin, I guess it was, as a clerk. He was handicapped by a terrible shrew of a wife. When I visited Venice that time with Mrs. Luce, they invited me to dinner on Saturday night after the ceremony. The wife did nothing but complain the whole evening. Shrill complaining about never living in a good post because her husband never got a good post. He was in Venice, for God's sake! There is no better post! She was just terrible. She'd say how awful the Foreign Service was in the presence of foreign guests! So I hold it against her much more than I do him, poor guy.

Q: Well. You came back in '58 and you went to Harvard University.

VIRGINIA HAMILL BIDDLE

Visa Clerk

Palermo (1956-1959)

Virginia Hamill Biddle was born in 1904 in Omaha, Nebraska. As a member of the Foreign Service, she served in countries including France, Bermuda, Thailand, Italy, Sweden, Turkey, Morocco and Spain. These excerpts are from her memoir written in 1994.

BIDDLE: As soon as the plane landed at Rome, I dashed up to Florence. As many do, I dearly love Florence. To those fortunate enough to have traveled in foreign countries there is an ever present lively nostalgia to revisit beloved places. In this city of Dante and Giotto I began to seek out my old haunts. I walked along the lazy Lung Arno and strolled across the Ponte Vecchio browsing in tiny jewelry shops that flanked both sides of this picturesque bridge, the oldest in Florence. Then dropped into the Grand Hotel and it looked even grander than when my sister and I stayed there several years ago. Florentines are proud that Via Tornabuoni is acknowledged to be one of the greatest shopping thoroughfares in the world. It was on that street that I found my favorite pension, Tornabuoni Beacci, an old fashion establishment where one can stay in passed grandeur very inexpensively. On this street is the Palazzo Strozzi that Byron said was the greatest sight in Florence. But for me, the greatest sight in Florence was the Duomo Campanile and Baptistery all in a group in Piazza del Duomo. The Duomo is artfully fashioned from stripes of black and white marble. At the dawn of the new architectural era, 1400, the Giotto Campanile is still a miracle of beauty after six centuries of existence. The perfect grace of its proportions and the loveliness of its graceried windows make it marvelously light and elegant. When Giotto died in 1337 he was buried in the church at a corner nearest his Campanile. His baptistery is the most conspicuous monument of any age because of its celebrated bronze doors which occupied Ghiberti for 27 years. Each represents various events from the Old Testament. It was Michelangelo who it is said stood in silence for hours regarding every detail of this marvel in bronze. Then walking away as if in a trance said, "It is worthy to be called the Gate to Paradise."

After absorbing all of this beauty I sat down at an outdoor cafe and sipped a cool drink while watching that leisurely old world go by. The next morning I was up early to take the 8:25 bus back to Rome via Siena where we stopped for several hours. Although much too much to see in that brief time, fortunately there was a very informative American woman on the bus, a Miss Pickney, from Charlestown, Virginia, who had lived there for a while and kindly took me at once to see the most important places. On the ancient gate Porta Camalin was a welcome written in Latin legend, "Siena opens her heart still wider to thee." Siena has preserved its medieval character to a greater extent than most other places in Italy. Strange to say as their fortunes fell, the arts flourished to unimaginable heights. Her famous school of painting was renown for individuality. The Sienese demanded of their painters art that was the handmaid of religion. The first great name in Sienese art was Duccio who painted with religious ecstasy. His subjects were full of tender beauty and sentiment. It was enough just to feast my eyes on these in the short time I was there.

As we drove along the countryside seemed so green, restful and peaceful. The Italians have a sense of the picturesque and the dramatic, always perching their towns on top of a mountain which gives a beautiful silhouette to the countryside. We stopped briefly at a little hotel, the Milano, in the tiny village of Aquapied where Princess Margaret had stayed and signed her name, which they had framed--Margaret, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland--and dated just to the month we were there.

We arrived in Rome about 8:00pm and I was taken to the Hassler Hotel perched at the top of the Spanish Steps. There I had a lovely room and bath for about \$4. As the shops were beginning to

close, I rushed out to make a few purchases and to look up Nancy Howard and Margaret Avent at their hotel, the Majestic where they stayed for about a \$1.75 and had excellent service. We went along to the Cafe Gleco, which I had read about in "Vogue" and where all the artists gathered. It certainly did have atmosphere. A long haired artist was writing at a nearby table and frantically picking his teeth at the same time.

We decided to go to a little bistro around the corner for pizzas and then parted at the Hassler. The hotel was to call me at 7:00 the next morning but forgot and I was still sound asleep at 8:00. So I flew around to get ready and left without breakfast as we were to take off at 9:30. I was certainly glad when coffee was served on the plane. The French say coffee should be black as night, strong as love and hot as hell. Just what I needed! Everyone compared notes on what they had done. Nancy...

I did book a trip around the island with CIT (that's the tourist bureau) and on Sunday, April 28, 1957 I wrote my sister from the Grand Hotel, Catania, Sicily.

This is a modern deluxe hotel equal to the Waldorf with heated towel racks and telephone in the bathroom. Such a surprise especially after passing through so much that was BC. From my room I have superb view of Mt. Etna through an enormous picture window that makes a perfect frame for Europe's highest volcano. It is soaring in the distance, gently spuming faint plumes of smoke at the moment with a bit of snow still on its sides. The unique feature of the city of Catania is that it has been destroyed eight times and rebuilt almost entirely of lava. The Elephant of Catania, known as the heart of lava, holds up a fountain in the main square, but it is the grandeur of Etna that dominates the scene here. At Siracusa I stayed at the Politi Hotel charming situated where I had a balcony overlooking the blue sea. The weather has been divine now.

Audrey Auchincloss has sent me a note just before I left saying, "I hope your heart will not be too heavy to really enjoy Sicily in the spring." My heart is still heavy, but I am greatly solaced by at last finding spring in Sicily. There is so much of historical interest around Siracusa. The Greek theater is indestructible as it is cut out of a stone hill and plays are still performed here. The stone quarries where Athenian prisoners were taken to die of heat and thirst after losing their naval battle, is now a beautiful orange scented garden where Winston Churchill comes to paint. The ear of Dionysus...it was constructed to hear every whisper of his prisoners so extraordinary were the acoustics. Arethusa Fountain, where the fish and geese who float there preserve the water, where weeds and papyrus grow that were imported by the Arabs is famous. In June 1798, Admiral Nelson sailed into Siracusa with 14 warships and remained five days. It is said in a letter he wrote to Lord Hamilton that he had taken on provisions and fresh water there since water drawn from the fountain of Arethusa would certainly gain a victory. The prophecy was realized for his warships sailed out from Siracusa to win the battle of Aboukir.

I was so delighted when I heard we were to include a visit to Piazza Armenia to see those recently discovered mosaics I had read about with such interest in the *National Geographic* magazine. The Romans, in contrast to the Greeks, who built for views on spectacular sites, chose the sheltered spots and much is preserved intact of the mosaic pavement in this imperial villa

depicting the luxurious life of a Roman ruler, including the savage beasts the ancient Romans hunted in Africa, and women who had their own steam baths and gym and wore bikini bathing suits. To see them to advantage, one must climb and look down on them.

We drove through some quaint 16th century towns. In one little town, Vizzini, the story of the opera "Cavalleria Rusticana," was written. The sea is bright blue and we have passed some lovely beaches. The fields are full of yellow daisies and lots of purple clover for the cows. The 5th century architecturally was the most dramatic period of Greek history and Sicily enriched it with temples we were most admiring today. It is said a city's statues could be judged by the number of and wealth of temples. They were a talisman of her treasures on the crown of the hill visible to all. Segesta and Selinunte. The main beauty of these ruins is their state of dilapidation. Noble mementoes of antiquity which speak so eloquently of fallen greatness and nothingness of man.

Given an interest in classical literature, history and mythology, archeologically the sights seen are bound to grow on one.

Taormina was a paradise and the grandeur of its setting makes it truly one of the most unique among the pleasure resorts of the world. It clings to its own cliffs on Mt. Tauro above the sea. And the majesty of Mt. Etna soars above it all in the distance. Taormina is very proud of their volcano for they claim they can forecast the weather by the smoke signals. I was booked at the Excelsior Hotel, but changed to the Timeo where I could almost touch the ruins of the Greek theater from my bathroom window.

When I came downstairs the next morning, I was presented with a lovely bouquet of lavender sweet peas and charming from Culver Sherrill saying that he understood I wouldn't want any parties, but asked if I would come in at 7:00 for a drink. Just a few friends would be there and we would be going on for dinner afterwards. So I accepted and met two chaps from Rome on holiday. A Mr. Van Brown from the United States, and a countess, who I had met there before and had admired her sweet bright face. Culver showed me a bit more of his fabulous house, swimming pool and gardens where he picked a white camilla for me. We had interesting conversation and Culver said he always felt so flattered that Clare Booth Luce, our American Ambassador in Rome, told friends the only two things to see in Taormina are the Greek theater and Culver Sherrill. I am writing him a thank you note saying, "Yes, this is true, but one can enjoy seeing the Greek theater once, but Culver Sherrill again and again," which is a fact for he is delightful, witty and very hospitable. I appreciated so much his kind thought of me.

The next morning I left Taormina at 8:00 in the morning very reluctantly. I could have remained in that heavenly spot for ever. For many it had served as an escape from reality. Lovers of beauty came here as to an enchanted spring that would quench any thirst. And anyone seeking consolation for their souls from the turbulent progress of life will find it in the voices of the past. It had done just that for me at this time.

On the drive back to Palermo, we stopped at Chefalu, perched deliciously above the Tyrrhenian Sea and backed by a miniature rock of Gibraltar. Chefalu's chief glory lies in the marvelous mosaics in the Norman cathedral practically as they were when installed in the 12th century. The

famous mosaic, Head of Christ, whose eyes follow you through the church, is said to have provided a model for the better known and larger Monde all Cathedral.

When I returned to the consulate, everyone was busy making our office as presentable as possible for the visit of Ambassador Zellerbach. I rushed out and bought three fuchsia plants for our balcony and was pleased when Mr. Auchincloss and Mr. Memminger, the Supervising Consul at the embassy in Rome, remarked about them. About 300 invitations had been extended to the Italians for the reception held in the garden of the Villa Igea, which had the right note of grandeur. Many of the aristocracy who came bore names of the proudest names of Sicily. Mr. Auchincloss introduced Count Periera, Prince Mirto, and Prince Gangai.

As we were all standing together speaking French, Mrs. Fenzi came up and said, "Mrs. Biddle is the most charming person in Palermo." I felt suddenly flattered by such gracious compliment and thought what a charming person she was to pay me such a spontaneous compliment, especially in the presence of Prince Gangai as I had heard the ladies of the Gangai family were reported in every generation among the most ravishing in Palermo. And the palazzo Gangai in Magueda had a long romantic history.

The Auchinclosses have a great many friends here and are charming and gracious to everyone and so kind to the staff. Ellis Debolto said yesterday that they are so well bred it is a pleasure just to look at them.

One day, when I was lunching at Lucapres, I recognized the former Japanese Ambassador to Bangkok and his wife, who I remember had been transferred to Rome. We had a brief conversation and I heard the Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires was also posted in Rome, a most attractive diplomat I often sat next to at official dinners because protocol-wise we were both usually placed below the salt as we were low men on the totem pole.

The Fourth of July was celebrated here by a picnic with the Americans at Mandello.

My sister was on route to visit me, and in a letter to reach her in London, I wrote, September 13, 1957

Dear Mildred,

So glad you saw "The Boyfriend." I nearly rolled in the aisle laughing. It reminded me so of my boarding days at Briar Cliff in the twenties. No more news except to wish you a pleasant flight over and assure you that I will be at the airport with open arms to welcome you to Palermo.

But the day I was leaving the consulate to meet Mildred, I got stuck in the elevator and panicky I would not get to the plane in time. All the staff tried to pacify me by calling down the shaft, "Don't worry, we will get you there." And by some mechanical miracle they did. Then the parties began and a tour around the island.

We were entertained by Culver Sherrill, the ever hospitable host in Taormina and from there across the Straits of Messina to the mainland of Italy on a marvelous rapido train. We stopped in

Sorrento and had fun in Capri giggling like two silly school girls as we lay flat on the boat as we had to do to go in and out of the Blue Grotto. I really preferred Anacapri where we roamed through Axelmonthi's interesting home and museum. We took a motor tour through the hill towns stopping at Assisi to visit a friend, Mrs. Rockwell. In Florence stayed at our favorite pension, the Tornabuoni Biacchi. The charming proprietress knew Mrs. Fenzi, Orlando Biacchi, daughter of the Countess Biacchi, who had died, was a friend of Mrs. Rockwell.

From here I bid goodbye to Mildred who returned to the States. The next day I booked a tour to Siena and San Gimignano, after passing once more the Baptistery to gaze in admiration at the gold reliefs of Ghiberti's famous doors. San Gimignano's imposing towers of nobility are unique in Italy and all of Europe. Only noble families were permitted to build a tower near their palaces. In the 16th century there were 65, but time and wars have reduced this number and some were dangerous and had to be topped. Each noble contrived to build his tower just a little higher than his rivals. Finally an end was put to this foolishness by having a limitation, although some nobles tried to get around the law by embellishing their towers with a Pisan-like lean just to advertise the virtuosity of their architects. I heard that an American woman bought one and is living in it.

Like many painters and writers, I felt the charm of the place deeply.

Siena was more interesting than I had remembered. The cathedral, older than the one in Florence, built from bricks with the breathtaking red color, "terra d'siena."

When my plane from Rome landed at Palermo, the Auchinclosses were at the airport to meet some friends and very kindly drove me home, bringing me up to date on the news. I had not heard, however, that the office hours had been changed and arrived a half hour early to find a note of thanks from Culver Sherrill for the chocolates Mildred and I had sent from Perushia.

My French friend, Andre Triolet, wrote he was finding the life in Tangier, "very boring." His English was amusing at times. And Yvonne Sonleshe wrote, "What would you think if I paid you a visit?" So, the two came. Andre, by the *Independence* and stayed at the Palma Hotel, and Yvonne by train and stayed with me. I gave a cocktail party of 15 for them and when Mr. Keeley arrived without Mrs. Keeley, when I asked where she was he said, "Oh, she is in bed with that Greek." When I exclaimed, "What?" He added, with a twinkle in his eye, "laryngitis."

I showed Andre and Yvonne the usual sights I had seen. On Sunday we visited St. John the Hermit and Monreale and the Palatine Chapel, where Mr. Cheli, the Chief of Protocol, who had given me a little Sicilian card and sent a couple of cards to me from the Scandinavian countries, rushed out and kissed my hand and said the German President had just preceded us into the Chapel.

The Baroness Jusapina Potino invited us for luncheon and as she spoke only French, it was enjoyable.

The consular staff had been invited on board the *Julius Caesar* an Italian liner going to South America, so Yvonne and I joined the grand tour of the ship with Mr. Keeley, the Auchinclosses and Lottie and Joe Kyle. When the Prefect with his chic wife, the Captain of the ship and the

Captain of the Port joined us for cocktails, there was an explosion of flashbulbs. After the champagne and this excitement, Yvonne and I were in high spirit when we met Andre for dinner at Lucapres and had a gay time. They left for Taormina the next day with a note of introduction to Culver Sherrill.

One evening there was a costume party at the Beach Club in Mandello for benefit of the poor. I thought I would wear my Japanese bride's kimono, but regretted I did not have a black wig. My French hairdresser, Pierre, said he could dye my hair black for one night, but I didn't think it was quite that necessary. So just tucked a white chrysanthemum on each side of my head. Pena helped me get into the complicated obi. When the Kyles called for me, people must have wondered where we escaped from. Joe got out of the car dressed as Napoleon with the proverbial hat and suit shining with gold braid and gold epaulets, all much too big for him. But he was as handsome as Lottie was ugly, as a witch. She had on a sleazy black satin dress, black stringy wig with horn rimmed glasses on to which was attached a nose, what a nose. It was enormous and hooked and had a slight off-center look to it. And she carried, of course, a broomstick.

Don Herdick, where we went for cocktails, accentuated his tallness by wearing a white fur Cossack hat with his Russian costume, rented as most were, from the Nasomo Theater. His wife came as a 15th century Desdemona. The Slutzes were in Spanish costumes. Bob said his costume was big enough for the bull and himself. Rose was pretty with a black mantilla covering a big comb and a rose over one ear. We all commented on each other's costumes and everyone said to me, "You are really authentic, aren't you."

After a few drinks we were ready to leave and Don, to be hospitable asked if anyone wanted to go to the bathroom. Looking at everyone else and thinking about my own tight costume, I couldn't help but say, "Oh, it is too difficult." For a brief moment there was embarrassed silence and then a roar of laughter.

The Club was prettily decorated with balloons and a great array of costumes. It was amusing to see three musketeers doing the rock and roll, a priest the jitterbug. Gradually people began to take off bits of their costumes and wigs, hats, swords and veils to be more comfortable while dancing. Later an announcement was made there would be a parade for judging the costumes and a half hour is allowed to get back into their bits and pieces. We all marched around to be judged and I can hardly believe my ears when I heard the master of ceremonies say, "The first prize for the most beautiful lady's costume goes to the little lady in Japanese costume." After I recovered from my surprise I walked up and made a low bow in true Japanese fashion and Don Herdick waltzed me off with the prize.

The next day I went with Margaret Hussman to the Deboltos for tea and met their very good friends the Duke Deboltos and his Danish wife. He was the Swedish and Danish Consul and he knew Alf Herdom, my Norwegian friend from Honolulu, who was first a composer of music, then an artistic when he found Honolulu more conducive to painting than composing. I related the time I had attended a concert with him when Kirsten Flagstaff sang some of his songs and she announced that the composer was in the audience and how proud I felt to be with him when he rose and bowed.

Unfortunately I caught a cold over the holidays and was in bed on Christmas Day. But matters could always be worse. Poor Lora, a local in our office, fell and broke her leg at Margaret Hussman's party jitterbugging with her husband.

Upon returning from Tunis I found among my mail a charming letter from Baron von Plason, saying, "Had I known you were in Capri, we might have seen each other last summer for before leaving Naples for Bangkok on September 11 on board of *Celandia*, I spent a delightful week in Capri with my cousin, Eddie Bismarck and his very rich American wife, formerly Mrs. Harrison Williams, known as the best dressed woman in the world." Of course, I too was very sorry that we did not see each other.

Also came a gift of a book from Helen Keller just the sort to keep on the bedside table to dip into now and then. Her thoughts are like spiritual vitamins. When we do the best we can we never know what miracle is brought into our lives or into the life of another. And a letter from my Swiss friend, Jacqueline Cramer, asking for rates of hotels here and about the weather. She wants to come and do some painting. But, best of all was an efficiency report from Margaret Hussman.

Then came an amusing invitation from Culver Sherrill to a carnival party. The note at the bottom read, "Come lose your head, and beg, barrow, or steal another for the occasion." As implied just a head dress was required. I was so glad I had bought a white wig I saw in a shop window on Saturday. Pena helped me decorate it with a black velvet ribbon wound with pearls and pretty pink rose. And, I found a black mask edged with lace to complete the disguise.

A letter to my sister Mildred written from Hotel Timeo, Taormina, Sicily, Saturday, February 15, 1968

I left Palermo in a London fog and since arriving here it has been coming and going ever since. From the balcony of my room this morning I had a thrill seeing Mt. Etna covered with snow and fuming with smoke. Then the mist came and hid it all from view. It has been like a veil, raising itself to give one a glimpse of beauty, like a Chinese print.

When I arrived yesterday afternoon, I said to the nice manager, Mr. Berndt, that I wanted to see the historical monuments this time and he very kindly sent his English speaking German secretary with me. On the Corso I happened to see Culver Sherrill and said that I was seeing all the old ruins. And he replied in his characteristic way, "and you will see another tomorrow night." I suppose he meant his house after the party is over.

The hotel is filled. Mrs. Fenzi from Palermo is here to see her cousins, the Copelands. Mrs. Copeland had been a former Member of Parliament and a great friend of Winston Churchill. She is quite elderly and her husband nearly blind. We all piled into a tiny taxi and went together to Culver Sherrill's party, which was very gay. Mr. Keeley was there as a sheik with some pearls hanging over his forehead.

I met quite a few interesting people, including Eugene Bonner, whose book, "Sicily

Roundabout,” I had just bought the day before and was told it was completely sold out in America. We met at the piazza for tomato juice the next morning where he autographed it for me. It is the place where some how or other everybody manages to find themselves between 12-1:00 to pass the time of day, make engagements or amuse themselves in general.

Mrs. Fenzi asked me to sit with them at an excellent place to watch the floral parade. The streets were strung with lights. There was a treasure hunt by car and people were dashing all over, the treasure being 60,000 Lira. From our balcony we could watch the crowds of people from all over the country parading the streets, throwing confetti at one another, blowing trumpets, clowning, joking, laughing and shouting. The carnival spirit was contagious so we joined in the fun by throwing down paper streamers at the passing flood of participants.

The Keeleys came back on the same train with me and Culver came to the station to see us off and kissed me goodbye. We didn't reach Palermo until after midnight and shared a taxi. I had dropped them off first.

The next morning Mr. Keeley telephoned to ask if I got home all right. He said he was worried about me and had looked up my number in the directory but when he saw it was just an emergency number, the Potinos, he didn't call, but thought a lot about it afterwards. I felt deeply touched that he was so concerned about me.

Everyone was going to the festival at Agrigento to see the lovely almond blossoms, so one Sunday I went up at 7:00 in the morning, stayed on for the illumination of the temples and fireworks and returned to Palermo at 11:30pm. While there I met a delightful Englishman, Mr. Byers, who had been a guest of the British Ambassador, Sir Barclay Gage in Bangkok when I was posted there. But it was during the Queen Grandmother cremation when the Court was in mourning, so they did not go out but drank their whisky sodas behind drawn blinds.

The next day the inspectors arrived, Mr. Rice and Mr. Hart, with their wives. When I met Mr. Hart he said, “I hear you are an expert on hotels in Paris.” As he had never been there and they go in August, I gave him a list, but regretted the Vouillamont, where I loved living for four years, was no longer there. I heard it is now a school.

I invited them to my little house for cocktails one Sunday, but unfortunately it turned out to be a cold, rainy evening. Poor Mr. Keeley came but with a cold and when I said how kind of him to come out, he said, “Well, I remember that nice fire.” My fireplace did emanate a nice welcome of real flames. The first thing he said to the inspectors was, “You should have seen this house when Mrs. Biddle's predecessor had it. He even had chickens up on the terrace.” I was amused, but pleased he pointed this out. Mr. Hart wanted to see the whole house, so I gave him a private inspection tour. He was interested in knowing what I paid for everything and seemed to find it very charming.

Margaret Hussman and I received an airgram from the Department regarding our home leaves. We are the only ones due this fiscal year. We must also fill in our post preference reports. I requested leave December 24, exactly two years from the date I arrived and preferred my next assignment to be in a warm climate where I could do protocol work again. It depends where my

post is, but if at all possible I should like to have Pena with me. She said, "Senora, I will follow you anyplace but darkest Africa." She didn't like hot countries. She was excited about coming to the States and when I told her my sister was inquiring about a visa for her, with tears in her eyes she picked up Dad's photo from my dressing table and said, "I will pray to your dear departed Father for the dead know what is in one's heart."

One Sunday after lunching with the Fenzis at Mondello at their lovely villa by the sea, they took me with them to have tea at Miss Delia Whittacker's. She was a very classical maiden lady in mourning for her mother who died at the age of 99. I was told when she was a child she sat on the lap of Garibaldi, the great general whose conquest of Sicily in 1860 with his thousands, was a famous expedition and proclaimed a great epic. Their fabulous home, Malfitano, was filled with precious collections. A pair of cloisonné elephants came from the summer palace in Peking and on one table was an autographed photograph of the former king of Italy. When I said goodbye she asked to come to my little house sometime.

Mrs. Fenzi and I went to see the film, "Sayonara," together and she was a wonderful person to see it with for she told me she had visited Japan in 1921 when her Italian brother-in-law was Naval Attaché at the Italian legation. It was at the time the then Prince of Wales made his first visit and she attended all of the elaborate functions given in his honor. Ernestino, her daughter, was then only four years old with flaming red hair which was such a curiosity that the Emperor turned and stared and stared at her when passing in a procession.

I also went to see "The Ten Commandments." It is such a thrill to see the name of Leroy Prines who arranged the dances in both films flash across the screen in a foreign country, who was the son of my old dancing master, Prof Prines, I had as a child in St. Joseph, Missouri.

I received a long letter from Sarah Redman, telling me her husband Roland, obtained his Florida divorce and married the Princess Lydia d'Fonstino Bodrero, half Italian, half American, and one time wife of Ballentine Macy. So she moved out of White Elephant and found an old ranch type house right on the way to Sagamore Hill with a charming little brook running across the end of the front lawn, complete with a small waterfall and has a nice guest room. Frances Roosevelt is teaching in the university about four miles from where she lives. Her interesting neighbors were Horst, leading German photographer for *Vogue* and Nicholas Lawford, English and erstwhile British Foreign Service and secretary to Anthony Eden, just writing his memories in three volumes. She has already established a sherry/biscuit before lunch get-together which she find popular. She hopes to get to Sicily during my tour of duty.

April 5, 1958, at home

I am just up from my breakfast and preparing to arrange the flowers for my birthday party tonight. Pena brought me some lovely yellow tulips which I shall arrange in Japanese flower arrangement in the green Peking glass bowl for the center of the dining table. And the gardener brought some sprays of white climbing roses for the two 17th century pots on the console tables. Miss Whittacker had sent some gorgeous birds of paradise from her garden, so you see my little house was like a bower of flowers. I did not tell anyone that it was my birthday, but word does get around.

The Poles invited me to dinner the 18th, remembering it would be a sad day for me, the day we lost our dear father just a year ago. I was very touched that they would think of me on this sad day.

Such a charming handwritten letter was received from Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy, dated April 1, 1958. "Dear Mrs. Biddle,

It was a joy to receive news of you at Christmas time and to know that you were well and happy. It must be wonderful to travel around like you and see so many different countries. We have been in Florida the entire winter and the season has been most disappointing, cold, rainy, blustering. After Easter we go north and then I am going to go to California to visit my daughter, Patricia, who is married to the movie actor, Peter Lawford. All my family are very well and my two sons are working hard in Washington. I do hope to meet you again on some of my travels. My best wishes to you always, Very sincerely, Rose Kennedy."

Then a typewritten letter came in the same mail dated April 18, 1958.

"Dear Mrs. Biddle,

In answering your Christmas card I noticed on the decorating map a picture of a small Sicilian donkey cart. I recall such a cart as a decoration at Ambassador Luce's when I was in Rome. I would appreciate it so much if you would send me one of these carts as I think it would be wonderful with a doll collection which my daughter is making. I know that it can be sent duty free and am enclosing a check for \$10. Will you address the package to me at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, and please mark it Attention: Wobert Marsh. If the cart exceeds \$10, please let me know, and if less, please drop the money into a box for the poor in one of the churches. I am most grateful to you for your cooperation. Very sincerely, Rose Kennedy"

Of course I wrote and acknowledged both letters and said I would be very pleased to select one for her this Saturday when I go down town.

I often went on picnics with the Fenzis. I loved being with them. One Sunday we drove along the beach and picnicked among the wild flowers which we picked later. On that day Mrs. Fenzi had on a stunning Shetland wool suit. She said she had bought the material in Scotland and had Mussolini's tailor make it. He admitted he never tailors for women, but as his son went to school with her husband's nephew, he did it as a favor.

I invited them to luncheon the following Saturday with Miss Whittacker who stepped out of her liveried, chauffeur driven car bearing the most gorgeous bouquet of amaryllis lilies from her enormous garden, which I appreciated so much. After lunch she wanted Mr. Fenzi to take her to the botanical gardens, which I understood was the finest in Europe, where Mr. Fenzi's father was a great horticulturalist. In fact, he had written books on the subject. Mr. Fenzi had planted an avocado tree there six years ago and we were all amazed how it had grown.

One evening I was invited to the Sullivan's for cocktails. Mr. Sullivan is the British vice consul

here and utterly charming, married to a chic Italian. Miss Whittacker invited me to tea one afternoon when the other guests were the British Consul's wife, Mrs. Barley, Mrs. Sullivan, Mrs. Fenzi, the padre and later Princess Niscemi arrived with her two daughters. I had met her some time ago but she had in the meantime been in America. She was of the wealthy Hersh family of Philadelphia, very intelligent. When I said goodbye, she invited me to cocktails Saturday evening saying she had some American guests come. A cousin of Miss Whittacker, Manfred Whittacker, was also there having just returned from India and brought back 65 paintings he had done there. He lives most of the time in Rome.

Mrs. Fenzi, who knows everybody, told me an interesting little anecdote about the Niscemi family. Prince Niscemi's mother was lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Italy at one time (she is now the Queen Mother). When the Prince was a young man the Queen of Romania had been invited to stay with them. She did not want to be entertained by the nobility but asked to have the mafia invited. They were invited, but all came heavily armed and were asked to leave their arms below stairs. Then they danced and had a wonderful time.

The evening of this cocktail party, Lottie and Joe Kyle called to take me to their palace. It was like evoking the times of princely splendor in Sicily as we ascended the long winding marble staircase laid with red carpet. The dining room was decorated with coats of honor and all around the upper walls were paintings of the various kings of Italy. One of the daughters, who was showing us around, pointed out two kings and then added, "and that is the bust of Grandpa Hersh, in the center." Then we were shown the bed where Lord Nelson had slept and a few more rooms where there were treasures worthy of the Louvre. And then came out onto the terrace where Prince and Princess Niscemi were receiving. When I said, "Good evening Prince Niscemi," he quickly said in a friendly way, "Call me Conrad," as he was apparently known to his friends, as a naturalized American.

Their American guests were Mr. and Mrs. Greenfield from Philadelphia. The Kyles, Slutzes and I were the only ones from the consulate among the 80 guests. The others were mostly titled Italians. I knew a few. I immediately tried to think who I might know in Philadelphia and mentioned my artist friend, Ara Lee Gaul, who had done the sketch for me in Bangkok and Mr. Greenfield said he had known her for a long time and even named the street, Spruce, where she lived.

One of the Niscemi daughters wore a dress with the new potato sack look and looked like something out of *Vogue*. I hadn't seen shows for over a year, but here this is the height of fashion. She designs exquisite jewelry and Mrs. Fenzi tells me her mother is furious that she didn't accept a job with Tiffany. Her father took my hand and admiringly showed her the Cavershawn star ruby ring I was wearing that had been made by a Russian and designed with fleur-de-lis and diamonds from my deceased mother's bar pin.

I read in the *Foreign Service Journal*, the Norbert Anschutz had been assigned to Cairo.

On May 28th I left Palermo by non-stop plane for Rome, then took an express train to the little midget port of Piombino and thence by ferry to Portoferraio, Elba where I went to stay at a small guest house Picchiale, belonging to Colonel Powell West and his wife and recommended by

Matilda Sinclair, the social secretary to our Ambassador in Rome. A letter to my sister describes the holiday.

Elba, May 29, 1958

Dearest Mildred,

Well, here I am on this lovely quiet peaceful island of Elba and I love it as I knew I would. When I was at the airport in Palermo, I saw the British vice consul, Mr. Sullivan, who introduced me to Archdean (Inaudible), he was seeing off on my plane. We sat together and had a very pleasant chat. He had come to Palermo at the request of Miss Whittacker to discuss turning the Whittacker chapel over to the diocese as she is the only remaining member of that famous family. He knew, of course, Bishop Rose who was such a comfort to me when Dad died and also old Bishop Chambers at the British embassy church in Paris. He has lived in Florence for years and was returning there. He knew the Countess Biachi where we stayed and Mr. and Mrs. Sutro, friends of Jacqueline Cramer, where I had lunch many years ago. Mr. Sutro had a large key collection and is dead now. Marguerite, his wife, lives in New York.

I made perfect connections on train and ferry and Colonel West was at Portoferraio to meet me. He looked more English than American, although from Nantucket, and was perfectly delightful, as was his wife. His house was renovated with beautiful taste from a 200 year old farm house set in 30 acres of ground the Germans had left in ruins when they were there to work the iron mines in 1943. I am the only guest at the moment, but today will arrive Matilda Sinclair to see about converting the Norman peasant house above the Wests' and her cousin, Mrs. Arnold, from Brazil, whose house in Trieste, the Auchinclosses by coincidence now occupy. It once belonged to her and was bought by our State Department.

We had the most interesting conversation over dinner. The Wests are the only Americans living here, but they mentioned Mrs. Simons, American wife of a banker in Beirut and New York, who has bought property here. It is probably Ralph Simons, who was in our National City Bank when we were living in Japan. Others he mentioned were Lord Hastings, who had bought some land from him and will eventually build near. The Duchess of Kent is said to be interested. Also Winston Churchill. They hope, of course, the island will not become too touristy. It is such a quiet charm now. They had staying with them recently Herbert Kubley, author of "Eastern Sicily," the book you so kindly left for me and is going to have an article on Elba published in *Holiday* in the fall. Then a Mr. Alexander was there writing an article for the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Colonel West has a very brilliant record. His second wife was the daughter of our Ambassador to England, Mr. Davies. Mrs. West had been married to a Darrell from Bermuda. I knew the name well, a great sailing family. And her daughter had gone to Briar Cliff, my alma mater.

Last evening, when I was asked to sign the guest book, my eyes were immediately attracted to a familiar handwriting, although I had not seen it since my boarding school days. What a thrill to read, Henrietta E. Six. None other than Henrietta Earhart my own Briar Cliff school chum. Her former husband is now married to Ethel Merman. They said that Henrietta was there just a few

days ago and had been staying at the Biacchi and now had gone to London. I hope to contact her soon.

This afternoon going to visit Napoleon's two homes and museum. More later.

At the station Piombino, June 2, 1958.

I have nearly 45 minutes to wait for the train so will tell you more about Elba. It really is the loveliest, quietest, more peaceful place. I most certainly could spend a week there. The island spreads out a lot and there are some beautiful beaches with villas clustered around them, with picturesque towns higher on the mountains. I have become delirious about the scenery and steeped in Napoleonic lore. You know I have always been especially fascinated by the Napoleonic isles. I will be off to St. Helena, next. Napoleon's brief visit to Elba was one moment of historical glory. He ruled for little less than 10 months with a hundred grenadiers and a naval force consisting of one brig. He captivated everyone with his knowledge of his exile kingdom and lavished his administrative genius which had previously organized a huge empire. He accepted his exile on one condition, that his wife and son would join him, but he waited in vain. Empress Marie Louise was busy with General Neipperg, who she later married and the Emperor of Austria held his son, his own grandson, King of Rome, a prisoner in Vienna. The only women who did come were his mother, Letizia, and the young Countess Waluwaska. Other visitors were Napoleon's illegitimate son who left after two days and his beautiful and scandalous sister, Pauline Borghesia, who arrived to head his court in the modest Villa Mulini. On the night she was to give one of her gay parties, her brief apology was, "canceled by destiny." It was in February, 1815 when Napoleon slipped away on the *Inconstant*, passed the British warship, went to Paris to be crowned the second time.

On this island of Elba one became conscious of golden bees, imperial eagles and the letter N. His country villa at San Martino, 2 miles from Portoferraio, is simple, small, infinitely touching like his birth place in Ajaccio, Corsica, the island one could see lying on the horizon. On the ceiling of the salon were painted sentimental symbols of the Empress and himself, a pair of doves tying lover's knots with blue ribbons in their beaks. I learned for the first time that Napoleon's only novel was *Clissona et Eugenie*, an autobiographical love story. The occasional pieces of original furniture were covered in the same blue he loved. A little Egyptian room tenderly intended, one supposed, to be a comforting memory of passed glories to a repenting tyrant. After a visit to Napoleon's houses there were no more monuments to see to nag one into activity. It was just like Napoleon once referred to it, "his isle of rest."

Delia Whittacker had given me a note of introduction to her cousin, Hugh Whittacker, an elderly man I was told imbued with spiritualism. He was not at home when I called, but I met his administrator who invited me in to his tiny apartment for a drink near the Whittacker's famous hotel Fonte Napoleone in Poggio, where the guest book included signatures of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. I regretted I did not have time to look up the British Consul's wartime friend, Major Robinson.

When I sailed from Portoferraio this morning at 7:00, I could see for many miles out to sea the Wests' precious pink house perched on the side of the hill. It really had been an ideal place for a

peaceful holiday. The train is leaving now so must close. Love Virginia

As soon as I returned from Elba, I plunged in for preparations for a cocktail party I was having on my upstairs terrace. The dim colored lights from my Moroccan hanging lamps cast a soft glow on the faded ancient tiles and the Bangkok temple bells tingled in the breeze. Princess Niscemi was the first to arrive and raved about the ambiance. I felt very flattered as it was such a far cry from her own palatial home.

A few nights later the Duke d'Belsito and his wife called to take me to the Niscemis for dinner. It was in honor of a Mr. Mund from Seattle, Washington, and his pretty new bride, who were returning to the States aboard the *Ile de France*. As we entered that romantic old palace, the Duke looked around and said to me, "You know my mother was born in this palace. She was the sister of Prince Niscemi's father.

Among the other guests was the charming Italian, Mr. De Luce, director of the American Express. At dinner I was seated to the left of Prince Niscemi and during the course of conversation he mentioned his place in Hyannis Port. So I ask if he knew the Joseph P. Kennedys and, of course, he did, very well. I told him how fascinated Mrs. Kennedy was with the little Sicilian carts and had asked me to send her one for her grandchildren's collection. He said he was going there in September and kindly offered to take it to her. But I thanked him and said it had already been posted. He also knew my brother-in-law's relative, Edgar (Inaudible).

It was a beautiful dinner, but unfortunately, during one of the courses, the pasta slipped from my fork and fell on the front of my blue Thai silk dress. When the Prince saw me struggling to wipe it off, with typical Italian gallantry he reached for his white carnation, that had also been given to all the men for their buttonholes, and gently tucked it in my bodice covering this spot and my embarrassment. Needless to say, I was touched and grateful.

When we left all of the ladies were presented with tiny bouquets of pink roses and jasmine. It had been an unforgettable evening.

A note from London arrived from Henrietta Earhart, my dear Briar Cliff boarding school friend. I had lost touch with her over the years and really didn't know if she was still alive.

"I can't tell you how completely amazed and delighted I was to receive your letter a few days ago. Leora Biachi forwarded it on here where I have taken a tiny flat for a couple of months. I think you were so clever to notice my name in the West book. That is a charming place, isn't it. What an interesting career you have chosen for yourself and how I wish I could have done such a thing instead of wasting my time in such an aimless way. If you find that a trip to London is in the offing, do try and make it before I leave here. We can spend a lot of time catching up for the last 25 years."

What a wave of memories washed over me as I read it, of the happy times we had together at Briar Cliff and vacations spent with her delightful mother and father in their beautiful 5th Avenue apartment. She was an elegant little girl of privilege.

Also came a card from Audrey Auchincloss saying that they are going on home leave in October and booked on the *Saturnia* leaving Trieste on October 3 and will come via Palermo and hope to have a glimpse of me there. I was, of course, thrilled at the thought of seeing them again.

Also came a charming letter from Mrs. Kennedy thanking me for the Sicilian cart dated June 11, 1958 from Hyannis Port.

“Dear Mrs. Biddle,

The little donkey cart arrived Mary 23 and was greeted with exclamations of delight and admiration on every side. Thank you very much for your efforts in selecting the adorable toy. I do hope that all goes well with you. We shall be at Eden Rock on the French Riviera during the month of August, and if you are near, please contact us. My deepest appreciation always. Very sincerely yours, Rose Kennedy.”

On July 9, I wrote my sister from Sardinia where I had gone for the July 4th weekend. Jolly Hotel, Cagliari, Sardinia, July 9, 1958.

From the moment I stepped off the ship last Friday we have been on the move, but I could not go to bed tonight knowing the date, our dear Father’s birthday, without writing to you for I know what must be in your heart too, today, my dear.

The weather has been pleasant, sometimes hot, but not unbearable. There are six Italians and one other American in the group taking the tour around the island. This is an island of primitive, unspoiled beauty. The scenery is most dramatic. Tall, spiny, reddish mauve rocks rise above green valleys, undiscovered beaches, deserted, rugged, solitude. Some of it peopled only by shepherds. Eagles glide silently above the mountains. Human life is glimpsed only briefly. It certainly looks like bandit country. As D.H. Lawrence wrote in his book, “Sea and Sardinia,” “After spending six days here, from February 4-10, 1921, Sardinia is an island lost between Europe and Africa belonging to nowhere.”

It is indeed like nowhere. It is a blessed wilderness. The people are essentially reserved and introspective and seem becalmed in the past. The women are ferociously beautiful with straight queenly backs. Then their pleated skirts flap at their ankles and their heads are tied with kerchiefs, one end drawn across the mouth. They weave baskets from the tall stalks of the asphodel plant whose blossom are like pale stars and dot the hillside. And they make rugs on hand looms from wool of their own sheep, must sort after. Then saddlebags of beautifully woven and patterns of the characteristic Sardinian colors, rust brown, lemon yellow and pink. They say the Sardinians are probably the most skilled peasant artisans in the Mediterranean. The men, the few and old that are left, are dressed all in black and white like magpies. White drawers, great white sleeves, black waistcoats and gaiters and black stocking cap whose hanging ends bobs like a top. A tassel in the back is called a berrette. With their remote stares, mounted on the tiniest donkeys I have ever seen, and believe exist in the world, they look like Cyclops.

What appealed to me most were the Pisan Romanesque churches, black and white basilicas which we came across all over the island. How wonderfully the Pisans made use of the romantic

wildness of the landscape by building on remote crags completely isolated and their austere beauty so perfectly suited the Sardinian characters. Few countries have an ecclesiastical architecture which blends so strikingly into the landscape. What intrigued me most were the “nuraghi,” curious remains in various stages of ruins, overgrown with weeds and briars scattered about the island. They were crumbling cone shaped forts rising like derelict castles from the prehistoric period. There is no evidence of mortar so they were supported heaven knows how. They could have served as a refuge for tribes and chieftains, shelter for herds, used as granaries or any number of other things. Nobody seems to agree about their meaning for few reference works exist and authorities are constantly contradicting one another. But it is their unfathomable mystery that is one of their great charms.

As we drove around the island we noticed every house we passed bore its DDT spray date in scrolled in black letters like a vaccination, a joyful attestation of immunity from malaria. For centuries throughout the whole of Sardinia, malaria worked its way through generations of Sardinians leaving them sick and inert until 1945 when American doctors subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation set to work and completely eradicated it by 1952.

We spent a night in the Jolly Hotel in the hill village of Nuoro and heard we were the first Americans that had come there. A stupendous view could be had of Mt. Ortoben

which towered above Nuoro. Saved by tourism by its inaccessibility it was the birth place of Grazia Deledda, who won a Nobel Prize in 1926. She wrote fictional romances and her novels were interwoven with unusual anecdotes and a great deal of untapped and fascinating local history which gave Sardinia a place in literary.

Cagliari, the capital, had a museum housing a most important collection of bronzes, skillfully wrought and designed with artistry showing how highly developed was their civilization. It was in the prehistoric period Sardinia gained its greatest influence.

Alghero, the walled harbor, with its towers and bastions, looking like a transplanted port of Morocco or Spain, was a popular bathing resort on the sea, and the most cosmopolitan town we visited. I learned that the coral that Naples sells comes from this place and is bought there. Here we stayed in a CSIT hotel, a group of these unpretentious, yet attractive government hotels, like the Jolly, made remote, wonderful stopovers possible.

We took a small boat from Palau, little more than a stone jetty, to the island of Maddalena, where we stayed two night and from there drove across the stone causeway to the tiny island of Caprera, where we visited Garibaldi's home, now a museum. Maddalena, lying between Corsica and Sardinia had a scrubbed look that comes from being a naval base and is responsible for the beautiful upkeep of the museum and the gardens of the island estate, Casa Bionca. Giuseppe Garibaldi, the hero of Italian unification, was born July 4, 1807 at Nice, which was then Italian. He retired here in 1855 at the age of 48 after his fighting days were over and tortured by rheumatism to write a novel. The high point in his career came in May, 1860 when he landed with his red-skirted army of a thousand to liberate all of Sicily, Southern Italy and defeated the Napoleon force. A daughter, 94, still lives in a part of the original home. The rooms are kept just as he left them, with revered objects even the saddle of his horse, Marsala, named after the

landing place of the thousand. Hanging on the wall was a calendar bearing the date, June 2, 1882, the day of his death. We walked down a neat gravel drive to his granite tomb flanked by those of his wife and children, under olive trees and among rich clusters of geraniums. It all had great charm and dignity. For an intelligent traveler it is a rewarding island. Love Virginia

Twenty years later, while writing this chapter in Bendenot on the island of Majorca, I met one person, Prince Gilles di Poliolo, cousin of the former King of Italy, who did not agree that Garibaldi was a hero because he told me that his grandfather and many of the nobility preferred Sicily to remain an independent kingdom and did not want to become part of Italy. But, when they rebelled, Garibaldi confiscated their land and striped them of their titles so they fled to France, where he was born.

After I arrived back from Sardinia, things began to happen. The minute I got home a note came from Lottie Kyle saying they were giving a dinner that evening for the Memmingers, who had just arrived from Naples. He is the Supervising Consul General at the embassy in Rome. So went to the hairdresser and had my hair cut and permed and felt marvelous. Margaret Hussman gave a cocktail party for them and included the new German Consul and his wife, British Consul and vice consul, and wives, and new Panamanian Consul and Prince and Princess Niscemi, and some others. And I am entertaining them on Sunday evening.

Mr. Memminger and I began to talk about Bangkok and he told me he had relieved Norbert Anschutz in Athens when he went there and was a great friend of Ambassador Peurifoy. So I told him all about his terrible tragedy and showed him photos of the funeral and of the Anschutzes when they departed Bangkok. Then he noticed my autographed photograph of President Truman and exclaimed, "Oh, I see you have a photo of Harry." I explained the Trumans had been friends of the family for some time and they had always been very nice to me.

I was terribly happy to have the good news that I had been promoted to class FSS-11 and had waited so long for this decided to celebrate by giving a party for the entire visa section, locals and Americans, about 50, including spouses. They all came, even the Consul's chauffeur, Luigi and his dear little wife. Marcelle L'Conte sent me a congratulatory note from the Embassy in Paris which was a pleasant surprise.

At a cocktail party at the Niscemis I met Miss Jebb, whose father was British Ambassador at Paris. A sweet young girl who said she was on French *Vogue*.

Mrs. Kennedy wrote on June 6, 1958 that the grandchildren were all so delighted with the little Sicilian cart, would I please sent another addressed to her daughter, Mrs. Sargent Shriver in Chicago. So, I did with pleasure.

On July 22 there was a staff meeting announcing that all local leaves had been canceled until further notice. Three hundred people were being evacuated to Rome from the Near East, due to the Suez situation. A few days later on a Saturday afternoon, Joe Kyle came to see me to say he had just received a call from Mr. Waterman in the personnel section in the embassy in Rome requesting that one American be sent over to assist them with the evacuation. So, I was the one selected to go and must leave Sunday evening by plane in order to report for work on Monday

morning. The maximum time there would be for two months. So I hurriedly packed. "Flying Rome Sunday evening, detailed embassy two months, assist Near East evacuation, inform Charlie, writing, Love V." was my cable to my sister.

Our embassy in Rome fronts the famous Via Veneto, a historic building on a historic site, once known as Palaco Margarete for Margarete Disaboiy, the first Queen of Italy who once owned it. When I approached it Monday morning it looked like a day nursery. There masses of children of all ages, sizes and sex and their fond Mommies swarming around, the newly setup evacuation office to the right. I thought, "Well, this is it." I was assigned to Mr. Rosenthal and my particular job was to type messages, run them off on the hecto and route them. The code room was air-conditioned and all were on continuous alert duty. Code clerks stayed at post 24 hours at a time undertaking the arduous, delicate task of decoding urgent, Top Secret telegrams, long and complicated. My hours were from 4:00 to midnight.

At first the hours were a bit of a shock, but really didn't mind because it gave me the day free to look for a place to stay. All the hotels around the embassy were fully booked with tourists and evacuees. Rome was seething with Americans and one heard more English than Italian and one wondered who was at home. Matilda Sinclair very kindly suggested going out to Parioli, the lovely residential section where she lived. And, I did see a charming little hotel, the Rivioli. Each room with a terrace and they had an excellent lunch there. But they were fully booked. I finally found the perfect place, a pension just a few minutes from the embassy called La Residenza. It was beautifully furnished and the bathroom covered with 16th century tiles. It had been recommended by the embassy and the guide I had in Rome several years ago, Lea Lelli, who had invited me to dinner one evening. Eleanor Roosevelt had written in her column, "Eleanor Roosevelt Day," headed "The Countess Knows Her Home. On Friday, March 13, in Rome, my granddaughter, Nina, and I went out at 9:00 with Countess Lea Lelli, the most interesting guide one could have. She describes the history of Rome as if she had lived through each century and experienced each conquest and I can think of no one who could have given me a more interesting bird's eye view of the city as a group on different hills." This is all too true.

In the evening I dined with her and she gave me a list of recent archaeological discoveries to see here and I would have loved chatting with her longer, but had to get on to the Memmingers' party. She introduced me to her secretary, a young attractive American girl, Miss Rippel. It was the only evening she could see me because she was leaving for the Dolomites and would be gone a month, and gave me her address if I should come that way.

Just as I went into the Memmingers' party, Mrs. Jernigan arrived and said she had just seen the Ambassador off to the airport for his month's holiday. So that meant that her husband was now Chargé. I was delighted to see Margaret Hussman who had come over from Palermo for the visa conference and returning early the next morning. I was so pleased to see Mrs. Fritzlan, the nice English wife of David. They had been so nice to me when I had arrived at the legation in Tangier. But the poor dear said she was on holiday in Jerusalem with her two-year old son and now pregnant with another child and English nurse, when she received the news from her husband, who is now Chargé in Baghdad, to evacuate and left from Jerusalem and never returned to Baghdad again to see him.

I was beginning to gather bits of news here and there from various people about their experiences. When I thanked Mr. Memminger for the lovely party on leaving and mentioned what an attractive apartment they had, he said, "I will trade it for your little house any day." "All right, that would suit me beautifully," I said.

Margaret asked me to go to dinner afterwards and we went to a trattoria in a pretty little piazza where a fountain was playing and the moon rose over an old church.

My hours were eventually changed. I was now working from 8:30am to any old hour, but get paid for overtime, and was pleased because I was now on the heart of things. My job was to go out to the airport when flights came in, check the passports of the evacuees, assign them to their respective hotels, then come back to the embassy and type the list of arrivals to send to the Department. Among the refugees were many pregnant women who had to be sent on to the United States.

It is quite exciting watching the planes soaring in and out bringing the evacuees to safe haven Rome as it is called here. The chartered flights had been doing an airlift surpassing that of the Berlin one. Mr. Rosenthal gives a briefing in the embassy theater to every plane load that arrives. And when I listened I marveled at the wonderful organization, coordination of everything. Facilities were made for the children to play at the playgrounds of the embassy while the American officers' wives took their Mums to look for apartments. Always there were enormous buses drawn up in front of the embassy loaded with children to take them to a beach club. There was a wonderful cartoon in nearly every office in the embassy of an American family showing films to their friends of a demonstration abroad and the caption underneath it read, "An we took refuge in so many embassies our savings and hotel bills were simply fantastic!"

I kept meeting people I had known before. One day a woman came into the office to see Mr. Rosenthal, the evacuation officer, who was young, very nice and easy to work for. We both stared at each other and finally realized we knew each other in Bangkok where her husband had been with USIS and later transferred to Baghdad. She then asked me to come to her hotel for a drink that evening and I was eager to hear all about what happened in Iraq. She told me haltingly, looking away with tears nearly coming to her eyes, about the panicky exodus. She said it all happened quite suddenly, but felt a coup would come some time. They attacked the British embassy first and then burned their USIS. The Iraqis seemed to want to keep friends with the Americans and have cooperated very well. She planned to go to a resort on the Adriatic coast.

The next hot spot mentioned is Tripoli. Then they expect to evacuate Amman and Beirut.

Staying in my hotel was Mrs. Gallman, the wife to our Ambassador to Baghdad with her two sons, the older one from Yale, the younger one from Berkshires. They had just come out in June to be with their parents for the summer holidays and only there a month when evacuated. They asked me to join them for dinner one evening and we had a very interesting conversation. A telegram was received from her husband in the embassy so touching I showed it to Mrs. Gallman and could see tears in her eyes as she read it, as they were in mine when I first read it, for it was such a tribute. "Messages are now coming back to us from our evacuees. Overtone of all is one of highest regard and friendly reception on arrival Rome and for smooth, intelligent handling of

hotel accommodations followed by availability of all essential means to facilitate adjustment to temporary life in Italy. As I put these messages from our evacuees together, I get a clear picture not only about staffing, planning, administrative and executive skills, but the warm understanding appreciation of the hundred and one things that would trouble and preoccupy our wives and dependents. From their husbands and fathers in Baghdad, deepest gratitude. Gallman.” He later became Director of the Foreign Service.

On August 1 it was so frightfully hot one became almost stupefied and the embassy closed in the afternoon. I stayed in the office to allow Mr. Rosenthal to take the afternoon off. He had been at this since June 26 and was doing a very good job on this evacuation program, but was beginning to get awfully tired, and the heat, of course, has been most debilitating. It was just like Bangkok weather, but one cannot dress exactly like Bangkok, unfortunately, because Rome is a sophisticated city. I only hope they continue to keep me busy so I can stay on here. I feel I have been given a wonderful opportunity and I am making the most of it in every way.

The Jernigans gave a cocktail party in their garden for 500 of the evacuees. I recalled under these gardens were once catacombs where Christians took refuge from the Romans, and heard that Ambassador Zellerbach, a wine connoisseur, tried to keep his wine there but it didn't work. It was too cold and too damp.

In chatting with the Memmingers, I like so much, Mr. Memminger said if I could not get home for Christmas I could spend Christmas with them in Rome. Then Mrs. Memminger said, “I think you should get transferred to Rome.” Of course, that was what I was trying to do. I overheard Mr. Rosenthal tell Mr. Memminger that I was doing a wonderful job, which was music to my ears.

Towards the end of the evening I met a Mrs. Simmons, whose husband was with MAAG, who invited me to their place for a swim and supper Sunday evening. They lived some distance from Rome in a new section of enormous modern apartments which surrounded a beautiful swimming pool and tennis courts. From the terrace of their fifth floor apartment we had a gorgeous view of Rome with St. Peters towering above all.

One of the other guests was an American, Miss McFarland, who lived in Chevy Chase, just outside Washington and whose father was in the Navy. Mr. Waterman, chief of personnel at the embassy, who lived just below, joined us for a drink. They spoke of the famous Palio in Siena that was being held this Saturday. It takes place twice a year and attracts thousands from all over the world and something I had always wanted to see. Although it was late to get tickets I began to try for Ruth Clark, Mr. Memminger's secretary, said she would go with me.

Mr. Martelli who had been so obliging at the CIAT office in Palermo called their office in Florence and got two very good seats for us. It had seemed hopeless because the embassy said they were all sold out in Rome. But, I waited until the last minute to pick them up because if something came in on the evacuees I couldn't have gone. But luckily nothing came in.

We took the most marvelous, deluxe, all air-conditioned, supper rapido for Florence. Then taxied to a pension for which I had the greatest affection and it was nice to have (Inaudible) at the desk

say, "Yes, I remember you," having been there just last September with my sister. We had been given the most enormous room with a beautiful view over the campanile and Duomo from our window. Later in the cool of the evening walked up to see the Duomo and thrilled to see that the scaffolding, Mildred and I had seen around the campanile had been removed and it had been beautifully cleaned. Then we walked down to the Arno and stood on the San Trinita bridge and looked over towards the Ponte Vecchio. I remember so well when here in 1947, everyone lamented that the Trinita, the most beautiful bridge of all had been bombed. Then they planned to rebuild it just as it was and to see that it had been accomplished was another thrill. We had a delicious dinner at Santini.

The bus picked us up early the next morning to take us to Siena via San Gimignano where we had lunch after seeing the little town with its many towers rising into the glorious sky of Tuscany. We arrived in Siena in the heart of Italy's Chianti's country and one of Europe's perfectly preserved medieval towns, about 2:30pm. It was just about an hour's drive from San Gimignano.

We had perfectly wonderful seats right in the second row in front of the starting place where they let the ropes down for that made race. The race lasts less than two minutes but the parade goes on for two hours. The setting alone was enough to thrill one. The beautiful Piazza de Campo where the Palio is performed looked like an immense basket of flowers. Ancient mansions stand all around it and most beautiful of all is the town hall with its graceful lofty tower called Tour del Mangia. Byron said it was "the noblest town in Italy." The balconies were decorated with red velvet bunting and flags of all colors were flapping everywhere.

The bell in the tower tolled out to announce the procession. A historical pageant, an allegorical parade. Silver bugles and drums played the traditional march of the Palio. Bells tolled from all of the churches and the Mangia tower. The participants are dressed in colorful medieval costumes. One of the highlights of the Palio are the expert manipulators of the contrade (district banners), a flag twirling game. Two men stop just in front of our box and to the beat of the drum, cleverly twisted and turned their large banners around their bodies and between their legs. Then toss them high in the air. As each flag starts to descend the folds gracefully unfurl against the blue sky and before it touches the ground it is skillfully caught only with the left hand while he salutes with his right to the delight and applause of the crowd.

Then came the horseback riders bearing the colors of the contrade. Each group seems to have been selected from the animal kingdom. Paradoxically enough, the snail contrade was winner of a recent Palio. The wildly excited horses unleashed extraordinary emotion in the race. The rider who started off first kept ahead the entire time until he made the last difficult turn when he fell off, but his horse kept going and won the race.

With the sun setting and the swallows flying over the tall tower and medieval palaces with their gay red velvet hangings, it had been a spectacle to behold.

When I reached Rome, I went to the train at midnight to meet an evacuee from Amman. She had known the Peurifoy's when posted in Greece, so we immediately formed a mutual admiration society. I had to give up my room while gone, but luckily was given another, the guest room of

the proprietor on the very top floor. It was air conditioned and quiet, but the telephone was down on the next floor. The Residenza is so crowded. Poor Mrs. Dorsey and her daughters, evacuees from Beirut, where her husband was director of USIS, had to move out. She was most attractive and lived just a block from my sister in Georgetown. Her two daughters were very accomplished. Caroline, the older, and Charolette the younger modeled for *Pouchi*.

After communion on Sundays I would often go to a little English tearoom I found at the foot of the Spanish Steps named for the 17th century residence of the Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican and decorated by a sunken large fountain by Bernini, in quiet surroundings where I could have a real American breakfast of orange juice, waffles, crispy bacon with hot American coffee. It was the Babbington Tea Room and faced the Keats Shelley house, where later I would browse over all of their mementoes in a tiny room where he died at the age of 26 with the famous painter Joseph Severn beside him. Later I visited the Protestant cemetery where they were buried. (I always had an insatiable desire to see where famous people were buried.)

The next evening I went with Gabrielle Metcalfe and her mother, now posted in Rome, to hear "La Traviata" in the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. It is considered to have the largest stage in the world. It was a wonderful experience sitting in those 1700 year old ruins and listening to the most lovely voices from this charming opera. It was so chilly during the intermission that hot coffee with brandy was passed around in bottles with straws.

I was so glad to discover so much of Rome could be seen by night when it was cool and I was free. One evening I wandered through the Baths of Diocletian, through the museum alone with my guide books thoroughly enjoying myself. It was heavenly to stroll under a full moon through the gardens designed by Michelangelo where a fountain was playing, goldfish swimming, surrounded by the cloisters of the monks. To know Rome at all, you must feel it, then only will you begin to see it.

Another evening I took the CIT tour to Tivoli where the fabulous fountains of the Villa D'Este were illuminated and it was romantic beyond words wondering in those Renaissance gardens. At one time the composer Liszt lived there and wrote, "The Fountains of Villa D'Este."

After a late breakfast one Sunday at my favorite Babbington Tea Room, all I wanted to do was to find a cool spot and read a book as it had been 2:00am when I left the embassy after typing the list of evacuees. We had reached the thousand and one mark by now, but the refugee exodus was far from over. So, I walked up to the Borghese Gardens, sat down for a while to enjoy the magnificent panorama of Rome, bathed in the hot afternoon sun. Then remembered that I had heard of a charming restaurant, Casino Baladier in the Pincian Hills, but as it was 4:00pm the solitary waiter was resting his head on the table and there was not a soul on the terrace. So I just had a gin and tonic and a bag of potato chips, who had aroused himself to serve me, about the history of the place. He brought me a card with the explanation. It had been originally built for the King of Rome, the unhappy Aiglain, which interested me very much as I had followed Napoleon's family from France to Corsica to Elba and now here.

I returned another day to visit the Borghese museum where the aura of the Princess Borghese, the ravishing sister of Napoleon, Pauline Bonaparte, was potent still. Marvelous works of

sculpture by Bernini. One I loved was of Apollo and Daphne as she was being turned into a tree, done when he was only 18. There were also wonderful painting by Del Sarto, Titian and many others.

I had read in a good little book called *Roamin* the palace of the president could be visited on Thursdays and suddenly remembered that an Italian I had known in our USIS office in Palermo was now a protocol officer to the president. So I rang him and he met me at the palace gates when my taxi drew up and kissed my hand while all the guards and flunkies around saluted him. An attractive gentleman in the thirties and it was so nice to have this personally conducted tour. There were such beautiful rooms, each done in different colors and appropriately named the Japanese Room, the Gold Room, the Blue Room, etc. As we looked out of the window at the gardens below, Serge said, "That is where the receptions are held in the summer and white swans are added to the pools when a party is given." It had formerly been the summer home for the Popes and served as a royal palace after 1870 and now the home of the president. Serge said he could live in the palace if he wanted to but preferred not to as he would have to pass the guards every time he came and went with guests. So he had more privacy living apart. He thought it was the most beautiful palace he had seen in Europe, mentioning the ones in Sweden and England. The candelabras were enormous made of Bohemia crystal, beautiful marble topped tables, rare marble mantelpieces. One of the eleven of ceilings were beautiful paintings.

When we finished the tour and walked toward the gate, the changing of the guard was just about to take place and we could hear the beat of the drums and the band approaching from outside. As a special favor they allowed me to see it from inside the palace while all of the others had to wait outside. The glorious picturesque guards with their shiny helmets, long horse tails falling from them down their backs, bright swords held in their white-gloved hands, white coats with blue trousers and red stripes, added a touch of the old monarchy to the palace. I came away feeling like Cinderella.

One noon, Mr. Rosenthal said I could take a longer lunch hour if I wished. So I dashed over to the Fontana Sisters near the Spanish Steps, just to get an idea of what sort of cocktail dresses they were showing. But the most interesting thing I saw was a perfectly enormous autographed photograph of Margaret Truman and her husband in her wedding dress they had designed.

On September 2, I received a letter from my Swiss friend, Jacqueline Cramer saying: "I am leaving September 1 for Ischia where I shall take the cure until the 20th and will stay in care of Duke Cameening l'Algarada, Porto Ischia. It would be great fun if you could come over, fly over, sail over, swim over, some day." I answered by saying that she probably remembers that I had been longing to come to Ischia for ages and hoped to get there before she leaves. I still don't know when I can leave. Mr. Rosenthal said they must have someone cleared for classified material, so that is the reason I am not be so really replaced. But, I hope they find someone soon because I don't wait too late to go to the lakes and find them frozen over. We already have had a few down pours.

One Sunday I took a bus with several others to see Hadrian's famous Rock Villa, especially interesting to me because the exquisite mosaics in the president's palace came from there. In the afternoon I made a tour of the Castella Romani, the Roman castle, situated on the Albani Hills.

Tiny villages each with its peculiar charm. Our first stop was at Frascati where the famous white wine of Italy is made, to An Ariccia and then on to Genzano, arriving about 6:00 in the evening at Castel Gandolfo, a pretty little village on Lake Albano, the Pope's summer palace, where I heard we were going to see the Pope. I quickly bought two rosaries to be blessed as we walked up the hill with hundreds of others. We passed inside the gates where the guards were standing on either side carrying their medieval swords bearing jaunty black tams on their heads and in their gay uniforms that haven't changed since the 14th century. There must have been about 3,000 in the courtyard. When the Pope appeared all in white, such a cheer went up. An Italian girl kept shouting, "Vita, vita," which meant "long live the Pope." An American standing beside me kept repeating, "Oh, Holy Father, Oh, Holy Father." And another behind me was heard to say, "Look at his beautiful hands," as he blessed the crowd over and over again. After 15 minutes the door of his room was opened and he disappeared. It was a wonderful and most unexpected experience. He was Pope Pius XII, now 84 years old. The one with whom I had a private audience with Mildred and Charlie in 1934 was Pope Pius XI.

When I returned to the La Residenza, I found a message that the consulate in Venice called to say a Mrs. Wright, with her son and mother, would be arriving in the morning on the 7:23 train. The embassy car picked me up at 6:00am and I discovered she was the wife of the Chargé in Amman. When she heard I was from Palermo, immediately mentioned what a good job Mr. Keeley's son was doing, who had just arrived there.

Mr. Rosenthal announced on September 4 that the security needed our office as it was theirs originally and he was going back to his old job of management. So, my tour of duty would be over as of Monday evening. I plan to leave Tuesday morning for Milan and the Lakes and then on to Verona, Padua and Ravenna and hoped to get up to the smallest republic in the world, San Marino. Then back to Rome and take the train to Naples and go over to Ischia for a few days and visit with Jacqueline Cramer before taking the postali back to Palermo.

Mrs. Fenzi had come over to Rome to see her daughter for a few days and it was good to see her and have news from there. I had experienced one prolonged interesting break in the routine of office work in Palermo, but also looked forward to returning to my little house and garden and Pena.

The next morning I left on that super duper train to Milan, the same one Ruth Clark and I had taken to Florence. The trip to the Lakes was delightful. First went to Lake Maggiore and never have I seen such enormous dahlias in the garden and I had a delicious lunch of trout from the lake at the Regina Hotel in Stresa. We crossed over to Isolabella and it lives up to its name that was chosen to honor Isabella, Countess Borronio. It was Count Vitaliano Borronio who made it into a luxurious residence in the 17th century. It had originally been just a flat rock with a church and a few cottages. (Later at Ischia, Jacqueline told me she almost married one of the Borronio family.) Now the huge palace is a richly furnished museum. Then on to Lake Como which sparkled like a three-pointed star and had tea at a hotel where I should love to return and stay one day, the Villa D'Este. It was so beautiful and so romantic. At Lake Garda, I heard it was the only lake that was not misty.

The next morning I was off on another bus tour to Verona with the courtyard of Juliet's balcony

is still imbued with romance, and on to Padua where I learned that St. Anthony of Padua was neither a Paduan nor even an Italian. He was born in Lisbon in 1195 and christened Ferdinand, but inspired such love among so many that the Paduans erected in his honor one of the most sublime basilicas in Christendom and I found it more impressive than ever because of Donatello's celebrated sculptures and exquisite frescos. We stayed at the only first-class hotel in town, the Storione. It couldn't have been much older and still been considered first-class, but I loved it.

The next morning I dashed to a church to see some marvelous mosaics and became so enthralled and missed my bus to San Marino, but fortunately there was another one at noon, a local one that stopped at several little villages. When people got off they were carrying all kinds of funny things. One woman threw a mattress over her shoulder and carried it like this as she walked up one of the hills.

Although San Marino is a republic, it is like a toy kingdom situated on very steep hills with gorgeous view. I had an excellent lunch at the hotel, Tre Pen...

...man with elaborate camera equipment who said he was with Burton Holmes and Warner Brothers. When I got back to Rimini I had a walk along the beach, but wouldn't care to come to the Adriatic coast for a holiday, although very inexpensive.

When I arrived at Naples and was checking in at the Royal Hotel I saw Mrs. Hall, the dear mother of Max Hall. She was spending her last night there as she was sailing the next day for the States and I think she was feeling very sad about leaving Naples. Max was going to administrative school in the Department and transferred to Iceland where she would not be going. I suggested that we go to a German restaurant I had heard was excellent and have some good German beer and some wieners. Then, afterwards, from the roof of the Royal we watched the fireworks from the castle just across from the hotel. They were the most gorgeous I have ever seen.

The next morning I took the boat for Ischia. Jacqueline had reserved a room for me at the Marimare Costello, just under the shadow of the old Arganese castle at Point Ischia. A perfect location directly beside the sea and very comfortable and reasonable and the food was good. The sea bathing was delicious. Jacqueline was taking the cure so I could only see her after 4:00, we would meet for dinner. She knew all of the restaurants so she would go into the kitchen and select what we were to have.

One day we took a trip in a boat around the island stopping at San Angelo where we took another little boat over to some Roman baths. It was amusing to see some people lying like mummies buried in the radio active sand. It was such fun being with Jacqueline who knew the island so well. I found her more beautiful than ever and so intelligent and charming. She said she was planning to fly to India to work with the Red Cross there. I found her not at all interested in the recent wedding of the Eden girl and the Berreli chap who were married in that little village where his family sold dresses and suits, etc. in a shop we passed.

I left the island about 4:00 in the afternoon and looked back at what is called the greenest island

in Italy because it is almost entirely terraced in vineyards interspersed with groves of citrus fruit trees, figs, palms and olive and orchards of peach and mandarin. The lofty umbrella pines and architecture of the villas with their white, washed, flat fronts and iron barred windows, reminded me of Morocco.

I arrived in Naples about 6:00pm and had a bit at Kafloss, a popular restaurant there. Then, down to board the postali. I would have preferred to fly, but was over-weight for the plane. My Italian holiday over.

When I arrived the next morning at Palermo, as I was going down the gangplank I heard someone call, "Virginia" and was delighted to see little Joy Pole. She had come in the consulate car with Andrea to meet me and brought me home giving me the news en route that the Herdecks had been transferred to Naples. When I reached my little house, Pena came running out with opened arms.

I went immediately to the consulate and was warmly welcomed by everyone. When I went in to speak to Mr. Keeley, he said, "I was sorry I couldn't accept your sister's invitation in Washington, but I had to go into the hospital and then out to California." Then added, "I heard you had gone to Rome to say nice things to the evacuees. You must have liked that." Young Mrs. Keeley had arrived from Amman with her two children and were moving into the Auchincloss apartment and had my Pena help them for a few days, whom they highly praised.

I invited the Keeleys for luncheon on October 15 and Louise Keeley said her husband, Bob, may arrive from Amman if he could catch a Navy flight from Beirut. So we all waited with great anticipation and he did arrive and come to lunch with his mother, father and wife. So, it was an exciting family reunion. He was perfectly delightful, very good looking with a nice clean cut face.

I was very sorry to hear of Pope Pius XII's death, having so recently been blessed by him, also the death of Mary Roberts Reinhardt at the age of 82. I remembered so well the day I met her with her son, Alan, at the Eaton's Dude Ranch in Wyoming and she autographed her book which I was reading.

On October 10th, an OM (operation memorandum) from the Department arrived saying I was assured of receiving my travel orders in time to arrive home for Christmas and my desire for a protocol job would be considered at the time of assignment by the Department, which pleased me very much.

Margaret Abell, who I had known in Washington, came through Palermo with a friend and they completely convinced me I should fly home via jet. The schedule goes into effect the middle of October. At first I thought it sounded a bit frightening, but Miss Canyon said, "These planes have had more tests than any other." So, I thought probably I should and would be quite an exciting experience.

Almost mid-November. Pena left one morning for her home in Castelloammare to obtain a legal separation from her husband and came back that evening looking rather haggard, but so relieved

because she had obtained it. She had relations in Brooklyn and Utica, New York and we were trying to get her a visa for the United States. On December 9, I received my travel orders and the news I was being transferred to Stockholm as citizenship and passport assistant. I was, of course, pleased to have the travel orders, but didn't know whether to be pleased with the assignment, preferring warm climates. But Pena was delighted because she does not like hot climates and said, "Senora, I will follow you anywhere but darkest Africa."

Shortly after the news came, the Auchinclosses passed through on the *Vocanyia* and on home leave from Trieste and due to return. Mr. Auchincloss told me Mr. Bonbright had been transferred from Lisbon and was to be the Ambassador in Stockholm. I have never seen a couple with such devoted friends. Nearly all of the diplomatic corps and high officials were aboard drinking champagne with them. They were taking their Italian maid and said they hoped she would stay forever with them. And I had the same feeling about Pena. Audrey's last words to me were, "We will probably see each other some time in Georgetown," not dreaming that those words would come true later in life.

Then the parties began. The Marquise Casterelli, who everyone called Emily, invited me to cocktails one evening. She is president of the Italio-American Association and knows everyone as she has lived in Palermo for 30 years. Her other guests were four Italian women and one Italian man, Marquis Gagolo, a great archaeologist who was to have an article in the *National Geographic* soon. Henrico Elles, her constant companion was also there. He invited us to his place after for dinner. It was great fun.

One day Henrico took me to a place where I bought a pair of real ceramic pineapples, symbols of hospitality, the last purchase I made for my little house.

Louise Keeley invited me to Luckaprese for lunch with her mother-in-law and Mrs. Barley, the wife of the British Consul. They were being transferred to Bremen and invited me to visit them there for they were to have a lovely villa.

One Sunday I had tea with the Duke and Duchess d'Belcito in their charming apartment. He was the Consul for Norway, Denmark and Sweden, so I was interested in what he could tell me about that country. Their apartment was filled with priceless antiques. The Duke showed me around and pointed out six de Monti plates that were given to his mother by the King of Italy. The others are all in the museum in Naples. It is the museum I want most to see the next time I go to Naples where all of the famous de Monti is.

Miss Whittacker invited me once again to Moufetino for lunch before I left. The zero hour was fast approaching and Pena hoped to have her papers in order to sail December 30. I had been advised to take the postali over to Naples and the train to Rome just in case the airport was closed down as it sometimes is this time of year. So I did, in the pouring rain.

I was so touched that Henrico von Elles and Emily Casterelli had come to the ship in the down pour bearing long stemmed red roses.

I had sent my sister a hurried note on September 13 hoping to reach her in Washington before

leaving for New York where she was to meet me to say that I was now leaving Rome by a DC plane and joining the jet in Paris as jets were not flying from Rome except on Saturdays because they claimed the noise at that time disturbed the eternal city and hoped to be in New York on schedule Christmas Eve to attend the midnight eve service with her, and I was.

DANIEL A. O'DONOHUE
Consular Officer
Genoa (1957-1959)

Daniel A. O'Donohue was born on October 27, 1931 in Detroit, Michigan. He received his BA from the University of Detroit in 1953 and served in the US Army for two years. He entered the Foreign Service in 1959 and spent time in various countries including Italy, South Korea, Ghana, Thailand, and Burma. The Ambassador was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 28, 1996.

O'DONOHUE: What characterized the class was enthusiasm. In those days, as now, the State Department had its budget problems. We were not sure where we were going. There appeared to be no money available to cover our ongoing assignments. Then, at the last minute, the Department found money in the Refugee Program. This meant that most of the class went either to Italy, Germany, or, in a few cases, Greece, where a residual refugee program was going on. This program dealt with what was the last residue of refugees left over from World War II. Remember, we are talking about the situation in 1957-1958.

Q: This was the Refugee Relief Program.

O'DONOHUE: Exactly. This was the last gasp of this program. There had been a much larger program before this. Anyhow, I ended up being assigned to the Consulate General in Genoa, Italy, in connection with the Refugee Relief Program. Those of us who went overseas under this program wound up in consular jobs. The Refugee Relief Program was a means for funding our jobs. You might say that the Department met the legislative intent of the Refugee Relief Program in a geographic sense. I went out as a junior Consular Officer in Genoa. I spent about six months issuing immigrant visas, as Genoa handled immigrant visas for northern Italy. It also handled the visa applications for Austrian or German wives of US servicemen.

After six months handling immigrant visas I ended up becoming the Consular Officer for everything but visas. I did Citizenship and Protection work, handled notaries, and did other consular work for a year. For a relatively young man like me this was an interesting experience.

Q: When were you in Genoa?

O'DONOHUE: I was there from January, 1958, until July, 1959. I was engaged to be married by then. My wife graduated from college in Detroit and came out to Genoa, where we were married.

Q: Was there a pattern of northern Italian migration?

O'DONOHUE: Well, first of all, during that period, Italy was an exciting and happy place to serve. Generally, there was a sense that Christian Democracy was working. The civil servants were running the country, and the politicians were acting like politicians. The country's economy was growing at a rate of 8- 10% a year. In northern Italy this was a period of very significant, social change, in that the Vespa motorbikes were being succeeded by Fiat automobiles with 500 cc engines.

Also, there was new social legislation which was changing the patterns of life in Italy. Overall, I had the sense that Italy was a thriving country. In Italy I don't think that politics or politicians were ever viewed as "working." After the 1948 elections there was a sense that American policy toward Italy was succeeding very well. So it was almost an exuberant time in Italy during those years. For a young person like me it was a very exciting place, in that sense.

As I said, in terms of migration the Consulate General in Genoa handled all of the immigrant visas for northern Italy. I've forgotten the figure, but maybe, let's say, that amounted to about 50 immigrant visas a day. As a Consular Officer handling immigrant visas I think that I interviewed about 20 people a day. The immigrant visa program was a reasonable heavy burden, but nothing like that at other posts, even in those days. Nothing like the patterns which developed later in terms of the sheer volume of applications.

Q: Were there any problems with Italian-Americans? We call taking care of them "American services," involving Americans in your consular districts.

O'DONOHUE: There were problems but not particularly in terms of Italian- Americans. If you looked at the American citizens we provided services to, probably about 75 % were Italians who had become naturalized American citizens in the US and then had retired in Italy, where they almost completely disappeared into Italian society. Probably their only real connection with the Consulate General would have been Social Security problems. On the whole, at that point, there were almost no problems with the Italian-Americans. In those years tourism by American citizens in Italy was large but a far cry from what it is today, although there were some problems. Then, as now, there were problems with Americans who went abroad to escape their problems-- which only intensified them. In terms of consular work for someone my age, coming out of school and so forth, although I had served in the military, probably the most different aspect was the number of American citizens who were in jail in Italy. They included a Hawaiian-American "mass murderer." Another was an American seaman who had not talked to his shipmates during his whole voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. His ship arrived in Genoa, and then he suddenly stabbed and killed one of them. There was also a young Marine who had badly beaten a prostitute. These were some of the cases.

There was also an oil worker from Saudi Arabia who was "honeymooning" in Genoa with his fifth wife, a Greek dancer whom he met in Beirut. When they did a routine check of hotel registers, the Italian police found that this man was on their list. They more or less apologetically took him in, only to find out that the poor man had had a fourth wife who was an Italian. While married to her, he was caught in a "Cambio"--money exchange center-with a gun in his hands. He claimed that he was just carrying the gun. An Italian court sentenced him to jail for a year,

after which they let him go. He thought that he was free, but the State Prosecutor had appealed the release from prison. Unbeknownst to him, the court had added another year and a half to his sentence. The Italian authorities were as embarrassed as anyone, but by the time he was apprehended, every legal recourse had been exhausted. The poor man was in jail until the next amnesty was handed down, and we got him out of prison.

It is a measure of those times that you could number “serious incidents” in terms of a handful, but certainly no more than one a week--ranging from the incident I’ve just described to another, when two Navy planes crashed simultaneously into two mountains. These two planes were “wing men.” In one case all of the crew members were killed. In the other case they all lived. Out of cases like these when people served as Consular Officers, come some of the best Foreign Service stories.

Q: Absolutely.

O’DONOHUE: I learned to be a “father confessor” to all sorts of people who would come into the office and pour out their woes to me. So in terms of broadening and maturing, all of that was a very positive experience.

Q: Who was your Consul General?

O’DONOHUE: The first Consul General was David Maynard. He was a man with a great thrust and enjoyment of life. This had probably carried him a little bit beyond his abilities. Genoa was his “retirement post.” He had had some very major jobs. As a young man he had started out in the Foreign Service in China. During the 1930’s he had been in the Foreign Commercial Service under the Department of Commerce. At one point he was the senior Foreign Service Officer in USBER in Berlin. So he was in charge. He had had a very active and varied experience. He was very much of an extrovert--but Genoa was clearly his “retirement post.” He was succeeded as Consul General by a man named Joyce who had had a more important career in Washington. However, for physical reasons Joyce was assigned to Genoa for his last few years in the Foreign Service.

In both cases these Consuls General “presided” over the Consulate General, rather than “ran” it. Both of them had had major responsibilities previously, although both of them took very seriously their responsibilities toward the two, young Foreign Service Officers who served under them in Genoa. In that “institutional” sense, they had considerable influence on me.

Q: Our Ambassador to Italy at the time was Claire Boothe Luce, wasn’t she--at least for part of the time?

O’DONOHUE: My brother-in-law had entered the Foreign Service with me and then had met and married my sister. He was assigned to the Embassy in Rome, but our connection with the Embassy was very remote. The DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] was John Jernigan, who later became Ambassador to Algeria. He paid some attention to the Consulates. When he visited the Consulates, he made a point of meeting the younger officers--so we had a very clear impression of him.

James Zellerbach was the Ambassador to Italy during my assignment to Genoa. However, as far as the Embassy was concerned, it was a very distant and remote organization. As I said, my brother-in-law worked in the Embassy, and we went to Rome to visit my sister and him. So we had some contact with the Embassy, but otherwise the Embassy was very remote from our concerns in Genoa.

Q: I take it, from what you are saying, that you had a very good, positive reaction to the Foreign Service.

O'DONOHUE: Yes and no. I learned a lot about consular work, which was a big "plus." But I wanted to be a Political Officer; However, I found that consular work had helped me, both in maturing and in handling responsibilities. Generally in the Foreign Service several years go by before you have supervisory responsibilities equivalent to those in the consular field. In terms of leadership, both of the Consuls General I served under in Genoa were admirable men.

The Consulate in Genoa itself was "nutty," bordering on the bizarre. After hearing other people's tales of other Consulates, my only conclusion was that one's experience in Consulates varied greatly, indeed, but that my experience was very common.

The rest of the staff of the Consulate was a very mixed bag. When the Consul General was out of the office, there was some conflict between the Economic and Administrative Officers over "major issues" like parking space. In the first efficiency report which my first superior in the Foreign Service wrote he said that I must have been absorbing what he was saying, although I never asked any questions, because I was doing a "good job." This was not exactly how I would have described his performance!

I knew that there was something very strange about the office I was in, but it was only later that somebody bothered to tell me that the Consul, that is, the man who was supervising the office, had had an "affair" with the chief Foreign Service National employee which had become public knowledge. He had asked for a transfer. The Embassy arranged for home leave orders for him. However, in those days it hadn't told the Office of Personnel in Washington why it had done this. The Department, all unknowing, assigned him right back to Genoa! In my naiveté, it took me a few weeks before I realized that there were some real tensions in the office and that it wasn't just my imagination.

Overall, I had the impression that I was living and working in a very small cloistered community, without the broadening experience that you have in an Embassy, where you are in a national capital, dealing with a variety of issues.

I did my first report to the State Department in Genoa on a fruit fly that was devastating the olive industry. I wrote another report on the proposed construction of a new airport for Genoa and whether it would ever be built. I think that it was about 20 years later when it eventually was built! I learned a lot from my experience in Genoa. With the exception of the two Consuls General, I would say that most of the rest of the staff was self-absorbed, neither outward oriented nor participating in the Italian culture.

Q: Italian society is extremely friendly and open, but essentially it is pretty much “closed” as far as getting out and meeting people.

O'DONOHUE: Well, in general this was true. The Genovese tend to take the view that other Italians are “foreign.” So if you look closely at it, the “foreign community” includes Italians from other parts of Italy. Most of my friends were Italians who had come from other parts of Italy.

We had that brought home at my wedding. As I said, my wife had finished college before she came out. We are Catholics, and I had to make the arrangements for the wedding. I was attending Mass at a very small church in a fishing village which Genoa actually surrounded. However, the village was still there. There was a quaint and charming church, and I thought that this was the place to be married in--instead of being married in the Cathedral, as other foreigners were. This was the beginning of my trials and tribulations with the parish priest in this village. He was from Liguria, the area surrounding Genoa. For him foreigners were really a “strange breed.” My sister had come over to Genoa with my fiancée. We were married in Genoa one week, and my sister and brother-in-law were married in Rome the next week.

At one point in an Italian wedding you always sign the marriage registers. It could be in the middle of Mass or at the end, but it would be at some point. So we were signing the register during the middle of Mass. Behind me, in the midst of it all was the little old parish priest, who was sort of the “master of ceremonies.” A friend of ours. Another priest was actually presiding over the marriage. The little old priest shouted out in Italian, “Stop the wedding!” I had dealt with him for six months and knew that nothing would go very smoothly. It turned out that my sister had signed the wedding register and put in her home address, which was Detroit, Michigan. The little priest made clear that no one from Detroit, Michigan, had ever been a witness to a marriage in his church and that no one ever would be.

So our various Italian friends got involved in the matter. For a change I was the one who was utterly relaxed, this incident having confirmed my expectation. They finally agreed that, as we were all “men of the world,” my sister could cross out “Detroit, Michigan,” since she was going to live in Rome. She wrote, “Roma,” and the wedding proceeded. Certainly Ligurian and Genovese society was more “closed” than Italian society in general. However, the impression that I came away with at the time was an immense respect for senior Italian civil servants, who had immense authority. Indeed, my impression was that, in our system, we devolve authority and responsibility “downward” quite well. There, in Genoa, lower level officials were only obstacles and nuisance to be overcome. At the senior levels government officials had near absolute authority which they exercise quite effectively. In fact, at this time, they were running Italy to all intents and purposes. The politicians were scurrying above them but were not really in charge. As I say, I had great respect for the senior Italian officials and for the authority which they had. In our society you could not contemplate that kind of authority. It seemed that the senior Italian officials could deal with any problem that came up.

Service in Genoa was a good experience for me. However, I had sort of “fallen in love” with East Asia when I was in the Army in Korea, with Korea as devastated as it was. I was there just

after the agreement on the cessation of hostilities [in 1953], and not during the fighting. At the time I was in Korea in the Army, the country was still wrecked. In Seoul one could see the Catholic Cathedral standing on a hill. The old Japanese Capital building was bombed out, and its dome was gutted. It was still there, but there were holes in it. One had the impression that most of the city had been almost leveled. As a matter of fact, when I went back later to Korea, I realized that there were more buildings than I remembered.

Korea in 1954 and 1955 was an utterly different world than it is now. Since I entered the Foreign Service, I have always been interested in going back to East Asia and Korea. So I requested Korean language training. In the summer of 1959 my Genoa tour of duty was cut short and I was sent to Yale University, where we studied Korean in those days.

ROGER KIRK
Political Officer
Rome (1957-1959)

Growing up, Ambassador Roger Kirk traveled extensively throughout Europe. In 1947, he returned to the United States to attend Princeton University. From 1949-1950, he served as an interpreter in Russia. Ambassador Kirk entered the Foreign Service in April of 1955. His career included positions in Moscow, Saigon, Mogadishu, Vienna, and Bucharest. This interview was conducted by Horace G. Torbert on May 21, 1991.

Q: At least if you went to France speaking Italian they'd snub you, but if you went to Italy speaking French you got some cache' out of it.

KIRK: I inquired about language study and was told there was no time or funds, so I took 18 hours of Berlitz at my own expense. We arrived in Rome -- Betty having been out of the country once on our honeymoon, and once on a grand tour with her family -- myself, having been out a good deal -- arrived in Rome with our two small children in the middle of the summer at the Pensione Villa Borghese where they spoke no English whatsoever. It was hot, it was close down by the road.

Q: At least you were across the street from the park.

KIRK: I remember thinking this was awful, but our Italian got a lot better fast. There I was the junior member of the political section working exclusively on external affairs, foreign relations. The Italians, of course, as you well know Tully, were sharing with us some reports from their embassies in Sofia and Tehran -- their diplomatic representation. I would go down and pick up those despatches, translate them, or excerpt them, and send them back to Washington.

Q: As a result I think they got to use our embassy in Tehran.

KIRK: They did, but I think it was you, Tully, who told me that you had prevented that from

being...

Q: *...from being sold, but that was much later on.*

KIRK: Rome, as third secretary, was very nice in that there were plenty of counselors of embassy, not to speak of DCMs and ambassadors, but plenty of counselors of embassy, including you, to take care of all the social responsibilities, so that we were relatively free to do what we wanted, to take care of our small family, to see something of the countryside, and of course to mingle with the Italians as best we could but it was very...

Q: *... several score of families came to visit you every summer.*

KIRK: There was that, and we formed friendships there amongst the junior officers who stayed our friends.

Q: *It was a wonderful place to be. Let's see, Niles Bond was the Counselor.*

KIRK: Niles Bond was the Political Counselor, Earl Sohm was my immediate boss, John Keppel was the Communist and Socialist watcher.

Q: *Clayton Madd and Gus Vettetri were in the political section...*

KIRK: Jernegan was the DCM and then Outerbridge Horsey came in. Zellerbach was the Ambassador. When my wife had a baby I remember Mrs. Zellerbach sent her a little sweater, which was very sweet. It was a huge embassy. It was a very nice touch, one which I think is something to be borne in mind by senior officers or ambassadors in large places -- a little gesture is often very much appreciated.

I didn't know her much, but you may recall, Tully, it was Matilda Sinclair, a political officer or whatever you called her -- social secretary -- at the embassy, who certainly told myself and my wife what to do at receptions, where to go, and where to stand. There's no nonsense about it.

GERALD B. HELMAN
Consular Officer
Milan (1958-1960)

Gerald B. Helman was born in Detroit, Michigan on November 4, 1932. He received his BA from the University of Michigan in 1953 and received his JD in 1956. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956 and served in countries including Italy, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, and Switzerland. Mr. Helman was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 8, 2001.

HELMAN: I never went to London as a first assignment; while I was taking some leave at home, and about two weeks before my family and I were due to depart for London, we were informed that our first assignment was now Milano. And after the initial shock because I didn't have a

bloody word of Italian, we went to Milano.

Q: So you were there in '57?

HELMAN: I went there in '58.

Q: You were in Milano from '58 to when?

HELMAN: '60.

Q: Let's talk about how you saw Italy at that time and then we'll talk about Milano.

HELMAN: Italy was exciting. First of all the Italians are extraordinarily good-natured people. Particularly if you're wandering around with a couple of tiny children they feel very solicitous and protective of you, particularly of your wife. They sort of look at this husband with a fishy eye, because my wife is rather petite and looked very young despite the fact that we're roughly the same age. I always had the feeling Italians thought that I must've been doing something wrong to inflict two infants on such a young lady.

In any event, once we found a place to live, once we found some help, got a car, I concentrated on work. The Consulate General, which it was at the time, was well run. It was a small group with a number of young officers and the guy in charge, the Consul General, Charlie Rogers, and his deputy, Doug Coster, were very decent people. Charlie was probably I guess at that time what they considered a senior officer, probably an FSO-2 or something like that. I was there as a consular officer, vice consul. I did a little commercial work for about six months and then they put me in charge of the consular section and Charlie's attitude was, "I'm not interested in consular work, I'm interested in political work. You'll be doing your job if you make sure that I'm never bothered with any of the consular problems." (*laughs*) Doug Coster was the number two and Doug was a very fine man. He administered the Consulate General. He was the economic officer, I recall, as well as being number two in the consulate.

The consular section of the consulate, which I was put in charge of after about six months in the consulate general, had all the consular functions except immigration visas. Thank God. It was welfare protection, citizenship, passports, non-immigration visas and the like. I had an outstanding Italian local staff; we called them "locals." They were marvelous professionally, and very solicitous. They made sure that I was well-insulated from any possibility of making mistakes. (*laughs*) And we rather liked each other. As a matter of fact one of them, my principal local consular assistant - her name was Lauri Cantele - was later married to a prominent resident American businessman and she and her husband became very close friends of my wife and myself, and we've maintained that friendship to this day. I just treasure that. But they were very direct with me, very solicitous, very kind, made sure I learned the ropes. It was in many ways the best, and in some ways the most responsible, job I ever had in the Foreign Service because I truly was in charge. I enjoyed it tremendously.

Q: What were the politics of Milano at that point?

HELMAN: You know I'm not sure. I didn't follow the politics that much. I paid attention more to the local police and related bureaucracy.

Q: Bologna is always known as a red belt in that area there, but Milano was...

HELMAN: Milano, despite its role as Italy's business and financial center, was probably governed by the socialists. It certainly wasn't communist.

Q: During that time it was the beginning of a lot of American students, and actually from other countries too, beginning their wander year in coming up. Things in Europe had settled down after the war and so the kids could take their year off and wander around and get into trouble. Consular officers get another trouble. Did you have any...

HELMAN: That's right. Oh, tons of them.

Q: Can you tell me something about some of them?

HELMAN: Lots of students of voice used to come to Milan for obvious reasons because you had the tradition of La Scala. There were many voice students who - in many instances - were strung along by voice teachers. I'm not sure how qualified some of these voice teachers were. I suspect a fair number were mediocrities. Often the students got into trouble, sometimes just financial trouble - ran out of money. Sometimes they got into rather shady activities and sometimes some of the young ladies got into even shadier activities in Milan in order to make a living. And they used to come by the consulate for advice, help in terms of money I couldn't give them. Sometimes my wife and I treated a bunch of them to a meal at home or something like that, but there were so many. You didn't want to develop a reputation as a meal ticket or a food kitchen so we had to be a bit careful. A lot of them were nice and as far as I was concerned had great voices and provided great entertainment at dinner. They all were persuaded they were just an inch or two away from soloing at La Scala. You had to be careful how you responded to inquiries from their parents. They were, after all, mostly adults. So they got into trouble but older Americans got into all kinds of troubles as well.

My first stunning experience, not too long after I took on the consular section, was a TWA (Trans World Airlines) crash on take off from Malpensa airport, the principal airport in Milan. I remember it vividly. It crashed into a field about twenty miles from the airport and of course there were many dead Americans on board. I went to the crash site to assist in identification and also to recover the diplomatic bags on board. Boy, that was an experience.

Q: Oh, yes.

HELMAN: Because they had some pouches on board I had to recover and so on. That was a maturing experience I would say. Emotionally it was hard-hitting. But one did the job and got the bodies organized and so on.

Q: Well, did you have families and parents coming and besieging you from the States or was this pretty much taken care of by a phone call, telegram, that sort of thing?

HELMAN: Phone call, telegram, yes. We didn't have any outside help coming in. We got a little help; I think the embassy in Rome sent somebody up to help out on all the detail work, and so on because there was quite a bit of it. And of course the Italian authorities were very good, very efficient in the recovery process, the recovery of personal effects and so on, assembly of the identification. They didn't have all the forensic tools of today but I think they did a good job. The scene of the accident was pretty grim, wreckage all over the bloody place.

Q: Did it hit other buildings or did it...

HELMAN: No, it came down in an open farmer's field outside of Milan. I think it was twenty miles outside. That was my responsibility together with Doug Coster, who as number two in the consulate, stepped up to help a lot. And of course there were other unusual events that occurred. One, my favorite story in a way, occurred in my first few months when I was sitting in my office in the consulate general and this rather tall, imposing gentleman walks in and says, "My name is John Paul Getty. I'd like you to witness my will." I knew who John Paul Getty was. I had no idea that he ever got to Milan. I said, "I'm sure I can but I'd like to double-check to see whether it's a fee or a non-fee service." *(laughs)* How's that for quick thinking? It was a non-fee service, by the way.

Q: He was one of the richest men in the world, I think.

HELMAN: Yes. One of the richest men in the world and I subsequently discovered that he had a son living in Milan. Subsequently you may recall his grandson was kidnaped in Italy, in Rome and had his ear cut off during the ransom negotiations. It was my impression that Getty was not particularly beloved by his children. But the will I witnessed was the will that was taken to probate for the disposition of Getty's estate after he died in the late '70s. I recall as he was leaving, I asked, "Mr. Getty, do you have a car or do you want me to call a taxi?" and he told me, "No, I'll walk. It'll save me some money." *(laughs)*

The final chapter in that story occurred many years after when he died and I wondered whether the will I had witnessed was his final will. I was at that time deputy assistant secretary in 1977, '78, and sure enough his attorneys called up and asked if they could interview me and asked me to validate my signature. I said, yes, that's my signature and so on, and they asked me if there was anything I wanted. I knew that I couldn't ask for a piece of the estate *(laughs)*. I asked if it were possible for me to have a copy of the will. And they said yes, that's proper since it's now been put into probate and it's a public document. To this day I have a copy of that will.

Q: (laughs) In Milan, how did you find the Italian society there? You know, sort of the movers and shakers. Were they easy to penetrate or not? One of the problems in Italian society is everybody goes home and has Sunday dinner with mama. The family is so important that in a way it's a little difficult to get...Did friendships develop there?

HELMAN: Yes, some friendships developed. I'm not sure to what extent they penetrated the internal family, probably not, but as I mentioned, my wife and I became firm friends with Lauri Cantele - her married name is now Kalnan. She came from a very prominent Milanese family,

who we got to know, as well. And there were a couple of other good relationships we established that I think had some depth, to the extent that we were invited the family home in Como and meet the family and have dinner. So there was something more than casual about some of our relationships. Certainly on a superficial level it was easy to get along with Italians at all levels, particularly after you pick up some of the language - and I was beginning to pick up the language, by necessity, for no other reason than if I had a situation in which an American was in trouble, I would have to figure out how to help, and English was not widely known among Italians, much less Italian cops. And Americans have marvelous ability to get into all kinds of bloody scrapes. You did the practical thing to get the job done. It was great training. I enjoyed it.

Q: Did you find the Italian police you had to deal with understood sort of the general counsel rule is you go up as American counsel and say, "Look, this person may have done something stupid; let's get them out of the country and let's not bother either of our places. Let's move them on?"

HELMAN: Sometimes there was some of that, but I must say I never had any real problems with the Italian police. They usually had more serious things to worry about than some the petty misbehavior of some American. Italians defer to titles; of course I was only a "vice console" but I was immediately elevated to "console" and "eccellenze" - so the title helped. Good manners and proper deference on my part also helped; they appreciated that. An effort to speak their language does wonders in that kind of situation and they were very helpful. I don't think I had a bad experience. I think the only time I was conscious of them cutting corners wasn't really in deference to me. I don't know if you follow jazz, but at that time and even subsequently, there was quite a famous American jazz trumpeter whose name was Chet Baker. Chet was just a marvelous musician but badly on drugs at that time. I met him first when the manager of one of the principal hotels in Milano - I think it was the concierge from the Principe de Savoia which was only three blocks away from the consulate - called and said, "You better come over here. We've got Chet Baker here and he seems to be in some real medical troubles." He had gone on a heroin binge as it turned out and had overdosed. He was in a bad way. There was a doctor in attendance when I got there. He came out of it and we chatted. We got him some further medical attention and there was a police report. The police sort of waived it off. They didn't want to take on a jazz musician who was well-known in Italy at that time. I think they gave him a warning. I don't think he ever went on the wagon and during our occasional conversations thereafter he once confided in me that he knew drugs would kill him. About six months after that my wife and I went to hear him play in a club on the island of Elba. We talked, but it was hard for me to tell if he was clean or not - probably not. I recall a year or two later he was found unconscious and bloody in the toilet of a gasoline station outside Rome. Again he had overdosed and was really in quite a bad way. I think the police arrested him that time and put him in a facility of some sort, some recovery facility.

I, of course, followed Chet's career and recordings thereafter. His career was a long one musically, but one also spent in and out of jail and various facilities because of his addictions. He died just a few years ago. He was a helluva musician. But generally the police were quite happy to get misbehaving Americans out of their jurisdiction. *(laughs)*

Q: Oh, yes. I mean that's the principal counselor weapon really. You just go in there very nicely,

hat in hand, and say, "Maybe we can work this out." (laughs)

HELMAN: There were only a couple occasions when an American got in such a scrape that I felt they were beyond my help. *(laughs)*

Q: You know you would say run into the "old guard" at the State Department. How did your wife find this first overseas experience? Were the Americans there at the consul general supportive?

HELMAN: Yes, they were good. That was a satisfying experience. Both Charley Rogers and his wife, Doris, had us participate in various representational events, so we began to develop some skills at that. They had a knockout penthouse in downtown Milan. Oh, it was gorgeous. The building was called the "Torre Valesca" and it probably still exists. I'm not sure if the consul general resides there anymore. But they entertained and they involved us frequently enough so that we got some experience. My wife was responsible for the shopping and our two daughters, both of whom were barely out of infancy. They went to Italian kindergartens and nursery school and they of course were totally bilingual in Italian. And we had sort of a nanny, or a maid of all work, who was Italian and who spoke only Italian, so that helped our Italian. So it was pretty good. I enjoyed that.

We couldn't afford to live downtown, but did find a nice apartment sort of off the central park in Milano proper. We learned how to shop, including at supermarkets that were then just being introduced. But most of the shopping was done at small neighborhood shops, you know, within a block and a half you could buy your fresh vegetables and fruit and beef and the rest from your local merchant. And that was a lot of fun.

Q: While you were there did you start thinking about what area and what type of work you wanted to do within the Foreign Service or did you get much feel for that?

HELMAN: Yes, I wanted to do political work. I was interested and felt qualified. But in those days the Foreign Service pursued a good program that, if you recall, in the first couple of tours exposed the junior officer to a variety of Foreign Service functions. They didn't have this current cone system, which I think is a seriously flawed approach.

Q: Yes. A horrible thing to explain, but it's what specialty of...

HELMAN: No. They didn't want you to specialize. They wanted you to get some idea of what the Foreign Service is like. So, as I said, in Milan I did some commercial work for about six months and I did all the consular work for a year and a half and was in charge of the consular section - for a junior officer that was pretty good. The next step should be political work and I was sent to Vienna, which also gave me bragging rights. I think I may be the only FSO who had successive tours at La Scala and the Staatsoper.

CHARLES E. RUSHING

**Consular Officer
Naples (1958-1960)**

Charles E. Rushing was born and raised in Illinois. He attended Augustana College followed by Duke University. He served in the US Army and entered the Foreign Service in 1956. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Italy, Eritrea, Southern Rhodesia, Congo, Laos, Liberia, Denmark, Ireland, and Switzerland. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on July 2, 1996.

Q: After two years in the Department, in 1958 you were transferred overseas to your first post, to Naples. Did you get Italian language training before you went?

RUSHING: Yes.

Q: You were two years in Naples. What did you do there?

RUSHING: I first started out as the officer who put together the extensive documentation required for immigrant visas. The consulate general was large in terms of numbers, at that time. There must have been 18 Foreign Service officers. Then, I was made the chief of the Protection and Welfare and Shipping and Seamen Section. One even more junior officer than I was in the office. I think we also had four nationals.

Q: That would have been a busy office, I assume, with all the American interests in Southern Italy. Did you get an opportunity to do any substantive reporting work while you were in Naples?

RUSHING: If I did, I don't remember. The job itself demanded a lot of after-hours work and was perhaps the busiest in the consulate.

Q: Were the Communists strong in that district?

RUSHING: No. Southern Italy was relatively conservative. But throughout Italy there was a large Communist presence. It was the second largest party in Italy. But the Christian Democrats were the ones who counted the most.

Q: Did the ambassador from Rome visit the consulate or did you have a chance to get up to see the embassy in action?

RUSHING: I went to Rome quite frequently. I had both friends and business there. But I don't remember that the ambassador ever came to Naples during my time there.

Q: You were there for what was a rather crucial election in 1958 or...

RUSHING: It was in 1948, wasn't it?

Q: *Well, there was another one in '58 where the Christian Democrats increased their majority.*

RUSHING: I don't remember.

Q: *Was there much anti-American sentiment in the district that you came across?*

RUSHING: No, on the contrary. I think there was a general pro-American attitude. Americans were liked. There was a relatively large group of Italo-Americans, that is, people who had gone to the States, made a bit of money, and then they went back to Italy. As you know, by far the largest element in emigration from Italy to the United States was from Southern Italy and Sicily. People in the North were better-off and, as was almost always the case, those who are better-off don't leave.

Q: *How about neo-fascism? Was that evident at all? It was only ten or twelve years after the destruction of fascism.*

RUSHING: Yes, it was. The neo-fascist party, the MSI [Movimento Socialista Italiana], was quite strong, particularly in the South. I'm trying to think of who ran the municipal government in Naples at that time. I can't remember. I think it was the Christian Democrats. But, as in the case of politics in Italy, almost all governments, including local governments, were coalition governments. So, there might well have been MSI people on the city council.

Q: *Anything else stand out in your mind from that tour in Naples? It must have increased your competence in Italian.*

RUSHING: Yes, it did. One of the things that I concerned myself with a good deal of the time was visiting American seamen who were in jail for one reason or another. Also at the time, an American woman, a longtime resident of Capri, died there. Her daughter in the U.S. did not want to have anything to do with executing her estate, administering her estate, or anything. I went through her effects, taking inventory and eventually arranging for shipment of her effects to her daughter in the States, who never came to Italy. We had a great deal of correspondence including designing a headstone and her burial in Italy. That went on intermittently, month after month, and involved several trips to Capri and stays there.

Q: *Yes, well, it's presumably better that you had to go to Capri for it than the Siberia. In 1960, after two years in Naples, you were transferred to East Africa, to Asmara. Why did this happen? Had you asked for a transfer? Was your time up?*

RUSHING: My time was up. Naples was a two-year tour. I thought that Africa was interesting and perhaps would enhance promotion.

HORACE G. TORBERT
Political Counselor
Rome (1958-1961)

Ambassador Horace G. Torbert was raised in Washington, DC. He received a bachelor's degree from Yale University and a master's degree from The Harvard Business School. His Foreign Service career included positions in Austria, Hungary, Somalia, and Bulgaria. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 31, 1988.

Q: When you were political counselor, what were our major political concerns?

TORBERT: Our almost overriding and continuing concern was keeping a non-Communist government going in Italy. Keeping direct Communist influence out of the government wasn't easy, because although a great deal of the Communist Party membership was a protest type of thing, and many of the members of it would have been scared to death if the Party had ever come to power, nonetheless, it had the apparent potential of coming to power or at least sharing it.

Beyond that, of course, Italy was very important in our defense posture. We had bases there. Spain also became, during that decade, an important base for control of the Mediterranean, but Italy was further east and was important. As you recall, we put some missiles in there while I was there. That was a little difficult because every time we thought we had the arrangement all settled, the government would fall, and we'd have to wait for a new government. It was that kind of a problem.

Then, of course, another great problem -- not a problem, but an interest, a connection, a tie, was that we have so very many Italian Americans. I found this throughout my career in Europe, in countries where there was great immigration in the United States, created all sorts of ties and connections, economic, financial, political pressures at home and that sort of thing. It really was the influence on the American political scene that had to be managed.

Q: As political counselor, we were concerned about the influence of the Communists, but how did you operate? What did you and your officers do to work on this problem?

TORBERT: The first thing, the political section's mission, of course, was not to operate, but it was an intelligence mission. Overt intelligence is what it was. What we did was to work very hard estimating the political prospects, on getting to know the people, and then advising the Department what to do and what not to do, advising touring congressmen what to do and what not to do. There were many congressmen who were of Italian background themselves or who had very many Italian constituents who would come through, and a few of them would want to make speeches in Italy, usually in Neapolitan or Sicilian dialect. They'd want to make a speech in Rome, saying how much America loved them and how important it was that they vote anti-Communist. This would have been, in some cases, just the wrong thing to do. That kind of thing. So it was basically a reporting, a traditional intelligence operation.

Then we would have staff meetings in which all sections of the embassy were represented, the economic section, the CIA was always present, and we would discuss policy actions. But those would be usually for recommendation to the Department as to what we should do.

MARY CHIAVARINI
Consular Officer
Palermo, Sicily (1958-1963)

Ms. Chiavarini was born and raised in Massachusetts. After Secretarial training, she worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC before joining the Foreign Service in 1944. During her career with the State Department, Ms. Chiavarini served as secretary to the ambassador and other officers in Naples, Tirana, Manila, Seoul, Prague, Rome, Singapore and Warsaw. After her appointment in 1957 as Consul and Secretary in the Diplomatic Service she served in Palermo, Monrovia and Paris. She also served as special "trouble shooter" in Nicosia, Dublin and Riyadh. Ms. Chiavarini was interviewed by David T. Jones in 2007.

Q: This is November 29th. We're going to pick up with your experience as being a consular officer in Palermo in 1958. You've now made the transition from being a secretary to being a consular officer. I'd appreciate it if you would talk a little bit about that.

CHIAVARINI: Okay.

Q: What was it like to be a new consular officer in Palermo?

CHIAVARINI: Well, I enjoyed it in spite of the reputation that Palermo had of being full of problems. The people were very nice to me so I never felt ostracized or anything like that. They were really very kind to me. I met a lot of the locals, especially the women who were with the Soroptimist Club. They convinced me that I should join it; which I did. I used to go to the meetings. They listened to me if I had something to say. I usually didn't. You know the famous Giuliani was working around there too. I met him once when I went to visit him at his home which was just outside of Palermo. He was nice to me. I can't complain about anything that happened in Palermo.

Q: Do you remember any specific consular cases at that time?

CHIAVARINI: Well, there was a murder of an American citizen. I went out on it and also assigned a couple of other people in the consulate to go to certain areas to look for certain things. The murderer was an American who was visiting Palermo. He was driving around showing his Americanism by really putting it over the locals. He was the one who committed the murder. The police got him. Their success had nothing to do with me. But, anyway, that was the story on that. And I was a new consular officer so I was sort of wide-eyed about it all. Anyhow, the man was arrested and charged.

Q: Did you have to do anything special to get your new consular position.

CHIAVARINI: No, I didn't.

Q: You didn't have to take any tests?

CHIAVARINI: No. They just took me as I was.

Q: Were there other consular officers at Palermo at that time?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. I remember one. Jean Smith, she was my boss, but she was the top consular officer. She was very kind to me knowing that it was my first consular post. There was something that she wanted me to be impressed about; but I can't quite remember it.

Q: This was your first time in Palermo?

CHIAVARINI: No, I was there in my first post.

Q: Did you have friends in the local community as well as the Soroptimist club?

CHIAVARINI: No, nobody that was close to me. But the Soroptimist people I really got to know them when I went back as consul general.

Q: Was your Italian and their Italian compatible?

CHIAVARINI: Yes. Because most of them spoke real Italian. Spoke the language correctly.

Q: What was your housing like there?

CHIAVARINI: Oh, it was very good. I had one in of the new buildings, and my landlord lived across the hall. They very nice, but they were very Sicilian.

Q: Did you have staff to work for you? A cook, a servant, a maid?

CHIAVARINI: Oh yes, I did, a very good cook. When I went back I hired him.

Q: Again.

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: What were the concerns of the consulate? Were there political issues? Or economic issues?

CHIAVARINI: No, they were mostly personal. Each consular case individually. I don't remember anything in particular.

Q: Do you remember the consul general? Who was the consul general when you were there in 1958?

CHIAVARINI: There was nobody except Jean Smith. I considered her my real boss.

Q: Did you have any other responsibilities, such as for political reporting or economic reporting?

CHIAVARINI: I didn't. If I did any it was on my own. I know that Ambassador Zellerbach in Rome used to think I was great. Which was fine with me! I don't know why he thought that; but he came down to visit us a couple of times, and I guess I must have impressed him. I have a picture of myself at one of the meetings that he had in Palermo. It was just all very favorable.

Q: How was the local staff in the consulate?

CHIAVARINI: Well, they were all locals. They were very good except we had trouble with one of the boys. His English was quite good, and he was in charge of collecting money for consular services. He got into a little bit of trouble over that. I guess he couldn't resist. But he wasn't fired.

Q: Even though he had been collecting more than he should? Or, was he not turning over the money?

CHIAVARINI: He wasn't turning over the money. But I don't know why they forgave him.

Q: Maybe it was because his English was so good.

CHIAVARINI: Probably.

Q: Did you do any traveling in Sicily while you were there?

CHIAVARINI: Yes, I did. I did it on my own. And then also, in some cases, I did it in relation to my position. There were several interesting places. One was a famous historic site. It was a Roman structure.

Q: A temple, a forum, building?

CHIAVARINI: Well, inside the building, yes. There was a historic place with a famous floor.

Q: A tile floor? A mosaic?

CHIAVARINI: Yes, a mosaic. People would come to visit it. I went, and I remember it quite well. As a matter of fact I went to see it when I first visited Palermo and then I went back after I returned. It was quite beautiful.

Q: Did you travel in Italy or elsewhere in Europe during this tour?

CHIAVARINI: Well, I went to England.

Q: England!

CHIAVARINI: Yes. I had a friend who was stationed in England so I went there to visit her. I remember driving in that London traffic and did all right.

Q: Well, you were certainly fearless if you were driving in London traffic and on the wrong side of the road.

CHIAVARINI: Yes. And going around the circle and getting back into the right side of the road. But I managed and I didn't kill anybody. And I didn't have a wreck of any kind.

Q: Do you recall anything else of particular interest about this first tour in Palermo?

CHIAVARINI: Well, I enjoyed it as I did later when I was consul general. Members of my family came to visit me. Which was nice.

Q: Well that was fairly rare. You didn't have, as I recall, family members visiting you in other posts.

CHIAVARINI: Well, one of my sisters and my brother-in-law came to Palermo. My other sister didn't come. My sister, Ida, the one who is next to me in age, didn't come to Palermo. But my married sister and her husband came, and they were very happy to have been there.

ROBERT C. AMERSON
Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Milan (1959-1960)

Press Attaché, USIS
Rome (1961-1963)

Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Rome (1973)

Robert C. Amerson graduated from Macalester College with a degree in journalism in 1950. Mr. Amerson then gained employment in Public Relations at General Mills. It was at General Mills that he gained meaningful exposure to international affairs. His boss at the time was involved with the newly formed USIA. He then became president of the US Jaycees. Mr. Amerson has also served in Caracas, Italy, Madrid, Bogota and Rome. The interview was conducted by Allen Hansen on May 5, 1988.

Q: Italy must have been a real change of pace, though many Italians had immigrated to Venezuela during the time you were there. But in Italy you were first assigned to Milan?

AMERSON: Well, to go back a little, I had submitted the famous April Fool's sheet -- remember

when they were sent around? Every April you could name posts where you'd like to be sent to. So I took a flyer and said I'd like to go to a small post in Italy, why not? And lo and behold it came true. I don't know if the reason for this partly was that I had learned some Italian, since one of our local employees in Caracas was a linguist, and he and I used to enjoy sitting with the Italian immigrants over at the cafe and at the barber shop, practicing. So my Italian was about at a three level by the time I left Caracas to go to Milan.

Milan, a change of pace indeed. A major, industrial, sophisticated, cultured, tightly organized city, so far from the underdeveloped world of booming Caracas. From an Information Officer's point of view the differences were particularly dramatic. For instance, in Caracas we were placing in the newspapers several USIS opinion columns every week, column length size, plus all kinds of photographs. Our movies were running constantly on the three television stations. Radio was carrying our stuff. We had a lot of media access in Venezuela.

In Milan, as Assistant Branch PAO, I found in press operations that when we got maybe a two-inch item on page 36 of the Corriere della Sera about a cultural event in our little Milan library, it made us feel pretty good. One item every couple of days or so. It was simply a different kind of post. We ran a library and information center. We sent out releases to the northern Italian area, smaller towns. Max Kraus was my branch PAO, and I learned a lot from him. He knew Milan -- and still does, must say -- very well. It was a period of learning for me.

I was there for only about six months before word came that I was soon to be sent somewhere else -- down the highway to Bologna. I resisted some just on the basis of ten months not being long enough get anything done at any post -- to say nothing about having to move the family and all that. By this time we had two daughters, one having been born in Venezuela. I think it was CPAO Mickey Boerner or maybe Deputy PAO Ed Schechter, down in Rome, who made it clear that this was not a suggestion or an invitation. This was going to be an order.

Well, it turned out to be a very good thing. Because going to Bologna not to work but to have a year off at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, the Bologna Center, was very, very rewarding.

Q: Were these courses in Italian or English?

AMERSON: Mainly in English, except that we did have some European professors, and at least one conducted his course in Italian, as agreed by the class. I worked on my French some as well. The student body was about half American graduate students, and half European. So it was quite an international experience. In those years Grove Haines, who established the Bologna Center, was still the director there. He strongly emphasized the notion of European studies and an integrated Europe. We did some study-traveling around the area and made visits to such places as NATO and Berlin. It was a very good time to get a handle on what was going on in Western Europe.

Q: You got the total European view.

AMERSON: That's right. The end of that year coincided with what was known as the Vienna

summit with Khrushchev and Kennedy. And so just before going from Bologna to Rome as press attaché, I got agreement from CPAO Mickey Boerner, who was going to be on TDY in Vienna to handle some of the enormously complicated press arrangements, that I could be there too, to learn and to lend a hand. That was my first experience with summitry as such, pretty interesting by itself.

Q: There were a number of high-level visits when you were press attaché in Rome.

AMERSON: Oh, boy. I'll say. Everybody comes to the Eternal City. In the Kennedy-Johnson years I was press attaché in Rome only about two years. The president came once -- you may remember his only trip to Europe.

Q: Was this President Kennedy?

AMERSON: Kennedy. He went to Germany, Berlin -- "Ich bin ein Berliner" -- that famous trip where Berliners were wildly cheering him in the streets because he represented to them hope and security. He went on to Ireland where his Irish ancestry celebrated his presence with great, enthusiastic crowds. Then he came to Rome, and the Romans had been watching dignitaries come into their town for 2,000 years. I still remember the dismay of the staffers around, the White House guys, you know. What's the matter? Where's the enthusiasm? This is President Kennedy, leader of the Western World! There were some Romans who actually stopped sipping coffee and would wave or something from the sidewalk as the Kennedy motorcade passed by. But Rome was sort of jaded with the tradition: this was just another in a long series of visiting dignitaries. However, the day was saved in this regard by having the President helicopter down to Naples, where he gave a talk at NATO headquarters. The Neapolitans are different from the Romans, and there he found the enthusiasm and wildly cheering crowds that the White House people were all looking for. So they finally departed Italy very happy.

Q: Then President Johnson took office while you were still there and he came to Rome?

AMERSON: No, during these two years he came to Rome three times as Vice President. Well, we can get into all kinds of ramifications of all this but I think it's safe to observe that Lyndon Johnson did not seem to have an easy time traveling as Vice President. No deputies perhaps ever do. But he chafed kind of obviously at being number two. And so he -- and especially the people around him -- reflected all this by making what seem to me still ridiculous, unreasonable demands about how this visiting Vice President should be treated.

For instance, the advance party would specify to the Embassy that when the Vice President lands he shall be photographed only from the right side (or the left side, I forget now which was considered Mr. Johnson's preferred profile). How are you going to stop people from photographing on both sides? So we had to construct our press arrangements at the airport with that in mind. And at the Excelsior Hotel he would require a shower that was 6'4", as I recall -- if it isn't already there, change it. He had to have a bed that would accommodate his long frame. He would demand to see art works at any time of day or night. He would expect the artist to bring them up to his room so he might select something.

In short, this group around Johnson exhibited a degree of arrogant, imperious, unreasonableness that I never saw equaled in other public figures operating abroad -- the Nixons or Fords, to say nothing of such prominent politicians as Hubert Humphrey who was always much more thoughtful in his expectations.

Q: And it didn't change when Johnson became President.

AMERSON: I suppose not. I did not have to endure any of those. Perhaps when they're Presidential visits, demands made on an Embassy seem less unreasonable.

Q: Right. And USIS played a major role in all these.

AMERSON: Inevitably, sure. Setting up the press centers, maybe escorts, working out press releases and press translations, taking care of the visiting press -- all that of course is fundamental. But high-level visits always make a big impact on any post. And I guess that part of it hasn't changed at all over the years, has it?

Q: No. I also understand that Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton were filming Cleopatra at the time you were there.

AMERSON: Yeah.

Q: You had to escort people to see some of that occasionally?

AMERSON: As I say, everybody seems to come to Rome sooner or later. Groups of Congressmen would be out there on a pretty regular basis -- to find facts, naturally. In the early sixties out at Cinecittà' Burton and Taylor were indeed filming "Cleopatra," and it was becoming a famous movie already because it was breaking records, running over budget of some \$22 million, as I recall. Doesn't sound like as much today as much as it did then. But "Gone With the Wind" was done in 1939 for four million. And so now to have "Cleopatra" at \$22 million made it newsworthy.

Those were also the days when Liz Taylor -- at least as glamorous then as she is now -- was putting "Cleopatra" in additional headlines because she and her co-star Richard Burton obviously had something going while Eddie Fisher, her current husband, was driving around Cinecittà' in a green Rolls Royce convertible. So there was broad public curiosity as to what was going on out there. A group of Congressmen was invited to the set, I guess by 20th Century Fox to generate publicity and support. For some reason, it fell to me as press attaché to escort them. I remember we had the Congressmen standing around the room that somebody had arranged. Finally, Cleopatra came out in costume, between takes, obviously complying to Fox's request. And everybody just stood around and kind of stared -- ogled, maybe -- while Liz looked uncomfortable, and nobody said anything until one of the Congressman sidled towards her and announced tremulously: "I came, I saw, I conquered!" Then everybody looked embarrassed some more, and we left. The episode still seems to me one of the more bizarre sidebars to an assignment in the Eternal City.

Q: This was now in 1973?

AMERSON: '73, right. Past experience made it easy to get back into the post and the work and the living style, language and culture. I'd never really lost Italian, having learned it mainly, as I guess I mentioned, from the barbers and from a local employee in Venezuela many years before.

Q: With a Spanish flavor maybe.

AMERSON: Maybe so. But going back to Rome was a lovely thing to do. And, of course, Italy is a very important and very rewarding country to serve in. We lived there for eight of the 24 years of USIA work which is probably more than anybody really deserves. But as we say, somebody had to go there.

Q: Did you have some more presidential visits then when you were back on that tour?

AMERSON: Yes, but I think the only presidential visit in four years was that of Gerald Ford. And he and his staffers were easy to work with. One of his advisors was Bob Hartmann, with whom my acquaintance went all the way back to the Nixon visit in Caracas, when Bob was an accompanying writer for the Los Angeles Times. So we had that in common. He was very useful to us during the Ford visit to Rome. But no problems. Rome as a USIS post is so experienced in these things: dig up Plan A, and in a few days we've got it going.

I don't know that we had any one principal concern overshadowing U.S.-Italian relations, though the perennial political issue always present concerns potential participation in Italian politics of the famous Italian communist party. What would it mean if they become full partners in the government? So that issue colored a lot of our public statements, ambassadorial speeches or responses to press inquiries. What came out of a Washington press conference or State Department noon briefing could be reproduced in the Italian press, and cause quite a stir. The question of Italian communists was always a sensitive issue.

Q: And terrorism wasn't an issue in those days like it later became.

SARAH HORSEY-BARR

**Student; Daughter of U.S. Ambassador to Italy
Rome (1959-1963)**

**Student, Loyola University
Rome (1968-1969)**

Mrs. Horsey-Barr was born in Maryland into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in the Washington DC area and abroad and was educated at Georgetown University; and Loyola University in Rome, Italy. Her service with the State Department took her to several posts in Latin America dealing with both consular and political/management affairs. Her last assignments were with the Organization of American States, where she served in various senior capacities

with the U.S. Mission. Mrs. Horsey-Barr was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: Then you went from Japan back to Rome?

HORSEY-BARR: We went from Japan back to Rome.

Q: This would be about '59.

HORSEY-BARR: Yes, this is about '59.

Q: And you were there, you say, four years?

HORSEY-BARR: Four years. Well, I was there six years actually, but my father was there four years, because from there he went on to Prague as ambassador and there were no schools.

Q: He was DCM in Rome?

HORSEY-BARR: He was DCM in Rome, yes.

Q: What was schooling like in Rome? Back to the sisters again?

HORSEY-BARR: Yes, the same Sacred Heart sisters, who probably still are an international order, French based, but have schools all over the place. Yes, they had a number of schools. They had two in Rome, one of which was for poorer, less advantaged children over near the Vatican, and the one we went to was attached to that church, the Trinita dei Monti that you see at the top of the Spanish steps. That's their church, and the school was attached there. As I said, they were French nuns, so you spoke French outside the classroom and Italian in the classroom, because it was run according to Italian state curriculum. It was very traditional, some might say monastic. In reflection at the time I didn't mind it, but thinking back on it, it does seem rather monastic and barbaric.

Q: One hears so many stories of the nuns, you know, with rulers and...

HORSEY-BARR: They didn't deal with the rulers, but they had funny ideas on things. All your mail was screened, incoming and outgoing, except, I think, to parents. If you were a boarder, as I was the last two years, you weren't allowed to leave unless your parents had given permission and specified whom you could leave with. We were lucky. My younger sister was with me the first year that I was a boarder, and I think we were going to the dentist to get braces or whatever, so my father had arranged things, which I'm sure you couldn't do today, having an embassy car pick us up on Wednesday afternoons, because there were no classes, to take us to the dentist. So we got out once a week, but otherwise you never left the place. You were there morning to night. You woke up at 5:30.

Q: So much for boys.

HORSEY-BARR: On, no boys. Boys were out of the question. I do remember being called on the carpet because some boy in Prague was writing to me, another embassy kid, and, oh gosh, this was worse than death. But it was pleasant. It was a supportive atmosphere at the time. I could not go back to it obviously. If I had kids, I'm not sure I'd put my own kids in that situation. But they were nice nuns. The kids were all Italian except for my younger sister and me. We were the only foreigners there. We went in the first year not speaking any Italian, because we'd lost it all, and that was difficult. But the Italians are a very nice people, and it was a very pleasant atmosphere. It was a very different academic upbringing than what we get here in the States, not so great in sciences or math, but great on the linguistics and history and that sort of thing.

Q: Did they train you sort of in - I may be a little off on this - the Cartesian method of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, this very logical approach.

HORSEY-BARR: Yes, that was part of it. As an example of that, you had to get up in front of the class and kind of be drilled by the teacher on whatever the lesson was, and then all the students would take their time drilling you as well. They were not paid but they had different roles that they were supposed to play in terms of this thesis that you mentioned. So you really had to learn how to think and look at things from a different perspective. They were very heavy on the classics, which I think is essential for a founding in education. I don't know that kids take much in the way of Latin and Greek these days.

Q: They don't even read the Bible anymore.

HORSEY-BARR: Right. Even now, you come across a word you don't know, and if you think back to your Latin and Greek, it's just immensely valuable. So there was a lot of emphasis on that. There was obviously a lot of emphasis on religion, getting up at 5:30 in the morning and then go to mass. And that provided interesting experiences too, because the Vatican II Council happened while we were there. You know me: I always wanted to get out of something that's longer and do it in a quicker way. I thought I would volunteer to say mass for one of the cardinals. A lot of them were staying in the hotel next door, which was nice, the Hassler Hotel. It's a nice one there in Rome. If you said mass for one of the cardinals or bishops, you could get in and out. They just whipped through that mass, and you'd get out in 20 minutes and could go and have your breakfast, whereas otherwise if you did the regular mass, it would take 40 or 45 minutes, so that was kind of nice, which is an interesting commentary on the Catholic Church today. It's only now that you read in the newspaper about girls, women, being allowed to serve mass in an open setting, but when it's convenient the Catholic Church will make do, but back in the '60s...

Q: Particularly at the cardinal level.

HORSEY-BARR: Yes, they didn't find it was any problem to having a girl saying mass. That's what they could get. It just goes to show that even though the Catholic Church is often, and often rightly, accused of being so rigid, they can bend when it suits their interests. I was there three years as a day student and then two years as a boarder.

Q: How did you find going back to Italy after being away?

HORSEY-BARR: That's an interesting question, because that time going back to Italy at Loyola I was with a bunch of Americans. So I was with Americans in Italy as opposed to before being with Italians in Italy. It was nice to be able to share what I knew about the city and the culture and the people and such with friends there at Loyola. It was also nice to be there on my own, because my parents at that point were down in Sicily, they weren't in Rome. That was a very satisfying year. It was also nice to be able to look at cultural and artistic monuments as an adult, if you will, as opposed to being dragged around.

Q: Also, I imagine this would have allowed you to be more of a leader too. You knew the language, you'd been around the block, so people would look to you.

HORSEY-BARR: That's right, exactly, and it was very nice to be able to share it with them and to appreciate it myself as an adult as opposed to a child being dragged around. "Now it's Sunday, and this Sunday we'll do this church or this museum or whatever it was." That was a very satisfying year. I enjoyed that a lot, and I did a bit of traveling with friends around Italy and around Europe actually. It was nice, and then, what the hell, I had one year left so I came back and finished.

Q: On the Vietnam issue, were there a lot of debates? Was the campus pretty well stirred up?

HORSEY-BARR: Yes, but there weren't a lot of debates, as I remember. There was a lot of participation in demonstrations because, of course, Washington was a focus point for demonstrations and a lot of participation. There was a lot of discussion around the dorms and in small groups about the Vietnam business. I don't remember debates, like formal debates in the auditorium.

Q: At Georgetown there was no sort of taking over the classrooms or administration or anything like that?

HORSEY-BARR: No, no. You see, that's one of the things that I would still say back at that time it was very much a Catholic institution, and good Catholics in the old days used to do what they were told, follow the rules. It's very much sort of a dogmatic approach. And I think there was a large bit of that at least still left. I may be wrong, but I don't remember that kind of stuff going on.

Q: I would imagine that there was a series of big demonstrations and marches on Washington and all that, and Georgetown would have a lot of students from other places coming and you'd be putting them up and all that. Did you run into much of that?

HORSEY-BARR: I didn't. It may well have gone on, but in my group of friends I don't remember that. I do remember people used to play very hard at Georgetown, so while it was perhaps quite active in demonstrations, Vietnam and civil rights as well, people used to play really hard too. A lot of drinking went on.

Q: Today there is, and there has been for a long time, very serious concern about the drinking. Did you find this was a problem?

HORSEY-BARR: No, not in our group. I'd been drinking since I was 15. We always had wine. We had wine at Sunday lunch and we had wine in the evening. Again, that whole very American thing about drinking and you can do it when you're 18 or 21 was something again that was very strange to me. I remember parties, yes, and there was booze there and, yes, I can remember people getting drunk. I can't remember this obscene kind of drunkenness that you hear about today, not to say that perhaps it didn't happen, although I don't remember ever hearing about somebody dying from binge drinking as has been the case in the last four years. Yes, people got drunk and they probably got sick and they probably drove when they shouldn't have, but I think it was something of a different order than what we're seeing today.

Q: I think you're right, because even going back, much farther back, that wasn't a problem. People got drunk, but there wasn't this competitive thing to kill you.

HORSEY-BARR: Right. People got drunk but then you were dancing. I guess my theory, whether it's right or wrong, is that, well, if you're dancing and you're drinking, you drink and then you dance a while and you get some of it out of your system, I guess. I don't know what happens at these binge drunken parties.

GEORGE G.B. GRIFFIN
Vice Consul
Naples (1960-1962)

Consular General
Milan (1995-1998)

George G.B. Griffin was born on October 22, 1934 in Istanbul, Turkey. He attended Georgia Tech University and the University of South Carolina. He served in the US Navy and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Italy, Ceylon, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Nigeria, South Korea, and Kenya. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 30, 2002.

Q: While you were taking this orientation course, did you have any idea what and where you wanted to go and do?

GRIFFIN: Yes. The location was wide open, as far as I was concerned. On my wish list I wrote that I would like to go anywhere in the world except Naples, Italy. I had been through Naples dozens of times growing up. Every time we went back and forth to Turkey, the ship would stop in Naples. It was a filthy, dirty place, and I wanted to see other places. So, of course, they sent me to Naples.

Q: Oh, naturally. There is someone out there looking out for you.

GRIFFIN: I don't know if they meant to teach me a lesson, or whether it was a mistake.

Q: Somebody probably said, "Well, he mentioned Naples." So you went to Naples. This would about 1960? And you were there...?

GRIFFIN: From May of 1960. I was there two years. Of course I did want to go to Turkey, but I was told right off the bat that I would never be posted in Turkey. When I asked, "Why not?" they said, "Because you were born there." My protest that I was born an American cut no ice. This was in the McCarthy era, when there was a lot of suspicion - just the opposite of what we have right now.

Q: Naples in 1960 - I have to put a caveat here: I was Consul General there in '79 to '81. Who was Consul General when you were there?

GRIFFIN: James Henderson. It was his last post. He had had, I think, a career mostly in Latin America, though he may have had another post in Italy. He regaled us with tales of his first post, which was Guadalajara, Mexico. There, he found a factory making dirt-cheap glassware out of discarded Coca Cola bottles. They could make anything he wanted for next to nothing, so he ordered a huge collection of everything he could think of - from shot glasses, to brandy glasses, to highballs, to iced tea; you name it. He bought something like 100 of each type of glass. For his last fling in Naples - in a lovely villa that we no longer own on via Posillipo - he invited the entire staff to come drink the last of everything. We drained what was left in the bar and, as he insisted, smashed the last of the glasses in the fireplace. It was a giddy time.

Q: What were you doing there?

GRIFFIN: I was one of the newest vice consuls on the block. Three or four of us arrived at about the same time. I was assigned initially to the immigrant visa unit. On the first day, everybody else was on leave or out sick, except for the chief of the consular section, Jean Zimmermann. He said, "Mr. Griffin, you have 200 visas to issue today." When I mumbled that issuing two hundred immigrant visas sounded impossible, he said, "Do it!" Fortunately, we had a good Italian staff, headed by Alberto del Grosso. They had all the stacks of paper nicely tied together with red ribbon and sealed, with several places for me to sign. All I remember doing in rudimentary Italian was saying, "Raise your hand and swear that everything you say is the truth, and sign here." Eventually, it got easier. All us junior officers were rotated, so I did some of everything. After a year, I was made chief of the congressional correspondence unit, which was instructive. Congressional correspondence in that district, as you well know, was enormous.

Q: Immigration from there has just fallen off down to practically nothing.

GRIFFIN: We made it easy, so they don't come, or...

Q: Well, the Italians, those that wanted to do something, were heading up to Germany or

Switzerland or northern Italy.

GRIFFIN: Sure, to Milano, or Torino. One of our dirtiest chores was to implement the so-called Montreal filing system, which was developed at that consulate. It meant that applicants had to keep their own files. Several of us spent our Saturdays schlepping files. We almost had a revolution in southern Italy because, when people started getting these enormous files – and they were enormous; the basement of that building was one huge file room – they thought they were being rejected, and didn't like it. But we managed to send it all to them and to convince them that, when they brought the papers back, we would honor them.

Q: We were no longer hanging onto these files for 30 or 40 years.

GRIFFIN: Correct. Our citizenship files were also enormous, as were the Social Security and other benefits files. As I recall, there were something like 600,000 American citizens in southern Italy, and we kept files on most of them. It was the visa applicant files that we got rid of – an enormous number.

Q: Did you get any feel for Italian life over there?

GRIFFIN: Of course. I'm still in touch with a Neapolitan who lives about five blocks from the Consulate. He came to the Consulate to learn English where, several evenings a week, some of my colleagues and I would teach classes. Sometimes, we would go out to eat or take trips together, switching back and forth between English and Italian. Their English was pretty rudimentary, and our Italian was somewhat better; let's put it that way. So, yes, we did.

Q: Was the Camorra or the local Mafia of concern there?

GRIFFIN: When we arrived, we stayed in one of the waterfront hotels – the Royal. The concierge pointed me to a restaurant around the corner that served American-type breakfasts. But someone in the Consulate warned me to be careful going there because it was a hangout for a gentleman called Lucky Luciano, to whom I was not to be seen talking. Taking that under advisement, I went anyway. Sure enough, there he was. After awhile, we spoke a few times. I didn't report it to my bosses, I fear. It was not as if we were getting friendly, but we had a nodding acquaintance. Then Luciano died suddenly, and all hell broke loose. His mother was still alive and living in Brooklyn, where she wanted her baby buried. The Bureau of Narcotics, which is now DEA, was run by Harry Anslinger. We were told that he declared that over his dead body would Lucky's dead body come into the States, because it would be pumped full of narcotics and would be another drug shipment. At the request of a New York politician, Attorney General Bobby Kennedy intervened and overruled Anslinger.

I was ordered to go to the funeral, which was at a church high up in the city. It was a grand Neapolitan funeral. Did you ever go to one? There was an enormous black hearse drawn by huge black horses – maybe a dozen – and a man with a stovepipe hat on top of the hearse driving them. The more horses, the more expensive the funeral. I was told to expect some Mafiosi to show up, to be very careful, keep my eyes open, and take notes. Well, I didn't see anything except mountains of big, enormous wreaths. One was from Joe Bonnano, or “Joe Bananas,”

which said “So-long Lucky!” We had crossed the ocean on one of the American Export Lines ships with his family. They went back and forth regularly. He was in jail, or having trouble with the authorities, but his family could go back and forth. There were other wreaths from equally flamboyant Mafia characters. It was quite funny. I returned to the Consulate and told the DPO that I really didn’t have much to report; there was no family, nor recognizable Mafia dons. Later, I was invited into a room at the back of the Consulate, which I hadn’t seen before. There was a Consulate officer and two senior Italian officers – one a *Carabinieri*, and the other from the *Guardia di Finanza*. It turned out that they all sent observers to the funeral. They all had movie cameras and took pictures of each other. We looked at several movies, and finally decided nothing had happened. Everybody was satisfied, and eventually off the body went to Brooklyn.

Q: Did you get involved with Americans in trouble or anything like that?

GRIFFIN: Oh, there are lots of good stories. As you know, consular stories are usually the most interesting. War stories.

Q: I wouldn't mind hearing one or two.

GRIFFIN: Perhaps the most interesting one was when Roy Davis, the Deputy Principal Officer, summoned me. He told me to retrieve a passport from a Mr. Gold at the Excelsior Hotel and bring it back to him. He said I had to go because the Protection and Welfare Officer, Vernon McAninch (who later became quite infamous), was not in, and we needed to get the passport before Gold could get away. So I jumped in a taxi and went merrily off to the Excelsior. I went to the front desk and asked for Mr. Gold. The clerk said that the Golds’ keys were there, so they must not be in. He rang the room anyway, and there was no answer, so I went back to the Consulate and up to Mr. Davis. He said, “Thank God you’re back.” When I asked why, he said, “We just got another telegram from the Department saying this guy is armed and dangerous.”

It turned out that Mr. Gold was part of a gang that had robbed a bank in the U.S. and fled to Canada. They got away with about a million dollars, which was said to be a record at that time. Three members of the gang were captured by Canadian Mounties, but they didn’t have the money. Mr. Gold got away, and now seemed to be in Naples with his wife. Just then, Mr. Davis’ secretary came in with another telegram, reporting that, for political reasons, the Canadians were refusing to extradite the other three men. Apparently Secretary Rusk was battling the Canadians over a seamen’s union problem, so the Canadians didn’t want to cooperate. I can’t recall all the details, but the Department said it was urgent that we get his passport so Mr. Gold wouldn’t disappear. The Italian Government was being asked to arrest Gold while his extradition was negotiated. Mr. Davis sent me back to the Excelsior Hotel, this time with Mac McAninch, which made me feel better, as he was a John Wayne-type, about 6 feet 4, with a strong build.

At the hotel the desk clerk told us Mr. Gold had just gone up to his room. We went to the room and banged on the door. When Gold appeared, we said we were from the Consulate and needed to see his passport. When he asked why, we said Washington told us that there was something the matter with it. He said, “There’s nothing wrong with it. I’ve got it here.” He disappeared for a moment, and then returned with a passport. We took it, thanked him, and left, patting ourselves on the back.

Later, I went back to the hotel. While talking to the desk clerk, I saw another passport in Mr. Gold's mailbox, and asked to see it. It was made out to another name, but had Gold's photograph. So, we informed the Department that he had at least two passports. Washington was feeding us information in dribs and drabs, but we never got the whole story. They did say he was dangerous, because someone had been killed in the robbery. Mac and I asked why Italian police were not involved, and were told things were being worked out by Embassy Rome. The Italians finally agreed, so the next time we went to the hotel it was to accompany police as they apprehended Gold. But when we got to his room, the Italians with guns drawn, there was no Mr. Gold. There was Mrs. Gold, who said, "Oh, he went out for a walk. He'll be back in a little while." She told Mac and me they were leaving the next day by ship for Haifa, Israel. So, we stayed at the hotel, and the Italians stationed a policeman outside the Golds' room, but he never reappeared. The next day Mrs. Gold said she had to catch the ship, even without her husband. After some frantic consultation between Rome and Washington, she and her luggage were allowed aboard the ship. The ship's departure was delayed for most of a day while it was searched, but they didn't find Mr. Gold. When the ship sailed, the Naples chief of police sat in Mrs. Gold's stateroom as the ship crossed the Bay, until the harbor pilot was offloaded. We learned later that Mr. Gold arrived in Tel Aviv at about the same time the police chief got off the ship. He was welcomed there and made an instant citizen of Israel, where I presume he remains. The rumored deal was that the Government of Israel would get half of whatever he had. We speculated that the police chief was probably sitting on the money, in a large trunk, while he was waiting.

Then there were others. Did you see that television program called "The American Embassy?" I didn't think much of it.

Q: I saw a couple of them.

GRIFFIN: In that, they had a naked man. In Naples, we had a naked woman. She was with a group of peace marchers headed for Moscow. Somewhere along the way in northern Europe it got cold, so they came south. Some of them camped out in our lobby for about three months. One woman kept stripping so we wouldn't push her outside, but we did finally manage to get rid of her. It got boring after a while, and flea-infested, too.

What else happened there? I got my first award – \$150. It was for suggesting that we abolish an unnecessary visa form. I got my first efficiency report, which did not please me, but Mr. Davis advised me to calm down. He said, "This isn't the Second Coming. Your report is better than most, so just be patient." That gave me ulcers, which I eventually conquered, and developed patience.

There was another Mafia incident. Washington needed the original birth certificate of a major boss of "Murder, Inc." So three of us – Cal Berlin, John Crawford, and I – went to Calabria to get it from authorities in his mountaintop home village. For cover purposes, we went as tourists in my new, fire-engine red Fiat Spider convertible, though the back seat was a bit cramped, to put it mildly. We got to the village and found some very unfriendly officials. They didn't want to talk to us. Finally, using our charm and their phone to call our bosses to prevail on their bosses,

we managed to get what we were after. As we were leaving the village, I saw some women, all in black, washing clothes in a stream, and thought it would make nice picture. I pulled out my camera and began snapping away, which brought a hail of stones around our ears and on the car. They were very superstitious about photographs, and probably still are.

We also had lots of VIP visitors. One of the first was a Congressman – I can't recall which one – for whom I was designated control officer. That was the first time I had heard of that function. I thought it would be a good occasion to talk about important things. I went to the airport on a weekend to pick him up and bring him to the Consulate. He said he was tired from his flight, and didn't want to talk or go to the Consulate. He was on his way to Capri, and all he wanted was the money. In those days, we still had excess currency funds from the PL-480 program, which Congressmen were allowed to use for any purpose they desired. I was quite upset at what I considered a waste of taxpayer money, but my boss told me to calm down and get used to it.

Then, Jacqueline Kennedy came on a family vacation with her sister, Lee Radziwill, and her husband, the Prince. I don't remember the exact date, but it probably would have been in August 1962. The President did not come. There were children there, but I don't remember much about them. There were others, one or two other family friends. I think Mrs. Lawford was there, and somebody else - I don't recall.

Q: Peter Lawford

GRIFFIN: ...and a Secret Service contingent. They had rented a historic villa in Ravello, over on the Amalfi coast. It was a private visit, so we were told that we should be aware of it, but were not to take any official action. Then things started happening, like handwritten letters from the President to the First Lady. They appeared in our pouch, with no real indication as to how we were supposed to get it from the Consulate to Mrs. Kennedy. At some point the Consul General asked if one of us would like to volunteer, on personal time, with no compensation, to take the letters to Ravello. A couple of us raised our hands, and I was picked.

And so I went, and it turned out to be fascinating. It was not just letters, but medicines and other odds and ends, which came almost on a daily basis. The group was in Ravello for almost a month. I went over several times, and was accepted as one of the household after awhile. The first time, the Secret Service guys were very protective, especially when I insisted on handing the President's letters personally to Mrs. Kennedy. On the other hand, she was very gracious, delighted to get them, and invited me to come in for a drink. After that, they often invited me in. There were other people coming and going, and there were parties. I didn't attend any parties, but was never asked to leave when one was going on.

One evening I got there late, to find the Secret Service team very tense. Mrs. Kennedy had gone off with Gianni Agnelli. Later they told me they located them on his yacht off Capri. The Secret Service and their Italian counterparts commandeered other boats and stayed nearby all night.

Q: While you were there, were you thinking of getting out and finishing in '62? What did you want to do? Were you putting down other places you definitely didn't want to go to?

GRIFFIN: When the call came for bids for my next assignment, there were lots of possibilities. My then wife thought Paris sounded wonderful, but I explained to her that in Paris I would be a very small fish in a very large pond, so I preferred to aim for a post where I might be a slightly bigger fish in a smaller pond. In the long run, I wanted to go to Central Asia to satisfy one of my fascinations as a kid in Turkey. When I was 12, I went on part of an expedition to Mount Ararat, and thought the world would be more fascinating the further East I went. Of course the Central Asian republics weren't open to us in those days, and what was available was mainly a big post such as Tehran. Finally I found a slot in Colombo, Ceylon, with part-time political officer work, which sounded better than anything else, so I put in my bid and got it.

GRIFFIN: I left in July of 1995. It was a two-year tour after my three years in the South Asia Bureau. There were a couple of chief of mission possibilities for me, in Central Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa; small posts. The one in Central Asia was unaccompanied – no spouses. Since I had already put my wife through that in Afghanistan, I turned it down. Then a friend in Personnel told me the Consul General in Milan was curtailing his tour, and asked if I were interested. I said I was, but wanted to be sure it was available before making a bid. I was hesitant because it was not a chief of mission job, which I wanted before retiring. But the more I thought about it, the more I saw how attractive it could be. I thought my wife deserved something pleasant after all the hardship posts she had endured, and it would be my last post, as I was approaching retirement age. It would be a nice present for Chrissie and interesting to be back in Europe. Moreover, I speak Italian, so I wouldn't need to learn another language. My friend called Dick Shinnick, the incumbent in Milan and asked him if he really was curtailing. He acknowledged that he was. She told him she had a friend who would fit the job perfectly, and asked if he would talk to me. He agreed, and called me to say, "You're the first to know, but I'm leaving early. I hear you want the job. If you leap now, you can nab it." So I did. I went to work on the D Committee. Tom Pickering had come back from Moscow to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs, so that helped. Others supported me, and I got the nod.

I left the Coordinator for Business Affairs job in July of 1995, and came to FSI to brush up on my Italian. I hadn't used it for many years, but managed in about six weeks to bring it back up to the 3-3 level. I got my wife into a regular course, where she had about three months of basic Italian. Her French was pretty good, but she had never spoken Italian, so it was very useful. We planned to head for Milan in August, but Dick Shinnick called again to say, "I understand that you're eager to get here, and I'm leaving long before then, but nobody is in Milan in August. Everybody's away for *ferragosto*."

Q: It's like descending into a deserted city.

GRIFFIN: But the real reason was that most of the staff wanted to take leave. If I were there, they would have to work. I learned over the years there that August is one of the best times to be in Milan. Very few people are there, so you can walk down the middle of street without getting hit or seeing anybody.

But first I had to pass muster with Reggie Bartholomew, the Ambassador in Rome. He claimed to be the first FSO ever to be Ambassador to Italy. It's almost right, but he didn't exactly start at

the bottom as an FSO-8. He came from the Defense Department and was a lateral entrant into the Department, in PM, I think. His case was a bit like that of Hank Byroade who eventually became an FSO. After we met briefly in the Department, Reggie decided I was acceptable. He noted that I was a veteran political officer, who clearly understood the relationship between consuls general and ambassadors. I agreed. At least I thought I did until I got there, and then I found out that our understandings were a bit different.

Q: You were there from when to when?

GRIFFIN: I was there from September 1995 until August 1998. The post covered all of northern Italy after consulates in Torino, Genoa, Venice, and Trieste were closed. It had a big staff – in my time it was the third largest consulate in the world, after Hong Kong and Jerusalem, each of which had a quite different status. It had a staff of 110 Americans, and even more Italians, in ten US Government agencies. The annual budget was well over \$10 million. In terms of land area, per capita GDP, and presence of American armed forces, the district was bigger than 12 of the 15 EU countries. So it was a responsibility I could get my teeth into. The post was there primarily to assist American business, but we issued plenty of visas and passports. Before I went there I consulted with a lot of people, here in Washington and elsewhere, especially with business people. BCIU – the Business Council for International Understanding – set me up with appointments in New York, Boston, and Washington.

Q: There weren't any visas because there was a visa waiver.

GRIFFIN: There certainly were visas, though at some point issuance of all immigrant visas was shifted to Naples, to keep that post alive. Milan was mostly oriented toward commercial work, though we had a large law enforcement staff, and did the usual political and economic information gathering. At the time, the Italian Government was headed by the same fellow who heads it now – Silvio Berlusconi. He is from Milan, and most of the political and economic power in Italy is in the north. The President was also from the north, as are the heads of most businesses, so it is the center of action and culture in the country. Shortly after I arrived, I went to Rome for a day to introduce myself to Embassy people. I came right back, which was fortunate, because the next day the tug of war between Congress and the White House forced all posts to close. We were put on furlough, except for me. I was called essential.

Q: This was the whole American government.

GRIFFIN: That's right. Everybody shut down. It went on most of the winter. We didn't have money to buy anything, but I couldn't just sit there. I was allowed to talk to people and write reports, but couldn't have a communicator come in to send them out. It was strange.

Q: What were your people doing?

GRIFFIN: Sitting at home twiddling their thumbs.

Q: Say a counselor officer or economic officer, they didn't go away, did they?

GRIFFIN: Some did, but they couldn't go too far because we had fits and starts. Washington would send out a message saying we might open next week, so everybody would come back to town, ready to go to work, but then nothing would happen. I told them they couldn't go more than six hours away. Meanwhile, I decided to get out and meet people, using the official sedan. We had a brand-new Ford Taurus, after sending our beat-up old Chevy sedan to Embassy Tunis. They needed it because it was armored, even though it ran badly. So I hit the road, didn't claim any travel expenses, and started introducing myself around. It was odd. Once I got lost in Bolzano, the capital of the Trento/Alto Adige Region, and couldn't find the house of the President.

Q: The Prefect?

GRIFFIN: She was a Rome appointee, so you're right – she would have been the Prefect. I was stopped at an intersection looking around and checking a map trying to figure out where to go, when a nice fellow came up, licking an ice cream cone, and asked me where I wanted to go. I told him, and he said, "You'll never find it. Follow me." He was right. It was well hidden. There were one-way streets and the place was halfway up the mountain in a forest. The man guided me to the gate, and I drove in. A butler opened the door, looked at me, and asked, "Where's the Consul General?" I was driving the car, and he could see no one in the back seat. That happened a couple of times. Some of my Italian staff thought it was *brutta figura* – very bad image for a Consul General.

The post was in excellent shape. My predecessor Dick Shinnick was an administrative officer. He cleaned up some messes and put it back on its feet, so there wasn't much to do on that side. Most of the sections ran smoothly, but I saw some potential problems. There wasn't an awful lot of coordination, so I set up some working groups. The first one was on trade promotion, because I wanted Commerce to talk to State, to talk to Agriculture – FAS was there as well – and to talk to USIS. I told them it had to be a community effort. All agencies should be involved, and they began to get that way. I did the same with the law enforcement agencies. I found that the FBI was not talking to DEA, was not talking to the Secret Service, was not talking to Customs, and certainly not talking to the intelligence people.

The staff, especially in the furlough period, began complaining about having nothing to do. A lot of them wanted to exercise, but the local gyms were too expensive or too far away. So I formed a committee and we built our own. We cleaned out half of a storage room, raised some money, bought some equipment, and set it all up. It got very heavy use, and some of the machines didn't last long.

My first call was on Philip Wetton, the British Consul General, and Dean of the Consular Corps, who happened to be an old friend from my time in Seoul, Korea. He said he was delighted to see me, not just because we had been friends in Korea, but because now he could relax, put his feet up and let me take over. I didn't catch on at first. I asked him what he meant, noting that he was still Dean. Philip replied, "I'm just the British Consul General. The American Consul General is the real power around here. So it's great to see one I know, and who I know I'll get along with." He added that the Dean had a real function in Milan and was listened to. He was trying very hard to build on that advantage. He enumerated his successes, saying he pointed out to usually aloof

local officials that they were hosts to the largest consular corps in the world outside of New York City. It was true. There were some 160 consulates in Milan. Some were honorary, but they at least flew a flag, went to meetings, and got things done. Like us, most of them were doing trade promotion. Of the career consuls there, who numbered 90-odd, about 25 or so of them had been ambassadors elsewhere. They didn't view Milan as a step down.

Q: A little bit like Sao Paulo.

GRIFFIN: Yes. They all had very ambitious commercial programs. Most of them – certainly the British and the other Commonwealth countries, the Swiss, the Dutch, and the Russians – covered all of Italy. They didn't answer to their ambassadors in Rome on commercial matters, but reported directly to their home ministries. Several, like the Australians and New Zealanders, were either businessmen on political appointments or from their trade ministries, not from foreign ministries. Despite the built-in competition, we all got along well. After a few weeks, I concluded that we should do more political reporting, given the preponderance of northern Italians in high political office. My very ambitious deputy, Philo Dibble, was a political officer, and he was frustrated with marching orders from Ambassador Bartholomew. Reggie insisted that we clear every political report with the Embassy. Philo found that difficult, for two reasons. One, the Embassy Political Section took a long time to clear our reports, if they ever got around to looking at them. They often took his reports and subsumed them into theirs, removing his name. He was a highly irritated officer when I got there. I told him I had discussed reporting with the Ambassador, and thought I could change the rule. After all, Reggie had approved my assignment after he told me that he liked the fact that I had lots of experience as a political officer – something my predecessor was not. I had reminded him that there was considerable political activity in northern Italy, and argued that if we had the information, we should be allowed to report it. He said, "It's your call; your judgment."

That was, until we actually tried it. Then everything hit the fan. It didn't start with the Ambassador, but the Political and Economic Counselors in particular started raising a ruckus. They finally got to the Ambassador, who called me and read the riot act. I told him I thought we understood each other – meaning that I could report what I wanted from a Milan viewpoint. I pointed out that the Embassy could always fire in a different point of view and embarrass us. He said he too thought we had agreed, but he wasn't sure I had the right instincts. He didn't complain about our first telegram, which quoted mayors and regional presidents in the North as saying that Rome had better start paying attention to them. They were becoming vociferous, and beginning to claim the right to hang onto money. They argued that when they sent tax money raised in their constituencies to Rome, it went into a black hole, which nobody in the north ever saw again. They tended to refer to anything south of the Po River as "Africa." It was not a pleasant dialogue.

Q: You know, I had been, back in '79 to '81, Consul General in Naples. You'd have these prefects who would come down who were assigned to Naples, and their wives and they would sit around at the dinner table and really disparage everything. Also, the other things was that I noticed, and I was not an Italian hand, Rome got terribly insular. They would send out reports saying there had been another cabinet reshuffle - and this was an era where it was the same cabinets as 1948 but they kept shuffling it around - and say, "What's the reaction down in

Naples?” In southern Italy the reaction, of course, was nil, and quite rightly so. But you have these people you felt up in Rome were jumping around and saying, “Oh, a new cabinet reshuffle,” and playing games. It was that Roman minuet that seemed to absorb the people.

GRIFFIN: Oh, yes, that’s the way it was. Anyway, some powerful people, especially the mayors of Milan, Turin, Venice, and Trieste, and others, were all challenging Rome’s authority to do things. The prefects, those agents of Rome, would try to keep peace. Most of the prefects were from the south somewhere. I guess that was calculated.

Q: I would assume that.

GRIFFIN: They carried a pretty big stick, but they weren’t always listened to.

I soon met Umberto Bossi, the head of the Northern League, who says he detests Italians from the south, and delights in making trouble. He was trying to create an independent “Padania,” or self-rule for Lombardy. His lieutenant, Marco Formentini, was Mayor of Milan when I arrived. He was succeeded in 1997 by businessman Gabriele Albertini, who was a bit like Tony Williams here in Washington. He had ties to Italy’s “uncrowned king,” Gianni Agnelli, the head of Fiat, and other top business leaders, who backed him. We became pretty friendly, and he helped me continue to stage our July 4th events in Milan’s Castello. I got him introduced to New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, one of his role models.

During my three years, I visited every province in my district. There were some 50 of them in the district, about half of Italy’s 108 provinces. (The numbers changed during my tour, as new provinces were created.) I also made it a point to visit all the U.S. military commanders in the district. They had some 29,000 U.S. military personnel and dependents under their commands, mostly at Verona, Vicenza, and Aviano, which is north of Venice, with a few scattered in other Italian or NATO commands. There was also a NASA office in Torino.

Q: NASA, this was the Space...

GRIFFIN: The National Air and Space Administration. That is because Italians make some parts of our space vehicles, and have their own space program. It was a liaison office with a small staff.

At the military bases, I saw that the Consulate was not on the radar screens of most of our commanders. I set out to fix that. At Aviano Air Force Base, the overall Commander was an Italian – in a NATO position – but the Wing Commander, the real power, was Chuck Wald, an American Brigadier General. He has been promoted rapidly, and by now should have gotten his fourth star. He was very quick to realize that we needed to coordinate. It may have helped that I had an opportunity to put him in my debt. The U.S. Air Force sent a squadron of stealth bombers to Aviano to take part in the Bosnia campaign. But they “forgot” to ask permission of the Government of Italy. The planes were apparently over France and radioed that they were coming in to land. But an Italian air controller told them not so fast. He asked who they were, where they were coming from, and for their authority to enter Italian air space. When they replied that they had no special authority, they were refused permission to land. The Air Force started ringing

phones in Washington and Rome, and the issue quickly went to Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli. She took it to the Cabinet, which backed up the air controller, saying that Rome was tired of Americans treating Italy like it was part of the United States. The planes returned to the U.S. I told Chuck Wald I regretted that the aircraft didn't get to Aviano, because I knew they were needed, but stressed that it was a perfect example of why he needed to keep in touch with me and Embassy Rome. Italy is, after all, a sovereign country. Wald took the point, and we remained in close contact. On my first visit, he told me about some serious housing problems. Many of his permanent personnel were living off base in small villages around Aviano. Some of them were home to leftist political leaders who didn't much like the U.S. They collected hundreds of gripes from neighbors who didn't want our personnel living among them, and made life miserable for them. I suggested that we work together to overcome some of those problems, and we did.

Q: How did you overcome it?

GRIFFIN: We went together to see several of the mayors. They seemed a bit blasé with Wald, but my title seemed to change their attitudes. They liked the Consul General title and the fact that I spoke Italian to them. (Wald didn't know the language.) We told the mayors we needed their help. Both the Italian and U.S. Air Forces wanted to expand the base. We worked out a deal in which an unused part of the base was turned over to one of the villages for a housing project. In return, the Air Force got some land on the other side to extend a runway. So the collaboration worked rather well.

When I called on him, the U.S. Army Commander in Vicenza didn't seem to know that his people were sending us somewhere between 50 and 100 consular cases a week. These included applications for passports, visas, and birth certificates. Once we were asked to issue 900 passports in less than 24 hours. That was because a contingent of troops was suddenly ordered to Bosnia, where they would need passports – something they didn't have. It was a tremendous burden on our consular staff, who had to work over a weekend to get it done, but they did produce them. The next day, we fired off a request to the Department and the Pentagon to give all our troops passports before they left the U.S. I told the General we didn't appreciate such unexpected burdens, as our people were being hassled about access to his base commissary. It turned out that we had both gone to Georgia Tech, so we resolved things. The personal approach worked.

I also worked with some of your old friends at CINCSOUTH in Naples, the headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of Southern Command, and the Commander of the 6th Fleet, because their ships called at ports in my district, and I wanted to make use of them. During Sixth Fleet ship visits, we helped them invite local VIPs aboard the ships, and set up some of their calls on local authorities. One of our knottiest issues was access for nuclear-powered vessels to Trieste – true of almost all Italian ports, but Trieste was really touchy. The Mayor favored them, the Prefect favored them, the Admiral who was the Port Commander favored them; Rome did not. The Embassy staff wasn't always helpful, often claiming they had too many other things to do. Eventually we got an agreement in principle, but then the government in Rome changed and we had to start all over again. Meanwhile, I took a group of regional presidents, mayors, and business leaders on a COD flight to the aircraft carrier USS George Washington. It was cruising

off Bosnia, and we spent the day. All the Italians had a ball, and my stock shot up all around the district. Then General Wald in Aviano had a huge Christmas party, featuring the U.S. Air Force Band Europe, and Jay Leno.

Q: A well know comedian on TV.

GRIFFIN: It was like a USO show. Christina and I sat next to General Michael Ryan, Commander of U.S. Air Forces Europe, and his wife. He went on to become Chief of Staff of the Air Force. After the show, I talked to the leader of the band and asked him if he could perform in Milan for a civilian audience. He said he would be delighted, because after all, he was paid to do that sort of thing. His wife was Italian, so they were always looking for official reasons to come there. We struck a deal, and had some very good times. We also managed to get the 6th Fleet Band for other performances.

Actually, I'm still working with them. Just the other day, I got an email from a mayor in my old district, asking for help. He said the Consulate in Milan didn't respond to his request for an American band for a special September 11th memorial concert. So I spoke to Consul General Douglas McElhane, who said he is setting it up. I hope the tradition carries on. It's a wonderful program as long as we can afford it.

When I arrived at the post, morale wasn't what I thought it should be, especially during the furlough when the government shut down. For starters, I organized a party at our residence. Dick Shinnick had moved out of the former CG apartment, and found a much better one. It once belonged to the Agnelli family, and was quite elegant. It was only six blocks from the Consulate and two from La Scala, in the hub of the city. When I learned that most of the Consulate staff had never been to it, I decided to invite them all, which seemed to help their spirits. I followed the advice we heard in the DCM course and tried to manage by walking around our offices. It paid off, as I learned a lot I wouldn't have known otherwise, and I think the staff welcomed it. At the end of my three years, several staffers said that my constant presence kept them happy.

Some of our problems in the commercial area stemmed from what many Americans called an absolutely useless American Chamber of Commerce. In Washington I spoke to "Wally" Workman, the long-time Vice President for International Affairs at the American Chamber of Commerce. He was quite familiar with the Chamber. He said it was awful, but he had no power to shut them down or take their title away. He agreed to help try to institute some reforms. We agreed it was important, because it was the chamber for all of Italy, not just the north. Before my departure for Milan, I got a message from the Executive Director, asking me to deliver the keynote speech at its October annual general meeting. I agreed, and asked the Economic Section to work with FCS, FAS, USIS, and Embassy Rome to draft something. It was good, but I made it a bit tougher, which the staff seemed to like. I focused on three things: First, I said they should recruit more American members. (Its membership was about 75 percent Italian business people seeking to export to America.) I noted that I had been on the Boards of Governors of two AmChams, and knew that exporting to the U.S. was not a valid purpose of the Chamber. Next, I said that, in addition to recruiting more Americans, they needed to lobby the Italian Government to accord American companies better treatment. I said no member of the American Chamber of Commerce should work behind the scenes to block American competitors from the Italian

market. Third, I had learned that most speeches at the Chamber were delivered in Italian. So, I began my speech with a few sentences in Italian, then switched to English. I told them that as long as it was an American Chamber of Commerce, I would never speak to them in Italian. The Americans there loved it, but the Italians didn't, and they paid me back. At the next elections to their governing board, they ousted all the Americans except for a couple of Italo-Americans who could walk either side of the street. They filled every other seat with Italians. I sent a full report to Ambassador Bartholemew, who was Honorary Chairman of the Chamber. On his next visit, he requested a meeting with the Chamber Board at their offices, rather than the usual luncheon or public meeting. He reamed them out. Without any further prompting from me, he said exactly what I had been saying, and said it better. He growled at them, "You are supposed to be an American Chamber of Commerce. Where's the American? Show me one American in this room." One guy in the back stuck up his hand and said, "I was born in the US." Reggie shot back, "When was the last time you were there?" The man said, "About 20 years ago." They were all scowling, and started to grumble, but what really got their attention was what the Ambassador said next: "If you don't fix this, and fix it fast, my name is coming off your masthead." After that, they started being nicer to me, though some of them accused me of setting the Ambassador up. Reggie's policy didn't continue, by the way, with his successor, Tom Foglietta, who was a different kettle of fish.

Q: Was he more the typical Italo-American who comes back and is more delighted to show the Italians how a guy from the old country made good in the United States, which means they usually end up by being more lenient towards the Italians rather than promoting American values?

GRIFFIN: As soon as he got his feet on the ground in Rome, I urged him to put conditions on letting the Chamber list him as Chairman. He not only disagreed, he came to Milan and sat for a portrait so they could put his picture on the cover of their magazine. He told me the members of the Chamber were "good boys," and indicated that would be his reaction any time I tried to tell him otherwise.

To make peace, I suggested to the Chamber that, if we collaborated, I could do them some good. They were always casting about for luncheon speakers, and I told them quite frankly that I didn't want to listen to any more Italian manufacturers of pizza machines telling us how successful they were. They needed American business, and needed to learn how Americans do business. They weren't thrilled, but I did bring in several speakers. I got Ed Artz, the CEO of Colgate Palmolive. He came to Italy fairly often, but usually hid out on vacation. He didn't want to work in Italy, but finally agreed to speak. He made a terrific speech, which even impressed the Italians. Then Alexis Herman, a Special Assistant at the White House, who was nominated for Secretary of Commerce after Ron Brown died. There was Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida.

I got Admiral "Fuzzy" Smith, CINCSOUTH himself – a wonderfully bright and charming man. The Chamber treated him miserably. It was all set with the Admiral's staff when we discovered at the last minute that the Executive Director of the Chamber had neither reserved a meeting hall, nor invited the members. When I asked him why not, he said innocently, "He's just going to talk to the Board over lunch, right?" I went ballistic, calling him names, but managed to get the Commander of the Italian Air Force to lend us his meeting hall. The Consulate staff frantically

sent word to every Chamber member, and we managed to scrape together a crowd less than 48 hours before the Admiral arrived. The Italian civilian and Air Force officials who attended were fascinated. The members of the Chamber Board didn't seem to know what he was talking about. I was furious.

As you might expect in Milan, the post had a steady stream of visitors – interesting ones. Many business people came, including Bill Gates, the head of Microsoft, the President of US Steel, the Chairman of General Motors. It was like Korea in that way. They all had business to pursue, and usually would touch base with us. After listening to me, several of them instructed their country CEOs to be more active in the Chamber if they agreed it would be useful, which helped.

USIS was doing an excellent job. The Italian publishing industry is headquartered in and around Milan, and USIS helped attract some name-brand authors to visit. Some of them had translations of their books coming out in Italian, and their publishers helped us draw big audiences. From my standpoint, the best one probably was Joe Heller, who wrote *Catch 22*.

Q: He died just recently.

GRIFFIN: Yes, his wife invited us to the funeral. The four of us had a wonderful time in Milan. Joe, his wife Valerie, and my wife and I went out to dinner quietly after his speech in Milan. We talked half the night and corresponded afterwards. I told him I wanted to write fiction, and he gave me lots of pointers. I'm really sorry he died.

Q: Did they have a book fair in Milano?

GRIFFIN: Yes, but not as big as the one in Germany.

Q: I was wondering, because these fairs, of course, are major. It's the way Europeans do business.

GRIFFIN: Yes. Nick Veliotis, a former FSO who was President of the Association of American Publishers came through on his way to one of them, and we helped him with some contacts. Other authors we hosted during their visits included Mary Higgins Clark, the prolific author of romance novels and mysteries. Another very interesting one was Peter Matthiessen, who wrote *The Snow Leopard*, *Far Tortuga*, and *The Tree Where Man Was Born*. He's been all over the world.

Q: Sort of an adventurer, out in the different terrain.

GRIFFIN: He's a friend of the great naturalist George Schaller, and his books are grounded in nature.

I should tell you about our use of the Castello Sforzesco, the big castle in the middle of the city, built by the Duke of Milan. Before I arrived, the Consulate held a Fourth of July reception in the CG's apartment to which they invited over 800 people, about 500 of whom tried to show up. There was no way to cram 500 people into the apartment. It was hot as blazes, and the air

conditioning didn't work very well, so the staff vowed never to try that again. After hearing about it, I told them I still wanted to have an event, and asked what was the best outside place to hold one. I wanted it to be a splash. After they suggested several places, we were invited to a show at the Castello. At my next staff meeting, I said I wanted our reception held there. The group was very skeptical that we could get it, but I went to see the Mayor. Then I talked to the Prefect, the Provincial Governor, and the Regional President, who all said, "Sure." But then they began to set stiff rules. The culture bureaucrats were opposed, especially after I said I wanted to include a Neapolitan fireworks spectacular. You know how terrific those are.

I set the FCS staff to work. We got clearance from the Department, which imposed rules on how we could raise money, and how we could display corporate insignia. We raised \$100,000 the first year, which allowed us to import the Air Force Europe Band, get the fireworks, and feed 3,000 people. It was a roaring success. I did it for three years, and everybody loved it. People came from as far away as Trieste in the east, Val d'Aosta in the west, and all the other provincial capitals. It was a terrific show, and well worth all the money. It never rained, though it was misty one year. Our biggest problem was mosquitoes. The Po Valley not only is the largest coherent rice-growing area in the world (a crop Marco Polo brought back from China) but is also one of the largest mosquito-growing areas in the world. One of the companies that didn't respond to our invitation to sponsor the Fourth of July event was S. C. Johnson. I went to see their CEO and asked him to reconsider. He was interested, but said he would have to get permission from headquarters in Wisconsin, which for an Italian could be hard. I told him I didn't want money, but a donation of several thousand of his little packets of Off lotion. He knew very well about the mosquito problem, and I told him how several important officials said they wouldn't come back if I held the reception at the Castello, because they didn't want to get bitten again. I suggested that he could put Off's name in lights simply by giving me a carton of the packets. He could tell his accountants it fell off the truck, and I would feature S. C. Johnson's name as a donor on our board. He decided it was not a bad idea, and did what I asked. We gave a packet of Off to everybody who came to the party, and it worked perfectly. I've still got some.

Another set of opportunities opened up while I was in Milan. American universities were not only recruiting students to come to America, but some were also trying to set extensions in Italy. Florence is full of them, and there's a couple in Rome.

Q: In Bologna they have...

GRIFFIN: ...an extension of Johns Hopkins University. But American businesses want to be in Milan because Bocconi University is universally acknowledged to be the premier economic and business school in the country. Pace University of New York wanted to set up there, and went a long way toward doing it. They opened offices in Milan and started giving classes, but then there was a problem at the home university on Long Island. The man who started the program was in trouble of some sort, and they closed. Then there was a group of American colleges, mostly from the Southeast, who set up a joint venture in the Veneto, just north of Venice. It was in a beautiful village, and still functions, as far as I know.

Shortly after I arrived in Milan, we had a long-planned inspection. The chief inspector was John Monjo, and we were given flying colors. They couldn't find anything at all wrong, which was a

nice introduction for me. Their recommendations were helpful in most respects, but I didn't favor some ideas from Embassy Rome for cutting our staff, which we finally had to do. Worldwide budgets were getting tighter, so I tried to ensure that when our staff was let go, they either found jobs outside, or were used somewhere else in the Consulate.

Q: You're talking about the Italian staff.

GRIFFIN: And American. Both. It affected everybody. When the U.S. Tourism and Travel Agency office in Milan closed, it was because the entire agency was abolished. Milan was their southern European headquarters, and the American woman who had run it for 12 years stayed there and opened a travel agency. She tried to perform the same functions and charge for it. We managed to find her Italian staff jobs in USIS and elsewhere. FCS absorbed some of them because they absorbed the function.

My predecessor had fired the Italian protocol assistant, saying he was doing me a favor. We needed a replacement because my schedule was very busy. I first sought Italian applicants from some of the offices that were downsizing, but I ended up hiring the wife of George Ruffner, the FCS chief. She was Dutch, and probably the most competent protocol person I have ever run into anywhere, bar none. She set up a computerized contact system. Her predecessor took all the contact files with her, so she had to start from scratch. That wasn't all bad, because we got rid of some deadwood and came up with new names and got current addresses and numbers.

An event early in my tenure reinforced my concern about security and my antipathy to the Embassy's plan to close the RSO office. The Consulate is on a triangular piece of land and the building itself is a sort of rhomboid, with no two parallel sides. It's smack on the street on two sides, with a small sidewalk on the third, shortest side, all of which was dangerous. We controlled the entrance, but the next four floors were rented out to others, and then we occupied the rest of the building up to the 13th floor. We could have used the other four floors if USIS hadn't dug in its heels and refused to move into the building at the same time FCS did. They preferred their pretty place off of Via Monte Napoleone, the fanciest shopping street in Milan, saying it was closer to their clients. Anyway, one fine November morning I was happily beaver away on something with my windows open because the weather was pleasant. I could see the snow peaks of the Alps in the distance. All of a sudden I heard a racket, and realized that there was a traffic jam. The minute traffic stops, every Italian worth his salt starts blowing his horn.

Q: It helps.

GRIFFIN: So I looked out the window to see how bad it was, and noticed something very odd. All the Consulate cars that were normally parked on that side of our building were gone. The only vehicle there was a truck I didn't recognize. There was a cop behind it in what looked like armor, and a long white line leading to the intersection half a block away. I picked up the phone, and called the RSO. No answer. I called the Admin Officer. Not there. I called the DPO. Not in. Nobody was there. It was 10:45 in the morning, and everyone had gone out for an *espresso*, except for the guard at the front door, an Italian. I finally reached him and asked what was going on. He said he didn't know I was there or he would have called. He told me that two Middle

Eastern-looking men had driven into an unoccupied parking space. Since those spaces were off-limits to non-Consulate vehicles, he went out to tell the men to move. But they both jumped out and ran in opposite directions. So he called the *Questura*, the police headquarters just around the corner a block away. They sent their bomb squad over immediately, concluding that the truck contained one. He said they were going to blow off the back door to see inside. I said, “They’re going to do what? Are they out of their minds? Suppose it is packed full of explosives?” I slammed shut my window and ran to the middle of the building. The charge went off, and fortunately the truck was empty. An hour later, the driver returned, and the police determined that the men were from the Islamic Cultural Institute, which, if you’ve been reading the papers lately, is a nest of al Qaeda agents. We never determined to our satisfaction whether it was a test of our security, or whether the men were as stupid as they seemed to be. They claimed that they went to register at the *Questura*, which aliens must do. There is usually a long line and no place to park, so they said they saw a parking place, and grabbed it. If they had been carrying a bomb, I wouldn’t be sitting here talking to you today.

Well, I went ballistic. I screamed and yelled to Washington, to everybody I could think of. The RSO in Rome had been my RSO in Nairobi, and I wasn’t pleased with his reaction. I told him so, told the Ambassador so, and told Washington so. We got some attention for a while, and I almost got the Marine guards that I had asked for in the beginning. By law, we were supposed to have Marines to guard certain facilities. I can’t be more specific here, but we were technically illegal, and kept being told by DS that we were “next on the list” for a Marine detachment. That was about the time that the Soviet Union had collapsed and the Department was opening embassies in Central Asia, which also needed Marines. We never got any. Worse, for budgetary reasons, the Embassy decided to cut the RSO position in Milan. I almost lost it then, but managed to keep my cool and gather ammunition from all the authorities in Milan, which I used to pester the Embassy. I made friends with the *Questore*, the General in charge of the *Carabinieri*, the head of Customs, and all the regional military commanders. Everybody who had anything to do with police and security became a close friend.

I also ran periodic drills. I made sure that the entire staff didn’t go for *espresso* at the same time. We were inspected again by security teams from several agencies, and were declared vulnerable, but the Consulate is still there. We pushed the city to close a short street on one side of the building, but the authorities refused. They eventually diverted traffic away from that side during working hours, and today it is finally closed. It took that long. But the other street is a major artery, so there is no way to close it. That sidewalk is lined with bollards, parking is banned, and police are stationed there around the clock. That was probably the best we could expect. Then we installed a very fancy electronic security system. It was a lock-and-leave system for awhile, but then we kept an American officer in the building around the clock. Italian guards were always there too, in shifts, so we were about as well taken care of as we could be at that point.

I kept traveling. After I learned that the district included almost half of Italy’s 20 regions, and 48 of its 102 provinces, I knew it was my job to visit every one. It took three years, but I made it to all of them, which paid off in many ways. I mentioned earlier Riccardo Illy, the Mayor of Trieste. At first, he was opposed to the idea of American nuclear-powered vessel calls at Trieste. But he is a businessman – the biggest coffee importer in Italy – and understood that his business would improve with more ship visits. Bosnia was heating up, so there was a real need for port

visits in Trieste. After I pointed out that Venice was getting all the business, he realized what was at stake and changed his opinion. But we didn't achieve the goal, for reasons I mentioned earlier.

I got to know Enzo Ghigo, the President of the Piemonte Region and Valentino Castellani, the Mayor of Torino. My entré was helped in part by the arrival of two massive, simultaneous CODELs, made up of 65 Senators and Representatives at an NAC meeting – that's the NATO parliamentarians council – in Torino. The ranking members included Nancy Pelosi and a Senator whose birthday was celebrated. Was it Jesse Helms? We had no money to support the CODEL, but got permission from H, the Congressional Affairs Bureau, to put the arm on the Congress for funding our support, and got it. I sent two officers and four FSNs over from Milan, and things started off well. But when I got there, a Representative, who shall remain nameless, was complaining about the service. She wanted to go to a hairdresser, and was upset when she couldn't get a car to take her. The hairdresser was half a block away. When it was suggested that she walk, she retorted, "I want a car. I get a car everywhere I go." She eventually got her way. I pointed out to the members who would listen that, if they quit slashing our budget, we could support them in the way they preferred, or better. Pelosi in particular heard me and chastised some of the others for complaining. Ambassador Bartholomew didn't come. I told the delegation that he couldn't come because he had no budget for such a trip, and that I was there because I jumped in a car and paid for the gas myself. Most of them did not seem impressed.

Since I'm on the subject – a favorite among FSOs – we had some other interesting CODELs. One of the most – I was going to say "humorous," but maybe that's not the right word – was Representative Henry Hyde of Illinois. He wanted to go to Venice, though the official reason for the trip was to inspect the airbase at Aviano. Hyde didn't want to stay at Aviano because Aviano ain't Venice, to put it mildly. He didn't like the quarters reserved for him, although they were pleasant general officer quarters. When he said he wanted to stay in Venice, all the others on his CODEL agreed they wanted the same. So the Air Force flew him into Aviano, and helicoptered him to Venice. Then Chairman Hyde said he wanted a car solely designated for himself. The others could share another car. We sent back a message asking them to tell the Congressman he couldn't have a car because there are no cars in Venice. The Department sent back a message saying Hyde didn't believe that, and neither did his staff. We had a hard time convincing them that Venetians don't run around in cars. The upshot was that we had to put some of the CODEL about 30 miles away in Padua because there were no hotel rooms available in Venice. One evening, Hyde decided to go to a restaurant on the other side of St. Mark's Square from his hotel. He said he couldn't walk from the hotel to the restaurant because it was too far, so we hired a water taxi. The control officer almost lost him. I don't know if you've seen him but he's big, and weighs a lot. Fortunately the control officer was strong, or he would have lost Mr. Hyde in the drink. But he couldn't walk very fast to the water taxi, and there was another Congressman yelling at the control officer by cellular phone, asking where "his" boat was. When the control officer tried to explain that the Chairman was using it, he said, "I don't care. Get me another boat." It was that kind of trip. You've seen your share.

Q: Congressman Hyde led the attempt to impeach the President but was unsuccessful in convicting him, impeach the President on moral grounds, I guess, and he was also renowned for having fathered a child out of wedlock when he was young lad of 43. This gives a little idea of

Congressman Hyde.

GRIFFIN: Our friend Chuck Robb also showed up in Milan.

Q: Senator from Virginia.

GRIFFIN: He was only there for one night, and left early the next day. I told him he should see something in the city before leaving, in particular Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper." I could have had it opened although it was closed that day. The other must-see site was the Duomo, the big gothic cathedral. The Senator said there was not enough time for the "Last Supper," but agreed to drive by the Duomo, if it was on the way. We did, and he was bowled over, and got out of the car to take a picture. Fortunately, my driver noticed one of the usual scams underway. The piazza around the Duomo is usually full of people, including some small children usually referred to as gypsies. They approach their marks with a newspaper, while little hands underneath go into your pockets. They snatched Robb's wallet, but the driver managed to nab the kid and got it back, and we shoed them off.

I had a rather different experience with Representative Paul McHale, a Democrat from Pennsylvania. He was on his way back from Bosnia, and wanted to know more about our military presence in northern Italy. He was on the Armed Services Committee, and had been to the base at Aviano, but wanted my take on it. We went out to dinner, and had a long, very interesting conversation, in which we discussed staffing, troop deployment, our overall posture in the Balkans, our Bosnia policy, and related issues. He said he was frustrated by the attitude of the White House staff. They were having problems on the Hill, but he said that, if they asked the members the right way, he, for one would probably help them out. He said he had no policy disagreements with the President, and thought they could agree on most of the issues we had discussed. I reported all that, as I was supposed to do, and did so very accurately. Unfortunately, I made two errors. One, I sent it to several addressees I knew would be interested, such as CINCEUR – the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Forces in Europe – and some other military commands. Second, I quoted McHale as saying he could do what the White House wanted. That was the line that set it off. Somebody showed him my message, and he went ballistic. He called the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs in H and told her I should be fired.

At about that same time, I was hosting our Fourth of July celebration at the Castello Sforzesco. (We never held it on the 4th, by the way, because that would have conflicted with the Ambassador's party, and many of my guests were also invited to his in Rome.) As I was about to walk onto the stage to speak, one of my staff shoved a cell phone at me, saying, "The DCM has to talk to you." I said, "Tell him I'll call him back." He said, "No, he said right this minute!" I got an earful from Jim Cunningham, the DCM, who told me that Congressman McHale was going to have the Department's budget sliced unless I called him in the next five minutes and apologized. The cell phone was dying fast, but I managed to call Washington, and reached a secretary who said, "He's not here." I left my name and asked him to call back. Then I called the Assistant Secretary in H, who acknowledged that she had heard about McHale's reaction, vaguely, and had read my telegram with interest. I argued that there was nothing in the telegram that the Congressman should object to, except my quote from him saying he would do what the White House asked him to do. I said that's what he told me, so I reported it. She said she

understood. She had seen nothing objectionable in my telegram, but McHale wanted an apology. I said I had tried, but was told he was out. On the other hand, she was there in his time zone. I asked her to call McHale and say I had tried to call him, and would try again. She set it up, and later I had a long – and not unpleasant – conversation with him. After he reminded me three times about the powers that reside in the Congress and do not reside in the White House, and I had apologized for putting him on the spot, he said, “Actually that was quite a good report.” Then he added, “But you shouldn’t have sent it all over the place.” I’m sorry he’s no longer in Congress, because he was one Member who thought carefully about issues and how he approached them.

We had a Presidential visit too, Clinton on his way back from Bosnia. He was supposed to land at Aviano on his way to Bosnia, so I went over to the airbase to ensure that all went well. This was in the time of Foglietta.

Q: Foglietta being...?

GRIFFIN: Tom Foglietta, our new Ambassador in Rome. I went to Aviano, where the U.S. base commander put me up. The weather was rotten. The Ambassador got to Venice by commercial air, went to a hotel, and checked in with me by phone. When he heard that Air Force One might not land at Aviano because of the weather, he said he was going to stay in Venice. There is a lot of fog in the Veneto at that time of year. The President and his entourage on Air Force One had landed in Germany, where they switched to a smaller plane that could land in Bosnia. But as Foglietta went off to dinner with some friends, everything changed. Air Force One and its backup flew to Aviano to be closer to the President’s party. It was touch-and-go for awhile, but they brought it in. If you have experienced a White House visit lately, you know the President travels with two 747s. The second carries the limousines, back-up crews, guns, the press pool – you name it. No one was sure the smaller plane could return to Aviano, but Air Force One was there if it did. It could always return to Germany if the other plane headed there. As all that was going on, the Wing Commander and I slipped over to his deputy’s house for a party, remaining in touch with the Aviano tower. After one sip of beer, we were told everything was on again, so we went running back. I tried to call the Ambassador, who didn’t answer. While we were waiting for the plane to land, my wife asked a driver why the presidential limousine was sitting there with its motor running. He said in case the President wants to ride from one plane to another. She was astonished, noting that it was maybe 200 feet from one plane to the other. She was told that was normal, as there might be terrorists around. She looked around and couldn’t see anything but fog.

The plane landed, and disgorged Secretary Madeleine Albright, Bob Dole, and dozens of others. They were all shuffled off to various other planes going to different destinations. Finally the President, Mrs. Clinton, and Chelsea debarked. We had brief chat with them, during which I made an excuse for the Ambassador. The President didn’t seem interested. When it was time to go, he started walking to Air Force One, talking to one of the generals. Mrs. Clinton took my arm to make conversation, as we all watched the driver steer the limousine to the other plane. Later, the Ambassador asked me why I didn’t let him know the President had come. I described the whole scene to him, noting that he couldn’t have gotten there anyway from Venice. I asked him why he didn’t come to Aviano as I had, instead of hanging around Venice. He said, “I wanted to

eat.”

As you surely were in Naples as well, we were involved in a lot of cultural events – good ones. Italy claims to have three-quarters of the world’s cultural artifacts, and won’t let any of them go. Since our apartment was two blocks away from La Scala, we went there a lot. Before my time, the Mayor of Milan would invite selected ambassadors in Rome to come to the opening night, which is always on December 7th. The selection for the past ten years or so had always included the American Ambassador and, more often than not, the French and the German. Normally, their Milan consuls were also invited. My first year, Ambassador Bartholomew was invited, but diplomatic invitees were cut to five ambassadors, and no consuls. The stated excuse was to open it up to more local luminaries. That set off the Dean of the Consular Corps, who mounted a campaign on behalf of the Corps. He demanded three seats for consuls, with the recipients to be decided by the Corps. The Mayor’s office stalled, not liking the idea. I recalled that the Dean had told me I had more clout than the others, and went to see the Mayor. I said I must have a ticket because my Ambassador was coming. He agreed to make an exception for me. After that, I was invited every year. It was a mixed blessing, to put it mildly. My first time with Ambassador Bartholomew was fine. The last time, with Ambassador Foglietta was a disaster from start to finish, but I’ll come back to that in a minute.

Meanwhile, the keepers of La Scala decided it needed a new stage, saying its equipment was at least 100 years old. That was a myth. Some parts of it were, but the theater was bombed during the Second World War and had to be rebuilt, so most of it was maybe 50 years old, not 100. But to accomplish it all, the performers had to move – and have done so – out of the building for several years, and the city needed to raise money. Some smart cookie realized that Americans have a lot of money, so they worked on the Washington Opera Society and the New York Opera Society, and put together something called the Friends of La Scala. That was a set of individuals who were invited to opening night when they paid \$10,000 a head. It was quite a list, and because of my job, we met many of them. They included Jim Kimsey, the founder and CEO Emeritus of AOL; Lillian Vernon, the mail-order queen; John Kennedy and his wife, before they died; Lucky Roosevelt, who sort of runs the Washington Opera...

Q: Selwa Roosevelt.

GRIFFIN: ...and who used to be Chief of Protocol. Around the opening night, there would also be dinners for the high rollers in private homes all over Milan. We were invited to those as well.

We went to many operas outside of Milan. Once, we went to Parma for the 100th anniversary of the first performance of Puccini’s *La Boheme*. The Prefect of Parma invited us to be his guests on the opening night, so we sat in the royal box. It was a black-tie event, of course, and I had on some brand-new Gucci shoes. It started snowing about an hour before the performance, and by the time we got to the entrance, the snow was about a foot deep. That was the end of those shoes. If you know the opera, it has a snow scene in it, so it fit in nicely. We also went to its 100th anniversary in Torino, where it was originally performed, in the beautifully reconstructed opera house. We often took guests to operas at the Arena in Verona; usually something like *Aida* or *Carmen*, with casts of animals and throngs of people. It often rains on those performances, so there is sometimes only one act – if that – because the musicians will not allow their instruments

to get wet.

We also hosted some musical evenings in our residence. There were always American musicians visiting Italy who, if contacted, would come put on a little performance in return for a good dinner. One of the best for us was pianist John Bayless, who was a mutual friend of an American opera singer. Our packed audience thought he was one of the best they had ever heard.

There were many other interesting visitors, such as Roger Enloe and Rick Munger. Maybe you have heard about the huge Leonardo's Horse statue. According to legend, Leonardo da Vinci was commissioned by Ludovico il Moro Sforza, the Duke of Milan, to design a bronze equestrian statue, on which the Duke would be mounted. He drew sketches, including some of the horse without a rider. Then he carved a wooden model. But at about that time, the French invaded, the Duke fled, and so did Leonardo. The French used the model for target practice, which destroyed it, and the statue was never made. In the 1980s, United Airlines pilot Charles Dent saw Leonardo's sketches of the statue in the museum of the Castello. He thought they were stunning, and decided to commission the real thing and donate it to Italy. He began a campaign to have it fabricated in the U.S. and sent to Italy as a present from the people of the United States. (By the way, there is a statue of Christopher Columbus with a similar history in Genoa. It was originally on Ellis Island.) Dent began the process, but then he died, so his brother-in-law, Roger Enloe, and his former copilot, Rick Munger, kept it going. They came to see me out of frustration, saying they were getting nowhere with the culture officials in Milan and needed help. Their idea was to mount the statue in the main courtyard of the Castello Sforza, where Leonardo had meant it to be. I thought it was a good idea, so I checked them out, found nothing adverse, and agreed to help. I went with them to petition the Mayor, the culture mavens, and all the others who claim to control culture in Milan. Long story made short, approval was finally granted. But the culture officials wouldn't allow the statue to be put in the Castello because it was not an original Leonardo, and there was a debate as to which design was the one he meant to use. So the horse, which is 30 feet high, stands at a race track near Malpensa Airport. There was a big hand-over ceremony after I left, with Ambassador Foglietta and others present. The statue was fabricated at the Tallix Art Foundry in New York State, where the FDR Memorial here and several other famous works were created. There were endless debates about how to get it there. It was cast in segments, put together, finished, and then taken apart and shipped. The sponsors wanted to have a grand entrance, but couldn't figure out how to put it back together before getting to the gates of Milan, or how to transport it through the narrow streets after assembly. They investigated several options, including bringing it in by dirigible or barge up the Po River.

Another annual event was the US-Italy Council. It was created by Gianni Agnelli, the head of Fiat, and always includes the American Ambassador, the Italian Ambassador to the U.S., and the heads of major American and Italian corporations. It was one of Ambassador Bartholomew's favorite events, but Foglietta didn't like it. I was invited, thanks to Mike Calingaert, its Executive Director, and an old Foreign Service colleague. We were in Colombo together. After sending me the invitation, Mike heard that Reggie didn't want anyone else there from the U.S. Mission. I went anyway, and he left as soon as I arrived. That event was almost necessary to make good contacts, which I needed – such as Agnelli and Renato Ruggiero, who eventually became head of the WTO. The site of the Council meeting is Villa d'Este, one of the most famous hotels in the world, on the shores of Lake Como at Cernobbio. The owner and general manager hosts a July

4th party every year, since most of his guests are Americans. Every year, he asked me to come wave the flag and make a speech. That was another reason not to have our Consulate event on the Fourth of July, so I could do both. Many of our other visitors, such as the Clintons, George H. W. Bush, Henry Kissinger, Allen Greenspan, and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, provided us entrées to influential people in the region.

I am always asked if we went to all the fashion shows. The answer is no. I went to one or two, and very quickly decided that it was not my scene. Talk about sharp elbows and fist fights! Watching to see who gets in the front row at the shows is great, if you like to watch a brawl. I decreed that if someone had to represent American interests there, it would be a commercial officer, not me. The only one we attended more than once was staged by Raffaella Curiel, who's not well known in this country, but should be. Her clothes are things women can actually wear, not the *outré* things that make the front pages of fashion magazines.

Back to the subject of law enforcement, I continued to work with Peter Eigen, and his Transparency International organization. We supported the famous prosecutors in Milan, known as the *Mane Pulite*, or Clean Hands. They were successfully uncovering corruption in government, nailing people, taking them to court, and even to jail. Their targets often were big names, including the current Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi. For that reason, the prosecutors were under constant attack in reaction. USIS put some money on them, sending almost all of them to the U.S. to consult with other prosecutors and judges, and for training courses. We brought American prosecutors to Italy, including, before my time, Rudy Giuliani from New York, as well as some Supreme Court Justices who gave lectures. It was an excellent program, with measurable results. That and the Fulbright program are the best things that USIS used to do.

Other agencies at post were also helpful in nailing crooks. This morning I got a call from a friend of mine who wanted to know something about the Nigerian market. I still pay some attention to it. It reminded me of a conversation with the British Consul General in Milan. He had served in Nigeria as I had, but wasn't aware of the most recent scams. He seemed amazed when I told him our Secret Service office spent much of its time working Nigerian scams. Their other big role was to seize counterfeit American bills printed in northern Italy. We quickly realized that each of us had information the other could use, so we both sought permission to formalize an exchange. Both of us got permission, so we instituted an information swap with the British, and found some of theirs very good. The result was that we both nailed some crooks.

Q: On the subject of crime, what about both indigenous and extraterritorial sort of terrorist groups, Primarenia, the Red Brigade, and then other ones?

GRIFFIN: We had a formal exchange of information with the Italians on several levels. One of the advantages of our type of Fourth of July party, for example, was that the DEA could invite, say, 50 of the people they worked with the closest. They would be of all ranks – not just generals, but the sergeants and detectives they worked with every day. There was a good exchange of intelligence at every level, by every agency in the Consulate. I kept track of it all, not just for security purposes, but also for the possibility of things of higher level interest. If a topic or issue was of sufficient import, I would call on the *Questore* or one of the other top officials to discuss it. After our bomb scare, I went to see everyone I could think of. They saw

how serious it was and afterwards, on their own initiative, if they heard something that might affect us, they would let me know quickly.

Now, the Al Qaeda crowd – I don't think they called themselves that in my day – at the Islamic Cultural Center was watched very closely by the Italians. The Red Bridges theoretically had been crushed, but there was still a cell that the authorities knew about. They watched other groups, some of which were just criminal gangs – of less interest to us – and lumped them into two types. They called them Albanesi – Albanians – or Marochini – Moroccans – because their skins were dark. I don't think they necessarily were all Albanians or Moroccans; they could have been Indians. Some of them were trafficking in people. Not just women, but men too, as slaves. Illegal immigration was rampant, and when the EU opened its internal borders, the problem became more serious. That concerned the French and the Swiss particularly because they figured that almost anybody could get into Italy, so if that border was wide open, they had lost control. Then there were the Russian Mafiosi, Taiwanese criminals, and you name it – terrorists and bad guys of all stripes. If you drove out of the city on a back road – not an *Autostrada* – within three blocks of the last apartment building, there would be women in very short skirts standing by the side of the road. Most of them were black, apparently from Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa.

One of the things I stressed to the American military commanders was the need to be precise when dealing with Italians. If they always treated Italy as a sovereign country and asked for permission before flying an airplane into an airport, or pulling a ship into a harbor, they would have much better cooperation. It would induce the Italians to share more information and be helpful on security. That paid off every time we had a ship visit in Venice, or Genoa, or Trieste. The ship would be visited by the *Carabinieri* or someone from the *Questura*, with up-to-date intelligence about potential threats, because they too were worried about things like what happened in Yemen to the USS Cole.

Q: It was a destroyer that was hit by several suicide bombers in a small boat.

GRIFFIN: I'm sure you had the same thing in Naples.

Q: It wasn't of that intensity.

GRIFFIN: Since Italian Naval Headquarters in La Spezia was also part of our district, they coordinated with us and would send out patrol boats each time we had a big ship come into port. So I was religious about making calls on the *Questore* and the prefect everywhere I went. I never missed them, because they were the ones on whom we depended for our own protection and good intelligence.

Q: On the military side, were you there when that, I think, Marine Corps plane...?

GRIFFIN: I'll come to that. But first, back to visiting businessmen. One in particular irked me. He arrived shortly after Kathy Black, the head of Hearst Publications, who chaired a big worldwide convention of all her editors in Milan. And after good visits by Bill Gates and Lee Iacocca. George Ruffner, our chief Commercial Officer, rather breathlessly told me another big businessman from Washington was coming. He wanted me to host a reception at the Four Seasons Hotel, for which he would pay. I asked who it was, and George said it was Michael

Saylor. I asked “Who’s he?” Ruffner looked at me as if I were dense, and said Saylor was the Chairman and CEO of Micro Strategy. Today I’ve heard of Michael Saylor as he is featured in the papers for the near collapse of his company. But then he was on top of it, supposedly making lots of money.

Q: He’s in the dot-com business, wasn’t he?

GRIFFIN: That’s right. My wife took one look at him and said, “That’s a dot-commoner.” There was something fishy about him. For whatever reason, we didn’t meet before the party. Anyway, this kid wandered up and, without saying “hello,” asked me when the Mayor and the Prime Minister were coming. I replied that I doubted he would see either of them there. He looked incredulous, and said he had issued specific instructions. It was why he came and was having the party. He said, “I need to meet those people. They must come see me. You were supposed to arrange it.” I said, “Look, I never heard of you before. I don’t think that they, who’ve never heard of you either, would show up, even if both of us invited them, as I’m sure we did. They’re busy elsewhere.” He was furious, turned on his heel, and walked away. He told his Indian Vice Chairman to talk to me. I started to explain patiently that neither Gates nor Iacocca automatically saw those politicians, but then I got fed up, and left. Saylor had bad vibes – I’ll put it that way.

On to other things. I tried to help further the negotiations for the nuclear test ban treaty. There was a crucial meeting in Geneva, to which the Indian Representative was Arundati Ghosh, an old friend from Calcutta days. My wife and I had gone with some other friends for a weekend in Switzerland, an easy drive from Milan. The weather was nice, so I called Chukku – Arundati’s nickname – in Geneva and asked her to join us. I had been reading about the conference in the newspapers and suspected that she might not be in full agreement with her Government, though she would try to reach agreement with the other delegations. She said she needed a respite, and agreed to come for the day. I called the head of our delegation in Geneva and explained the situation, asking for some talking points if he thought I could help. He said he thought she was reasonable but was having a tough time with her own government. If I could give her a bit of a push, he would be grateful. He sent me the talking points, which I used, and she seemed interested. But in the end, any agreement was shot down – not by the Indians, but by Washington, which insisted on saying, “Do as I say.” The Indians replied in kind.

Now, about Tom Foglietta. He was a Congressman from the First District of Pennsylvania, in South Philadelphia. I first saw him in Korea. Earlier I mentioned the return to Seoul of Kim Dae Jung, who had been in exile at Harvard. He was accompanied by former Assistant Secretary Pat Derian and several others, including Foglietta, who was beaten up by police at the airport. Before the 1994 elections, the Democratic Party concluded that Foglietta could not be re-elected because the Republicans were putting up a very charismatic and popular black candidate against him, and the pollsters foresaw a Foglietta loss. He was asked to step aside in favor of a young black candidate, but at first refused. Asked what it would take to change his mind, he said he wanted to be Ambassador to Italy. A deal was struck, and he got the job. As you said, it was an Italo-American coming home to show off. The sad part was that he didn’t speak Italian. He spoke a few words of Calabrese.

Q: It’s sort of like sending somebody to the United States who speaks maybe at best not-very-

fluent hillbilly.

GRIFFIN: Soon after he arrived, I informed Foglietta that he could have a ticket to the opening night of La Scala. They weren't going to issue one to the American Ambassador that year until they saw what manner of fish he was. But I had talked the Mayor into giving me one extra ticket. The Ambassador leapt at it, but insisted on bringing along a lady friend from Philadelphia. (He has never been married. He brought two sisters with him to Rome. They never went out, and just stayed in Villa Taverna the whole time, as far as I know.) His political- appointee staff aide and his gay partner also moved into Villa Taverna. Foglietta wanted tickets for all of them, but I told him it was impossible. I thought I could get two and maybe twist the Mayor's arm again for the staff aide, but that was it. In the end, I managed to get only two tickets. I put all four of them in a good hotel, though not the one Foglietta wanted, as it was jammed with other VIPs. At least he got a nice suite for a good price.

I warned the Ambassador on the way in from the airport that they must be at La Scala ahead of time because they lock the doors at eight o'clock on the dot. I stressed that no one would be allowed to enter once the performance was underway. At seven thirty, my wife and I were at the hotel to escort them. We had two cars and a police escort. First, the staff aide appeared, badly dressed. He had managed to get a standing-room ticket in the rafters. I reminded him that it was black tie, and said some men would wear white tie and tails. He said, "I don't have any." I let it go. Then the Ambassador appeared, not in black tie either, but in a strange sort of jacket. We started to head for the car, but he told us to wait because his friend wasn't ready. I reminded him of the deadline, noting that, to be sure, we only had five minutes. He told my wife that his friend had a run in her stockings, and would not go that way. So we had a frantic pantyhose search. Fortunately my security officer was a young Italian woman who knew how to run and where to find things, and managed, in the space of literally 10 minutes, to get what was needed. By that time it was about two minutes to eight, and we were 20 blocks from La Scala in very heavy traffic, as the cops performed miracles. At his insistence when they checked in to the hotel, I gave the Ambassador his ticket, his friend's ticket, and a program. When we were three blocks away from the opera house, I suggested that they get their tickets out because it would be a rush at the door. He said, "Ticket? I don't have any ticket."

I radioed the Admin officer, who was in a follow-car behind us, to return to the hotel for the tickets, though the Ambassador had no idea where he left them. We got to La Scala just as the outside doors were closing. I raced up to the fellow shutting the door, said I was the American Consul General, with the American Ambassador, who had seats as guests of the Mayor, but he didn't have tickets. What were we to do? He let us all in.

Q: To arrange things.

GRIFFIN: No, they showed us to our assigned box. Then Foglietta kept getting up to go to the bathroom. It's not supposed to be done in the middle of a performance at La Scala, but I think he had an incontinence problem. He didn't like formal dinners, but enjoyed restaurants. It was difficult. The staff in Rome said he wouldn't come to his own dinners. He would invite people to dinner, and sometimes show up, sometimes not. If he did appear, he often stayed five minutes and left. They were tearing their hair out, and didn't know what to do about it. We all soon

learned that he didn't ever want to do what you wanted him to do. He had his own agenda in his head, and didn't want it interfered with. He didn't like to meet many people at once.

During intermission, we suggested going to the lobby to see the exhibits and to meet some people. It's usually quite a scene as all the celebrities and famous faces mug while TV cameras roll. The Ambassador declined. We went out anyway and chatted first with John Kennedy and his wife, and then several others, enjoying ourselves. As we started back to the box – I think my wife went in and told the lady friend that John Kennedy was there – Foglietta came running out, pushing people out of the way. He went straight to Kennedy and said, "I'm Tom Foglietta. I was close to your father." Kennedy was very polite about it, but quickly returned to his box as the lights dimmed.

The next day we took them to Pavia, to see its stunning Charter House and monastery. Foglietta liked it, sort of. On the way back to Milan, he said he wanted to see the *Duomo*. I suggested that it would be better to wait til the next day when we had a guide ready, and do it properly. No, he wanted to do it right then. I radioed the police escort in front of us to alert them that we were going to stop at the *Duomo*. We screeched to a stop, blue lights flashing, and Foglietta jumped out. He went up to a crowd of people calling, "*Io sono ambascador Americano.*" I reminded the staff aide that we had a police escort because of intelligence saying the American Ambassador was under threat. I didn't think his actions were clever, and asked the aide to speak to him. He said, "I can't talk to him. He's always like that."

Q: Well, there's a certain thing. You can sort of sit back and nature takes its course and you...

GRIFFIN: If something bad had happened, it would have been my fault, with all that entails. Anyway, we got through the visit and he went back to Rome. A few months later, in February, just as we returned from a trip, I found an urgent message from my deputy, Desiree Milliken. A U.S. Marine Corps fighter-bomber had crashed into a cable car at a place called Cavalese in the Alps, killing 20 people. The Italians were in a rage.

Q: It had cut the cable and the cable car fell down. It was awful.

GRIFFIN: Desiree, who is fast off the mark, learned that the Ambassador was at a ski resort not far from the crash site. He was headed back to Rome, but she managed to reach him by cell phone while he was still in the Alps. To his credit, he turned around and went right to the site at Cavalese. A camera crew from RAI-TV, the Italian state television network, was there, and pictured him kneeling in the snow and praying. He turned to the camera and apologized for the United States. It was all shown on national TV. If he hadn't done that, things would have been much worse.

He didn't drive to Cavalese, which would have taken too long. Instead, on my advice he went to a nearby Italian Air Force base. I first called Aviano Air Force base, but the American Commander said they had no helicopters. Then I called our Army General in Vicenza, but he said all his helicopters were grounded, as they were unsafe, and he would not put the American Ambassador on one. So all three of us worked on the chief of the Italian Air Force, who agreed to send one of his helicopters, which got Foglietta up there and back down the mountain in good

time. We used the same arrangement to take up a Congressional delegation led by Bill Young of Florida, who was Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

The Marine Corps was in utter denial from Day One. Their mantra was, “It was not our fault.” The pilot claimed he did nothing wrong, which was a lie. The copilot had incinerated a videotape he made of that flight as soon as they returned to Aviano. I’m convinced they were hot-dogging – roaring around at treetop level through valleys, frightening cattle and people. I doubt that they saw the cable across the gorge at Cavalese. They clipped it with their tail, and somehow kept the plane flying. It cut the thick cable like a razor blade. Twenty people died, mostly Poles and Germans. There were only two Italians – the driver and someone else.

So we had a serious problem on our hands. It came at a time when the Status of Forces Agreement was being renegotiated, and that incident did not help our case. The Marines kept saying things I didn’t want to hear. The U.S. Commander at Aviano, where the plane was based, was an Air Force brigadier. He told me he could get nowhere with the Marine Corps or its pilots, whom he had grounded while an investigation took place. The investigation was led by Marine General Peter Pace, who went on to become Commandant of the Marine Corps. In the end, the investigators couldn’t decide exactly what happened, but they did say they thought the pilots were guilty. So there was a court martial, staffed by Marines, who let them off the hook. The Italians were flabbergasted. I told some of them that military justice is an oxymoron.

One of the issues was compensation, on which I tried to help, because my inquiries in Cavalese convinced me that the community needed it. To get a process moving, I put together a team of American business people. We found that the first concern of the Italians – after the deaths, which wasn’t their main concern because they weren’t Italian – was the loss of their money machine. The ski lift was what brought people to Cavalese to spend money. They seemed uncertain as to what to do. (I discovered much later that a previous ski lift collapsed years earlier and killed even more people, but since that was their fault, they didn’t talk about it.) I asked our business people to help Cavalese find other ways to earn money until the ski lift was repaired, or to raise enough money to help them rebuild it quickly. They agreed, and a coalition got moving, led by the CEO of Schering Plough, who was an ex-Marine, and very unhappy about the way the Marines were behaving. He flew to the States and went to express his feelings to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, whom he knew. He told me he argued for at least a court martial for the air crew and their commander, which is what eventually happened.

Ambassador Foglietta also tried to get the Marines to bring the pilots to justice. But we all ran into strong disagreement at the Pentagon, where we were told we just didn’t understand. They argued that handing out compensation would set a bad precedent. Something like the attitude today, where the USG won’t let the International Court of Justice try any American soldier who might go out and do a My Lai somewhere. They got very sticky, insisting that under NATO rules, the Italians had to pay any compensation. That was true, so we knew it was going to be a long time in coming. Our colleagues at the Embassy went to work on political leaders in Parliament, as I did on leaders at the regional and provincial levels. We did raise some money, and were about to hand out some of it, when we learned that the Mayor of Cavalese and a friend of his had other plans for it. Then we became extremely careful. The last I heard, the ski lift was rebuilt in a slightly different location, which allows it to go much lower than before, in case

another Marine aircraft comes along. That was about the best we could do in the circumstances. I don't know if people ever got full compensation.

Q: Probably not. I was in Naples when we had a major earthquake down there. This was 1980, and it's my understanding there are people still living in temporary housing.

GRIFFIN: I wouldn't be surprised.

Q: Before we leave Milano, I would like to ask you how was Berlusconi seen from your perspective and also the Northern Alliance and the politics of that area. And two other things: one is on Italian business. Did you find that it was similar to the oriental, sort of self-sealing to keep other people out? And the last one is: Did you have any insight on the Bosnian activities, or was it Kosovo at that time?

GRIFFIN: The simple answer to the latter is that I put the Consulate on the telegraphic addressee list of some military and State reporting for Bosnia, but I didn't get into the thick of it. I went to military intelligence headquarters in both Aviano and Verona, and got briefed on what they were doing. It was fascinating, with real-time views of bombing missions and so forth. But I didn't have time to pay attention to it daily, though I tried for awhile. I thought I should know the basics because I was being asked why we were there. My usual response to the Italians was, "Well, why are you there?"

Q: Okay, having served in the Orient and other places, about Italian business and how open were they to American initiatives.

GRIFFIN: Good question.

Q: Let's talk first about the politics of the north. We're looking at megaterms. Italian politics is sort of broken; things have broken up. There's no longer the CDU trouncing the communists but changing the same people over and over again for about 30 or 40 years. How is this change working as far as Berlusconi and the Northern League and all this? How was this playing out during your time up in Milan?

GRIFFIN: Well, Italian politics is still something of a revolving door, and today Mr. Berlusconi is back in the job, after being ousted a couple of times. When I first got to Milan, his government had collapsed. Most of the time I was there, Romano Prodi was Prime Minister. He led a leftist coalition government, which didn't last either. Most northern Italians – especially the Milanese, but also the Torinese, the Venetians and the Veronese – consider themselves more important than people further south, and say so publicly. They think they're far more clever, and know they make more money. It's one of their political rallying cries. They say, "We pay all the taxes, then all our money goes south and disappears into the black hole of the Mezzogiorno." Having created a giant television network, having broken the monopoly of RAI – *Radio Italiana*, radio and TV – Berlusconi fills the airways with glorious views of himself, which helps him get elected. He appears on regular programs on his channels, all of which are based in Milan.

There is a sort of coalition of very big businessmen in the north. Most manufacturing is in the

north. Not all of it, but certainly most of it. Berlusconi can get along with the uncrowned king of Italy, Gianni Agnelli, of Fiat. They don't share the same politics, but they certainly know each other and can get along. I got to know Umberto Bossi better than Berlusconi or Agnelli, partly because he needed allies and was willing to stoop to the level of Consul General much more quickly than Berlusconi. One of Bossi's lieutenants, a man named Fiorentini, was Mayor of Milan when I arrived. He's very personable; very much a back-slapping politician, and he wanted our cook. I wasn't about to give her up, but every time Fiorentini was invited to our apartment, he came. He loved her cooking. We made a running joke of it, saying he was trying to steal her, and that I was fighting back. Ketti knew that the American Consulate General was going to last longer than Fiorentini, no matter how many incumbents we had. She likes to work there.

Fiorentini was instrumental in getting Bossi and me together. But the first time he came to our place was to meet Ambassador Bartholomew. He seemed taken aback by Reggie's aggressive style. The Ambassador tried to get Bossi to say whether he had enough votes to play a major role again in Parliament. One of Bossi's platform planks is that the north can ignore Rome because it is unimportant. He talks loudly about separating the north off and forming a new country called Padania. It's an old name that supposedly came from the Po Valley, the alleged homeland of the Celts of northern Italy. One of Bossi's heroes, whom he talks about at length, was the main character in *Braveheart*, the movie that Mel Gibson made about Scottish nationalism.

Q: With William, was it, Douglas?

GRIFFIN: I guess so. Bossi had it on video and would watch the film at least once a week, to build up his spirits, I suppose. The Padania crowd talked about independence, and were quite strong in the sub-Alpine region north of Milan around some of the famous lakes. He's back in Parliament again. He brought down Berlusconi in 1995 by walking out of the coalition. In their first meeting, Ambassador Bartholomew tried to press Bossi as to whether he would ever join another coalition with Berlusconi. He said sure, if things were right. The Ambassador thought Berlusconi would be foolish to join with Bossi again, and told him so. It didn't make much difference because they're once again in coalition in Rome. That's politics. I don't think the Padania movement is as strong today as it was when I was there, but Bossi certainly has enough votes to make a difference in Parliament. He will play national politics despite what he claims to think of the rest of Italy, and still be reelected. He makes a fetish of being very difficult to understand. He speaks a dialect of Milanese that is almost impossible for a non-native to comprehend. He certainly speaks Italian, but usually sticks to Milanese, saying Italian is a foreign language, and gets even more votes. That makes it difficult for me and other foreigners who don't speak the dialect to understand. He doesn't speak English.

Q: Obviously this is something you kept a watching brief on. Were there any elements to this that caused us disquiet other than the break-up of Italy?

GRIFFIN: That was, of course, the most important element. As a close NATO partner, and given what was going on to the east in Bosnia and Kosovo, our continued access to Italian military facilities was extremely important. So any talk of breaking up the country was not something we liked to hear. Every time we met I tried to reason with Bossi, asking how he could think of

splitting Italy. He said he had nothing against NATO, but that independent Padania would provide bases too. He didn't listen to suggestions that such a course might lead to civil war or suppression of his movement. He asserted that he would win. He claimed to have a low opinion of the U.S., but he didn't hesitate to come to my functions, or to talk to me. At my last big Fourth of July reception at the Castello, I put him and Albertini, the new Mayor of Milan, next to each other at our VIP table. The Mayor was certainly not a particular friend of Bossi, and was a close ally of Berlusconi, but they got along just fine, and with all the other politicians who were there.

Q: This government sort of to the right that was going on, did this cause us any problems? Did we feel that there was an awful lot going on, corruption, influences...?

GRIFFIN: Well, I mentioned earlier that USIS had a program to assist the Clean Hands prosecutors in Milan. They were going after corruption after being instrumental in stopping some of the terrorism. They brought to trial and convicted several major figures in the Italian establishment, including some in the giant fashion industry. Armani and other big names were involved, as was Berlusconi and some Fiat executives, but Gianni Agnelli managed to dance away. USIS looked on this as a way to improve the health of the Italian political and economic system. It was a great program, and included not only the Clean Hands prosecutors in Milan, but others from Torino, Vicenza, Verona, Venice, Trieste, Pavia, and Genoa. I spent a lot of time with them, and introduced them to people from Transparency International in an effort to foster cleaner government and processes.

You asked about Italian business attitudes toward America. That's what I'm talking about right now. Many American businessmen complained about being asked for bribes as a prelude to business. When the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act came into force, they were prohibited from doing it, and they were tearing their hair. So I included some of them in meetings with the prosecutors and Transparency, as well as in some high-profile American businessmen who delivered that same message.

It was always a fight. We asked the American Chamber of Commerce to help us on the Italian side, both official and nonofficial, so Americans could market their goods more easily. That was of no interest to most of the members. When I tried to get the head of Westinghouse, who was an American, elected President, or at least Vice President of the Chamber, there was fierce resistance from the Italians, and he didn't make it.

Q: Let's say there's a contract put out by the government, say, to put up a new phone system or record system. How receptive were they?

GRIFFIN: It was a tough slog every time. The national telephone company is a miserable organization.

Q: If you want to make a long-distance call, people would say, "Well, I know somebody in the telephone company," you know, in order to help you make those long-distance calls.

GRIFFIN: But a new way was opened with the advent of cellular phones, which Italians call *telefonini*. That broke the back of the phone company, though we still had to use it for our office

lines. Now, virtually every Italian has a cellular phone permanently attached to his or her ear, and they talk all the time. Of course, they need one hand free to gesticulate, or it makes no sense. Getting Italians to shut up is almost impossible. Some people in this country are annoyed when people use cell phones on a train or airplane. With the Italians, it's non-stop everywhere, including in church. But they aren't allowed in La Scala. The first time one rang during a performance at La Scala, Conductor Riccardo Muti stopped the orchestra, turned around and told its owner to leave, or he would end the performance. American cellular phone companies tried hard to break into the market, but the Italians crawled into bed with Phillips, Ericson and Nokia, and locked the door. We tried to help several U.S. companies, but the rules were set and carefully restricted by Rome.

Our chief Commercial Officer thought trade fairs were the best approach because we could get past the Government to the consumers. By paying a small fee, anyone could come in to see American wares. Milan is one of the top two or three trade center venues in the world. It is an enormous facility, which hosts trade fairs almost constantly, and the Americans come and go. Our primary role was to help small business people; not General Motors and Kodak, though sometimes they came looking for help too. I always cut ribbons on opening day, to meet all the Americans and show them that we were there to help them. Our shop spent a lot of time setting up appointments for people seeking new markets in Italy, and it generally worked well. But when the big boys came, resistance became much stronger. It continues, but we're still trying. I wouldn't call it a closed shop, but the door is not wide open.

Q: Was the Communist Party of any consequence during the time you were there?

GRIFFIN: Some, but in the north it was flagging, and didn't amount to an awful lot, even in trade unions. It was big in Bologna and pretty firm in Tuscany, but elsewhere, no. I didn't pay attention to what it was doing in the south. Maybe you know.

Q: No, no, I hadn't spotted it.

GRIFFIN: They weren't that strong. The anarchists were just about as strong in Milan. They could make trouble for us, and did so. There were strong Northern League unions in the north, but not Communists.

JOHN A. BAKER, JR.
Political Officer
Rome (1960-1963)

U.S. Representative, World Food Program
Rome (1977-1979)

John A. Baker, Jr. was born in Connecticut. He received a bachelor's degree in international affairs from Yale University. From 1946-1949, Mr. Baker served in the U.S. Army and joined the Foreign service in 1950. His career included

positions in Yugoslavia, Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Washington, DC. Mr. Baker was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 23, 1992.

BAKER: I recall that I was about to leave for Italy when we ended our last discussion. There was one particular aspect of my tour in Italy, maybe two, which might be worth commenting on.

My job there was in the political section. I was a second secretary. My job was to look after the left side of the Italian political spectrum. The left side included rather substantially the Communist Party of Italy, which at that time had about a quarter of the vote and a corresponding number of seats in parliament. The Socialist Party, headed by Nenni, had up until the mid-fifties, the Hungarian Revolution, been rather tight with the Communists in a sort of common front. They had about 10-12 percent of the vote. Then there were the Social Democrats headed by Saragat, a small party that had broken from the Socialists back in the forties. They broke over the issue of working with the Communists. They were people who wanted to support a Social Democratic outlook, but not to team up with the Communists the way the rest of the Socialist did. Then there was a Republican Party headed by Ugo LaMaifa, who was quite a seasoned politician and expert on budgetary and financial matters in the parliament. So those were the parties I looked after.

I also had to look after the far right of the spectrum which were the monarchists and the neo-Fascists. I didn't really spend a lot of time on them because they weren't in the government. They didn't represent a very dynamic or growing force in politics and they didn't seem to represent any threat either to public order or to American interests. If they came around and wanted to see somebody in the Embassy, I was the guy to talk to, but I didn't really spend a lot of time cultivating them.

I spent most of my time with the Republicans and the Social Democrats and the Socialists. Not the Communists because at that time you were advised not to have direct contacts with the Communist Party in Italy. The philosophy there was that if the American Embassy developed an overt relationship there with that party it would give it greater respectability as a democratic player than was considered to be justified or wise. So I had to gather most of my information on the Communist Party from reading their press and from talking to Italian experts on the Communist Party who wrote in journals and to talk with Socialists and Social Democratic politicians. Some of them were ex- Communists and had experience in the party and knowledge of the individuals in it.

That was the kind of job I had.

Q: For somebody looking at this and see "cultivate" could you explain what a political officer with an assignment to report on the left wing in Italy, what did you do?

BAKER: That's a good question. When you go in there and have that job like this your predecessor, who has been handling those contacts, often will have an occasion before he leaves at which he introduces you to the people that he thinks are valuable and informative and interested in having a contact with the United States. That is one way. The other thing you do is

read the press and if you see an interesting article by a journalist or politician, you call him up and say, "That's a very interesting article you wrote. I would like to stop by if you have time and talk to you about it." Usually that is a little bit flattering and they say, "Yes, that will be very nice." You then arrange to meet with him or have a drink or take him out to lunch and that leads, you hope, at least to an acquaintance and perhaps to a friendship.

Of course, one of the things that you always have in your quiver is the potential of a Leader Grant program. The United States has a fine program that the USIA runs. Italian politicians took advantage of that program when they were selected and I think some of them felt that if they got to know someone and had a good relationship with the Embassy it might result eventually in an invitation to the Leader Grant program, and sometimes it did.

So that, plus the fact that Italian politicians generally are quite approachable...they are not inclined to put you off and regard you as interlopers as the politicians of some other countries. The United States had a very strong standing in Italy. It is quite influential in Italy. So if you were representing the American Embassy in Italy, mostly they would be inclined to talk with you. Provided you got on top of the language, there wasn't great difficulty in establishing contact.

Q: One of the things that always interested me in the Embassy's reporting on politics...we are talking now about the 1960-63 period...going from 1950 up until the end of the seventies, the basic combination of political parties and their relative standing didn't change a great deal. The Christian Democrats were running things with some help from some of the more moderate parties. The Communist Party had their quarter to a third percent. Yet we seem to report on the minuet that seemed to be going on within the Italian government. Did you ever feel that this was nice but to what avail our reporting on the Italians?

BAKER: You are leading up to the principal issue of that period which took most of my attention. There were two issues that I was concerned with. One was the growth of the Italian Communist Party. Was it growing, why and where? Had it recovered from the pasting it took because of the Soviet Union's intervention in Budapest in the fifties? That was one question. Were they, so to speak, on the march in spite of the fact that you were having the beginnings of the Italian economic miracle?

The other issue was this, if the Communists were advancing and if the Christian Democratic Party was not gaining ground, would the democratic center of the spectrum get dangerously thin. You had the four parties -- the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats, the Republicans and the Liberal Party, which was liberal in the conservative economic sense and not wanting too much government in business, etc., but not being clerical...that was their difference with the Christian Democrats, they were not linked to the Church. Those four parties had basically been running Italy since 1947, but together their majority in parliament had been shrinking from somewhere over 60 percent down to something getting close to the low 50s. So the question was, how or whether you should try to enlarge the democratic camp by bringing in the Socialist Party. That was the real debate of the early sixties. It was called the *apertura a sinistra*, the opening to the left. Should those four parties open to the left and bring the Socialist Party into the game? And then the question was on what terms should the Socialist Party come into the democratic

center game? What would have to be given up or changed for them to come into the game?

Into that equation came the problem of how serious the Communist growth was. If you saw it as serious, then you were more strongly motivated to deal with the Socialists. If you felt it was stable and would decline gradually because of the economic growth of Italy, then you would say, "Why should we yield any ground to these wavering Socialists, half of whom still want to be close to the Communists and half of whom seem to be ready to cooperate with the center?"

The Embassy, itself, was not of one mind on the matter. Nor was the administration in Washington. The impression one had in Washington was that the White House, and particularly Arthur Schlesinger, who was in the Kennedy White House, felt quite attracted by the idea of the opening of the left. Schlesinger even sort of idealized it as some kind of Italian New Deal, which was one of his favorite historical subjects. The Department of State, because of its concern with the solidity of Italian foreign policy and commitment to NATO seemed to have some reservations about whether it would be weakened by bringing the Socialists into the government or into some relationship with the government.

In the Embassy you also had the different views. The Ambassador, Frederick Reinhardt, was sort of holding his peace on the matter to see how things developed. He was quite careful about taking any posture on that. His deputy, Outerbridge Horsey, was automatically opposed to the idea of the opening to the left. He was a rather conservative man of Catholic persuasion and seemingly closer to those parts of the Christian Democratic Party who had a lot of reservations about it. The senior guy in the political section who followed the Italian political affairs, George Lister, who is still around, I think, in the Department or as a consultant to the Department, was strongly in favor and felt that it was something that should be encouraged and supported. So one suddenly found that one was in a fairly charged atmosphere where one's orientation on this issue was being closely monitored, not in any spooky way, but people would just be waiting to see how you lined up when that matter came into discussion.

Q: Did your Eastern European background as far as assignment go make you a suspect among the Western Europeanists there?

BAKER: Not really, because there had been a tradition of having the person who monitored the Italian Communist Party be a person who had had experience in the Communist world as a diplomat. My predecessors in that function had also come out of an experience with international Communism, rather than with Western European politics. So I was not an aberration in having that background. But I fairly early on perceived that the Italian Communist Party was quite a special animal and had its own traditions. It was rather over towards the less revolutionary side of the international Communist movement and was trying domestically to present a non-revolutionary face in order not to lose and perhaps regain the links with the Socialist Party and to restrain -- to break, if possible -- the trend towards pulling the Socialists toward the center.

I think the Communists perceived that should the Socialists in effect join the center then they would be lost to a future return to the leftist front, so to speak. So they played down their "revolutionary" side and their links to Moscow. Nevertheless, they still had to wave the revolutionary banner every so often on the required occasions.

They were still going to those international Communist movement gatherings which took place in the sixties. They often occurred at the time of the congresses of the East European parties. One of them occurred in late 1960 at the Romanian Communist Party Congress. The Italian Communists came back from there with the news that there had been a serious altercation between the Chinese and the Soviet parties. It had taken the form of taking a different stand with respect to the Albanian party. But the Italian Communists were not deceived that this was all directed at the Albanian party and understood that this was a proxy way of illustrating a developing rift.

That was one of the early signs of the Sino-Soviet rift. We gathered information on it and reported it in some detail to the State Department, but it did seem to us that there was some time before that was taken seriously as a significant change in the international Communist movement. By way of illustrating the function of the Italian Communist Party, I think it is interesting that the news about that came out largely and first through the Italian Communist Party, which, like other Italians, tended to be more talkative and less secretive than other parties in the movement.

Anyway, by about 1962 it became clear that the leader of the Christian Democrats, Aldo Moro, was getting ready to make a gradual opening to the left and since the Italian governments were falling and being reconstituted fairly frequently then, there was an occasion in the fall of 1962 to construct a government which, while not having the Socialist Party in it, would depend on the Socialist Party for parliamentary support. This would be a government of the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and the Republicans and with the parliamentary support of the Socialists.

But as this began to take shape, alarm bells rang in several places because of the concern that this was the first step in bringing the Socialists into the government. There was a lot of concern about whether the commitment to NATO would have to be somehow softened because the Socialist had taken a posture critical of NATO or whether the deal would basically be made over domestic issues. Finally, it came down to the point as to whether the Embassy would recommend using its rather good connections with strong parts of the Christian Democratic Party to actually make a strong advisory against such a combination. In effect, go to Moro or to people who would influence Moro and say, "Don't do this. This is dangerous. It is dangerous to Italy. It is dangerous to the alliance and perhaps dangerous to the American-Italian relationship."

So that issue was laid out in a meeting that took place in the Embassy at which I was present along with the head of the political section and the station chief and various other players.

Q: What was the CIA attitude, at least in country, towards the Communists?

BAKER: Well, at that time the Agency had a fairly active set of activities in support of different programs in the democratic center parties, particularly the Christian Democratic Party. So they were following things very closely and had their own set of contacts with Italian politicians. It was sometimes awkward for some of us on the overt side. The inclination of the station chief was like the inclination of the Minister, to be concerned and cautious about the opening to the left,

and to be ready to use assets to obstruct it. So the general discussion was about whether or not one should do that.

Well, by that time I had come to the conclusion that Italy was in a fairly good state of economic development. The leader of its largest party, the Christian Democrats, was an experienced politician, a very judicious man. We weren't talking about a struggling democracy in the wake of World War II, we were talking about a system which had been operational for 17 years after World War II. So I offered the view that I thought we would be taking a heavy responsibility on our selves to try to guide the Italian choice in this matter at this stage in their development. And furthermore, based on contacts I had with the Socialist Party, I did not think they would seriously condition Italy's foreign policy. I thought that they would choose to make their impact and their price for coming into the arrangement more in the domestic area where the concerns of their electorate were more strong. I took the view "Let's not be cheerleaders for the opening to the left, but let's not try to block it either. Let's treat the Italian political leadership as if they had come of age and they have to make their choices and go down with them or win with them, whatever."

I am not aware of everything that happened after that meeting or of everything that might have or might not have been done, but I do know that the Christian Democratic Party did go ahead and make their deal. Basically the price of their deal was the nationalization of the Italian electric industry. It probably wasn't a helluva good idea, but it didn't cost the NATO alliance or American national interest a whole lot. And since that time, of course, the Socialist Party the following year came into the government and its leaders began to have ministerial posts and in the next 20 or 30 years it became just another left of center party in Italy, occasionally holding the prime ministership.

Q: Did you have the feeling, particularly because you were coming from outside...people who serve in Italy tend to come back, and back and back. I was Consul General in Naples and was surrounded by old Italian hands both in the Consulate and the Embassy. Did you have the feeling that we were taking much more of a propriety view and almost patronizing view of the Italian body politics than say in other European countries?

BAKER: I hadn't served in other Western European countries so I couldn't make that comparison, but it was my impression that we were pretty heavily engaged. It probably went back to the fact that we were the principal liberating power in Italy at the end of the war. We were the government that weighed in very heavily through Italian-American organizations and the Church, etc. in 1948 when it looked like there was a real threat that there might be a Socialist-Communist victory right in the period of the Berlin Blockade and all that. So we did weigh in heavily and I think ever since that period we had a sort of structure for being in a somewhat patronizing position and a lot of Italians were not only used to it but even played into it. Their politicians wanted the support and blessing of the American power. But it did seem to me by the time I got there in 1960 that this was perhaps more than it should be at that stage in history. That's I think why when the chips came on the table, I reacted in the way I did in that discussion.

Q: Any other issues that you were involved with? How did we view Italy as part of NATO?

BAKER: One of the things that was going on at that time...I wasn't involved in it because I wasn't handling relationships with the Foreign Ministry. The chief of the political section did that. But there was this ill-fated effort to create the multilateral force. The idea was that there would be some kind of jointly managed ships that would sail around the periphery of Europe armed with intermediate missilery, etc. That would be a way of creating a nuclear counter threat to the Russian bloc that would not just be an American one. Well, that never did fly. It had a fair amount of criticism on the left of the Italian spectrum and it was the kind of issue that, of course, was particularly uncomfortable for the Socialists, because they were not only lukewarm towards NATO but they were strongly anti-nuclear. So waving that issue around was something that tended to put something of a strain on the process of bringing the Socialists into the central area of the democratic spectrum.

I felt relieved that I did not have to play a particularly active role in hawking that particular proposal.

Q: Anything else?

BAKER: No. The evolution of the Communist movement as perceived through the Italian Communists and the opening to the left were the two aspects of my three years there that stand out in my mind.

Q: You moved from that to going out to Rome from 1977-79 doing what?

BAKER: Well, I went out to Rome as the US representative to the food aid agencies.

Q: FAO?

BAKER: Yes, the FAO; the World Food Program; the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which was a new bank that was set up this time designed to draw in all that Middle Eastern oil money that had come out of the huge fortunes oil producing countries made out of the energy crisis in 1973; and then the World Food Council which was created because of the concern that population was growing and hunger was growing in the world.

All that came about because of the change in administration. In 1977, the Carter Administration came in and appointed a new Assistant Secretary for IO. He wanted, obviously, new deputies who would be with him for a four year period so those of us who were there were up for the usual scramble to try to get embassies and equivalent posts abroad because we knew we would not be kept on, didn't expect to be kept on because when administrations change they always assume that if you worked for the previous administration at that level that you were somehow on the other team.

I guess I was somewhat marked by certain parts of Washington public opinion because I had been the organizer of the campaign to improve our results in the General Assembly and some people in the Carter camp thought that was hardball and the whole Carter foreign policy was much more North/South oriented at the outset. Eventually, with Afghanistan and arms control, it went back to its East/West axis. But it came in with a North/South flavor and human rights, etc.

So, I guess I was seen by some of those people as part of the bad old Kissinger team. That didn't help me a whole lot in coming out of the change with a big time assignment abroad. And I was also disadvantaged by the fact that the Assistant Secretary asked me to stay on initially, although I knew it wouldn't be for terribly long. But it was long enough that it kept me from competing for some of the posts I might otherwise have had a run at.

Anyway, I wound up working for the new Administration for about six or seven months as deputy and then getting to be chief of the small mission in Rome to the food aid agencies. But it was not an ambassadorial post, it was elevated to a ministerial post and, of course, next time around because a Congresswoman was interested in the job, it became an ambassadorial post.

Q: Fenwick.

BAKER: Yes. It was a pleasant place to be. I had served in Rome before, as you know, and I like Rome, spoke Italian and the job had a lot of autonomy. I knew the ambassador well, Dick Gardner. He was instrumental in my being nominated out there. Although he was very interested in the United Nations, he soon discovered that the Italian scene was going to take his full time, so he was pleased to have me do everything that had to be done at those international organizations -- to represent the United States in their governing bodies, etc.

Q: What were the prime concerns when you were there?

BAKER: Curiously enough, although these agencies were primarily aimed at the problems of the developing world, and although the Carter Administration had a strong orientation towards North/South relations in the developing world, my instructions had to do mostly with holding down budgetary growth and keeping the organizations' costs from ballooning. The principal thing that tended to make them balloon was that the Director General, who had been chosen by third world majority and was a Lebanese, was busily cultivating his constituency by creating a program of technical assistance grants, which was very much under his own personal management. This program was laid on to the regular budget and tended to cause it to grow. The slogan that I was instructed to work for was zero real growth. It was my job to organize the principal contributor countries to the FAO as a group to act in the governing bodies of the FAO to control cost. So that made me about as popular as a skunk at a picnic. The Director General very soon identified me as his principal nemesis in town and although I had polite relations with him and always did the right thing from a protocol standpoint, it was a fairly stiff relationship over those years.

In the World Food Program, it was a little bit different because that program does not have a regular budget with assessed contributions. It operates on the basis of voluntary contributions from the members, and the United States, having originally suggested that organization back in the days when McGovern was finding ways to move our large agricultural surpluses in constructive ways, was a major contributor of food, of wheat, powdered milk and flour. The whole idea was to try to get those commodities to countries that needed them because they were hungry but then to distribute them to hungry people who did work in work projects of a development nature. So the food-for-work program was a significant part of that organization's work. The program ran into the usual hazards of how do you land and protect and handle food in

tropical areas in developing countries and keep track of it and cut down on waste, spoilage and pilfering, etc. But it had dedicated people working for it. The US AID was the principal agency back in Washington that was responsible for our input into that agency.

AID was also significant in IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which we helped get started out there in 1977.

So it was that sort of work. I didn't feel that I was at the cutting edge of American foreign policy exactly...

THOMAS W. FINA
European Integration Trainee,
John Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS)
Bologna (1960-1961)

Consul General
Milan (1973-1979)

Thomas W. Fina was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1924 and was raised in Allentown and Winchester, Massachusetts. He attended Northeastern University Business School; after one year of study, he was drafted into the U.S. Air Force, where he served in Naples. Following his military service, Mr. Fina received a bachelor's degree in government from Harvard University as well as a master's degree. His career in Foreign Service included positions in Paris, Luxembourg, Brussels, and Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 21, 1992.

FINA: That assignment came to an end in 1960. Without my having asked, the Department transferred me to Bologna, to the John Hopkins Center of Advanced International Studies. They had a branch there, a school that specialized in European integration affairs, which was run by Prof C. Grove Haines who had been a professor at the School of Advanced International Studies here in Washington. Haines had created this idea of a school that would bring together graduate students from Europe and America in roughly equal numbers together with an international faculty to concentrate on the study of European integration. This was 1960, only two years after the signature of the Treaty of Rome.

Well, I thought going to Bologna was a great idea, but I didn't believe in European integration. I thought that it was highly improbable. The conflict between the French, the Germans, the Italians, the age-old rivalries seemed to me more likely to prevail than some idealistic scheme. It turned out that my experience in Bologna completely changed my views on that. I left Bologna convinced that the new Europeans really had something. The Bologna Center brought political and academic leaders from all over Western Europe, whom Haines had recruited to give regular lectures on what was going on. They excited me and thrilled me, about what they were doing to deal with the problems of post-war Europe. And since I had been very much interested in

European history as an under-graduate student, what they were doing just made so much sense in terms of their interests, and the interests of the United States, that I got very excited about it.

After that assignment of an academic year in Bologna, I was transferred to Luxembourg, where the United States had a small mission to the European Coal and Steel Community which had been the first of the three community bodies that eventually became the European Community.

Q: Just to go back to this while you were as a student looking at this, but these are future leaders, I mean you were going to be involved in this. What was the view of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as regards the European situation? Where did they fit in?

FINA: They were clearly adversaries. The Soviet Union appeared to be very monolithic. It was opposed to European unification. The Soviets saw it simply as a tool of NATO, or at least so they described it. They saw it as part of our aggressive effort to destroy, or at any rate to counter their efforts, whatever they may have been. From their point of view, European integration was bad news. There is no doubt that our support for European unification was in part, but I believe only in marginal part, motivated by Cold War considerations. Maybe marginal is too small a proportion, maybe it ought to be half and half as I think more about it. Because our view at the time was, and it had grown out of the analysis of the causes of the Second World War, that somehow you had to find a way of avoiding the conflict between France and Germany. One way of doing this was along the lines of the proposals that had been made by Jean Monnet and picked up by Robert Schuman to create a united Europe. Secretary Dulles was a very strong advocate of that. He certainly was in every way a main supporter in the United States of achieving this goal. We did an incredible amount behind the scenes to try to grease the skids, and oil the wheels, and whatever else you had to do to bring this about. We were active behind the scenes movers of this activity. And we did it in part, and maybe in equal part, because we thought it was necessary to rebuild the world economy in a dynamic expanding way to benefit our own economy, and which would also would have a spin-off for the Third World which we were concerned about. A way of stimulating the entire world economy at a time that you had the Soviet Union, and China, sequestered over on the side, largely at their own initiative. And at the same time it was a way of making Western Europe resistant to the appeals of Eastern European Communists.

In the end I believe that was one of the most creative and certainly the most successful of all of the policies that this country has pursued in this century. Our support for European unification, and even before that, for the rebuilding of Europe as a dynamic, open, competitive, democratic society, was in the end, I think, the thing that destroyed Communism. Because as the Communists looked across the Iron Curtain and saw these Western European democracies which were, and are, in all respects, as democratic as any country can be that we know in our day. They had achieved standards of living which were still the theoretical (though elusive and distant) objective of Communist societies throughout the rest of the world. They had achieved their prosperity without sacrificing individual freedoms. They had preserved individual dignity. They had improved the standard of living. They had improved the quality of life for their citizens to an extent that left the Soviet world completely in the dust. And in the latter years of the 1980s, of course, this contrast between the incredible prosperity of a democratic Western Europe, and an increasingly impoverished, repressive and bureaucratized East, is what drove the East to its collapse. It was the example of successful mixed economy and democratic government.

All that, after all, was the result of the thinking of the post-war generation which analyzed why the First and Second World Wars had occurred, and what was needed to rebuild a world economy along idealistic lines. That concept of what the world should be has come to fruition in our period. But we now find ourselves without the kind of intellectual leadership, or intellectual foresight, about what happens next. The great promise of the post-war planners and thinkers has been realized and that cycle has come to an end. The new cycle now beginning is in many ways much more difficult to deal with, largely because there's a lack of intellectual preparation for what you do next. Anyway, that was the way it appeared at the time when I got involved.

Q: Still, but moving up, a youngish man dealing with this from the United States, you were talking to other people and all from the Western European powers, how did you see, again at the time, representatives of other Western European countries feel about the role of the United States? I mean, here we were sort of an upstart country over there, and there was a term coca cola colonization. But on the ground how did American representatives, and these Western Europeans at the working level, feel about this?

FINA; Well, I think one has to say to begin that from my point of view, I was working in a special community. Once I entered the world of European integration which began in Luxembourg after my brain washing at the Bologna Center, until I left the Foreign Service, I was pretty much involved with people who were intellectually committed to the achievement of a united Europe as a major benefit to the United States. Their views inevitably were somewhat different from those of the traditional state, or government, leadership. They were the people who had moved into this particular aspect of their government's foreign affairs because they were committed to it. So that's one thing to be said.

The other people I dealt with were just ordinary, non- government people, on a private basis. The reservoir of goodwill towards the United States that I found in Western Europe, and all my experience after all was in Western Europe, was absolutely astonishing. The people whom I have known in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, the Benelux countries, Germany, showed tremendous admiration for what the United States did in the First and Second World Wars, and what it did afterwards. That doesn't mean that there wasn't plenty of criticism, but the basic goodwill towards the United States was and, although it is somewhat fading, still is a very powerful factor in our relations with these people. Now, there's lots of criticism of specific US government policies. But there is a distinction between the criticism that foreigners have of a specific government policy, whether it was the execution of the Rosenbergs, or our intervention in Guatemala, or our intervention in Panama, or various of the other of our post-war adventures, or the criticism of a given president. Those things are at one level. But the basic approval, and admiration, for our society that underpins all of our relations with Europe, is at another level. This is a vast reservoir which one can always draw upon if one has the wit to do it, the understanding that it's there, and if one remains consistent with our own ideals.

So while there were lots of complaints about coca cola colonization, and while I was involved in the chicken war in which the European communities tried to keep out exports of Arkansas chickens, basically those were superficial matters. They never affected the fundamental stability of our relationship because of our agreement upon the real things that counted, the commitment

to democratic government, the commitment to a mixed economy, a commitment to an expanded and reciprocal world trade, and a great commitment to human civil rights. So, yes, lots of criticism but all that stuff is sort of the day-to-day up-and-down that comes and goes with changing administrations. But did not affect the rock solid foundation of our good relations with all of the European countries. That would be my answer.

Q: You might explain what it was.

FINA: I was assigned to Milan as Consul General, and that was the first sort of normal Foreign Service assignment that I had ever had. I'd begun in intelligence research which was an odd-ball thing. I'd been assigned to Europe to the OECD which was an odd-ball thing, the European communities were odd-ball, back in the Department backing them up was out of the usual track, the same could be said for Congressional Relations, and the Arms Control. They were all tangential to what is thought of as sort of the core activity of the Department of State which usually centers around starting as a vice consul, and becoming an ambassador.

So this job as Consul General was pretty interesting, and going back to Italy was especially attractive to me because since I had gotten out of Italian affairs, after my disagreement with the Department's position on the separation of the communists and the socialists back in the 1950s. It had taken, what, 20 some years to overcome that particular little problem? And in the end I only got this job because of the friendship of Republicans!

Q: I was going to say, having myself been forced down the caw of the EUR establishment somewhat later as Consul General to Naples, I know these Consul General jobs, particularly in Italy are held like little jewels in the EUR establishment hands, and you didn't belong to anybody's establishment.

FINA: No, I was not a member of the EUR inner circle, to say the least. What happened was that, in Congressional Relations the White House assigned one of its people from Kissinger's staff to the Department to be the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. David Abshire had wanted to put me in that job, and he told me that he was nominating me for Deputy Assistant Secretary, which I thought would be great. I was enjoying the job enormously, I liked the Congress, I liked what I was doing. Even if I was out of sympathy with the Nixon administration the things that I was doing were things that I believed in. I wasn't obliged to do things on Vietnam where I was increasingly uncertain, and the Nixon administration position on keeping troops in NATO, and on multilateral trade negotiations, GATT, and so on, those were all things of which I was very supportive as I was of some of their other activities.

So I was glad for the opportunity to get on, and David proposed me as Deputy Assistant Secretary. Unfortunately, the White House must have gotten wind of the fact that I had views that were not exactly safe Republican views, and I was black-balled. I'd moved into the office, I was settling my papers in the desk, I was feeling hot-dog, I'd made it. And then the announcement came that, in fact, I had not made it, and the White House wouldn't approve.

So that increased my interest in leaving H, and going somewhere else. Then Personnel told me that this job was up in Milan, there were a lot of competitors for it. But interestingly enough, the

guy who had been brought over from the White House to fill the job that I had thought that I was going to get, was a 32-year old Republican whiz kid, who had restaffed the Arms Control Agency after Nixon's second term, and cleaned out all the guys who had been responsible for the SALT negotiations because that had been part of the political deal that Senator Jackson had made with the White House. The conservatives were being paid off by purging all these people of dubious wisdom who were in the Arms Control, and in the Department of State, for their role in the SALT treaties. Anyway, this guy appeared on the scene and he knew nothing about nothing when it came to the Department of State or foreign affairs. However, I rapidly discovered he was a very attractive person, and he was open to learning, was interested, and very candid about what he was doing, and what he had been doing in the White House. He escaped the Watergate thing by a hair although his buddies were implicated and dragged through the courts and the hearings, etc., but he, Stanton D. Anderson by name, escaped all that. Anyway, I became very fond of him. I thought he was really a very able, well-intentioned, and intelligent person, who wanted to do the right thing. And he rapidly caught on to what he was supposed to do. I thought he was very impressive.

Anyway, about that time, I found out about the Milan job, and it kept escaping from my grasp. There were always further meetings, there were always further problems, there were other candidates. In the end there were supposed to be objections by other agencies to my getting this job. I'd been keeping Stan Anderson informed of this, and he said, "Why don't I see what I can find out about this." After all, he had been in the personnel business in the White House, and had been fixing these things. So he called the Secretary of Agriculture, whose name I mercifully forget, and found out that he really didn't give a damn about who was assigned there although I had been told by Personnel that the obstacle to my getting Milan was that Agriculture had put a hold on it. The Byzantine life of the personnel business.

Anyway, Stan made a couple more telephone calls, and I was presently informed that in fact I had been paneled and I had gone through, and I was going to be Consul General in Milan. So I owe that, not to my buddies in the Foreign Service, but to a Republican, and a Nixon Republican at that!

Q: I might add that right now that you're...what's your title, what you're doing right now? We're talking about this is the election year of 1992. You're doing what?

FINA: I'm Executive Director of Democrats Abroad, which is the overseas arm of the Democratic Party.

Q: Okay, now let's go back.

FINA: Well, Stan Anderson, after leaving the Department I might say, has had a very successful career. I forget whether he made his first hundred million, or whatever it was very shortly thereafter. He's now running a lobbying firm here in town, and he's been a lobbyist for the Japanese and one of the principal organizers of the Republican conventions. Anyway, suffice it to say that I would never have gotten a decent job after Congressional Relations, if it hadn't been for the friendship of this Nixonian Republican.

So I went to Milan, and found it a rather dismal post, run down, sort of neglected, and with a long tradition of trying to do as little as possible because the embassy didn't really want other people second guessing it on political, or economic, things. You were supposed to stick to airgrams about local agricultural affairs, or something like that, but certainly not be involved in anything that the political section in Rome cared about. Well, inasmuch as I was interested in everything, I was into everything. and I wanted to make the Consulate function the way I thought a government office should. It should serve the public.

So my period there was one of, I would guess, relatively high profile. I got rid of people whom I thought were not doing anything, and I insisted that we do various things. We remodeled the Consulate, got in new contemporary furniture (Knoll) since I wanted Milan to see that we were living in the present, creative world. We took down partitions which allowed local employees to close their doors and be insulated from that nasty public out there that wanted visas or other services. I opened it all up so that there was no place you could hide from the public. That was a revolutionary concept when I got there, but I wanted both the consuls, and the local employees, to be serving the public whether it was the American public, or the Italian public. I figured we were there to serve them. And I wanted them out, visible and available, and being nice to people. Well, there was a lot of time spent on doing things like that, some deadwood in the locals who were hard to get rid of but eventually they retired, or we moved them, or something. And I thought that the Consulate became a pretty effective and active place, because I asked a lot.

I gave people a lot of responsibility and I urged them to do things. My theory was that we should know everybody in our Consular district, which incidentally ran from the Turin consular district, which was Piedmont, all the way to Trieste. We had the whole of northern Italy down almost as far as Bologna, a big consular district. And I wanted to know everybody who counted, and I wanted them to know us. I wanted our people to go out and visit them, to find out what they were doing, and to know them before the problems arose so that when something happened, we could call up and go see someone who already knew us. We shouldn't have to make the acquaintance of some guy for the first time when we needed him. So we drew up lists of the people who counted, and assigned them to people as their contacts, and we went out and did it. I traveled a lot through the consular district, constantly calling on all the right people, the prefect, the bishop, the cardinals, the leaders of industry, trade union leaders, all the political parties and the press.

Another aspect of my tenure in Milan was having a very active social schedule. I tried to know everyone who counted politically or economically. That meant a lot of entertaining. To do that within the rather tight budget that I had, nearly all was done at our residence. My wife supervised it all and did all of the shopping. In one year we had some 1,500 guests!

My access was increased when I became Dean of the Consular Corps in Milan. There was a large consular community and some friction between it and the government for very silly reasons. The Mexican Consul General made a big fuss about the Prefect not giving an annual dinner for the Consular Corps! I tried to clear that up and turned it into a quite active group which gave me further entre to both the consular community and to the Italian community. It was a lot of work, but it advanced the interests of the United States.

Our residence was a new apartment that we had leased and furnished with contemporary

furnishings and art. I had small lunches there with every sort of local leader and we also had larger receptions on July 4 which reached out to the broadest range of Italians. I did not want to spend our limited funds on the American community, so I organized a community picnic funded with private donations. That worked pretty well except that our Foreign Service people got stuck with all the dirty work. So that had some drawbacks.

I was in a very happy position at this time of having John Volpe, a Massachusetts Republican, as ambassador. He arrived in Rome a day or two before I arrived in Milan.

John Volpe was an unusual man. He was a Republican, and I was a (closet) Democrat, although I didn't advertise the fact. He was a very energetic and committed Catholic. I was an atheist. He was a sort professional Italo-American which I certainly wasn't. But he had a lot of qualities which I very much respected. And one of the first things he did, which has endeared him to me ever since, was that he changed our policy with respect to dealing with the Communists. From the time that I had entered the Department of State in the 1950s, until I got to Milan in 1973, it had been forbidden for Foreign Service Officers to deal with Communists. Until the 1960s you had not been permitted to speak with many socialists. Well, I thought that was absolutely idiotic. And I was so delighted when...I forget how it came about, but I asked for authority to deal with everybody, to talk to everybody, to report on everybody. And Bob Beaudry, who was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Rome to Volpe, a very fine career Foreign Service Officer, a very professional guy...I don't know how he brought it about, but at any rate Volpe agreed. And Volpe believed in it. His view was, that if you didn't talk to the enemy and understand them, how could you possibly know how to cope with the problems they were creating for you. So eminently sensible, but that was a politician, that wasn't a professional diplomat. That was a man who had lived his political life competing with, and rubbing shoulders with his Democratic opposition in Massachusetts. He had a much more sophisticated view of dealing with your political enemies than this very ideological approach that I think the Foreign Service had taken, and which was undoubtedly caused in large part by the McCarthy period.

Well, suffice it to say, that I began my contacts by dealing with all the political parties, and wherever I went whether it was Milan, or Venice, or anywhere else, I methodically saw them all. I saw the Christian Democrats, the socialists, the communists, the neo-fascists, whoever it was that was a political party, who counted. I wanted to go around and meet them, and interview them, and hear what they had to say. I did that in every provincial capital of my territory...it seems to me there were ten, or something like that, or twelve.

Q: It's amazing how divided as Italy is to areas (overlap conversation)

FINA: There's a great deal of decentralization, and long cultural history for all these places like Mantua, or Varese, or Verona, and Como. Each one of those places is a little society, and a little world. My objective was to go and see them all, talk to them all, find out what they had to say. So I began a series of telegrams, not airgrams, called "Cable from Mantua". Each place I went to I wrote a reporting cable.

Well, those cables gave me great grief, and great pleasure. I love to write, and I love to report, and I dealt with all the major political, and economic issues, that faced these areas. I reported

with as much candor as possible without regard to whether that jibed or didn't jibe with the political views of either the ambassador or the political section, or much less, the desk in Washington. I believed strongly that somebody ought to be telling it the way it is. You may draw different conclusions, but my job was to tell you what they're saying in Mantua, and what they're doing in Bergamo, or what they're saying and what they're doing in Trento, or what they're saying and doing elsewhere. You owe it to your government to tell it exactly the way you see it. Washington can disregard your truth. It can conclude you're wrong, but you should never fix your reporting to suit your listeners. And that's what I did.

Well, the ambassador was very good about that. He was very supportive. The political section in Rome, I think, had a constant case of indigestion from these cables. One reason for that was that I sent them as cables, and therefore they got back to the Department of State, and somebody read them. Airgrams traditionally have gone to the researchers, and no one has paid any attention to them because you're submerged in material. And I wasn't interested in writing for the archives. My cables were sufficiently lively to be read. They not infrequently got passed up to the Secretary of State, and I heard about it. I heard about it in complaints from the embassy saying that I was getting too much attention for a point of view which was obviously wrong! All this business about how the communists were no longer communists, and how the Christian Democrats were stealing out of the public treasury. This thing only misled people back in the Department. You shouldn't do it.

On the other hand, Beaudry and the ambassador didn't try to stop me. I certainly didn't make any friends among the traditional right wing Foreign Service community. They didn't like being upstaged by a guy in Milan who was dealing with all the hot issues of the day, and with national level political leaders to whom I had access, and who were very, very willing to see me, and to talk with me. That included Cardinal Giovanni Colombo, who was the Archbishop of Milan, who at one time was in the running for the Papacy. I think he would have been very good, a very impressive man. On the other hand, it was his colleague the Patriarch of Venice who got the job, who in my view, was really a second rater. I had seen him regularly when I went to Venice. I always call on the Patriarch. An incredible experience to go Venice and call on the Patriarch of Venice, and you think of the history that lies behind him. But he really was not...

Q: *Who was this:*

FINA: This may have been Pope John Paul, anyway he's the Pope who had a very short reign.

Well, suffice it to say that I was busy reporting from all over the area, and obviously making the political section very unhappy. And, I guess, to make things worse, the ambassador started picking up my stuff as an example of what he wanted all consular posts to do. Some of them could and some of them couldn't. Some of them were interested and some of them weren't. If I had had only career aspirations, I would have done things differently. I had career aspirations, but I also had substantive interests in what I thought ought to be done.

Volpe was a fascinating man, but he certainly caused us all unlimited anguish because of his Italian-Americanism. I don't know whether you were there when...

Q: I wasn't there when he was there, but I heard about it.

FINA: He was such a nice, decent person in many ways, although he was pretty tight, I guess. The people who worked with him in Rome thought he was tight-fisted. I think what agonized us all was that when he'd come to visit, and we wanted ambassadorial visits...these pastoral progressions, around the country were important in public relations terms. He insisted upon speaking Italian, and while he speaks and spoke impeccable English, excellent grammatical English with a fine accent, no one could ever fault him on his English; when he shifted to Italian, it was just awful. He spoke, and speaks the Italian of an uneducated mountain peasant from central Italy. He's very articulate, and undoubtedly in Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts political milieu with lots of Italian immigrants, lots of people with that kind of a background who still speak kitchen Italian, it must have been a tremendous asset. But in Italy there is a racism something like that of the United States with regard to blacks, and it's based on your cultural level, or your social standing. The minute you open your mouth, you're typed by any Italian. He knows immediately where you stand in the social scale, whether you're educated or uneducated, whether you're from the north or the south. And unfortunately the movers and shakers in Italy are, for the most part, the educated, traditional, upper- class. Ambassador Volpe sounded to them as lower class, which he certainly wasn't. And when they weren't laughing at him behind his back, they were disdainful of him. It was very humiliating for those of us who wanted the United States to look good to see our ambassador tarred like that.

Q: Did anybody tell him this?

FINA: Oh, it's a very hard thing to tell an ambassador something like that! He was such a nice man. We'd beg him to read an Italian text. And USIA, which was as conscious of this problem as any of us, always prepared him fine speeches. They were good literate Italian, and he could read it properly if he wanted to. But he'd always arrive at the rostrum and say, "Well, the staff has written this for me, but I want to speak to you as Paisani", or something like that. And he would then launch into his idiomatic Italian. He had them rolling in the aisles in some ways. He had this wonderful electric communication with people, but in the end there was disdain for the man among the movers and shakers, at least those who did not really know him. What the common man thought, I don't know. But among trade unionists, among business leaders, among government officials, in my area, they were not very generous about him. The problem has been that so often we've sent ambassadors to Italy who were beneath the dignity of the United States to send. There have been some good ones, but often they have been second raters. Ambassador Volpe was not a second rater, but he appeared to be in the eyes of many of these people because of his vanity, and because of this insensitivity to the cultural world in which an ambassador has to live.

His successor was an entirely different kettle of fish, and that was Richard Gardner. Did you work for Gardner?

Q: I worked for him, yes.

FINA: Richard Gardner had the intellect, the education, the background to be a great ambassador.

Q: He spoke fluent Italian, and was a professor of political economy...

FINA: ...and of law.

Q: And of law, which put him right up in the upper reaches of intellectual heights of the Italian scene.

FINA: Absolutely. He understood all the issues. There was never any question about Richard Gardner understanding the issues, being sensitive to the politics. He had a great command of what was going on, and he was a great credit to the United States in many respects. He made an excellent impression upon Italians. From my point of view, he was very supportive, very complimentary, he was very good to me.

Among the things that I very much respected in him, was that even though he disagreed with my views on the central issue of the Communists, he never tried to close off open discussion.

I reached the conclusion toward the end of my tour in Milan that we really ought to favor the reconciliation of the communists, and bring them into the government. It was a time when the Christian Democrats were struggling for majority, it was the period of the Brigade Rosse, the Red Brigades, the kidnaping, the knee cappings, a very fascinating, and very tense period in political and national security terms. I concluded, after several years of getting to know these people, and really spending a lot of time working at the grass roots...or at any rate, at the provincial level, getting to know the political leaders, that it would have been in our interest to have favored bringing the communists into the government. They were no longer loyal to the Soviet Union. They were no longer a subversive threat to anybody. They had become a bourgeois party, sort of a liberal democratic, or a liberal socialist party. All of the Stalinist, Leninist, revolutionary, totalitarian stuff, had gone down the drain sometime after Czechoslovakia, from my experience.

Q: That was in '68.

FINA: The leadership, and I don't know that much about the followership, but the guys at the trade union level, or the provincial, and city level communist party were about as committed to the democratic system as anyone could be, and a great deal more honest than their Christian Democratic counterparts. Anyway, I came to the conclusion, I suppose around '77, that we really ought to be moving in that direction. So I said so. Well, Gardner had come to Italy announcing as he left the United States that there was going to be a new policy with respect to dealing with the communists. We were now going to talk to them. Of course, that had been the policy that Volpe had established in 1973, but somehow or other that had never gotten back to Gardner, and maybe never gotten back to Washington! I don't know. Volpe certainly was not the kind to advertise it. But Gardner was, and he no sooner arrived in Rome, than Evans and Novak, as I recall, zapped him.

Q: These were conservative columnist of the nasty ilk.

FINA: That's right. I think they did a column in which they really zapped him for being soft on

communism, and a woolly-minded liberal. He really got raked over the coals by them. Well, that slowed him down to an impressive degree, and from then on he was very, very guarded on this question. He didn't stop me from continuing my contacts with the communists. But he certainly discouraged everybody else. As I say, I always appreciated the fact that he was willing to let me continue writing things which were contrary to the advice he was getting from his very conservative political section, and from his staff, including his new DCM (Allan Holmes) who was career minded at all costs, who later became an ambassador without any particular contribution to the interests of the United States, in my view.

Q: This was Bob Paganelli?

FINA: No, this was another guy...what was his name. I've a Freudian inability to remember some people whom I want to forget! Suffice it to say, that despite the pressure he had from his staff, he never tried to censor what I was writing, which was diametrically opposed to what the embassy was then saying, and what he was saying. And when we had national meetings of the staff in Rome, and so on, he was very willing to listen to my different point of view. I found myself alone, I think, among all the consuls and consuls general, and the staff, in advocating this point of view. He was willing to hear it, he never tried to squelch me, and for that I was very grateful.

On the other hand, my regret about Richard Gardner was, and is, that it seemed that his ambition was so great that there was no substantive issue which couldn't be modified, if that were necessary, for what he conceived to be his career interests.

Q: One has the feeling, when I served under him, that his career interest was Secretary of State.

FINA: It may have been. I don't know. I never attempted to divine what he wanted to do, but he was ambitious and wanted to rise in political influence, and stature, etc. He had all the abilities to do that, but there was this overriding ambition which unfortunately colored, as far as I could see, everything that he did. And I thought that was too bad because here was a man with great natural endowment, a wonderful education, a charming person with whom to work, but with what I considered to be a flaw for a public servant. Not an uncommon flaw, but in an ambassador, or a person of his abilities it turns out to look bigger and be bigger just because he's got more authority, and he's got more ability than the average...

Q: Can you think of any examples of how this played out?

FINA: Well, I think it was principally in this question of dealing with the communists, or what the relation of the communist could be. I think that he was so spooked by the public criticism of his initial declaration of a willingness to dialogue with everybody. There were, I think, other things, too, that escape me. He was very friendly with, or attempted to be very friendly with Brzezinski, who was at that time the National Security Adviser. I must say that I didn't think much of Mr. Brzezinski. I had known him when he was on the Policy Planning Staff in the Department of State. I think he was a very intellectually alert, and stimulating person, but unfortunately his Polish background gave him a special perspective on anything that had to do with the Soviet Union. That, in my view, distorted his picture of what was in the interests of the United States. And Richard Gardner needed to remain on good terms with Brzezinski whatever

his own personal views may have been. I think that influenced his position in a conservative way on a lot of the issues that we faced.

Q: Talking about the political section in Rome, I served in Naples as Consul General from '79 to '81. I came not from a political reporting background, basically a consular background, and maybe it showed my consular upbringing or something, but I have the feeling that the political section there, in Rome, spent an awful lot of time trying to figure out who was in what position in that minuet called the national political scene. I mean, you'd have an election and there would be in those days a difference of two or three percentage points. Nothing had changed since 1948, and we used to get cables saying, "What do you think of the latest alignment?" You'd get sort of a blank look when you talked to the local officials there because they didn't pay any attention to this. Did you feel that the political section in our embassy in Rome was more or less caught up in the exquisite detail of...Italian politics was very interesting, but as far as American interests are concerned, nothing had really changed. This was sort of my impression.

FINA: I think I would share that view. I wouldn't have thought of putting it quite that way, but I do think that the political section in Rome, as long as I can remember it, and I remember it from the 1950s, was always involved in this minutiae without ever looking at the big picture. They started with certain fixed views that all communists were subversive, bad, and enemies. Until the Kennedy administration, all socialists were really communists. The only really reliable people were the Christian Democrats, and then there were these other little parties that were frivolous, and needed to be kept in line to maintain a parliamentary majority. It all revolved around how you achieved these majorities to continue to rule with a minimum of attention being given to the macro picture of what's really happening in Italy, what's happening to the global economy, what's happening to society as a whole. And without giving any consideration to whether our interests might not lie in some fundamental changes in how Italy was governed. So I agree with you. That certainly was my impression over all the years.

It was a rare period when you got anybody in that political section who was able to get any perspective on the overall picture. I always thought the air in that embassy in Rome must have been recirculated from the 1940s to the present, and there was something miasmatic about it. You began to breathe it and before you knew it you were involved in these Byzantine maneuvers about an unreal world in which communism and anti-communism were the two great symbols, and long after that had any real meaning for the interests of the United States, in my opinion. At any rate, it was still that way when I was Consul General, but I sure as hell didn't accept that, and that, I'm sure, prevented my ever getting an onward assignment because when I got through in Milan, Gardner was very nice, and he actually asked me, and urged me to stay longer. But my view was that I'd put in six or seven years, it was a wonderful time. I enjoyed it enormously, I liked my job, but if I was going to get anywhere in career terms, I had to stop being a Consul General, I had to go somewhere to be a DCM, or an ambassador. And I thought, if I can't get a better job than I've got now, then I ought to get out, because the Department of State, the Foreign Service, even at that time was shrinking, and everyone knew there were fewer and fewer interesting jobs around. Then, too, I was getting older, and the question was, do I stay on here in this really nice job where I know everyone, where I've got a lot of prestige, and I'm living a very fine life. Or do I face reality and say, either I get a better job, or I get out. So I declined to continue. I suppose I could have continued a couple more years, I declined to continue.

I went back to Washington, and started walking the halls. In the end after endless hall walking, I decided I had to get out. I was not going to get a job. I had difficulty enough getting an interesting job in the Carter administration where Brzezinski had a very conservative influence. And when it became clear to my disbelief that Ronald Reagan was going to be elected President...

Q: I still find it difficult.

FINA: I never met anyone who said he was going to vote for Ronald Reagan when we got back to the United States. When it happened I said, "Man, they won't even give me a job sweeping halls in this place, and I don't want to be around." Moreover, there was a question of money. I had become an FSO-1 and so was at the top of the scale. But the income was capped by the rule that it could not exceed that of a Member of the House and the penny pinching required to support my family under those circumstances was very painful. I was tired of having to be so tight fisted with my children.

So I began job hunting, and I found a job in the private sector which I'm very glad I took because it was very stimulating. That was the end of my career with the Department of State. I am grateful for the opportunity that it provided to my and my wife to make a contribution to the interests of the United States. But it neither made me rich or famous.

Q: Well, I'll tell you it made you famous in one way -- I can only speak for one person -- I read all your cables. Before I went out I had a little time before I came from Seoul to be the Consul General, and I read with great pleasure your cables, and they were the only reporting ones reporting from Italy that seemed to make sense.

FINA: Thank you, sono commosso!.

Q: But the point being that they were there, and I think they have become part of the business which isn't true in most cases of those posts. So there is a legacy. I'm not saying this as a compliment, I'm saying this as a fact.

FINA: Thank you, I'd never known what happened to my cables. I had various people mention them to me on one occasion or another. However, they did not enhance my career prospects. Still, I look back on them without any regret because I tried to be as honest as I could, and sometimes honesty is rewarded, and sometimes it is penalized. But when you're honest at the wrong time, you get no benefits.

Q: Well, I think probably more than that was the fact that although you had served for some time as Consul General, you were not really part of the European establishment back in the Department. I know this, once you're out, when you come back you just don't belong to anybody, and that was a particularly trying time. A couple years later I joined you in the hall ranks, and unless you had a home office, and some people who cared for you in Washington, you weren't going to go anywhere.

FINA: I think that's absolutely right. If you didn't have a patron, a sponsor, who was taking care of you. Just as in any European court, or in the Soviet Union, or anywhere else, you didn't have much of a chance unless you have extraordinary talents which I cannot pretend. And in my particular case, all of my patrons, the Bob Schaetzels and Jack Tuthills, were out because there had been a change in policy and they were out of favor. So I was really navigating purely on my own, and you just don't get very far when you are as independent in thinking as I was. After my last patron, Stan Anderson, intervened to get me the job in Milan, there was no one left. While Dick Gardner offered to help, his influence was limited. And the interesting jobs available were precious few.

Q: *He was cut off.*

FINA: He didn't have the kind of clout in the Department. As I say, in retrospect, I've no regrets. It was a wonderful experience. I learned a lot. I hope I did some service for my country. One never knows. Our policy towards Italy hasn't greatly changed.

Q: *Well, what's there to change?*

FINA: That's right. The Italians are doing it for themselves, and they're being very successful.

Q: *I want to thank you very much, Tom.*

FINA: It's I who thank you for having taken the time to listen to the recollections of an old soldier.

AMBASSADOR ERNEST V. SIRACUSA
Advisor on Mutual Defense Affairs (NATO)
Rome (1960-1962)

Ernest V. Siracusa was raised in California and attended both Stanford University and MIT. He entered the Foreign Service in 1941 and served in the US Navy during World War II. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Argentina, Italy, Peru, Bolivia, and Uruguay. He was interviewed by Hank Zivetz in June 1989.

SIRACUSA: Toward the end of the course new assignments were being talked of, and the logical thing was for me to go back to Latin America and in fact a senior position in Brazil was offered. However, I felt it was time in my career to make a break from Latin America at least for a while, and as a suitable position was available, I asked to go to Italy.

This served a personal wish as well as a professional objective. The personal reason was that my father and mother had come to the United States as immigrants from Italy, my mother at age 6 in company of her father and brothers and my father, aged twelve, in company only of his friend, aged thirteen, and knowing nobody over here. Ultimately, after what is truly a saga of self-help

and achievement, he had become successful in the oil-well tool business. While I had accompanied him on his first return to Italy some years before, which aroused by interest in the Foreign Service as a career, I had a special desire to be in Italy so I could welcome my parents there as a senior officer of the American Embassy.

That is why I went to Rome. The position which I was offered and accepted was called Advisor on Mutual Defense Affairs which meant the NATO office. I did a lot of traveling around, meeting with the different commands, The Southern European Task Force (SETAF) in the north, the Sixth Fleet and NATO commands in Naples, the Navy Command at Livorno, etc. We had a lot of bases around, Italy, Nike stations and the like and I did a lot of work to try to stabilize Status of Forces problems with the new situation of an Italy which, while a strong and willing ally, was no longer willing to give the conqueror everything it wanted without question. The problems were frictional, rather than deeply serious, and the real need was to induce our forces to show a greater sensitivity to Italian desires. And with a strong communist party ready to snipe at everything from the sidelines, it was necessary to amend our ways to some extent. There was never any question however that Italy wanted and welcomed our presence and this went for the people in general as well, most of whom had at least one relative in the United States.

Apart from the above, we did have one really sensitive problem and attention to it was my main task. No too long before my arrival we had completed the installation of a Jupiter missile base at Gioia del Colli in southern Italy, which had been established with as much secrecy as possible. These missiles were intended to be armed with atomic warheads but the base was completed and the missiles installed and manned before the necessary Atomic Stockpile Agreement had been reached with Italy.

Negotiations had been initiated but were stalled as the Italians, sensitive to the matter at best, wanted to use this opportunity as leverage to settle some of the frictional problems mentioned above before signing the stockpile agreement.

Upon my arrival, the Deputy Chief of Mission, Outerbridge Horsey, briefed me that my main task was to pick up this stalled negotiation the stockpile agreement. But there was a peculiarity there, top secret at the time. That was that the warheads were already in place, sans agreement. That resulted from an unrecorded oral exchange between a very Senior US Air Force officer and a corresponding Italian. While established policy was neither to confirm nor deny anything to do with nuclear weapons the actual state of affairs was not public but both sides were anxious to legitimize the matter.

The ambassador, first James Zellerbach, and then was G. Frederick Reinhardt, a career officer, told me to give this the highest possible priority and I did so with my counterpart in the Foreign Office, Paulo Panza. Once I understood what the Italian hangup was and put some pressure on our own military to adapt more to new Italian sensitivities were able to make progress. Finally, a month before I left Italy we were able to sign the agreement and both sides breathed a sigh of relief. Ambassador Reinhardt told me that getting this agreement was the most important accomplishment of the Embassy in a long time.

Ironically, important as it might have been, at least to spare both sides much embarrassment if

the actual situation had become known, that particular missile base did not last much longer and was eliminated in the general settlement after the Cuban Missile crisis the next year, along with a similar base in Turkey. But I assume the stockpile agreement still served for whatever weaponry of that nature remained as a factor in Italy in later years.

Q: That leads into the next question. In 1963 at the time of the Cuban missile crisis you were the USUN advisor on Latin American affairs. Could you share with us some of your insights from that vantage point as the confrontation with the Soviet Union over Cuba unfolded?

SIRACUSA: I met Governor Stevenson in Italy, in May or June of 1962 when this job came open in the United Nations and somebody recommended me for it. I really did not want to leave Italy which we enjoyed so much, but Stevenson on a visit to Italy talked to me about it and I agreed to accept the assignment.

So we left Italy in July of 1962, having been there exactly two years, and went New York. I reported for duty at USUN as Advisor on Latin American Affairs in late August. The General Assembly was about to start and there was much tension over Cuba stemming from accusations that the US was planning an invasion. It was in October, I believe, when the Cuban missile crisis erupted. My first knowledge of it came on a Saturday afternoon. Governor Stevenson returned to New York and told a hastily called meeting of senior advisors (Richard Pedersen was the senior political man) about the discovery of the secret missile base in Cuba and of the President's plans. As Latin American advisor I was included.

We learned that upon being informed, President Kennedy had abruptly returned to Washington from a political trip, pleading a cold as cover and had determined on his course of action. Our job was to prepare for Security Council action at the UN immediately after the President revealed the situation to the world in a speech to be given at 6 PM Monday evening. In that speech he was to announce a blockade and demand immediate withdrawal of all offensive weapons.

We spent the entire weekend, everyone, working in the utmost secrecy to prepare for this event and at the appointed hour on Monday we gathered in the Governor's office to hear the President's dramatic speech with its ominous revelation. I had in my pocket a letter from Governor Stevenson to the Secretary General calling for an emergency meeting of the Security Council. As soon as the President finished I raced across the street and up to the 38th floor of the UN building to deliver to the Secretary General's office our demand for an emergency Security Council meeting, the idea being to do this before the Soviets could. There followed a series of dramatic, televised encounters, as you may remember. Tuesday afternoon was the first, followed by others of Wednesday and I believe on Thursday. As I saw it, the UN's role was to serve as a pressure-release valve where the contending parties could blow off steam while real negotiations to solve the crisis proceeded secretly between the White House and the Kremlin with some intermediaries.

These produced a series of dramatic communications between Kennedy and Khrushchev of which we received copies and, as the exchange developed it and led by Saturday morning to the defusing agreement by which the Soviets agreed to withdraw all offensive weapons (bombers as

well as missiles). In return for Kennedy's assurance not to invade Cuba.

In my opinion these few days marked the high point of UN achievement and an unforgettable experience for me, being, as I was, always in the Security Council with Governor Stevenson as he so ably debated and even humiliated the Soviet Ambassador, Zorin. Especially when he badgered Zorin into denying the missiles, only to call a recess whereupon we brought in huge aerial photographs which were clear for all to see. We could not have had a more able representative for this than Adlai Stevenson and his performance was superb. It was also a heady experience for me as I was privileged to be at his side. And especially so during respites while translations were in progress and he consulted the President who was of course watching on TV at the White House.

Through it all, Stevenson invariable kept his calm and his ready sense of humor which helped to ease tensions where many in the UN feared that a nuclear holocaust might be upon us. For myself, I never shared this fear possibly because I was so busy but also because, intellectually, I could not believe that the Soviet Union could possibly risk all it had achieved since their revolution to gain some obscure advantage in Cuba. It seemed to me that Khrushchev had tried a great bluff on our young President but that he would have to back down, as he did, when faced with a convincingly determined response.

And then there was a long period of negotiation after that was all over until December when I was able to go on my delayed home leave. A special Soviet Ambassador, I believe it was Kutsnev, came to carry out the negotiations at the UN. A minority point which sticks in my memory is that when he first called on Governor Stevenson I went down to greet him at the door of the USUN, a customary courtesy. Then we went up to Stevenson's antechamber, and he looked around and said, "This is a nice building, how much it cost?". It was a remarkable question to ask, I thought to which I made some equally inane response that I guessed it had been quite a lot.

Throughout, the whole episode at the UN had been very dramatic and tense and a lot of people were scared to death. Some of the delegates, I know, sent their families away, fearing, it seemed, that New York could become a nuclear target.

For my own part, it never occurred to me to be frightened at all. My wife and family, my two little daughters, were living right there with me in New York but I judged that that the issue involved could not possibly lead to a nuclear exchange. The Soviet, I thought, had nothing to gain in Cuba remotely commensurate to what they could lose: the achievements of nearly 50 years of revolutionary government. To put that on the line over Cuba seem totally unrealistic. Barring irrational acts on one side or another, and I did not have time to dwell on that ominous thought, I could envision no outcome but some form of accommodation on their part. So at least I was able to play my small role without fear.

It seemed to me, moreover, that President Kennedy was on exactly the right course, standing up to them, putting up the blockade, and thus forcing them to back down as they finally did. In the exchange of letters which we saw all the time, Khrushchev was shifting his position back and forth, all of which is documented, sometimes being threatening and tough, and at other times

vague or conciliatory.

It was certainly a very dramatic thing to participate in and also to observe some of the byplay that went on. A great deal of resentment seemed to develop in Washington at that time among many of the people surrounding the President. By his televised role in the UN debates, Governor Stevenson was inevitably projected into a dramatic prominence not seen since his failed runs for the White House against Eisenhower, and there was an extraordinary increase in phone calls and "fan" mail as thousands of letters poured in to USUN in praise of his action.

Could it be that some around the President resented this and maybe considered it somehow to threaten the President's justified praise for courage and leadership? Did they fear that the publicity attendant on the UN TV drama would tend to credit Stevenson too much for his role (after all, the really crucial negotiations leading to solution had been in Washington) and thus arouse jealousy? Who knows; but I doubt the President himself wasted much time on such sensitivities which are generally the province of acolytes.

Having only a peripheral view of this I cannot know. However, I do know believe that Stevenson, sensitive as he was, felt personally wounded by some of innuendo and worse. This was when the "hawk and dove" terms came out, and Stevenson was supposed to have been a dove, and the hawks were the ones who won, standing "eyeball to eyeball" with the Soviets until the latter "blinked". Such dramatic press-agentry rhetoric aside, there is no taking away from Kennedy what he did, compensating perhaps for his less than stellar role in the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

As for me, I thought Stevenson was magnificent in the way he carried out his role in the United Nations, being exactly the right man for the job at that moment. The dramatic moment, for example, when he told Soviet Ambassador Zorin that he would wait until hell froze over to hear his answer. He knew that Zorin understood English, but was stalling to collect his thoughts during the translation. Then, after having badgered a confused Zorin into denying the missiles, he dramatically called for a pause in which we came in with the hugely blown up aerial photos, clear proof for all to see. It was a tense and memorable moment, the certain high point for worthwhile UN action up until then and, I believe, for years after.

I thought that Stevenson achieved the role that he was cut out for. You cannot imagine the stature that man had. Stevenson could say anything and people would seem to listen in awe. The world had seen his eloquence and grace in two failed runs for the Presidency, and he was much admired for his qualities as a genuine human being. So when he spoke, people listened because he was Adlai Stevenson. It was a great place for him to be and a great privilege to work with him.

Also, as a matter of fact, I came to believe that he was better in that role than he might have been had he been elected President. It seemed to me that he lacked some of the toughness that it took to be a politician; and, in fact, that he had too much integrity to be one.

Perhaps a little vignette of our brief association with him may be in order here. Since he had inquired about me, I was assigned as his "control officer" when he was passing through Rome in

about May of 1962. Knowing that I might go to USUN I took my family to the airport to meet him and to invite him to rest in our villa before going on to Florence for a visit with his sister who lived there. But the governor, tired from the long overnight flight, and having to meet a later flight from London for another guest at his sister's house, asked instead if in the interim we could not have a quick lunch at Fregene, a nearby beach resort, where he might, as he said, see one of the then novel "bikinis." So after lunch, and at least one Bikini sighting, we returned to the VIP lounge which I had engaged where he proceeded to nap.

A few minutes later I heard a deep laughter from his end of the room and he proceeded to read from a piece of paper on which my 9-year-old daughter was writing a note to her best friend at home which said, as I remember: "Dear Eileen, I am here at the airport with some guy named Stveniss, or something, who wanted to be president but got beat. But he is nice, etc..."

Not only was he graciously amused with the foregoing, but he then turned to our 18-year-old son and asked if he would like to go with him to Florence for the weekend, acting as his interpreter. He was also to attend the fabled and spectacular medieval horse race, the Palio, at Siena. Ernest Jr. (Jerry) accepted with alacrity and sans toothbrush or change, rushed off with the governor to meet his guest, Marietta Tree, and then off to the private jet of the head of Fiat for the flight to Livorno and then drive to Florence. What more memorable weekend could there have been for our son which included also, as weekend guests, such as the celebrated chancellor of the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins, and others. Such was our introduction to Adlai Stevenson. a man to remember.

ROBERT W. DUEMLING
Political Officer
Rome (1960-1963)

Ambassador Robert W. Duemling was raised in Indiana and California. He received a bachelor's degree in American studies from Yale University. Afterwards, he won a fellowship to Cambridge University, where he studied for a year. He later received a master's degree in the art history from Yale University. He served in the U.S. Navy. Ambassador Duemling's Foreign Service career included positions in Malaysia, Japan, Canada, the Sinai Peninsula, and Suriname. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 11, 1989.

Q: Your first overseas assignment was to Rome in 1960 as a political officer. What were your responsibilities?

DUEMPLING: When I was coming to the end of my normal two year assignment in the Secretariat, the standard personnel system was cranking up an onward assignment. I was supposed to go to Trinidad. I was rather pleased with that because at the time there was a lot of discussion about a Caribbean association of states which would involve Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados. It looked like an interesting development. One morning I was delivering the "Morning Summary" to Loy Henderson's office. He was an Under Secretary and one of two or three senior

people in the Department. His staff assistant, who was a very able and promising officer, asked me where I was being assigned. I told him that it was Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. He thought that something better could be worked out. He thought it was not good enough and wanted to find something more interesting for me. I said I thought that it could be very interesting, but he disagreed. The next thing I heard was a phone call from the Office of Personnel. They told me that my assignment to Trinidad would be canceled. I told them that I had just been down to the Office of Transportation making travel arrangements and that I was excited by the prospects of going to Trinidad. Personnel said that this assignment was canceled, but could not tell me what else they had up their sleeves. I demurred and they finally admitted that although it was not yet final, they had an assignment in Rome in mind. I didn't say anything. The voice at the other end of the phone finally said: "Hello. Are you there?". I admitted that I was and then the voice asked whether I wasn't pleased. I said: "I am not sure. The situation in the Caribbean looks interesting and I am not sure that I am that pleased about going to Rome". The voice on the other end finally said: "You are crazy". I agreed to go to Rome and became the Ambassador's aide. Having just left the Secretariat, I had all the skills necessary to be the Ambassador's aide. The Ambassador at this time was Zellerbach, a political appointee from San Francisco. A wonderful man, who had been the chief of the US Marshall Plan mission in Italy. He had been a very successful industrialist -- the Crown-Zellerbach paper corporation. He was a huge success in Italy because the whole Italian business community respected him very highly for his successes in American business. He knew all about the Italian economy from his days in the Marshall Plan. He was therefore a very successful Ambassador. I arrived in the summer of 1960. In the fall of 1960, Jack Kennedy defeated Nixon and therefore Mr. Zellerbach as a Republican appointee left the following Spring. He was succeeded by Frederick Reinhardt, who was a career officer who had been briefly US Ambassador in Cairo before Kennedy assigned him to Rome. Fred was a super person, a very able officer who went on to be a great success as Ambassador to Italy. I worked for Fred as his staff aide for about another year at which time I moved to the Political Section. I spent a year and half in that Section. So I was in Rome for a total of three years.

Q: Would you agree that there has been a considerable amount of political micro-reporting from Rome on a political situation that has been essentially stable since 1948? Were we getting too involved in the minutiae of Italian politics?

DUEMLING: That is a very long story. We manipulated the Italian elections of 1948 in order to forestall a Communist regime. That experience deeply conditioned the involvement of the Embassy toward the whole Italian political scene. What I remember vividly from that period was the whole business of the opening to the Left -- The "Apertura-a-Sinistra". That was considered a very controversial proposition. Should we or shouldn't we encourage the idea of the opening to the Left? That issue deeply divided the American Embassy staff. Our Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the time was Outerbridge Horsey, who felt very strongly that the opening to the Left was a kind of Trojan Horse of the Communists. He very much opposed the idea. Another officer in the Political section -- younger than Horsey -- thought it made a lot of sense. He was in close touch with the Socialist Party. In the Political Section we were all assigned to specific parties, so that collectively we had a broad view of the Italian political scene. We had no connections with the Communist Party, but we met with the Christian Democrats, who formed the government, but also with the various branches of the Socialist Party, the Republican Party, the Liberal Party, etc. I suppose what happens is that with that degree of complexity in the local political situation,

it draws the Embassy' political reporters more and more into complex assessments and evaluations. It becomes somewhat like counting angels on the head of a pin. It gets carried to extremes. There was no question that the issue of the proper US role in Italian domestic politics was a very major issue.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr -- historian, Kennedy aide -- was very interested in political machinations. He came to Italy and made some political contacts -- White House authorized -- but he was not in touch with the American Embassy. He talked to some people on the political scene in Italy. It aroused the ire of Outerbridge Horsey, who was at this time the Chargé d'Affaires, between Zellerbach and Reinhardt. The very idea of a US representative visiting a foreign country officially without contacting the Embassy infuriated Horsey. Reinhardt took a more balanced view of that situation.

My own involvement in this affair was very minor. I was the low man on the totem pole in the Political Section. I was put in charge of writing routine messages, biographic reporting and other pedestrian assignments.

PHILIP W. PILLSBURY, JR.
Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer
Florence (1960-1962)

Chief, USIS
Turin (1976-1980)

Philip W. Pillsbury, Jr. was born in Chicago in 1935. He received a BA from Yale University in 1957 and joined the Foreign Service in 1959. His overseas posts included Spain, Italy, Mali, Madagascar, Zaire, Iran, and Argentina. He was interviewed by Charles Kennedy on February 28, 1994.

Q: Well then, you went to Florence from '60 to '62. What was the situation ... What were you doing in Florence?

PILLSBURY: In Italy, the USIA had a lot of money as did the Department of State. We had posts that have long since been closed. Florence was a four-man USIA post. It would just be unthinkable today. And I was the fourth person on the totem pole. I think I was Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, that was my title. USIA had the full complement of the then USIA activity. There was a very large library that was well established, well recognized. Sort of after the British library which had been there a long time, but still a very credible with credible information. We had a very good Consular district, Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. We had just closed our library in Bologna but maintained a small branch there. Johns Hopkins was just setting up its center. All the American universities were just coming in to set up their operations which are still going strong today in a big way. Stanford had just opened when I got there. Syracuse came in. So there was a flowering of cultural relationships with the United States. It was a wave that we rode there. In the face of what was then ... It was my first encounter with the

power of a major communist party. The communist party in Italy was the largest in the western free world and as a young officer I was astonished to see how well they were organized, how they could bring out the Faithful. I had a special interest in the organization of the young communists, the "Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana" in seeing how they organized at a very local level. It was there that certainly, that I realized your point about being able to do things as a young officer that you couldn't do as the Consul. The Consul certainly couldn't have gone to some of the meetings I went to. The Socialists were much more militant then too. But to go to some of the meetings and see and hear some of the diatribes against the United States was a real learning experience.

Q: How did we view the communist party then? Because the Italian communist party has gone through all sorts of things, still around, probably more influential now than it has been for a long time, but with its own particular slant now, no longer dealing with the Soviets. But how did we view the communist party then, particularly in relation to the Soviet Union lines of ...?

PILLSBURY: We knew that they were somewhat ... Again I was looking at it from the ground up a bit, but Togliatti was still in control and ... We knew that the Italian Communist Party, it being Italian, had a personality of its own, that they would not march in lockstep with edicts from Moscow all the time. But still it was regarded as a major threat to the west and the effective operation of NATO. They were getting, I believe if I remember, up to 30% of the popular vote and it was monolithic in that, unlike later on in my second tour in Italy when the left was splintered, they were pretty much it, they and the socialist. It was the red belt, that was the red belt, and it looked at Tuscany and Emilia Romagna as kind of political divisive force. It was of course the time when Aldo Moro led the movement for the "Apertura a la sinistra" the opening to the left that was I remember, not that there weren't elements in the American foreign policy apparatus that weren't very keen about that. They felt that was a mistake to open it up, but it turns out that it was the thing to do then. So that there were openings in that two year period to the left that all the while supporting strongly the Christian Democrats that made it very interesting for a junior officer to work, especially in Florence.

Q: You said you went to all these meetings. We've gone through time, you know, when you'd catch leprosy easier than go to a communist meeting, but what about them.

PILLSBURY: Yes. I always asked permission from my superiors. It's not that I became a fixture at these village meetings, but I was especially interested in going prior to the WFDY, World Federation of Democratic ... Youth meeting. It was an acronym that they had, the big world communist youth festivals in Helsinki and Moscow at that time. It was useful for me to go to some of these things and then come back and say what I'd heard and seen. So that on a controlled basis I was allowed to go... I found out about it and I asked if I could go. And there was one, I don't remember what the particular diatribe was, but it was so off-base and so repulsive about some attack on the United States that I walked out, and then I didn't go anymore.

Q: Did you have, or did the Consulate General have ... Who was Consul General, by the way?

PILLSBURY: Merritt Cootes was Consul General, and he'd been there for, I don't know ... He spent seven years there I think.

Q: We had an interview with Merritt Cootes?

PILLSBURY: He was very effective at the time and I don't say that because now you said that you'd had an interview with him. I really liked working with him. And he was a very good political officer at the time, Joe Cunningham. He was the best political officer I met, and Cunningham was preceded in that post by Sam Lewis who was also a very fine political officer.

Q: What about as the Consulate as a whole, could you have real contact with the communist party?

PILLSBURY: I didn't really, except with the Federazione Giovanile, I didn't have contacts with communist party officials, but I think that was more a function of my relative low grade. Certainly Cunningham and the Consul ... They defined their function. Those in turn were defined by the Embassy. And that changed of course, you're right. Over a period of time that changed. John Baker's book on the Italian communist party is interesting in that regard to see those changes that occurred. I spent more time learning about the younger leaders in the Christian Democratic party. That was to me fascinating and it's something I've kept up to this day with the son of Nicola Pisteili for example, Nicola was being groomed to be the prime minister and Giorgio La Pietra was the famous mayor of Florence. There was a lot of idealism in the Christian Democratic Party.

Q: Did you have the feeling ... One of the problems that's coming home to haunt us, and the Christian Democrats, is the fact that particularly from the '48 election, but it continued on, an awful lot of American CIA money in one form or another was poured into the Christian Democrats. Did you have any feeling for that at the time?

PILLSBURY: No, I didn't. It's a good question, and it was always in the background of my work I'm trying to do with the young political leaders and the establishment of relations between the United States and young political leader movements in Europe. They are much more structured and organized than they are here in the United States. As far as intelligence gathering and the agency's relationship with the political parties at that time, very little, which was correct. I think it was then and still is important that USIA be as far removed from intelligence gathering as possible. You know, I've been called a spy lots of time anyway, so ...

Q: What about those Christian Democrats? How did you get together with them, what were your views and your dealings with them?

PILLSBURY: Well, as I said, I was very inspired by Mayor La Pira who was a character in Italian politics. He was kind of a mystic and he truly believed in Christian principals being applied to a political sphere, and ran the city accordingly. One of his disciples more or less, or one of the individuals he was grooming, was this man Nicola Pisteili who would have definitely been elected to the parliament and would have definitely, I think, gone right to the top. He was killed in a car crash. We were still there. And it was that contact, where I saw the beginnings of the young political leadership going to the Christian Democrats who, with Aldo Moro were going to be willy-nilly in control irrespectively of what the communists did. The communists

were sort of a loyal or disloyal opposition. It was that contact that enabled me to get to know his son today, Lapo Pistelli, a young twenty-six year old who shares his father's idealism and is a member of the Christian Democratic Party even though the Christian Democrats are going through the tortures of the damned, which they inflicted on themselves. I really believe that the Christian Democrats had a vision and a role to play in the future of Italy.

Q: Did you have any contact with the Italian intelligentsia, intellectual group. I always think that the French intellectual group is sort of a defined group. They know who they are, and they have a disproportionate influence in how people think. How did you find ... Florence is a hotbed of culture and all this. Did you find that type of thing there?

PILLSBURY: For the Italians, at least in Florence, the British presence was much more appreciated or looked at with favor. The eminence grise at the time was Sir (Harold) Acton. An historian and an expert on Chinese affairs and really a salon leader of the old school.

Q: He just died, it was in the paper today I think.

PILLSBURY: Oh, he did? I know that he'd been sick. Anyway at the time his influence and the British influence in terms of culture, as well as the French who were next door, to us, kind of shut us out a little in terms of perception. It was a little harder to get across the idea of American culture. The thing that I'd say that one of the very important breakthroughs was the arrival of the New York Pro-Musica Antica. The director was a man by the name of Noah Green. At any rate, he came and he presented as part of the Spoleto festival of that year, (Presented first in Florence) was The play of David. He'd also done scholarship and had found the Lament written on the death of Lorenzo Medici, which the Italians thought had been lost years ago and didn't even know still existed. Anyway, they did that, and it woke the Italians up to the fact that there was significant scholarship on the other side of the Atlantic. From that time on I think more and more post-World War II recognition was accorded to American excellence in the arts and letters.

Q: We raised the subject when you were in Paris. How about the knowledge of the Italians on American history, not just culture, but government and all that. How did you find ...?

PILLSBURY: I'd say that they were more open to ideas and to exchanges of information than the French when I was studying there in the late '50s. I attribute that to a very active, extensive and well-run Fulbright program. They had a professor whose name I have momentarily forgotten who did a three year Fulbright program at the University of Wisconsin in American studies and then came back and set up the first chair of American studies at the university of Florence. It was very popular and well-attended and well-recognized. At any rate I think the Fulbright program, and in France too, became a significant force in the early '60s as well. It was a very important part of Italian understanding, in recognizing that there is such a thing as American culture.

Q: What about the Italian media, the newspapers? The USIA is always trying to get our story into these papers. Yet the Italian papers seem ... each one has its own little segment of the political spectrum. Did you have any dealings with that sort of thing?

PILLSBURY: Well, there again in Florence I was pretty low on the totem pole, but I worked

with Luigi Pilo. It was my first real long term, in other words two year, recognition of the brilliance and the importance of the Foreign Service national. All Foreign Service Officers soon recognize that their jobs are made or broken by the Foreign Service nationals. I benefitted from the fact that the press guy for example had been the head of the newspaper in Leghorn. So I spent a good deal of that two year just watching and following him and watching the way he worked with that wide spectrum of Italian newspapers. We had very little to do with La Unita, the communist paper. We did a great deal of work with La Nazione, which was the Florence daily, the prime one. Then we placed articles with other publications from, the right to left of center and they were pretty objective. I can't remember if magazines ... I'm sure l'Europeo was still in existence. There were a couple that occasionally published rather scurrilous stuff on the United States, but that national stuff was handled by Rome rather than Florence. Our work was basically in Florence and Bologna. Il Resto del Carlino that's the paper in Bologna too, so we worked with them.

Q: You were there from '60 to '62, when Kennedy came in. The Kennedy administration was really a new look on the scene. How was that administration particularly President Kennedy received from your perspective?

PILLSBURY: It was a blast of fresh air for the Italians. The USIA had an all-night vigil, that was a long election, and we had an all-night vigil at the library, with an election board and results from The Voice of America. There was a passionate interest in that election. The election center was crammed with people all night long. The next day, when Kennedy was elected there was the beginning of an almost euphoric attitude towards the United States and its new leadership role in the world with the younger generation, a president born in the twentieth century.

Q: It was really a generational thing, do you think?

PILLSBURY: No question, yes. But his victory brought along the older generation too. The whole sense of the American capacity, and it was my realization too, the American ability to renew itself. We see it just today, the Japanese using the term the rising Sam, you know. They recognize the United States has gone through another period of renewal. Well, in Italy in 1960 the good leadership, excellent leadership now recognized by some as great while regarding Eisenhower administration as somewhat old and stodgy, old-fashioned, unable to change with the times. Kennedy comes in with this whole bunch of new ideas, new thinking and it just swept our era and I'm pretty sure that would go for anyone ...

Q: Well, did you find your being a junior officer, that you were being given more instructions to get out and mix and mingle with youth?

PILLSBURY: Not really. I did it, but I wasn't told to do it. I had a natural affinity for it. We were young, a nice looking couple, I spoke Italian, and I just had a natural affinity for the younger generation. And I might say that it was not all work in Florence. We had a wonderful time. I mean, I was not the "youth officer." There was not a youth officer at the time.

Q: That came a little later. I remember we had it in Yugoslavia, Robert Kennedy was pushing it.

PILLSBURY: I am not sure today whether that was effective or not. I know that I was effective there and in the subsequent two posts without being told to deal with younger generation I just liked it and was able to reach the younger elements of the population like nobody else really because I just liked doing it.

Q: I think sometimes ... It was an interesting period, particularly with Robert Kennedy pushing his brother to concentrate on youth. In many ways, in many places, it was naive, the idea that this was going to be a force that would just take over which it didn't. But we were getting to the people at an early age. There was an emphasis by our government to look at youth as being ... to replenish ...

PILLSBURY: One of the criticisms I have, actually, I mean looking in terms of continuity over a decade time frame, is that I believe that looking at youth, young political leaders, over time, if it's done in a continuum, not having one person like Robert Kennedy come along and say: "God, we don't have any contact with these kids that are demonstrating in the streets, we don't know who they are, we don't know who's leading them, why is this happening. Got to set up a youth office." That kind of thing doesn't work because the next administration comes in and says: "They're not important." And I do think that the French certainly do it, the British do it. They've got programs that are aimed at reaching the next generation over time, so that would be a change I'd like to see if I had anything to say about it, that there would be a recognition, not so much high school type, but, in Europe, once a young person gets out of school, university, they join the youth wings of the political party. In some cases that's an absolute button they have to push in order to advance to a senior post in the party, so that by the age of twenty-five you can begin to spot people who twenty years later are going to be running the country. And that's what I mean, when I talk about youth I mean twenty-five to forty.

Q: We start with you going to Turin. How did that assignment come about, and can you give me the date?

PILLSBURY: Yes. I was working in Washington in the USIA on a home assignment and planning to spend four years having been overseas for some time. The home assignment was supposed to be four years. So I'd made none of the usual preparations or bidding for assignment or anything. I wasn't planning to do that for another two years. I got a call from the European bureau of USIA, a friend of mine, who said she wanted to see me about an assignment. So I went up and she said: "We want you to go to Turin to open, re-open the USIA post which had been closed ten years before, something like that, to prepare for the huge amount of resources going into Vietnam. That's why it had been closed, one of the reasons. This was again a bolt of the blue which surprised me to say the least, and I said: 'When?' And they said: 'Within ...,' I can't remember, but it was some very short time frame. Six months, or something like that. I knew that this would have a pretty strong effect on my wife and kids. On the other hand, Italy was a country that I knew and loved and knew the language, and was looking forward to at some point going back there. So it was a terrific proposal under adverse circumstances that came along. I went home and talked about it with my wife. It was a bombshell because we'd just bought a house and were moving in. You know, every Foreign Service Officer goes through that. But we

talked about it for a while and finally decided we'd do it. So this was ... decided to go, then arrived in Turin in late August or early September of 1976.

Q: And you stayed there till when?

PILLSBURY: The summer of 1980.

Q: Alright. Talk about Turin. When you got there in 1976, and so what we were up to there?

PILLSBURY: Turin in 1976 was, well is part of what is known as the iron triangle in northern Italy along with Genoa and Milan. It's the main focus certainly of heavy industry and commerce. Turin is the home of giants like Fiat of course and Olivetti. One of the problems at the time and the reason that the United States government wanted to expand a little bit in that area, or reopen a presence, let's say, especially a USIA presence was the importance at the time of Euro-communism. Especially in Italy, the communist party was in one of its many resurgences. There was also the birth at the time of some really rather alarming developments on the far left which were of great concern to the west and to the United States. It was also a time when we were beginning to want to insert missiles in Italy and in Germany and in the Netherlands to counter the perceived threat of the Soviet Union and their missile capability on the other side.

Q: You're talking about the intermediate range missiles? The Soviets had started putting their SS-20s I think or something like that.

PILLSBURY: That's right. The idea was that we had to mount a pretty strong campaign to sell the idea to our allies in western Europe.

Q: Our idea was to put in the Pershing missile.

PILLSBURY: Right. To the Italians' credit, they did accept it.

Q: The Italians were really the key players.

PILLSBURY: They were the key players. There was also a growing terrorist threat. The Red Brigades were getting more and more important. So it was a time of tension. Certainly the bloom was off the rose in the Italian miracle era. So that going to Turin at the time politically and just in the terms of safety was not like it was in the '60s, certainly.

Q: In the first place, the post had been closed. What was it now? Who was running it?

PILLSBURY: The USIA had closed down. It was a Consulate. In Genoa, it was a Consulate General, in Turin it was a Consulate, then Milan of course was a Consulate General. We also had a post I believe if I remember correctly in Trieste. So there was a very strong American presence in the northern part of Italy. Turin was a three-man post. Two consular officers. The Principal Officer, the Vice Consul, and then the USIA person, me. So it was a small operation. I think there were eleven or twelve foreign service nationals there. Basically their job was commercial.

Q: A little later we overlapped a little bit when I was in Naples. Sort of the word was that our Consulate in Turin remained open mainly because of Agnelli, the head of Fiat. Agnelli would come and turn his charm on in Congress or something every time we thought of closing it down, he would call in some chips and it would always remain open. Did you have that feeling?

PILLSBURY: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: What was his first name?

PILLSBURY: Gianni. Gianni Agnelli. I know he did it once during the Kennedy administration. One more time I know of for sure. At one point he finally said: "That's it. I've had it. I'm not going to do it anymore." Certainly in the Carter administration, they wanted to close it, and did in fact. I believe it closed down altogether in 1980 and then was reopened again during the '80s in a much smaller configuration. But the building we were in of course closed. The Vice Consul who was there with me closed it in the late summer or early fall of 1980.

Q: Can you describe the political situation in your consular district at that time during '76 to '80.

PILLSBURY: One of the most important single institutions was the metal workers union whose relationship with Fiat was essential. They were controlled by the communist trade union the CGT. Fiat was on an upturn, and therefore the whole area and the whole country. I mean, where goes Fiat, a good part goes Italy. So that was one factor that was very important. Another factor, as I said, was the rise of terrorism, the Red Brigades which were founded by members of middle to upper middle class families in the north, in Milan and Turin. At the time when we arrived they were using methods that were brutal but not fatal. I remember the word almost when I first got there, I heard the word: "Aginocchiare which means to kneecap somebody.

Q: Shoot them in the knees.

PILLSBURY: At some point shortly thereafter, they raised their sights and killed a journalist of La Stampa, but they said: "We've raised our guns to eye level, and we're now going to ..." So the threat was definitely increased and the atmosphere was one of fear and uncertainty. The Italian government more and more was being held hostage to the threats of these urban terrorists, a very small group but very effectively organized. They were aided and abetted by groups of the extreme left. Even the communist party itself disavowed themselves from them. So it was not the atmosphere that one would hope of the stereotype of the fun loving Italians, and good food and all that. There was that, but it was a very dangerous and unpleasant situation. Our cars were armed. Even my little Fiat office car was taken to Rome and had stuff put in. Not in the windows unfortunately. I had asked ... This car came back about a thousand pound heavier. This little Fiat 128. And I said: "How about the windows?" And they said: "Well, the window casings are too small and we can't put bullet-proof glass in the windows." And I said: "What if someone shoots at me?" "Well, hope they're aiming at the doors and you'd just better just duck." So it was not the most effective ... But it was a somewhat difficult situation to work in. And then another important thing at the time was that Turin, Genoa, and Milan were the focus of the huge immigration of labor from the south in the '50s to fuel the economic miracle. Certainly in Piedmont, I'd say especially in Piedmont, the Piedmontese did not accept this influx from the

south very well. So there were strong, almost racial overtones in the way the northerners looked at the southerners. It was social explosion really that I think they're just now beginning to absorb. It's taken a long time, several decades, and we were right in the middle of that too.

Q: How did you operate? What were you trying to get across? You had this communist party being important to the unions. Were we making any attempt to get a hold ..?

PILLSBURY: Certainly USIA was not doing anything with the unions. That was largely the work of the Consulate. I would say that even there the most important work with the unions in the north was being done out of Milan and Genoa largely. The Consul's main client was certainly Gianni Agnelli and the Fiat people, and to a certain extent of course Olivetti Iurea too. But their job was to work closely with Agnelli himself when he so deigned, although Agnelli's contact was really with the Ambassador and higher. I mean, he had contacts in the administration at home. Our main focus was the major newspaper, really one of the great newspapers in the world, La Stampa. So we did work very closely with them in terms of the standard USIA operation of getting material placed in La Stampa and other regional newspapers. And then I personally worked closely with the University of Turin and in small discussions we brought speakers in, very effective I think, to the university I also had lecture programs of my own... We had university level and government people from the United States giving lectures on various aspects of American economic and political life. We didn't have a center. It was not a library, so we did most of our work outside.

Q: How did you find the university as far as imparting knowledge about the United States and its political system?

PILLSBURY: Very much to the left. One of my friends actually who I just saw at the Democratic Convention in 1992, for the first time in twenty years ... Gimgincomo Migone who is from a very old and almost aristocratic family who was the leader, and still is, of an extreme left party. He teaches American history and American political science at the university. We understood from his students and from others that he left his political attitudes at the door and taught a quite objective course. He knew the United States very well and had been there a lot. So that the field within the university in the area of American Studies was wide open. By the way, while I was there, my area of operation was increased to include Genoa as well for USIA. I was the Public Affairs Officer for both Liguria and Piemonte, the Val d'Aosta, and at one point for a little while I was assigned to Monaco as well for the big television station, because it was at the time that private television exploded. So we worked with a growing plethora of private TV station that were coming in at the time as well. But I felt that there was a real need for USIA operation at just about that level. I mean I had two people working for me in Turin and three in Genoa, and it was just about right in terms of resources. It required a great deal of personal activity and just going around meeting people and talking to them and having meetings of key individuals in your house. It was a very personal operation. Perhaps the most personal oriented operation of any of the USIA assignments I had. And language fluency was key, certainly.

Q: How receptive did you find the students or those who were newly out of school who had been through almost the standard rather leftist orientation. It seems that almost any university of anybody who is interested in what you call the political side seems to come out that way.

PILLSBURY: I found that they were extremely interested in the United States as interpreted by and seen through me. I mean it was definitely a personal relationship. I only had a couple of adverse occasions. I remember one in particular, a student from the far left, who was making some absolutely outrageous comments about the United States at a public gathering. I was with the editor of La Stampa. I was going to get up and try and counter this fellow in public and the Stampa editor said: "Don't bother. He is completely," you know, "he is ideologically in a tunnel and there is no point trying to get him out of it, and you'll just embarrass yourself. There is no point in trying to change." So at that point I learned that there was a certain element in the Italian younger population there was just no point in reaching, because they were unreachable.

Q: Did you also find that the same phenomenon that goes on almost, certainly in the western world, where students have a wonderful time being very leftist when they're in school, and very quickly turn around and turn, I won't say to the right, but certainly move away from that to settling down, getting into business, raising families, and essentially going more middle line.

PILLSBURY: Yes, I did. Particularly this individual if I could find his name, I'd love to see where he is today. My guess is that he has assumed the position you just said, you know, finding a job, etc. The interesting thing to me was talking to Migone at the Democratic Convention sixteen years later, and finding out that he was just as convinced about the importance of basically a Marxist ideology as he was when I was in Turin. In his flawless English and knowledge of the United States, it was equal to none. I gave him credit for sticking to his ideological guns.

Q: Well, the academic world is still You weren't there during the collapse of the communist system which I think dealt a tremendous blow to the Marxists. Were you observing the corrosive effects of corruption but also of state support of non-viable industries?

PILLSBURY: Not really. I wouldn't say that. It was going on and perhaps I should have been more aware of it. I talked with the Consul about it a little bit. But I think it really began to come to a head after I'd left in the '80s. Certainly the P2 scandal and that was the opening even in... the indication of the corruption at the core. I think that the thing that impressed me the most was actually a very positive thing about Italy, was the kidnaping and eventual assassination of Aldo Moro which was an effort on the part of the Red Brigades to bring the Italian government to its knees and to turn to fascist state control methods. Do away with civil liberties in order to get at this problem of terrorism and to the great credit of the Italian government, they didn't do it. They went about it without destroying, taking away the civil liberties and in effect finally got judges and juries not to kowtow to the threats of local Red Brigades and to carry out the judging the members of the Red Brigade, to put them away. A very courageous aspect. That was in 1978 I think.

Q: What about the dealing with television stations. You had this growth of independent television stations, some were almost pirate stations, weren't they. What were we trying to do with them? How were you trying to operate with them? How successful were you?

PILLSBURY: The television movement began in northern Italy, in a little town, Biella. A man

felt that he'd read the Italian constitution that said freedom of speech and all, so he felt that he had the right to start a television station of his own. The first one was ... I think it had a reach of maybe two hundred yards around his house, but it upset the Italian monopoly, the RAI. They brought it to a head by bringing it to the Corte Costituzionale who ruled in favor of this fellow. And this just opened Pandora's box. There was no regulatory agency like the FCC to control this and a pent up desire to get on the air that had been building for years exploded within a year and suddenly, and you'll remember too, that there were ... anybody and his brother could get a signal on the air. They would just get a signal on the air even if it was the circle with a number on it to occupy a frequency. So much so, that in turn they were interfering with signals in the airport. It was hard for planes to land and to take off. For a while, it was anarchy. I remember getting a telephone call from a big news station in Los Angeles and they were calling and they said: "We've heard this fantastic news, unbelievable news." It was just at the time when the Red Brigades had upped their ante and they were starting to shoot people for real, to kill them. And I said: "Yes, this is a terrible situation facing us." "No, no, no, we're not talking about that. We're talking about this growth of private television." They had heard of housewives' striptease programs to lure viewers. That was the big news.

Q: Yes, I remember reading about that.

PILLSBURY: These stations were using any way that they could to get viewership, and one of the means was one station giving opportunity for housewives to take their clothes off in public. So that there was a period of anarchy. We went and visited these stations as did our colleagues all over Italy really. There were more in northern Italy than southern. But we went and visited the ones that appeared to have some long term viability and indeed did. We picked them well. And then we provided them with programming that came out of USIA. They of course were also buying heavily into American ... buying American movies and American commercial products. Again, it was a fascinating period to watch this competition explode and watching RAI first trying to resist and then going along with it, and everybody cutting out their own niche. Today I think they're in that situation where they are somewhat ... they have channels somewhat like we have here. There are some major private television stations. But it was a fun time to be there.

Q: Our Ambassador then was Richard Gardner for most of the time there and he was sort of unique in that he was not Italo-American or a professional diplomat but he came with an academic background in labor law. Wasn't that it? And he spoke Italian and had an Italian wife. From your point of view, how effective was he?

PILLSBURY: I'd say that first of all his Italian connection, his Italian wife was of big assistance. She I believe was related to the family that ... the film *Il Giardino di Finzi Contini* was her family.

Q: Right. She was of a Jewish Venetian family I think.

PILLSBURY: And so, she gave the couple, the Gardners as a couple and then Ambassador Gardner immediate credibility in terms of the Italians. And the language was very important, and the Gardners spoke good Italian. It's a little hard for me to say. He was effective when he came on his visits to the consular district, and dealt with again Gianni Agnelli and so on and his

people. They were usually lightning visits, very quick, coupled with sometimes he would take, combine a trip to Turin with a trip to Courmayeur to do a little skiing too, which was fine you know. We would join him there. My contacts with him were limited. The only time that I remember, it was a meeting in La Spezia which was also in my district from the USIA point of view, and Gardner made a speech there on American policy. It was a labor speech. There was a question I remember that was asked, I can't remember exactly what it was but it was anti-American, but I know that, anti-US policy. Gardner answered it beautifully. Usually Gardner in a formal speech would like to have the questions translated into English, but it was basically a ploy for him to think about his answer. He knew what they were saying. At this event I happened to have a tape recorder. The reply was misreported in the paper and I had the recording. So I sent it down to Gardner and the paper had to retract. So that Ambassador Gardner thought that was great, you know. I think he was very effective in his relationships with the government. He was a good Ambassador at the time. He was good for the time that he was there I think.

Q: This is my feeling too.

PILLSBURY: But I do say, as you know, the seven hundred kilometers that separated Turin and Rome were much more than that in terms other than geographical. We were a long ways away from what was going on in the Roman Embassy.

Q: Well, I was only about three hundred kilometers away but we're not even talking ...we're talking about a continental change. I could have been in Africa instead of being in Naples. The major thing was the Pershing missile business, getting ready to put the missiles in, which obviously was vehemently being opposed by the communist party. How did that play where you were?

PILLSBURY: Well, I think that occurred in the late ... It started to really take place in '79, '80.

Q: Yes. They really didn't get put in until ... during the Reagan administration, but the ground ...

PILLSBURY: The ground was being set during the Carter administration. I think that just Europe-wide or even worldwide, USIA can take a great deal of credit for the public diplomacy aspect of that effort, because it wasn't heavy-handed. We got materials from various sources, from academics, from scientists, from political scientists, hard core recognition of what the Soviet threat was, and I believe very definitely that it was a threat. Our mission really was to get that idea across that what the Soviets had on the other side was indeed a threat to western Europe and had to be countered. So that it was part of our programming over a period of four years, but it wasn't the only thing we were dealing with. That would have made us look as if we had a one-track mind and we would have lost our credibility for other things. Within the context of the protection and the common recognition of what was important in western civilization vis-a-vis the threat that was perceived from the other side. So that it was part of our programming over that period.

Q: Did you see in dealing with the communists or getting across to them in Italy that in a way it was almost two-fold. One: that internally, they were good solid communists and all that, but externally they basically they did not buy all the ... they weren't solidly, or at least many were

solidly on the side of the Soviets and what they were doing. I know for example that in Naples the mayor was a communist and he wanted more fleet visits, you know. The Sixth Fleet, he did not want us ... It was jobs, but also one had the feeling ... I mean the Italians were sophisticated enough to know they really did not want the Soviet stuff. Did you get that feeling or not?

PILLSBURY: Definitely. Ernesto Berlinguer I remember was head of the PCI at the time, the communist party and his relationship with Moscow was ... He was always a thorn in their side. In my case the mayor of Turin Diego Novelli was a communist. I admired Diego Novelli. I got to know him relatively well, and I talked to him ... His major concern was trying to create a sense of community in Turin between the southerners who lived in the periphery and also who had taken over some of the central part of the city causing a flight to the suburbs, something like what we had here. So his social policies were right on target in his effort to enable Turin to be a valid urban agglomeration in the face of this tremendous dislocation, spiritual and psychological caused by the influx of southerners. I think Novelli was a southerner, a second generation southerner himself. So that the answer to that question is yes. The Italian communist party is certainly sui generis and the fact that before we started you noted that in this last election they again won one third of the vote.

Q: *We're talking about 1994.*

PILLSBURY: 1994. They were getting a third of the vote when I was there. They represent a certain part of the Italian population that as you said wants to stick it in the face of whoever is in power. I think the Italian communists certainly were far removed from the monolithic approach of the Soviet Union's and Chinese as well.

Q: *Well before we leave here, is there anything else we should cover on Turin?*

PILLSBURY: Turin meant a great deal to me. I greatly regret its closing. It's the epitome really of, I think, the unfortunate tendency or actual policy of various administrations to open and close consulates and especially in a city that is of such importance to Italy and to the United States. I think we lose by closing a small window, we lose an enormous amount of access let alone the impact of the public relations of closing a place that has existed for a hundred and forty-four years. I greatly regret that we've done this not only in Italy but in the world. We should just ... I know we're going to do it again. Milan is now the only office in northern Italy and at some point something is going to happen and we're going to say: "We'd better reopen in Genoa, or reopen in Turin." So I think that that hiccup attitude towards facilities is really unfortunate.

WILLIAM C. SHERMAN
Political Section
Rome (1960-1965)

Ambassador William C. Sherman was born in Kentucky and raised in Pennsylvania and Ohio. He attended the University of Louisville until he joined the Navy on the onset of World War II in 1943. While in the Navy, he was sent to

the Navy School of Oriental Languages in Colorado to study Japanese. This marked the beginning of his career in the international field. His Foreign Service career included positions in Korea, Japan, Italy, and Washington, DC. Ambassador Sherman was interviewed by Thomas Stern on October 27, 1993.

Q: *Then you were assigned to Rome. How did that come about?*

SHERMAN: It happened much to my surprise. One day, as I was happily working on the Belgium/Luxembourg desk, Wells Stabler, who had become the Office Director for Italian/Austrian Affairs after having been Benelux Office Director, called and asked me to stop by his office. He told me that, as I may have already heard, Outerbridge Horsey, then DCM in Rome, had requested that I be assigned to Rome. Horsey had been the DCM in Tokyo during the last few months of my tour there. I had not heard of Horsey's request and I was surprised that Outerbridge would even remember who I was. These were still the days in the Foreign Service when an Ambassador and a DCM could request or reject almost any assignments to a post in their country. The vacancy in Rome was not to occur until the following year. I was to replace Gus Velletri in the Political Section.

Horsey's advice to me was that I attend early morning Italian lessons at FSI starting almost immediately. The assignment was made well in advance of our departure and I did study Italian at FSI. I continued that at the end of my tour on the desk because my replacement arrived a couple of months before my departure time allowing me to study Italian full time. That gave me a language rating of 3/3 by the time I arrived in Rome (sufficient to converse easily, but not bilingual). The ability to communicate in Italian was a great help. In Japan, people used to arrive without knowing a word of Japanese and left after their tour without knowing much more of the language. But in Italy, that was not possible. From the moment you arrived, you had to be able to navigate in the language.

When I arrived, I found there was a major policy dispute between the Political Section and Outerbridge Horsey and Tully Torbert, who was the Political Counselor. The issue was the question of a center-left coalition to govern Italy. Velletri was a strong advocate for the US to support such a coalition. Horsey was very much opposed. The Political Section position to which I had been assigned was responsible for liaison with the Christian Democratic Party, the Liberal Party and the Vatican. so I was in the middle of things. For a while at least I could plead newness on the job to avoid taking a position on the dispute..

I think it was Velletri had actually started the work with the Vatican. He had some family connections with officials in the Vatican. Horsey also had a lot of personal connections in the Vatican. His sister was a nun and he was a devoted Catholic. But Pius XII had laid down a dictum that there would be no relations, formal or informal, with governments that did not officially recognize the Holy See. So when Velletri went to the Vatican, he went in an unmarked car without CD license plates. Of course, senior Vatican officials were well aware of Gus' visits, they publicly denied any connections with the American government. By the time I arrived, the pattern had been pretty well established and, when required, I could go to see Archbishop Dell'aqua, who in effect ran the Vatican's Foreign Ministry. He was not actually the Cardinal who was the Secretary of State, but he did manage the Vatican's foreign affairs on a day-by-day

basis. So I could see him when necessary, but my usual contact was with Monsignor Cardinale, the so-called Chief of Protocol.

When the Ecumenical Council was convened, we made it clear to the Vatican that we were interested in the meetings. We talked to Cardinale often during this period as well as to the American Cardinals who attended the Council. The Ambassador was very interested and that helped. He would go to the Vatican, after I made the necessary arrangements, seeing the Pope or any official that he wanted to see. We were invited as official "guests" of the Vatican for the opening of the Council. So that even with Pius's restriction, we had adequate access to him and his staff. When Horsey went, he went as a private person. In light of the sensitivities on both sides, the Ambassador had established a rule that only he and I would be allowed to visit or contact the Vatican officially. He was trying to avoid any semblance of official connections between the US and the Vatican, especially in light of the political sensitivity of President Kennedy's position as the first Catholic president. Once Pius XII died, the official restrictions were lifted. John XXIII couldn't have cared less whether there were formal relationships. Paul VI was the same way; no one mentioned the Concordat or any other formal limitations on contacts.

Vatican II started in 1961 -- Vatican I had taken place sixty years earlier. It had a number of sessions over an extended period of time. For each sessions, all the Catholic leaders -- Cardinals and bishops -- around the world would come to Rome. They would meet in Council for three months and then would return to their dioceses. Then they would come back to Rome. The Sacred Congregations (similar to ministries in a secular government) and the special committees of the Council stayed essentially in permanent session, but the Plenary sessions were convened periodically and then lasted for three or four months. We tried to stay in touch with the American prelates in attendance, particularly the active ones. The American Jewish Committee was very interested in the proceedings because the Council did discuss its historical and current relationships with the Jewish community. The Council did produce a new statement (a *schema*) on Catholic-Jewish relations. It was important to the American Jewish community that the statement be as forthcoming as possible. So we followed the progress on that issue. We arranged for meeting between the Jewish and Catholic leaders. It was a narrow line that we walked because we couldn't give any semblance of becoming involved in what were essentially church issues. We were very mindful of the separation of church and state under our Constitution as well as the appearance of any impropriety. President Kennedy was certainly not anxious to give any impression of personal involvement or interest, although I think that the White House did follow the Council's proceedings quite closely. As I said, Salinger maintained contact with the Vatican even before Kennedy's visit. Washington did not show any official concern or express interest in the Council's proceedings, but no one ever told us not to report.

Beyond the Council's meetings, we were also interested in the Vatican's information on events behind the Iron Curtain. They had good sources, but it was not, as many have suggested, a great depository of information. It had a lot of intelligence, but it was primarily church related. They knew about their bishops and converts and church attendance and what churches had been closed; that was of limited interest to the United States government. The Vatican was incidentally only aware of security or political intelligence. It was more active in some places than others, but by and large, its information concerned religious matters and not issues of interest to a country's government. We had practically no requests from Washington to pursue

any particular matter, so I was pretty much left to my own devices on what issues to pursue and report.

We did have conversations with the Vatican about China. The church was essentially out of business in China and therefore not a very fruitful source. I used to see Cardinale about every other week; we were on the phone frequently, but many of these meetings and conversations dealt with visitors. We did institute a series of lunches hosted by the Ambassador for various Cardinals -- we rarely had two at the same time. The discussions around the table were mostly philosophical. He invited all the leading church theologians -- John Courtney Murray, Malachi Martin, Xavier Renn and Cardinal Bea. These were mostly Jesuit commentators on church developments. Bea was a German who had started as a simple priest and suddenly been named a Cardinal without going through any of the intermediate stages. He was most active in coalescing the Council. These lunches were unrelated to Embassy business, but were intended to pursue some of Reinhardt's personal interests, although some of the conversation was recorded in despatches to Washington.

Q: Tell me a little bit about who the various officials in the Embassy were?

SHERMAN: When I arrived, the Ambassador was James David Zellerbach. He was followed a few months later by G. Frederick Reinhardt. The DCM was Outerbridge Horsey first; he was followed by Frances Williamson. The Political Counselor was Torbert when I arrived; he left soon thereafter and John Auchincloss was acting head. Then Terry B. Sanders was assigned as Political Counselor. He had had no previous experience in Italian matters and was an impossible man to work for -- the worst boss I ever worked for. He stayed a little more than a year and then was followed by Bill Fraleigh. Jack Herfurt was the Administrative Counselor. He had followed Leo Gentner. The Economic Counselor was Sydney Mellen, who had followed Gardner Ainsworth.

I think the Embassy functioned reasonably well. We had very good language capability. Even most of the secretaries spoke Italian. That was almost a necessity because at that time, many Italians would speak only Italian and the secretaries had to be able to respond. All officers spoke Italian, certainly enough to get along. Some were bilingual almost. The USIS operated well. The Consular Section was busy and handled its work-load efficiently. The Political Section was active. The relationships between the various sections of the Embassy were good. I don't remember any policy disputes that occurred except for question of whether the United States should support a left-center coalition. That important and probably key US policy question was essentially a political issue dealt with by the Political section. I was of course also interested in the Vatican Council. Economic questions were pretty much relegated to the back-burner because Italy was at the time enjoying "the Italian miracle". There were some trade problems on such things as shoes, which were usually stimulated by one U.S. politico or another, but there were never any serious trade or economic issues between the two countries.

Life in Rome was pleasant enough. The office was generally pleasant. It was not so for Bill Fraleigh because he felt that he was being by-passed on matters that were in his area of jurisdiction. The main bone of contention of course were the Vatican issues because he had some friends there with whom he maintained contact and whom he believed should have been

consulted. It was an unusual situation. My colleague, Steve Peters, who was the contact man with the Socialist Party, entertained members of that Party frequently. Bill Fraleigh was of course dutifully invited to all these affairs. The Socialists were anxious to meet with U.S. government officials; they welcomed any invitations from U.S. Embassy staff. Those contacts were important to them.

The Christian Democrats -- the Party that I covered -- had no particular interest in the U.S. Embassy. They were reluctant participants in any American social occasions. They were the governing party and didn't feel that contacts with Americans were of particular benefit to them. Getting appointments in their offices with them was difficult. When I did get a chance of meeting, it more likely than not to be a cup of coffee late at night on the Piazza Navona. It was unusual that they would show up for a dinner party. They might accept, but would usually call at the last minute and cancel. So that was nearly impossible for me to introduce Fraleigh to the Christian Democrats as Peters did for the Socialists. I think that added to Fraleigh's frustrations and concerns that I was keeping information and contacts from him.

My relationships with the Political Counselor were also complicated because I was a very close friend with the DCM, Francis Williamson. That, I am sure, added to Fraleigh's unhappiness. Francis died while in Rome and after that, Fraleigh wrote a very damaging efficiency report.

Like all large European Embassies, Rome lacked close cohesion after work. There was not much social interchange among the officers. It was not at all like Tokyo, where there was a good deal of Embassy community activity which stemmed in part from the fact that all the staff as housed relatively closely together. It was very difficult to settle in Rome. First there was the Italian way of doing things -- the landlords, the service industry, etc. The Embassy provided virtually no assistance to newly arriving staff. An officer was on his or her own to find living accommodations, negotiate the lease, pay bills, etc. It was a difficult adjustment for someone who had just arrived from an Embassy like Tokyo. Of course, in Rome, the top-ranking officers -- Ambassador, DCM, the Counselors -- and the staff lived in government-owned housing and they didn't have the same problems as the more middle grade and junior officers had. It was only later that I recognized how many of those personnel problems Bill Crockett had tried to address as Administrative Counselor in Rome, for which he was severely criticized by the Inspectors and others. Staff morale was relatively good, although, again as in all European capitals, the staff corps people are largely ignored because the assumption is that anybody living in "the lap of luxury" should be able to navigate on their own. Anyone who could not enjoy one of those posts was obviously the one at fault and not the system. The single women had a difficult social circumstance in the Italian world. It was not a hospitable atmosphere for a single woman. Unless in the company of another woman or an American male, they were prey to the well-known Italian male predilections. The Embassy showed absolutely no concern for that problem, which was a serious morale issue. The Embassy did not organize any after-work hours activities. Mary Jane and I started a small theater group as we had done at every other post we had served in. We put up a set and the actors read from scripts, but went through the on stage action. It became very popular and that group went on for some years after we left Rome. We had a lot of fun. We also performed in some regular theater productions. The Embassy gave us no support, but the Ambassador and other members of the staff came to watch.

The Zellerbachs had Embassy people at their official functions. They were called "co-hosts" and assigned specific functions, like keeping people from wandering upstairs to the family quarters, making sure that everybody was being served and that they all would leave at the appropriate time. It was very formal. The invited Embassy staff had to arrive fifteen minutes before the guests. Mrs. Zellerbach would brief us on what needed to be done, etc. The Reinhardts were much more informal. They would also invite Embassy staff, but they were treated more as guests than as hired waiters. Mrs. Reinhardt had very definite ideas about the Foreign Service, which she has frequently expressed in places like the *Foreign Service Journal* after the Ambassador's death. She was considerably younger than Freddie and they had young children. So the whole atmosphere at the Residence was much more relaxed.

Q: *What were the views of the Embassy on the internal political situation in Italy at the time?*

SHERMAN: There was a huge problem which was dumped on me as soon as I arrived. It revolved around a center-left coalition. There were a substantial number of officers in the Political section, primarily the more junior ones -- George Lister, Clayton Mudd, Gus Velletri and others -- who believed that the way to maintain democracy in Italy and to keep the Communists out of power, was to bring the Socialists into the government -- the so called "opening to the left". That strategy had been vigorously opposed by earlier Christian Democratic leaders like DeGasperi, and certainly by the Catholic Church. These groups felt that any contacts with the Socialists should be taboo. The leadership of the CD consisted primarily of conservatives who were unalterably opposed to the "Opening". The debate about the political strategy was an open and wide ranging debate in Italy. Some Embassy staffers supported the "Opening" strategy; others supported the maintenance of a pure CD government. Outerbridge Horsey and Tully Tolbert strongly supported the position that the Socialists be kept out of the government. They did not object to us maintaining contacts with the Socialist Party or reporting on its activities, but our reporting was carefully edited to avoid giving any impression that the Socialists were part of a "democratic" family or that they would assist in the containment of the Communists if they were ever to share governmental powers. Our reporting tended to suggest that the Socialists, if in the government, would assist the Communists in acquiring greater power. Pietro Nenni, the Socialist leader, was viewed as just as much of an enemy as Togliatti, the Communist boss. The Ambassador did not come down on one side or another.

George Lister was our main reporter on the Socialist Party. He had most of the contacts. Whenever he would write his reports, his commentary and approach would be generally favorable and benign towards the Socialists and the center-left points of view. By the time Outerbridge Horsey got finished with his review, the draft report would be substantially altered to alter any favorable references to the Socialists or would include countervailing views. At times, the redrafting was so drastic that George Lister would refuse to be shown as the drafting officer. I would guess that more than half of the reports out of the Embassy therefore would show Outerbridge Horsey as drafting officer. Outer felt very strongly about the US taking a firm stance against the "Opening to the Left".

In retrospect, I would guess that Horsey approved my assignment to Italy because I had had no previous Italian experience and he must have felt that he could control my views and keep me on the "straight and narrow". In fact, that was not the result. I found myself more and more

sympathizing with a new center-left strategy. I might not have been as extreme as George, but I was certainly more supportive of that Christian Democratic faction, led by Aldo Moro, who believed that the CD was the party of center moving to the left. That, of course, implied first a closer relationship with the Social Democrats, under Saragat, and eventually to the Socialist Party. Moro and his faction were vigorously opposed by the *Dorotei* (named after the church where that faction first met), led by Flaminio Piccoli and Mario Scelba -- conservatives who did not want any relationships with any part of the Left. The fight among the Christian Democrats was fierce. It was fascinating to observe. I was greatly impressed by Moro, particularly by his performance at a major CD meeting in Naples. He spoke at about 2 a.m. with great passion; it was a major piece of political drama during which Moro expressed his views of the future, his fears, his dreams and hopes. It was oratory at its best. I became a devotee of Moro's and his strategy.

So I too began to have differing views from Outerbridge Horsey and had discussions with him. Of course, he saw current events through a prism of long experience in Italy which went back to the pre-war days; it was difficult therefore to argue with him in a historical context when you hadn't had the same experience. He had present at the birth of the CD; he had known De Gasperi well. He had strong feelings about the Communists; he was close to the Catholic Church and very sympathetic to its position, which was relatively inflexible.

There was a comparable and simultaneous debate in Washington on this major political issue. The Office of Western European Affairs tended to support the Horsey position; INR, where John DeSciullo was the major Italian analyst, supported the "Opening to the Left" position. There were others in town who agreed with INR. Sometimes, the officers on the Italy desk would "run off the reservation" and show some tilt towards the more liberal position. The Embassy was always concerned with the selection of the Italian desk officer because it wanted to make sure that it had a vigorous defender of the faith in the right place in Washington.

Before the Kennedy visit, Arthur Schlesinger came to Rome to review the political situation. George Lister was his control officer. He took the opportunity to unburden himself on his problems with his bosses during their trip in from the airport. Schlesinger, in his book, noted that Outerbridge Horsey was leading the Embassy down the wrong policy lane. He said that the Kennedy Administration, in general, supported Christian Democratic movements in the world and that it tried to get European support for Frei in Chile, for example. He suggested that Kennedy supported movements that leaned to the left such as worker-priests, etc. I believe, that as result of Schlesinger's visit, Outerbridge Horsey was eventually moved from Italian affairs in 1962 and sent to Czechoslovakia as Ambassador.

Q: If our policy was tilted, did that govern any of our day-to-day activities? Did the US government's internal debate have any effect on our relationships with the Italian government and parties?

SHERMAN: It probably did. We had a complicated arrangement, which included the work of other agencies which followed Italian politics closely, especially CIA. There was a degree of U.S. financial assistance to certain political institutions, but I don't know the details because I was never privy to them or directly involved. That assistance had started, I am sure, before my

arrival in Rome and was still going on while I was there.

The basic U.S. objective was to frustrate the Italian Communist Party by any means possible. The debate was not over the broad goal; it was over the means to accomplish the objective. The question was how best to fight the Communists. There was not a more dedicated anti-Communist in the world than George Lister. He was more passionate about that than Horsey was. But he felt that the best means to defeat the Communists was by encouraging the Socialists to split irrevocably from the far left through a center-left coalition. He also thought that the ultra-conservative leadership of the CD should be frustrated. Horsey supported the conservatives and so did some of Horsey's successors. Graham Martin, when he was Ambassador, reinvigorated the old civic committees which had been established to push ultra conservative policies in the CD party. No one went so far as to support the MSI (the crypto-Fascist Party) nor the Monarchist Party. It should be noted that the Communists at this period were receiving almost the same percentage of the vote as the Christian Democrats (mid-20%). They were particularly strong in some local elections and especially in the "Red Belt" -- Tuscany, Romagna. So they were a potent political force in Italy, although quite different from their French and other counterparts. The Italian Communists leadership consisted of rich, capitalist people. They had TVs, refrigerators, cars; they lived comfortably. When a Sicilian traveled north to Milan, for example, to find a job, he would probably be met and welcomed by a local Communist Party official, who found lodging and a job for him. The Communists would take care of these new "immigrants". That is how they built their power base. They operated a political machine which took great pains to take care of its "grass roots" supporters and potential voters.

The Communist Party did follow the lead of the USSR on foreign policy issues, but it didn't really spend much time on those issues. Italy under a Communist government, would have been just as difficult as Italy was under other governments. Italians usually don't vote *for* a Party or a person; they vote against. If the Communists had been the government, they too would have suffered the anger and complaints of the voters, like the CD did. Anything that went wrong, either for the state or an individual, would have been the government's fault regardless of Party in power. Knowing this predilection, the Communists preferred to be outside the government. There was a wonderful satirical movie made in which the CD members were in a room watching the election returns. The American Ambassador was also in the room. The scene has the returns indicating a Communist victory. Then the set changes to the room occupied by the Communists, who are becoming increasingly disturbed by the possibility of a victory as the CD people were dismayed by the possibility of defeat! It was a wonderful commentary, which not only illustrated the political scene in Italy, but also the Italians' ability to laugh at themselves.

But the intra-Embassy debate was a healthy one; it was out in the open. No one's opinion was being suppressed. Horsey did alter reporting cables because he felt that he was the senior representative of the Embassy, but the disagreements among the staff were well known in Washington.

Some one said that the "Political situation in Italy was desperate, but not serious!". That is the way it was. The political system was crumbling even in the early '60s. Nowhere else in the world could one find 35 governments in 30 years. Governments were always falling. The process worked, but only because band-aids were being applied to it from day to day. There was no

coherence. Some policies were agreed on, but there wasn't any political leadership strong enough to wend its way through the bureaucracy, much less change its culture. Government was viewed as an impediment, not as an avenue for change. The bureaucracy was an employer and a large one at that. The political system generated confusion, not clarity or national goals. The government was always in shambles. Even in those days, everyone was aware of the *bustarello* - the little white envelope stuffed with money that was handed to one official or another.

The economic system, on the other hand, was booming. The "Italian miracle" was in full swing in the '60s. Everything was great. People lived better and better and were full of optimism, even for Italians. Everybody had a job and felt secure. The South, which as always was the "economic basket case", was being helped by emigration to the North. Newspapers were flourishing giving great opportunities for public debates.

Q: Let me ask you about Vice President Johnson's visits.

SHERMAN: There were two Johnson visits. The first was in 1962 on a stop in a long journey. He and Mrs. Johnson and Lynda Bird were in Rome rather briefly. My responsibility was to take the party to the Vatican for an audience with the Pope. Lynda was, at the time, in love with some Lieutenant (JG). who was stationed in Naples. She was 18 or 19 at the time. Bill Crockett was the State Department's honcho on that trip. I remember that because at the time, Johnson's foreign policy advisor, who was a Foreign service officer was leaving and the Ambassador and Jack Herfurt, the Administrative Counselor were pushing me to be his replacement. That was the first time I met Crockett. The visit went off without any major hitches that I can remember, although Johnson acted as he did on all trips. That was the trip on which he decided he wanted to buy some Italian neckties. Outerbridge Horsey was sent across the street to bring back to the hotel a sample of 500 neck-ties. Johnson would select ten and pay half the price asked for by the shop-keeper. I can still see Outer sitting in the hotel suite's waiting room, saying: "I am just not going to do that!. I am just not going to do that!". But he had little choice.

The second visit came after the Pope died in April, 1963. This time, the Vice President came without his family, although he had a large delegation along, including Jim Farley, an Afro-American clergyman, a Congressman, etc. He stayed at the newly opened *Cavaliere Hilton*. The hotel gave him -- very aptly -- the "Petronius Suite" which was on the top floor. Jack Valenti, in his normal officious persona, ran around checking everything -- the soap, the Cutty Sark bottle and all the other pet demands that went with a Johnson visit. Johnson went into the bathroom and read the USIA Bulletin there which featured his picture on the cover. He couldn't stand any pictures of himself; it was always the photographer's fault. In this case, in addition, it was also USIA's fault for using his picture. He demanded that all the copies of the Bulletin be destroyed and be replaced with an edition using a line drawing of himself that pleased him. And so it was done.

Vatican ceremonies are interminable. They go on forever -- four, six hours. There was Johnson sitting in his white tie and tails, without any staff or entourage around him. He was surrounded by other world officials and diplomats with whom he had nothing in common. I have still have pictures of him, looking around fiercely, obviously very unhappy and uncomfortable. Finally, the ceremony ended and Johnson returned to the hotel for a club sandwich. The sandwich had too

much mayonnaise on it which gave him indigestion. But he had to make a call on Italian President Segni. The State Department had not sent an interpreter, for reasons that I still can not fathom. So I was chosen and became the official interpreter for a meeting between the President of Italy and the Vice-President of the United States. It was not an easy chore and I faced the prospect with a great deal of trepidation. But the meeting went off all right.

It was right after that meeting that I also interpreted for Johnson while he wandered the streets of Rome, shaking "flesh". We stopped in Trastevere, in a store where he bargained for a rubber raft for one of his daughters. The shop-keeper kept saying: "*Questi sono pressi fixe*" ("These are fixed prices"). I kept pointing out that this was the Vice President of the United States and asking that she make a deal. She would not give a lira! Of course, Johnson didn't pay for any of these purchases anyway. There was a "bag man" along.

I still have a tape recording, made by USIA man, of that walk during which Johnson repeated how important the Italian immigrants were to the United States and how he had appointed one to a Cabinet post. Of course, as luck would have it, the first people we met were German tourists, and I don't speak German. But Johnson persevered on, handing out Senate gallery passes and ball point pens with his signature on them. One of the local people came up to me to inquire who the VIP was -- he thought it might be Mr. Hilton. I translated that as well. Finally, we wound up back at the Hilton, only to run into Mary McGrory who happened to be in Rome on vacation -- she is a great Italophile. Doris Fleeson's daughter, Doris Anthony, was a press attaché at the Embassy and she was there as well. Johnson turned to me and whispered ; "You have done good! Now tell me who that is that just greeted me and asked to speak to me". I told him that was Mary McGrory. So he turned to McGrory and said: "Hello, Mary. Good to see you!". It was an amusing day!.

It was a busy month because Johnson came at about the same time as Humphrey visited and just before the Chief Justice, Earl Warren came. Warren came as head of a delegation that included Mike Mansfield, Charles Englehardt (the minerals king), and Rabbi Lewis Finkelstein. That delegation was the official US representation for the coronation of Pope Paul VI. Immediately thereafter, President John Kennedy arrived. So within a three week period, the Embassy hosted the President, the Vice-President and the Chief Justice and some other well known politicians, all of whom wanted to see the Pope, which made the groups my responsibility.

Kennedy waited in Milan until the coronation ceremonies were completed so that he wouldn't interfere with the Warren delegation. So we had Johnson, followed almost immediately by Warren, who was followed immediately by Kennedy. President Kennedy was in Rome for three days. The first two days were devoted to US-Italy bilateral issues. The third day was reserved for the Vatican. As I mentioned, plans for a Kennedy-Pope John XXIII had been worked out earlier through non-State Department channels. But by the time the visit came, there was a new Pope. So the visit did not go as smoothly as might have otherwise. First of all, there was a big battle between the State Department and the Vatican Protocol staff concerning who would attend the audience. The White House wanted to have a large group present, but didn't want to list every one as members of the official party because that would not be good public relations-wise. The Vatican, on the other hand, was equally determined that only people listed as official members of the presidential party, would be permitted to attend. Furthermore, the Vatican Chief of Protocol

wanted to call on the President before the audience. I tried to arrange that, but Kennedy would have no part of it. The Chief of Protocol could see the Secretary of State if he wanted, but that wasn't satisfactory. So the Chief of Protocol's nose was out of joint. When we arrived at the *Cortile San Damaso* where the entrance to the Pope's offices were, we were met by a mob scene, with everybody in Rome seemingly trying to get into the elevators. The protocol people were trying to clear a path for Kennedy. Finally we ran into the last hurdle which were the Swiss guards who were under instructions to let in only the members of the official party. The head of the Secret Service, who was more Catholic than the Pope, got very upset and was furious with me, wanting to know what I was going to do about this mess. At that point I saw Archbishop Dell'aqua hurrying through the crowd so that he could participate in the audience. I grabbed his cassock and told him that we had a problem. I also grabbed Angier Biddle Duke, who was the U.S. Chief of Protocol and I got the two to talk about who was to be let in. The Swiss guard, who had been so steadfast in his refusal to let anyone in not listed, was finally subdued and the whole group was allowed to enter into the chamber. Only Evelyn Lincoln was blocked because she was told that her costume did not meet standards; her blouse was too see-through. The Swiss guard would not let her in. She finally had to borrow a jacket from one of the newspaper people and that passed muster.

In the meantime, the Swiss Guard was still furious with me for having found a way to get the non-listed people into the audience. They kept looking at the newspapermen who were in their usual scruffy duds; they shook their heads in great disapproval of an Papal audience's dress code. The newspaper people were being equally pugnacious and ignoring the Swiss Guard's comments entirely. It was a circus! There had been no opportunity to brief the President about Vatican protocol or about how an audience was conducted. Finally someone decided that it would be wise if I could ride with Kennedy to the Vatican to brief him in the limousine. So I dutifully showed up at the Villa Taverna -- the Ambassadorial Residence where the President was staying. Kennedy and Dean Rusk came out and got into the limousine. I got in and sat on a jump seat.

I immediately found out that the President didn't want to talk about Vatican protocol; he wanted to be briefed about Italian politics. He had met with most of the political leaders the night before at the Quirinale, including Togliatti, the Communist leader. Mary Jane and I had been invited to mingle with the guests after dinner in the garden. Kennedy had some Language Service interpreters with him, so that the Embassy staff didn't have to fill in this time. He met and talked with the party leaders then; he met and shook hands with Togliatti. It was a situation that couldn't be helped. the host for the dinner and the party afterwards was the President of Italy; he could not exclude the Communists.

In any case, on the ride to the Vatican, Kennedy wanted to talk about Italian politics. So that is what we talked about. Periodically he would turn his head towards the window and wave to the crowd. The first time he did that, I stopped talking. Kennedy said: "Don't stop talking; I can listen and wave at the same time!". Then he said he only needed to be told one minute before arrival at the Vatican so he could comb his hair. And that I did. When we got out of the car, I tried to mend fences as best I could and introduced the Vatican Chief of Protocol to the President. I had earlier suggested that if he did meet the Cardinal, the President might wish to express his regrets that he hadn't been able to see the Cardinal on the previous day. Kennedy's reply was that he would leave regrets to the Secretary of State.

I should also mention that in that ride to the Vatican, Dean Rusk raised the issue of Vatican recognition, saying that he felt the time had come for the United States to recognize the Vatican. He thought that the domestic political objections would be minor. Kennedy disagreed, noting that Harry Truman, a Baptist, could not obtain agreement to recognition and that he, Kennedy, as the first Catholic President, wouldn't have a chance of succeeding.

That caravan going to the Vatican must have been a spectacle. There must have been twenty cars and trucks. It was, of course, a big deal since Kennedy had been the first President to call on the Pope. The meeting with the Pope was somewhat smaller than the audience, but included, as best I can remember, was Arthur Schlesinger, John Roche, Sorenson, O'Donnell -- all of the White House staff -- and Dean Rusk and the Charge, Frances Williamson (the Ambassador was ill and was in the military hospital in Wiesbaden). But the conversations were just between the President and the Pope. I was not present during that meeting.

We did have a small incident on our way to the Vatican. One man broke through the ranks of the police keeping the people on the sidewalks and ran to the limousine and threw an envelope into it. There was a note in it, asking the President for some favor or another. The Secret Service were horrified, as you can imagine. The crowd was fair-sized. Kennedy was extraordinarily popular in Rome.

Q: Earlier, you mentioned that at the beginning of your tour in Rome, you received a poor efficiency rating. Tell us a little about that and what consequences it had on your career?

SHERMAN: Bill Fraleigh was the Political Counselor, as I mentioned earlier. We never had any public arguments or disagreements, but I always had the feeling that he was irritated that only I and the Ambassador were privy to US communications with the Vatican and to any reporting on the Holy See. He was cut out of work that one of his subordinates was doing and that didn't make him very happy. Also as time went on, my political reporting on the DC were sent to Washington in preference to his commentaries. Being in competition with one's boss is not anything that I would choose to do, but on several occasions I would be directed by the DCM to write a report on a political event, only to find out later that Fraleigh had done the same thing. In most instances, the DCM would choose my draft. The DCM had a high regard for my work, which pleased me, but made my relationships with the Political Counselor even more tenuous. Before the end of my first two years in Rome, the DCM died during an emergency operation.

When it came to efficiency report time, I found myself facing a very negative report. I was supposed to have been a procrastinator; that is, I had not been responsive to his requests for reports. I must admit that it did happen on one occasion because I thought his request had been unreasonable and a waste of time. He had asked for a report on the election of the Mayor of Rome; that was not an "event" in Italian politics and had no consequences whatsoever beyond the Rome municipality. It would have been of zero interest to Washington and I was busy on other matters at the time. The whole tone of the efficiency report was harsh, which was very unusual for the times because in those days, efficiency reports were written in subtle and delicate tones so that you had to read between the lines and understand the code words if you really wanted to find out what a supervisor thought of a particular employee. I was accused of cutting

him out of information, didn't invite him to representational functions and all sorts of other slights and criticisms. I thought it was a most unfair and biased report. For example, I really didn't host any representational events because my contacts with the DC leadership was primarily during office hours. I may have had an occasional cup of coffee late at night at the Piazza Navona, but the Christian Democrats would seldom come to dinner at our house because they really didn't feel obliged to socialize with Americans. They were the party in power and didn't have to find occasions to make contacts with the Embassy, as, for example, the Socialists did. Pietro Nenni, the Socialist leader, would be delighted to accept a dinner invitation from one of my colleagues; he had to be "on the make" and all the Socialists were delighted to have contacts with the American Embassy.

So his terrible efficiency report was written by Bill Fraleigh. We had an Inspection Team in Rome at that time. In those days, Inspectors spent considerable amount of time talking to each officer and staff employee, making personal evaluations of all staff members. One of the Inspectors spent considerable amount of time with me probing about my relationships with Fraleigh. He had seen the report; I had not. From my responses, he pieced together the real situation and wrote a separate efficiency report that challenged all the criticisms that Fraleigh had made. The Inspector not only challenged Fraleigh's assertions, but indicated that they were just plain wrong and that they stemmed from a situation over which I had no control and for which I should not be held responsible. That Inspector's intervention negated Fraleigh's report and negated any adverse effect his report might have had on my career. Furthermore, when the Ambassador heard from the Inspection team what they had found, he also became involved and he took the opportunity to write a separate note, noting how satisfied he was with my work on Vatican matters since I had taken him to see the Pope, although I did not attend the private meeting he had with His Holiness Paul VI. When the two of them came out of the Pope's office, the Ambassador started to introduce me. The Pope said that that was not necessary since he and his staff knew me very well and that the Vatican had always found me very helpful. The Ambassador reported that incident in his comments on my work and that was also very helpful. hatchet job

The only other time that I found the efficiency rating used as a weapon was in the days when they weren't available to the rated officer at all. They were never shown to an employee, even when you came home to Washington for consultation or assignment. Someone in Personnel would give you an oral thumb nail description of what the ratings said, but you were not permitted to read them yourself. This happened to me after my first tour in Yokohama. I barely knew what an efficiency rating was. My rating had been written by the Executive Officer of the Consulate General. I don't know what that person had against me except that I was assigned to live in a house that he wanted to have himself. I couldn't think of any other reasons why my efficiency rating was so full of venomous comments. I was accused of not knowing much about my work and not doing it well. In fact, when efficiency reports finally were made available to employees, my counselor in Personnel noted that such a report would not have been acceptable under the new standards and would have been returned to the drafting officer for rewrite. It was just overly biased and prejudicial without any supporting evidence. I suspect that that efficiency report did have an impact on my promotional opportunities because most of the people who entered the Foreign Service at the same time as I did received their first promotion much sooner than I did.

In neither situation, did I write a rebuttal. In the first place, in those days they were not permitted. Furthermore, I have never seen a circumstance in which rebuttals have had any beneficial effect on promotion or assignment panels; on the contrary, it has been my experience that rebuttals tended to aggravate an officer's standing rather than aid it.

Q: *Did the Kennedy visit have any consequences for US policy towards the Vatican?*

SHERMAN: Most of the possible consequences were already on track by the time of the visit. Relations were no longer as remote and as glacial as they had been when Pius XII was the Pope. The separateness of the Vatican as a secular state, which Pius XII had guarded so jealously, was beginning to crumble. Although important American people, officials as well as private, were always received by all Popes, from John XXIII on, no Pope had any particular difficulty having Embassy staff come to the Vatican to discuss matters of mutual interest with members of his staff. The Kennedy administration was quite circumspect about its relations with the Vatican, concerned that it be criticized for being too close, for obvious reasons. But it was anxious to maintain a dialogue with the Vatican. Major efforts were made by both sides to stress the parallelism of policy between Pope John XXIII, with his opening to the world and trying to modernize the Church, and President Kennedy and his "New Frontier". These parallel trends were already underway when Kennedy visited, but his call on Pope Paul VI highlighted the two policy tracks. It was the symbolism of the presentation made by the Cardinal Secretary of State who, after the meeting with the Pope, in a separate ceremony at the North American College gave Kennedy the gifts that he would have received had John XXIII still been alive. One of those gifts was a signed copy of the *Pacem in Terris*, the encyclical which was the highlight of John XXIII's papacy.

Q: *I gather that President Kennedy's assassination and funeral caused quite a stir in Rome. Can you describe that period?*

SHERMAN: It was a fascinating period, which were particularly interesting to me because of my job as liaison to the Vatican. As I mentioned, Kennedy's popularity in Italy was extraordinary. The Italians are usually pretty blasé about political leaders -- their own as well as foreign. But the crowds who witnessed Kennedy's visit were enormous. When he was assassinated, the Italians took it as a personal tragedy. The taxi cab drivers, most of whom belonged to the Communist Party, parked a cab in front of the Chancery, decorated with a large funeral wreath, as a symbol of their sorrow. People stood in line for hours waiting to come into the Chancery to sign the condolence book. Every senior Italian official came to pay condolences.

It was the general custom that when a head of state dies, the Italian government would sponsor a memorial service usually at *Santa Maria Degli Angeli* -- the little Michelangelo church near the Termini railroad station. It became quickly clear to me that that church could not possibly hold the crowd that wanted to attend, both Italian and American. During this period, the Ecumenical Council was holding one of its sessions. That added to the throng that wanted to pay its respects. So I called the Vatican to inquire whether it would be possible to use one of the major basilicas for the service. The Vatican volunteered *Saint John Lateran*, which was the Pope's church in his capacity as Bishop of Rome. It was a big church that could accommodate a large crowd. When I

mentioned the new site to the Italian government people, there was some rumbling because the bureaucracy was concerned about the precedent. I pointed out that Michelangelo's church was very small and that the crowd would be quite large. Finally, they and we went to *Saint John Lateran* which like most Italian churches, had no installed seating, but was very large. We discussed the necessity to rent some chairs, but were told that the Vatican had an office, the *Floreria Apostolica*, which handled such problems. It would bring the chairs and drape the church and whatever else had to be done to make it suitable for a funeral ceremony. We then realized that the main altar was at the end of the nave, far removed and not visible by anyone standing in the second half of the church. But there was a second altar, which stood at the center of the transept. That was the Papal altar which was reserved for the exclusive use of the Pontiff. I asked whether it would be possible for that altar to be used for the Kennedy's ceremonies. That furrowed many brows. My friend, Monsignor Cardinale, said that he thought it might be possible to issue a Papal Bull, which was required if the papal altar was to be used. That Bull would be posted so that all would know that the Pope had personally approved the use of the altar. And that is what was done.

We had been discussing the ceremony with the American Cardinals who were in Rome for the Ecumenical Council. Cardinal Spellman was the senior American ecclesiastical official. He was the one who would conduct the Mass. All the American Cardinals were in Rome at the time, including Cushing, who as Archbishop of Boston had, of course, a special relationship to the Kennedys. He was chosen to deliver the homily. The rest of the cast was to include members of the North American College and Monsignor Dante, the great liturgy expert, who had taught all the Cardinals when they were students at the College and who tended to treat them as if they were still his students. The Vatican's protocol people were there to make sure that everybody dressed and behaved appropriately. A Mass of this kind can get very complicated and it really required considerable expertise to make sure that all went according to script.

In any case, the preparations for the ceremony required me to be in frequent contact with Cardinal Spellman. At sometime during this period, I got a call from the Cardinal who expressed great surprise that the Pope had released the use of the altar to him. He sounded almost overwhelmed. I expressed great surprise and congratulated him on his honor. He did not know nor did I ever tell him that the arrangements had been worked out between the Vatican and some functionary at the American Embassy.

The Embassy staff had been working around the clock, putting black borders on all the Embassy's envelopes with magic markers, getting the condolence books ready (we must have gone through 9 or 10 books, each of which held 10,000 signatures) and doing all the other myriad of tasks that take place when a President dies. We had a huge set of regulations -- the Combined Federal Regulations -- that governed our practices; I think that probably has been changed by now.

But in any case, the ceremonies went off very smoothly. In attendance at the Mass must have been at least 300 Cardinals. They of course were the "Big Wigs" and sat wherever they wished. The *Floreria* kept bringing more and more chairs. The whole church was people packed in like sardines from wall to wall. It was incredible; I had never seen a crowd like that in a church in Italy.

In addition to making the basilica available for the ceremony, the Vatican sent official condolences. I should note that I was never fully apprized of the "back-channel" communications that took place between the Vatican and the White House. Pierre Salinger certainly was involved and perhaps even the principal connection. I was aware that such communications did take place, but was never fully cognizant of their contents. I used to hear rumors or get small hints by Monsignor Cardinale, who was the Vatican representative in the communications.

JOHN W. SHIRLEY
Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Trieste (1960-1963)

Press Attaché, USIS
Rome (1963-1965)

Public Affairs Officer, USIS
Rome (1976-1980)

John W. Shirley spent his early years in Yugoslavia and was in Nazi-occupied Hungary during World War II. He entered USIA in 1957, after which he served in countries including Croatia, Serbia, Italy, India, Poland, and Tanzania. He was interviewed by G. Lewis Schmidt on November 21, 1989.

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.

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?

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?

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]

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 judgment.

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.

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.

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.

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.

ROGER A. SORENSON

**Consular Officer
Genoa (1960-1962)**

**Permanent Representative to United Nations agencies
Rome (1979-1983)**

Roger A. Sorenson was born and raised in Utah. He received a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University. He joined the Foreign Service in 1960. Mr. Sorenson's career included positions in Calgary, Dublin, and Geneva. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 25, 1990.

Q: Your first post was Genoa. What were you doing there?

SORENSEN: I learned during the A100 course that around April of each year members of the Foreign Service could signify their assignment preference. What was it they used to call the form we filled out? The April Fools sheet, if I remember correctly.

Q: Because it was due on April first, I think.

SORENSEN: That was the reason. In any event, I filled it out, naively requesting a European assignment, specifically an assignment to Italy. To the surprise of everyone -- not least of all, my own -- an opening was available in Genoa, and I was sent there as a Consular officer. It was a particularly interesting assignment because Genoa, as I later learned, was one of the first posts opened by the American government after achieving its independence. At the time of my assignment, it was the second largest port in the Mediterranean and it presented an opportunity to do some economic reporting as well as to engage in the full gamut of consular activities which were the post's bread and butter.

Q: How did you view the Foreign Service after you got your taste of it in Genoa?

SORENSEN: I loved it. My encounters and the dramatis personae were not dissimilar to something out of a Graham Greene novel: a distinguished Consul General tarred during the McCarthy era and consigned by destiny and the Department to what he clearly considered a diplomatic backwater; the disconsolate wife of a staff member hanging herself from a bannister, apparently rather than facing the rigors of playing her assigned role in the American Women's Club; sailors plunging in delirious abandon from the third floor of local brothels during visits of the Seventh Fleet; a drunken American tourist threatening to call his Congressman if he weren't immediately sprung from the local pokey and the joy of telling him that there was no habeas corpus in Italy -- these were new experiences flooding upon me every day, and it was ever so more exciting than selling Steinways in Provo, Utah.

It was against the stimulation and excitement of this first assignment that I learned with some reservation that my next post would be Calgary, Alberta.

Q: You left Geneva in 1979 and went to Rome. How did that assignment come about and what were you doing?

SORENSEN: Our ambassador in Geneva, Ambassador Vanden Heuvel, was transferred to New York as one of the ambassadors to the UN. He asked me to come to New York with him, but the thought of coping with life in New York on the income of a Foreign Service Officer was too daunting, and I declined. At the same time, however, I didn't want to remain in Geneva after Vanden Heuvel left and he was gracious enough to recommend me for the job of Permanent Representative to the UN agencies in Rome, which had just opened up. Happily, his recommendation was accepted, and I left for Rome.

Q: What were your functions there?

SORENSEN: They were largely the same as in Geneva. There are four UN food agencies in Rome -- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Program (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Council (WFC). My job was to coordinate and oversee the implementation of US policy with respect to these organizations.

Q: During this period, the end of the Carter and the early Reagan years, what was the direction of what we were doing there, and did it change with the administration?

SORENSEN: Not too much, with one exception that I'll come to. I say not too much because, from the point of view of our larger national interests, the basic issues remained the same. Once again, these were (1) the continual effort by the Third World to erode what they regarded as the advantages and prerogatives of the developed countries; (2) their ongoing effort to gain acceptance of the New International Economic Order (NIEO); and (3) their maneuvers to manipulate each of these organizations so as to make them instruments of resource transfer. Beyond these issues, the organizations continued to constitute playing fields in which East-West issues were contested, as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Finally, as ever, we had to confront the bureaucratic aspirations and interests of the elected UN and agency heads -- aspirations and interests that were frequently not consonant with our own. Changing the guard at home had little impact on the way we saw these issues.

Q: Let me ask about our problem with transferring resources through these organizations, specifically in connection with food. Isn't our policy to do whatever we can to get food to people who need it? What was the problem?

SORENSEN: The problem has to do with the nature of our treaty obligations to these agencies as defined in their charters, specifically our obligation to pay a fixed percentage of their respective budgets. Unfortunately, when the charters of the various organizations were drawn up we were not foresighted enough to demand some sort of weighted voting that would protect the big contributors from unwarranted demands on their national treasuries. The result has been that so called technical cooperation or technical assistance programs in the budgets of these organizations has gradually become a major issue, and it is not difficult to grasp the dynamics of the problem. The Third World, having the majority vote, has only to mandate vast and elaborate schemes of assistance through the budgets of these organizations and it becomes the treaty

obligation of our taxpayers simply to pay.

To come back to your question: of course our policy has been to do whatever we can to get food to people who need it, but we want to do it voluntarily. For example, in Rome there is an organization called the World Food Program, which takes surpluses, voluntarily donated by countries that have them, and channels these surpluses to needy countries in an organized and highly efficient manner. In this case, the resource to be transferred is something that we give voluntarily. We're not obligated to give it because it's part of an assessed budget.

The point is that what and how we give must obviously be under the control of congress, which has become increasingly incensed over the issue. In short, congress will not live with a situation where the Third World can use these organizations as instruments to make levies on the American tax payer. Congress insists upon reserving this privilege to itself.

Q: Were we ever living with it when it was equivalent to a levy while you were there?

SORENSEN: In the case of WHO, there was a period while I was in Geneva when the US simply refused to pay its assessment because a WHO resolution -- legally passed, of course, by the governing body -- required the organization to divert increasing portions of its expenditures to the Third World. This doesn't mean that these expenditures were not well spent, or that some of them may not actually have been in our interest. For example, WHO operates an early warning system intended to detect the outbreak of serious infectious diseases -- Asian flue, for example -- early enough to enable us to develop vaccines to prevent them from becoming epidemics. In this case, money is spent in the Third World where these things frequently originate in a way that makes us among the primary beneficiaries. Congress, however, saw the resolution in terms of principle and dug in its heels, and they didn't care much whether we benefitted or not.

Similarly, in FAO the governing body had passed resolutions that earmarked about 12 percent of FAO's budget for programs of technical cooperation, which was a euphemism for resource transfer. We strongly resisted this move, as did most of the other Western countries, with the result that the Director-General never really tried to get the percentage significantly enlarged. Of course, inevitably there would be fierce debates over the issue at each meeting of FAO's governing body, but this was part of the game. We simply had to make it clear that any enlargement of the program, or any abuse of it, would risk driving us from the organization.

Q: So it wasn't a matter of the Third World countries having a completely free hand.

SORENSEN: Absolutely not. A good chunk of the money that they spend -- twenty-five percent -- comes from us, and we can always tell them that we simply won't pay and that we're getting out, as we did in the ILO and subsequently in UNESCO. To do this in accordance with the governing charters of these organizations, however, notice must be given. Thus, it is not quite as simple as walking out and terminating our obligations the same day. Still, the threat was there, and it is perhaps the only thing we have ultimately to control the outcome. Either that or pay whatever is levied upon us, sit back, and watch them spend it.

Q: Were you able to keep the other representatives informed of how we felt and keep riding herd on this thing?

SORENSEN: Do you mean the other major donors?

Q: Yes.

SORENSEN: In fact, there are informal mechanisms for doing this. Since the other major donors share our concerns, they have banded together and formed a coordinating body called the Geneva Group, named because it was first assembled in Geneva. Representatives of the major donors -- the OECD countries -- meet annually, and subgroups composed the OECD permreps to each of the UN agencies meet before almost every important meeting of their respective agencies, to coordinate their policies on budget and administrative matters that might affect the size of their contributions.

Q: Well then, your role was what? How did you fit into furthering American policy there?

SORENSEN: In the case of the Geneva Group, since the U.S. was one of its co-founders, the U.S. Permrep acts as one of its two co-chairpersons wherever and whenever the Group or a subgroup meets. We and the British, in effect, shared the job of coordinating a common position among the major donors on budget and administrative policies. This, by itself, was a busy job.

To answer your question in the larger sense, the role of the Permanent Representative and his or her staff was to follow the activities of each of the organizations to which he or she was accredited; to report developments to Washington; to work with policy-makers back in the department to formulate comprehensive and cohesive policies in respect of the organizations; to implement these policies and build support for them among other countries; in general, to promote and protect US interests as they relate to the various organizations and their work.

Q: When the Reagan administration came in, in 1981, did you feel any change in atmosphere about the role and all this? It came in rather ideologically distant, I would say, from the United Nations effort to begin with.

SORENSEN: That's right. And, in fact, the Reagan administration and now the Bush administration have demonstrated this ideological distance over the past decade or thereabouts through a remarkable disregard for our basic treaty obligations. I mentioned earlier that our ultimate sanction is to withdraw from an organization and thus end our obligation to contribute. At the same time, however, this step must be taken in accordance with the rules that govern withdrawal, to which we agreed when we joined, and which are applicable to all member states.

Unfortunately, instead of giving notice as we ought to do, thus terminating our legal obligation to pay, we have simply refused to pay while continuing to insist on the rights of membership. At the present time, we owe enormous sums in back payments to the UN system, which we've allowed to accumulate. We're like the member of a club who refuses to pay his dues but insists on continuing to use the club's facilities.

In my personal opinion, the irony of the US position is beyond belief. Originally we saw the UN system as a means of inculcating Western regard for international law, for treaty obligations, for civilized debate among nations. We saw the United Nations as a major vehicle for conveying our values. And now we ourselves have become perhaps the biggest renegade in the system. In some UN agencies -- FAO is one of them -- the United States arrearage exceeds the combined arrearages of all other nations combined. This is in total disregard of our treaty obligation. How is that for the leader of the free world to behave?

My feeling is that, if a UN agency doesn't serve our national interest, indeed we ought to get out. But we should do so in accordance with our legal obligation to give due notice. To say that, in the event we don't like the way an organization is being run or don't like what the majority is doing, we won't pay our bills but will insist on continuing to participate, is a sad commentary on our regard for principle. It means that we don't have any,

Q: Did you feel, say, from emanations from Washington, that they'd just as soon you would go away? I mean, not you, but your office and all that. After the Carter administration, was there a difference not only in instructions but also in the tone or the style as far as dealing with the United Nations organizations between the two administrations?

SORENSEN: Well, certainly one suddenly began to see an increasing disregard for treaty obligations, which was deliberate. I shall never forget the first meeting of US permreps that I attended following the Republican victory. It took place in the latter part of 1980 in Geneva. Jeane Kirkpatrick was there together with the Ambassador to the UN agencies in Geneva -- some department store manager/owner from California. Somehow, the discussion came around to the question of US arrearages. I, together with a couple of other career Foreign Service people, took the position that, however we might feel about the activities or effectiveness of the UN and its agencies, we had a treaty obligation to pay until we gave legal notice to terminate the obligation.

Kirkpatrick greeted this view with a cavalier sneer, while the department store operator inferred that the view verged on downright treason and had, no doubt, contributed to the renegade attitudes being expressed, in his view, in UN fora. It was the first time that my loyalty had been impugned, even inferentially; it was also the first time that I had heard a responsible American official take what I re- garded as an irresponsible position on US treaty obligations.

No doubt about it, then. There was a distinct change in the attitude of senior people at the top. And with it, I'm sorry to say, there was a change in attitude among many of the career people back in the Department -- slavish types anxious to serve their political masters. In fact, some of the more pernicious changes in US policy with respect to holding back payments subsequently came from career bureaucrats who were duly rewarded with promotions, awards and other emoluments. There was an unparalleled loss of principle.

SAMUEL E. FRY, JR.
Consular/Administrative Officer
Trieste (1961-1963)

Samuel E. Fry, Jr. was born in December 1934 and raised in Illinois, New York, and Massachusetts. He received a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College in 1956 and then attended the University of Edinburgh on a Dartmouth fellowship. While attending Edinburgh, Mr. Fry was drafted into the U.S. military. Upon completion of his military service, he received a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961. Mr. Fry's career included positions in Moscow, Oslo, Helsinki, and Bucharest. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 26, 1993.

Q: Your first post was a very interesting one, I would have thought. It was at a time when you could get a look at two different worlds. You went to Trieste where you served from 1961 to 1963. How did you feel about the assignment and what was the situation when you got there?

FRY: At the end of the training class in June 1961, I was assigned to Geneva and was going to take a French language course. We then went into another week or two of very specialized consular training and the day before we finished my orders were changed to go to Rome and study Italian one on one with a barrage of tutors. They wanted a test to see how quickly a person could learn a romance language and Italian was a language that I didn't know a word of. Also they needed a junior officer in Trieste in September because the visa situation there was fairly active for a small post, and there were other things to do where they needed a first-tour officer. So I went to Rome and studied Italian very hard all of July and August, and about half of September. I lived in an Italian hotel and I tried to speak only Italian; I didn't have to work in the Embassy. The Embassy, the Ambassador in particular, was extremely supportive of this program; I was invited twice to the Ambassador's house for cocktails.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

FRY: Ambassador George Frederick Reinhardt, later killed in a car accident in northern Italy. He had been Ambassador to Egypt and Vietnam. The Embassy didn't ask me to come in on a Saturday and help out; language training was my business. It did allow me to arrive in Trieste towards the end of September and by November, when I was tested up there, I did get a three-three, which amazed even me because I had a fairly low language aptitude on the entering test.

Q: Three-three is considered a useful...

FRY: Yes, I think it was called professional proficiency in your work, that is you couldn't talk grand opera but you could tell people what they had to do to go to the United States.

Q: The first three is for speaking, the second three for reading, I think.

FRY: Yes. I always found Italian fairly easy to read because if I didn't know a word I would glide over it and didn't worry about it too much. I subsequently studied fairly hard in Trieste and since there were very few Americans there and the consulate was rather small, there was no one my age, I tended to meet quite a few Italians. Most of them didn't want to speak English or didn't speak it, so my language got stronger. I started getting the Trieste dialect, which is a very

interesting dialect, woven into Italian because when I asked about a word they would give me the Triestine word, not thinking too much about it. This led to situations such as one at a dinner party out of Trieste when someone was talking about music and how the Italians love opera, etc., and I said, "Every morning about six o'clock I have a toothbrush that comes down my street singing while cleaning the street." They all looked at me wondering what I was saying, and I said, "Well you know what I mean, he's a toothbrush and he sings." As it turns out, it was the difference between spazino, street sweeper, and spazolino, the Trieste slang for a toothbrush.

Q: What was the situation in Trieste when you arrived there in 1961?

FRY: Churchill, in his 1947 Fulton, Missouri, speech on the Cold War -- and I was very aware of that speech as we all were in the '50s and early '60s -- talked of the iron curtain that was descending from Szczecin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic. Trieste in 1961 was only six years away from the severe violence in the main square where students had been fired on by British soldiers and Italian constabulary. Trieste was then the Free Territory of Trieste. It had not been determined how Trieste would be divided between Yugoslavia and Italy. Trieste did not have representation in the Italian parliament; it was occupied by five thousand American soldiers and about an equal number of British. Fortunately for the Americans, they were responsible for public health and so on; the British were responsible for public security. So they were the ones involved in the student uprising against the possibility of going to Tito. Yugoslavia was not the friend that it later became to the West; this was still a very dicey time in Yugoslavia and there were a lot of people in Yugoslavia who wanted the B zone of Trieste, as opposed to the A zone which was more on the Italian side, simply to be annexed without any agreements. What had happened was that the earlier negotiations that had been headed by Ambassador Tommy Thompson, who was then Ambassador to Austria, and Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce, who was then Ambassador to Rome, and others, had really worked out an agreement on Trieste. That finally came to pass and time allowed emotions to recede. By 1961 I have to say that Trieste was fairly calm, in that the border was businesslike.

As diplomats, we were given a three-month multiple entry visa to go across the B zone into Yugoslavia proper. You needed it to get into the B zone which the Yugoslav military handled. There was a five-kilometer military zone on each side of the border outside of the city that was very strictly controlled. The situation was always a little tense and there were occasional shootings, but nothing of the seriousness that happened in the mid-'50s. I used to go into Yugoslavia a lot, even down the Istrian peninsula to Pula, over to Abbazia, the Italian name for Opatija, and over to Rijeka (Fiume). All still Italian speaking were all the waiters, the people along the shore, the people who fixed your car. I was able to use Italian and I felt very comfortable, and they did too. They liked Americans. I was able to go in there quite a bit; my diplomatic passport had to have a pull-out page by the time I left, I had gotten so many Yugoslav visas. To say that I went across the B zone to the beaches would simply be to say in Washington, DC, that you went to Georgetown. We are talking about a very small distance there to enter into Yugoslavia proper. The line came right into the city, and on Saturdays and other shopping days the peasants from Slovenia, where the land was very fertile as opposed to the solid rock lunar landscape of Trieste, would flock in with marvelous vegetables and melons; they would just fill up the Trieste market. That kind of flow of life had been reestablished and it gave an air of tranquility to a situation which was still a little dicey in international politics. But as far as people

on the ground were concerned, they had had enough of it. So as the border finally was agreed upon, it was pretty much the A and B zone that I had known.

After the mid-nineteen '60s, when the Italians in Trieste started having a representation in the Parliament, I would consider the Trieste situation went off the burner on everybody's scale. Also, Yugoslavia had begun to change its attitude toward the Soviet Union. I might mention one thing very briefly to show you how sensitive issues were in the Cold War. During my time in Trieste, Italian socialists were not allowed to have a visa to enter the United States without a waiver. This meant getting their passport in advance; sending a telegram which took a long time from our post because it had to be encrypted by hand on the one-time pad system and sent to Rome where it was decrypted and sent to the Department, back to Rome and so on. It took a long time to get approval.

We had the case of a man named Solari who wanted to go to the United States on private business, though he was the Senator from that part of Italy and a very distinguished Italian patriot during the war -- not a communist, but he was a socialist. We had to get a waiver and to write in big red letters where he could enter in New York. Solari's company had been picked by the airports in the United States because of the famed Solari clock that you still see all over the world. The clock where suddenly you hear a click, click, click, and all the times and flights and places flick around on these little chits; it is the clock used at Dulles airport from the day it opened. Solari was going to the United States only for business. So here we were outfitting our installations all over the United States with the product of his company and he couldn't enter without a waiver that made him look like he was the son of Joseph Stalin.

All of that eventually changed in the *apertura a sinistra*, the opening to the left, in Italy when we decided the socialists weren't such bad chaps after all since they were in power in England and France, and were a major power in Germany. All the other NATO countries seemed to be going socialist, not to mention Scandinavia. Somebody finally said, "Why are we punishing the Italians, they eventually joined us in the Second World War, let alone afterward." Those are the highways and byways of fighting the Cold War by punishing honest Italian Senators.

Q: This visa thing was following pretty strict standards. At the time you were doing this, I was running the Consular Section in Belgrade. I could pick up the phone and get my waivers over the telephone from our immigration people in Vienna.

FRY: Yes. Near the end of my time we were finally authorized to do that. At first the small post in Trieste could not pick up the phone and cut through the red tape, it had to go through all the paper work. The added fillip was that Trieste was still considered a special location since it wasn't, at that time, technically a part of Italy. It was still the Free Territory of Trieste, and still had a certain connection with the United Nations. You look on the maps of that time and it says Free Zone, US Zone, Yugoslav Zone. But that began to pass. Fortunately, and I say fortunately because of the workload that would have been involved, Trieste was not responsible for processing immigrant visas. Immigrant visas were done in Genoa, Naples, and Palermo, is my memory, and what we would do when someone would come and say they wanted to emigrate to the United States was to give them the materials they would need and those materials they would have to send to the appropriate place. Our non-immigrant workload I wouldn't say was

excessive, but there were a lot of people in Trieste who by the standards of the time had rather shady backgrounds because Trieste had been annexed by Hitler into greater Germany -- Trieste, Croatia, and a part of the Alto Adige.

Q: They annexed Austria and this was formerly part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

FRY: Exactly. And Trieste was always the main port of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. It was heavily German-speaking. The buildings were built by Germans, and many of the businesses were headed by people with clearly Germanic names. So there were a lot of questions on the denazification issue. Many of these people had come out all right. I might insert that we had a very large CIA contingent in Trieste; it was larger than the State Department by some triple. There were very heavy undercover people who sold insurance, were in shipping and whom I didn't know about at the time but found out years later were an integral part of the network. They had a double net and a lot of the people who worked there were managed from Switzerland, instead of from Rome, because these were the people who were doing the penetration into Yugoslavia. Also there was a team that interrogated people who had fled Yugoslavia and Albania, which was a real black hole at the time for intelligence. The only Albanian speaking Foreign Service officer that I have ever heard of, at least bilingually, was a guy named Steve Peters who had been stationed in Trieste as the deputy consul for several years. They then had Albanian speaking CIA employees or others on contract who, at the San Sabba Refugee Camp, used to interrogate people who had come across the border or who had escaped on small boats and had worked their way across the Adriatic up into the Italian side. Wherever they landed they were sent up to Trieste for preliminary interrogation and then they were sent down to a larger camp outside of Rome.

I had to go to San Sabba sometimes to talk to Albanians who had a claim to American citizenship, who would say that they were born in New York, had a sister in the United States and we had to process through to see if this was true. San Sabba was, incidentally, a place where they used to process salt, so they used to call it the salt mine. It was a beautiful warehouse structure, very thick to keep dampness out and was really kind of a scary place as it looked like a prison though it wasn't built to be a prison.

Q: I find this fascinating. I knew this was taking place but it seemed sort of unreal because at the time I went to Yugoslavia and served in Belgrade for five years, from 1961 to 1967. Here you were treating Yugoslavia as an enemy nation while we were sitting there and we could go anywhere. We really felt that they weren't on our side for practical reasons but nobody in Yugoslavia from Tito on down had any doubts that the real enemy was the Soviet Union. All their radar pointed east.

FRY: I never had a single problem traveling alone in Yugoslavia. I visited Ljubljana many times. I took former Ljubljana residents, who went with me for protection as they thought I was a white flag, back for the first time since the war. I got to know our people, Bob Barry, a Dartmouth classmate and others, in Zagreb. I always thought Yugoslavia was a wonderful place along the shore. I had traveled there as a student in the summer of 1957 before I went into the army. When I was in Yugoslavia, I was perfectly comfortable; I loved the beaches. The problem, of course, was that for their own propaganda reasons they had to keep the pressure on the border until they

were sure that the resolution wasn't going to be something in which they lost territory. The Italians really wanted Istria, which was Italian speaking, and Slovenia; without that Trieste had no food. There is that seventeen mile rocky road, now improved, and no airport until Venice. Trieste was really out on the end of a stick; nothing there.

I would like to say something about George Kennan, then President Kennedy's ambassador to Yugoslavia. One thing that influenced my life quite a bit, the direction of my Foreign Service career certainly, was that as the most junior officer in Trieste I often met Ambassador George Kennan, who would very frequently come by train, particularly in the winter when the weather was bad, from Belgrade to a small station on the Yugoslav side called Sezana. The reason that the train stopped in Sezana was that the Yugoslavs had taken the *Wagon Lit* cars that belonged to companies in western Europe; they didn't pay for them but simply seized them and used them on their train system. Therefore they could not allow those cars to come into the West because they would be seized. Also, the tracks from Trieste had been ripped out, so they couldn't come down even if they wanted to. There was no way, except for one freight line, I think, with a lot of controls to get into Yugoslavia without switching around in Trieste. The upshot was that you didn't have the famed Orient Express anymore. The Orient Express stopped in Trieste. Somebody had to go up, for a VIP or an Ambassador, to Sezana, pick them up and drive them down to Trieste, wait at the train station until their train came in, and see that they were safely on to Milan or Venice, wherever they were going to get an airplane.

When I first met Ambassador Kennan I was scared stiff. I had read his books in college, and he was a towering figure then. He turned out to be, of course, a very delightful human being, a wonderful man, someone for whom I have had the deepest respect all my life. He had his children with him -- this was his second family, I believe. His older children were in their late teens or college -- I knew a daughter who was about ten or twelve then and a son about seven or eight. His son loved to mess around with me. He would come to the Consulate with me when I went to send the telegram that the Ambassador had arrived, and then take it with me to the Post Office to be sent through the regular commercial system. Then I would go and have soup with the Ambassador at the station and talk with him for a long time.

My first promotion came at the end of my second year in Trieste. I was promoted from FSO-8 to FSO-7. It wasn't high enough to let me become a consul but I was very happy to get another twelve hundred dollars a year. The very first letter of congratulation that I got was from Ambassador and Mrs. Kennan. I have always treasured it. He said, "We know you deserve it and we want to thank you for your many kindnesses and courtesies to our family. We wish you success in your Foreign Service career."

Actually, it was talking with Kennan a number of times that decided me to apply, as my next assignment when I left Trieste, for something dealing directly with the Soviet Union rather than the periphery as we were doing there. So when our inspectors came right at the end of my assignment I found out that I was assigned, on direct transfer, to work in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs on the economic side. We didn't have cones then -- cones being the division of labor that the Foreign Service was divided into later, consular, administrative, political, economic. Prior to the cone time you just applied for a job in economics. I had no particular economic background but thought it would be interesting and I would learn on the job. So I went

from Trieste directly into the Department in October of 1963 and learned what it was like to work in the State Department. I had never set foot in the Department itself except for a photograph-taking session and a couple of visits to offices to learn what the State Department looked like when we were in the training course at FSI.

My break-in was tragically colored by the assassination of President Kennedy. On that occasion in November of 1963, I was at my desk and literally heard in the hallway the sounds of shouts and screams and running. I had no idea of what was happening and I ran to the door to hear, "Kennedy has been shot." In about twenty minutes that building was simply shut down. People just went to their safes, put all their classified material in, and sat at their desks in complete shock. They didn't know what to do and they just began to drift out of the building. I am sure that people who had jobs where they had to stay, in communications and other places like that, and the higher ranking people, probably stayed. We didn't have television very much in the building in those days so you couldn't go watch it anywhere. I didn't have television as I was still staying in a hotel, so I wandered over to a friend's house who lived nearby and we spent the rest of the day listening to the news and going up to the White House, and standing in Lafayette Park, during the evening.

I mentioned before how much I had been moved by the Inaugural speech. And I guess because I had met him and shaken his hand, I was as caught up in the Camelot myth as much as anyone else and was not assessing Kennedy the way I would assess him now. I was assessing the Cuban missile crisis and other things that had happened, which was all you had to go on at that point in history. I think my shock was as much as anybody else's and maybe personally a little bit more in the sense that I identified my coming to Washington with his call to join the government and roll back the forces of darkness and to join the good fight against communism. I also remember watching the funeral cortege which came right by the State Department. Most of us wept at this sight. The only thing I have ever seen in my life which compared with this true sense of grief of the people who were watching was, curiously enough, a funeral in Moscow, where all things are staged and everything is kind of stilted and no one shows any emotion. It was the funeral of Yuri Gagarin, the first cosmonaut, the first man in space, who was killed in a flying accident. His funeral was very moving because it was the only time I ever saw in the Soviet Union, then or later, true emotion in the man on the street as his cortege came by. It reminded me then, and still does, of the temper and the sense of feeling while watching Kennedy's cortege come by.

JOHN W. HOLMES

Vice Consul

Naples (1961-1964)

Economic Minister

Rome (1979-1982)

Deputy Chief of Mission

Rome (1982-1985)

**Deputy Chief of Mission
Rome (1985-1990)**

John W. Holmes was born in Quincy, Massachusetts in 1935. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Columbia University in 1957. His Foreign Service career included positions in Khorramshahr, Saigon, Brussels, and London. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 18, 1996.

Q: So you were in Naples from when to when?

HOLMES: I went to Naples in February 1962 and stayed there for two years.

Q: Could you describe the Consulate General at that time and sort of Naples as you saw it.

HOLMES: The Consulate General was not quite at its peak size but it was very large. It had well over 100 employees. There were over 100 Italians and there were about 30 American employees, very large multiple of its size now. The main function of the Consulate was what it had been for generations, issuing immigrant visas to Italians. More people were doing that than any other work. Naples. I arrived on a ship. People still took ships in those days. It was raining, it was a grey, February, Sunday afternoon. The city didn't make a great first impression but it grew on me. Naples was very poor then, much poorer than it is now. But not crime ridden. There has been a tremendous degradation of Naples in terms of criminality in the last 30-odd years. I came to be, in a certain way, charmed by the place. At any rate, it's in a wonderful area, a place where you can take an easy Sunday excursion to Capri.

While my being in Naples was a bit of an accident, I began to take an interest in the Mezzogiorno -- the Italian south. And I got to know some of the Italians like Francesco Compagne, who were experts on the south, and tried to get an idea of what was happening in a broader sense than who got elected to the Naples City Council. Nobody held this against me but nobody really pushed me into it either, and I'm not sure anybody cared about what ever results there were of my doing it. But it was in effect a hobby, rather than something there was an official demand for. And I'm not sure. I think that one can argue that although we had a tendency in Italy, to act as if it were our country to run, basically we are interested in a relatively small number of things in the country. Lots of issues that are of importance to Italians -- vital importance perhaps -- don't matter very much to the United States. Where I think the south finally managed to gain some attention other than for playing host to our military bases, was when the Mafia really acted up and the United States started taking an interest in what it was doing, mainly because the Mafia also operates in the United States. For several years, anyway, Palermo, not Naples, was a place in whose reporting Washington and Rome took a great interest. But that was a special case.

Q: That was later on?

HOLMES: Later on.

Q: Were you watching (I'm not sure of the dates), was there much investment by the Central Government to build up Alfa Romeo, Sud, and plastic factories and so on?

HOLMES: Yes, the Alfa Sud project started during that period. I don't know the actual dates but I know the project -- at least as a concept -- dated from then. The Italian government wasn't quite as corrupt then as it later became and people thought that some of these projects would pay off. But most of the more mastodonic projects came somewhat later. Some of them never came off. Like the idea of a massive industrial complex at Gioia Tauro. The port was built and then abandoned.

Q: That was built in Calabria, wasn't it?

HOLMES: Right. The south was pretty quiet then. The main thing that was happening in the south was the immigration to the north, which was still going on to Germany, France and Belgium. But, I traveled quite a bit. I went not only to places within the Naples Consular district but I traveled quite a bit in Sicily. To me the places...I really couldn't tell...but things seemingly hadn't changed very much since the Second World War in a lot of the places I visited.

Q: Did you get a feeling then...you later became pretty much at least partly an Italian hand, of dismissal, or disdain from people in our Embassy in Rome towards the Mezzogiorno or not?

HOLMES: That's right. This is a traditional attitude of Americans and not just Foreign Service Officers in the Embassy in Rome. Even in the 19th century, rich and cultured Americans almost never penetrated south of Rome. Yes. I think that the image that the people in Rome had was that Naples was a place from where immigrants got on the steerage class of Italian line steamers and went to the United States. I think that that is a fair judgement.

Q: Did you get involved at all with immigration at that point?

HOLMES: Yes. My first job in Naples was to act as an Immigrant Visa Officer. It was one of these crazy situations that the Department got itself into. I was sent to Naples without having any language training and I was supposed to interview Italians, southern Italians who barely spoke Italian and in some cases didn't speak Italian at all. But anyway, we were supposed to interview them in Italian; the staffing pattern didn't include interpreters. I will say for the powers that were in the Consulate in Naples that they realized, if the State Department didn't, that there was a problem. So, for a long period I spent the first two hours of every day being tutored, alone, in Italian and then I would descend to the upper levels of the Consulate and practice what I had learned on the unfortunate immigrants. I learned very fast, maybe not well, but fast. After that, I was moved off the firing line because we had such a volume of work that one person handled all the difficult cases, all the refusal cases, all the requests for advisory opinions and I was that person. So, I sat in the back room and saw a relatively small number of people but did a lot of writing looked at the police records and the Carabinieri reports. In effect was the "bad guy" of the visa operation.

Q: Did you get any impression about the Italians in that period going to the United States? About the type of support by looking at the affidavits of support from their people in the United

States, a picture of migration from any country. Did you?

HOLMES: Most of the immigrants were rural. And that may seem obvious, but actually not all of southern Italy is rural. Relatively few of the immigrants were from Naples itself.

Q: When everybody, when people say they came from Naples, what they meant is that they came from the interior. Neapolitans didn't really go anywhere.

HOLMES: That's right. These people were for the most part, relatives of previous immigrants. There were very few skilled people. A small trickle of women that had married US Navy personnel. They were country people and being one who saw the security reports, I could at least get an idea of what happened in these little towns where a family would sort of split up. If there were five brothers each of them would support a different party, trying to hedge all bets. The one who supported the Communist Party, of course, was refused a Visa. What I didn't question then, but in retrospect find somewhat surprising, is the amount of political information which the Italian authorities turned over to us. On plain paper without letterhead or watermark, saying things like "it appears that so and so is known to frequent Leftist circles." The reports might also say things like "it appears that she is a prostitute." And we refused a lot of people on those two grounds. The impression I got was of very poor people who frequently did not speak Italian. Frequently when we interviewed people we would ask questions in Italian and some so-called "travel agent" would translate them into Calabrian or some other dialect and then the answers would come. Usually one could understand the answer without further translation. But really these were people at the bottom of the economic heap and the United States was just one of several places to which they were going.

Q: You left there in 1976. Where to?

HOLMES: I went to Rome as the Economic Minister of the Embassy. In other words I went up a notch in terms of the position I held.

Q: You were in Rome from 1979 to when?

HOLMES: 1982. I left in the Summer of 1982. I was there about 3 ½ years that time.

Q: So you were there basically during the Carter years.

HOLMES: Kingman Brewster had come to London during the Carter years and then I went to Rome and the Ambassador was Richard Gardner, another Carter appointment. But, I lasted long enough into the Reagan period so that I switched Ambassadors in Rome also and Max Rabb came as the second Ambassador I served under in Rome.

Q: Let's talk a little bit about Richard Gardner who is presently back in as Ambassador to Spain. But, he was a political economist who prided himself on knowing Italy and he would have been a professor and spoke Italian. How did you find him? I mean from your vantage point of the Economic Minister?

HOLMES: He had written a book which began as his Ph. D. dissertation, called "Sterling-Dollar Diplomacy" which is a classic description of the creation of the Bretton Woods System in effect. And occasionally he would give a talk on international economics and he was, on that subject, extremely lucid and interesting. I certainly wouldn't question his expertise in that field. He explained that he hadn't really stuck with it because economics had turned increasingly mathematical. He also was a lawyer and he had drifted more in the direction of legal and political questions. He was very intelligent and very well educated.

His connection with Italy came from his wife. His wife was from a Jewish-Italian family which had emigrated to the United States when Mussolini had introduced anti-Semitic laws in 1938. She had grown up basically in the United States, but had grown up speaking Italian like a native and had connections in Italy. And he eventually had learned Italian. His Italian was pretty good by the time I encountered him in 1979, which was a couple of years into his time as Ambassador.

He was an extremely diligent Ambassador who tried to see everybody significant and do everything correctly. I thought he was a bit square for an Italian situation. He seemed as somebody who knew all the facts but couldn't detect the undertones and nuances that are so important in Italy.

Q: Didn't have rhythm, right?

HOLMES: That's right. His temperament was ill-tuned to Italy. This gets into national stereotypes but he certainly had an "un-Italian", cool, reserved, and not very perceptive nature. In a country where things are said by nuance and inflection, where, I always thought, the first rule about politicians' utterances was to believe the opposite, his sort of approach, which you might call straightforward but which I would describe as choosing to take appearances for reality, was not optimum. I have to add that I think that Gardner had a quotient of deviousness, and that sometimes his obtusely square statements were masks for hidden actions or thoughts of a less conformist nature. Nevertheless, I stand by my overall judgment that he did not, a profound level, understand the Italians.

I think he had had an impact but maybe not the best impact. His Ambassadorship was given a certain negative twist at the very beginning when, for reasons which are not entirely clear to me even now, he cooperated with or maybe even instigated -- depending upon the story one believes (and one could get both stories from Gardner, depending on what he judged his audience wished to hear) in a new and more public pronouncement of the US opposition to participation by the Communist Party in Italian Government.

Certainly the United States had since 1947 been opposed to the participation of the Communists in the Italian Government. But this was something that went without saying. In fact, it went (for a very long period) without being said; it was understood. In 1977, the United States came out with a very explicit public statement from Washington, which everyone knew Gardner had a hand in drafting, to the effect that every country including Italy had the right to choose its own government but the United States certainly had a right to its opinions and its opinion was that the Communists should not participate. The issue of Communist participation had come alive for two reasons, it seems to me. The Christian Democrats were talking about initiating some sort of

"compromesso storico," historic compromise, with the Communists, and the Communists under Berlinguer were eager for a marriage with the Christian Democrats. Secondly, Gardner was apparently nervous about a supposed feeling in Italy that the arrival of the Carter Administration meant that the US was changing its attitude towards such a development and he thought this perception had to be headed off at the pass.

Q: A Democratic government that was more amenable to the left than the Republican government or something?

HOLMES: Yes. But I still think issuing this statement was an unnecessary gesture. I'm not saying that we necessarily should have changed our implicit position but maybe it was better to keep it implicit rather than to draw the criticism for interference in Italian affairs that the statement provoked. I should note that the statement was issued before my arrival in Gardner's embassy, but the echoes of it continued throughout his time as Ambassador, and indeed afterward.

Another remark I'd like to make is that I recently read a little book by Sergio Romano, an Italian ex-diplomat who now seems to write for every Italian publication. He was their Ambassador to Moscow and NATO etc. He happens to have an American wife (which may affect his attitude), it's about US-Italian relations and its title can be translated as "The Unequal Exchange" or perhaps "The Unequal Relationship." In it, inter alia, he judges the Ambassadors of the last 35 years. He notes that the American Ambassador in Rome really was, for rather understandable reasons, something of a potentate in the early post-war period when we had a special sort of relationship with Italy. This has been somewhat less true in the last 35 years. The Italians, more than any other advanced people I know, still treat the American Ambassador as if he were really a potentate. But these Ambassadors don't necessarily have that much clout in Washington. Nor is the United States any longer so intimately involved in Italian politics, although the Italians tend to think so. Romano judges that the two best Ambassadors in this post-1960 period were probably Fred Reinhardt and Max Rabb. And he attributes that at least in part it to the fact to the fact that they had no Italian connections -- especially no ethnic connections. That they were completely detached, without any emotional links with Italy. In any case, I agree with Romano on Gardner. I can't fault Gardner on his devotion to duty but I'm not sure that he always quite understood what was going on or always chose wisely what to do. And I don't think his position was helped by having a very active wife of Italian background who cut her own swath in Italian affairs.

Q: How about Maxwell Rabb? Because it was one of those things where at the time of the appointment that there was feeling of "Oh, God, it's another Reagan reward" for somebody who brought in the Jewish vote or something like that.

HOLMES: It was true that Rabb was being rewarded for his political services to Reagan. But the way Rabb explained it was that he, an old Rockefeller Republican, had switched camps and then, for the first time in his life, got involved in a form of elective politics, getting elected to the New York State Republican Convention and there had helped Reagan get the New York vote at the National Convention.

Rabb had been around Washington for a long time before he went to New York. He came originally from Boston.

Q: He had been sort of a Staff Secretary for Eisenhower, hadn't he?

HOLMES: That's right. After working for a couple of Massachusetts Republican Senators, he became an Assistant to the President, under Eisenhower. Staff Secretary...I don't think I recall his functional title exactly; perhaps Secretary to the Cabinet.

Q: It's not quite the name...

HOLMES: In any event he worked on Eisenhower's team and in those days the White House staff was much smaller than it is now. He had several responsibilities but his main responsibility, the one that gets recorded in history and in Max's own memory, was for minorities: not just the Jewish minority but minorities in general including the Black minority. He was a savvy old guy. He was already quite elderly by the time he became Ambassador and he was a much less diligent and dutiful Ambassador than Gardner. He never learned very much Italian; he had a good time. But I think he had more inherent political sense than Gardner. He sometimes could be wrong and some of his American political instincts could be misleading in the Italian setting, but at least he had some instincts.

I thought he could be both amusing and frustrating but I also think he was not a bad Ambassador. In places like Rome, one usually has political Ambassadors. Gardner acted more like a classic, career Ambassador. But I think there is a case in a place like that for a pure political Ambassador as long as he has as much sense as Rabb had.

Q: Just for this tape here, during part of this time, I had never served in Italy but I ended up as Consul General down in Naples from 1979-81. It always seemed to me that not being an Italian hand that tremendous efforts were being made to find out what was going on in the Italian political scene where it seemed to be about as static a situation as one might think. There might be elections...this was up to this time. Christian Democrats were in power; there would be elections and minor changes. It just seems like our political reporting was on numbers of angels dancing on pins up in Rome. But this was an outsider's viewpoint.

HOLMES: No, I think that's right. The Embassy was caught in a time warp. There had been a time when the United States took quite a lot of interest in Italian politics. The 1948 elections are the classic instance of what we did when it really mattered to the United States...

Q: And we paid for it...

HOLMES: We paid for it. We bought the elections fair and square (laughing). But certainly, I think 30 years later things had changed. But periodically something would happen in Italy that would cause an atavistic reaction, like the governments of national solidarity that took shape in the late 1970's. Whether or not it was because of our pronouncements about Communist participation in the government, these governments did not include the Communists. But the Communists more or less supported them from the outside in Parliament.

The Communist happened to achieve their highest vote totals ever in the mid 1970's. This was at the same time when the Communists were doing well in the newly democratized Portugal and showing some signs of strength in some other Southern European countries. Kissinger himself seemed to be quite worried that suddenly that there was a new wave of Communism.

Q: It was called "Euro-Communism", wasn't it? Being a different breed of cat than the old one and the French...

HOLMES: "Euro-Communism" was sort of the positive view of it. Communists were still Communists but they had changed and they sought to present themselves as offering a third way between capitalism and Soviet-style communism. Kissinger's view was that they were a danger. Kissinger's attitude added to the already existing desire to keep on doing things the same way we had for the last generation, the spirit that dominated the Embassy. We had a large number of people who watched the Italian political parties and their electoral performance with minute care, even though the variations from election to election were very small. The real things that mattered to us in Italy were decisions like Italy's agreeing to station cruise missiles at Comiso, which was important in both the European and the East-West context.

Q: I mean this was the major, I mean, almost last sort of military confrontation in Europe. The Soviets had put the SS20...

HOLMES: They were developing them and it was known that they would be deploying them eventually. Helmut Schmidt started talking about the need for the West to balance this -- there was plenty of lead time. But when the US came up some balancing equipment -- Pershing II's and cruise missiles -- the Germans had developed some domestic political problems and they needed cover. The British were prepared to agree to the deployment, but the German government said it needed the cover of a continental European government's saying it was willing to have them stationed on its soil. The Italians, to the surprise of many people, including me, stepped forward without much pressure from the United States and said, "Yes." This was the Cossiga government. It was the first government to be formed after the period of "national solidarity" -- in other words it did not, like its immediate predecessors, enjoy Communist support or abstention in Parliament, and the semi-formal consultations with the Communists were ended. I was the acting DCM at the time (there was a long gap between Allen Holmes, who had been DCM when I arrived, and Bob Paganelli) and I remember going with Richard Gardner to see Cossiga about the Italian Government's willingness to accept the cruise missiles, and Cossiga saying, "Yes, I'll do it, and by the way, don't worry about the Communists...I've talked to them and they'll be against it but it won't matter...it's all squared." That was one of the more interesting diplomatic conversations I've ever attended. The acceptance of the missiles was the big news for Washington, but it was almost equally significant that the Christian Democratic Prime Minister had consulted with the Communists on the issue, even after the end of "national solidarity," and that he was evidently confident that they would not go the wall over the decision. (It helped that Cossiga was a relative of Enrico Berlinguer, the Communist party leader.) And indeed, while the Communists organized large demonstrations against the missile decision, they also kept those demonstrations orderly. And, having given their troops, their "base" -- always less open than the leadership -- a chance to wave banners, the Communists did not push their opposition any

further. This was an interesting concrete demonstration of the growing acquiescence of the Communists to the Western alliance, even if they were not yet ready to be straightforwardly positive about it.

The Embassy was slowly evolved from that microscopic attention to internal Italian politics but at the end of the 1970s it had not. Its attitudes then were certainly out of place, though they were understandable.

Q: As Economic Minister, what did you do? I mean the Italian economy, unlike almost any other isn't quite there to see. It's called the "grey economy" or what have you. How did you go about reporting and what were the interests?

HOLMES: You know there was quite a large number of people and agencies involved doing economic work and some of the people were very good. There were some specifics regarding which we and the Italians had differences; these bilateral strains tended to be in the energy area (though not solely there). The 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s constituted an extended period of worries about energy supplies. Schemes for dealing with that problem were developed and hawked around the world. The Italians had an extremely different point of view than the United States. In fact, this was one of the few areas where there had been a historic clash between the United States and Italy. The Italians had developed a national oil company, essentially in the 1950's, which went out and competed with the "Seven Sisters" and tried to break up the Seven Sisters' so-called monopoly (really an oligopoly). The Italians developed a softer, friendlier attitude than the U.S. thought appropriate even to the more radical Arab states, which caused us problems throughout my time in Italy. They thought this insured them access to Middle East oil on a preferential basis and also gave them markets in the Middle East. So that energy connected questions were a frequent cause of friction. In such cases it was a matter not just of observing but of arguing, indeed more argument than persuasion.

For the rest, this was one of the few bad periods for the post-war Italian economy. Labor troubles and terrorism, which overlapped but weren't identical, created economic difficulties. This situation created management problems in lots of Italian industries. Many Italian managers were "knee-capped", if not worse. (Knee-capping during this period being shot in the knees by terrorists.) It was a period when American companies were largely pulling out, not necessarily disinvesting from Italy, but withdrawing their American managers. I used to travel to the Po Valley area where industry in Italy traditionally concentrated and it was interesting to note the exodus that had taken place and was taking place among American managers. It was thought safer and more efficient to turn the running of what were still American-owned firms to Italians.

Italy was a country of late and shaky statistics. You couldn't rely on them; but it was also a place where it was easy to get people to talk. Our people, some of whom were quite competent, talked and found out what was happening. I thought we had a pretty good grasp on what was happening. It also was good to focus on business because, as the corruption scandals or the corruption trials in Italy in the 1990's have shown, one of the big underlying truths about Italy is that there is a tremendous interpenetration of business and politics -- not always in corrupt form, but it is not a standoffish, Adam Smith, type of situation. And getting to know sources and people on the business-economic side of things was often a useful way to really get an insight on

what was really happening.

Q: You mentioned corruption and it was certainly the cancer that really effected, profoundly, present day Italy. I mean, the whole political scene...

HOLMES: The trials, the so-called Tangentopoli trials, of the 1990's have drawn considerable attention even outside of Italy to the extent of corruption there. But there weren't many trials -- very few -- in the period of 1979-1982 when I was Economic Minister that I've been specifically talking about. But one had to be blind or deaf not to realize the corruption that was around. Now, let me tick off about four illustrative examples.

One that had some impact directly on American attitudes and or actions was the collapse of a company called "CIR", a petrochemical company in Sardinia, to which several American banks had made loans thinking that it would be considered a state-owned company and that the Italian government would come to the rescue if the company got into trouble. This was a sham company that really was run by political looters and the Italian state, to the surprise of some, did not come to the rescue when it went "kerplunk." This had tremendous impact. For several years American banks would not make further loans to Italy.

A second instance regards straightforward corruption, of which I remember tales...I got to know Gianni De Michelis when he was beginning his career as an Italian government minister. In this period he was Minister of State Participations, then Minister of Labor. People would come and complain that he was raising the kickback percentage on contracts that he had control over. Italian business was used to paying a certain amount to their political masters but he raised it. He was especially rapacious.

A third case, which did make the Italian newspapers, a scandal of some note, was a special deal that ENI the Italian State oil company, had made to buy oil from Saudi Arabia...the so-called ENI-Petromin Deal. Petromin was the Petroleum Ministry of Saudi Arabia. It was revealed eventually that 100-plus million dollars had been channeled by Petromin, not to Ani, but to bank accounts in Switzerland which were the under the control of various Italian political forces, in both the Christian Democratic and Socialist parties. The then head of ENI, Mazzanti was forced out of office but this didn't mean that the practice had ended. The affair was probably was exposed because not everybody got paid off and those who didn't share in the loot exposed it. Or maybe it knowledge of the payoffs was used as political leverage. But it was big money even by current day standards.

The fourth, one that I thought was the most serious in a sense, that it seemed to represent going beyond a certain level of behavior, involved the repercussions of the failure of the Sindona's banks, and the Bank of Italy's inspection of the Calvi bank, the Banco Ambrosiano. The Bank of Italy failed to rescue either Sindona or the Ambrosiano and....

Q: What type of bank was this?

HOLMES: The Ambrosiano was a large bank, but not one of the very largest banks in Italy. It had roots in what in Italy is called "Catholic finance." Most of Italy's big banks had "lay," anti-

clerical backgrounds. The Ambrosiano had a Catholic background, and it had connections with the Vatican Bank, the IOR, which happened to have an American Archbishop, Marcinkus, as its president in those days. At any rate, Calvi, like Sindona before him, was a crook who managed to become a banker. He ran all sorts of "Ponzi" type schemes. When the Ambrosiano finally began to crack under the impact of these schemes, and under the Bank of Italy's scrutiny of them, the Bank of Italy refused to rescue it and was ready to let it go into liquidation, just as it had the Sindona banks. The Bank of Italy's failure to rescue the two "Catholic" bankers enraged certain forces, mostly in the Christian Democratic Party. This was a period (one of the many periods) when Guli Angeredi was Prime Minister. A pair of friendly right-wing magistrates arrested the governor of the Bank of Italy, Carlo Baffi, and one of the deputy director generals, Mario Sarcinelli. Baffi, because of his age (he was nearly 70), was only placed under house arrest. But Sarcinelli was kept in Regina Coeli, the Rome jail, for a couple of weeks. Baffi and Sarcinelli were, incredibly, were incredibly accused of lack of proper bank supervision. Everybody knew that they were being burned for the very reverse...for not having rescued "pet banks" from their just desserts. I remember the period quite well because it seemed to me to cross the line from mere financial corruption to using the judiciary and police to threaten and harm those who stood in the way of illicit behavior. (A few months after the incarceration of Sarcinelli another transgressive action occurred, the assassination of Ambrosoli, the liquidator of the Sindona banks, who had been appointed by the Bank of Italy, and who had begun also to identify illegalities on the part of Calvi. Ambrosoli's killer was an American mafioso evidently engaged by Sindona or his Mafia friends.) It was incredible that anyone short of Andreotti could have pulled this caper against the Bank of Italy. Baffi resigned as governor at the next general meeting. Sarcinelli eventually left the Bank. Sarcinelli, in a sense, lived happily ever after; he has gone on to better jobs since; Baffi, not. They certainly were both ruined at the Bank, and their successors had to live with the memory of this "warning" from the politicians.

When Sarcinelli got out of jail, the Treasury Attaché and I made a point of inviting him to lunch at a very public restaurant in Rome. He suggested, I think, in any case we invited him to bring along with him the number 2 at the bank, Carlo Ciampi -- who became the next governor of the bank (and who has recently been Prime Minister). It was the right thing to do, but it was also a good way to build up a relationship with Ciampi and Sarcinelli.

That was a case where, unusually, the corruption of the Italian government showed its hand in a really brutal way. There's a small literature about the two crooked bankers, Sindona and Calvi, who had a weird set of connections with parts of the Vatican and the Mafia and with the Christian Democratic Party. I shouldn't say just the Christian Democratic Party, they eventually became tolerant enough to include Socialists in their web.

Surely it was evident to everybody that Italy was filled with corruption at the highest levels. The difference between then and now is that since 1992, some legal action has been taken about it. It is possible and I think it probably is true what many people, including I, observed end of the 1970s and early 1980s) was a significant growth of corruption. Italy has never been a pure country but probably there has been an uptake in corruption that started in the 1970s; corruption kept on growing until the 1990's. And it became beyond what the people were accustomed to and could be accommodated to within the economy, it became not just a political, moral and legal problem, but became an economic problem.

Q: Here you are...in an Embassy of a very friendly country and all. American business goes in there and all and you see this corruption. How do you go about it? One, do you report it to...is it a factor that gets out to the American business community...I mean, how do you deal with it?

HOLMES: Well, the American business community was directly aware of it because of its own activities. It wasn't the sort of thing that you made talks about at Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club lunches. Yes, we reported to Washington on what was going on. But, except in the rare, very rare instance, where it impinged significantly on some ascertainable American interests, we didn't make a big thing of it. You were talking about the excessive concentration on the nuts and bolt of the Italian politics that the Embassy had. I think that's true. But the key reason that concentration was excessive was that the concern about the details of Italian life that underlay it did not correspond to our real interests in Italy, which were limited, and to the threats to those interests, which were also limited. After all, Italy and the United States are two different countries. What we wanted of Italy was that it do as we wanted in matters of key importance to the United States. The agreement to station cruise missiles was the key decision of that nature during the three year period I've been discussing. Secondly, we had an interest in preserving our existing interests, political and economic, in Italy. As long as general developments in the country didn't seem so bad or so threatening as to challenge the political-economic order, then they might certainly be regarded as disagreeable phenomena -- ones worth knowing and talking about and reporting on -- but something that wasn't our business.

Q: What about the role of the Mafia-Camorra, these various things, from the economic point of view?

HOLMES: I think that we began to be aware that the Italian Mafia might be significant for U.S. interests around that time. We were probably running a decade late in paying attention to it because I think that from what I've read or understood since that it probably began to be a problem, not at the beginning of the 1980's but the beginning of the 1970's. By the way, Sindona, in a sense Calvi's "godfather," was certainly a figure with Mafia connections who got into big trouble 10 years before the time I'm talking about. (Lots of Americans in the 1960s and 1970s viewed Sindona with approval -- an attitude which, I hope, they came to repent.)

By the end of the 1970s people had ceased saying that the Mafia doesn't exist or it only exists in Palermo. There was a bit more recognition of reality but it can't be said either that the Italian government was very vigorous in pursuit of the Mafia or that we official Americans paid as much attention to it as we should have. Later, just about the time I left in 1982, our Consulate in Palermo started to become a sort of Mafia listening post and the FBI and the Justice Department started taking a great interest in what was going on in Italy. I think, while we weren't oblivious to it around 1979-80, I don't think we realized how significant it was either. Our attitude was a shadow or a reflection to some degree of the approach the Italian government took.

Q: Did you get involved in Embassy or US Mission problems with Italian tax authorities on taxes, was this...?

HOLMES: I remember that as a problem but not one that I can say very much about. I don't have

any good anecdotes to recount.

Q: I know it was a looming problem when I left in 1981. It was...our people weren't paying their taxes...along with about every other Italian (laughs) ours were particularly bad because we weren't either taking out taxes or reporting it and many of our employees were doing...I mean we are talking about in the tens of thousands of dollars...in unpaid taxes.

HOLMES: You've refreshed my memory. The biggest part of the problem, one that continued for years and I think eventually got resolved, was employees of the American military not having their incomes reported and not paying taxes. Over a period of years the thing got regularized and was resolved, but yes, it was a problem.

Q: What was your job?

HOLMES: I was the DCM in Rome.

Q: I remember Bob Paganelli being the DCM in Rome and being terribly harried. How did you, it's obviously a huge job. How did you look upon this when you...?

HOLMES: It was one of the few jobs in the Foreign Service I really made some effort to get, mainly by staying in touch with Max Rabb who was Ambassador for eight years. I had been there as Economic Minister. Eventually Peter Bridges (Bob Paganelli's successor) left and Rabb had to choose a new DCM. I was aware of this and made a point of seeing Rabb when he was in Washington. At least he had no doubt that I wanted the job.

Yes, it was a very difficult, time-consuming, energy-consuming job. Maybe the American mission in Italy imbibed some of the atmosphere of the country, which often seems to be the case. Things never seemed to work as smoothly as they had at the Embassy in London.

I also think the DCM's job in Rome was different from what it was in some other places. If he has an active career person as Ambassador, the DCM will generally have a different sort of role from the one Allen Holmes or Bob Paganelli or Peter Bridges or I had in Rome. Max Rabb in particular he tended not to do a lot of things, and that left a vacuum that would either be filled by the DCM or be left unfilled. It made the job more interesting. But it certainly added to the burdens of the job.

Q: During the time, was Maxwell Rabb the Ambassador the whole time you were there?

HOLMES: No. He was the Ambassador for the most of the time I was there but he left and was replaced by Peter Secchia in the summer of 1989.

Q: Did you see...did Maxwell Rabb, was he running still kind of way he had been running or was there a different Maxwell Rabb when you came back?

HOLMES: He had slowed down somewhat, it seems to me. I saw him later, a couple of years after he left Rome, and he seemed to have snapped back somewhat. But without saying that he

had become senile or anything like that, he had slowed down a bit. Maybe he had relaxed a bit, but he was after all, by the time I arrived back in Rome in 1985, he around 77 years old or thereabouts. By the time he left he was over 80. And during that stretch when I was his DCM he had a heart bypass operation.

Q: And he had been doing the job for a long time.

HOLMES: That's right. He never had been completely an absentee Ambassador. He was in the Embassy everyday and was active. But, partly because of his extremely poor eyesight, he wasn't interested, or able, to maintain control over the part of the Embassy's work that Foreign Service Officers tend to focus on, written reporting.

Q: You'd been in and out of Rome and had seen it. When you went as DCM and you knew you'd have an Ambassador who would certainly give you some leeway on say at least the normal business things, did you have any agenda saying, "By God, now that I'm DCM I'm going to take care of this or that?"

HOLMES: No. Although I suppose it would be fashionable for me to say that I did. But I didn't. It seemed clear to me that US interests in Italy, while significant, were not all encompassing. Many sparrows could drop in Italy without the American government caring about it. Nor should it have. And I thought on the other hand that Italy had established itself as an easy ally: that is, it provided the United States with what it mainly wanted without giving the US too much grief. The US government didn't have to pay too much day-to-day attention to Italy. It wasn't a place where the situation had to be rescued or even repaired. It was a maintenance operation. We were not there to build a nation. We were not even there to build a new relationship; we were there to preserve one.

Q: Another thing it seems. I remember reading in a book of Henry Kissinger's White House years, talking about landing in Rome and after having gone to various other countries and feeling that the mere appearance there was about it because there was nobody really talk to. There was no Margaret Thatcher or no Kohl or what-have-you. There was no one who was Mr. Italy or Ms. Italy; it was a collective form of government so that you weren't going to develop, at least for American leaders coming out any particularly personal relationship where you could pick up the phone and talk to Helmut or somebody like that.

HOLMES: That certainly was true. I think there were several aspects to it. Kissinger is correct. For once he is speaking not just for himself but making a generally sound observation about Italy in that part of his memoirs. The other thing which I recall he mentions was that for the Italians too, the main purpose of a visit was achieved when the President or the Secretary of State got off the plane and they shook hands. The Italians rarely, I shouldn't say never, had much to say. It was occasionally irking to some Italians that Italy had such a muted voice and that they were irked about two things. One, that Italy's voice was muted and secondly that it wasn't listened to. There was a connection between the two.

I think Kissinger also makes a comparison with Japan. At any rate, I would. There was a similarity between the political systems of the two countries at least until recently; both of them

have gone through important changes. The similarity was that these political systems positively discouraged the development of individuality on the part of leaders. If a politician got too powerful, his colleagues would chop him down.

There is a further point. The Italian leaders of the early post-World War II period, Alcide De Gasperi and Count Sforza, had a well-developed sense of Europe and the world. But most of their successors were extremely provincial men who were devoted to internal concerns. It was not just because the Italian political system discouraged the development of leaders with a capital "L," but because Italian politicians were not very interested in things outside Italy, that they were not very interesting for Americans to deal with. It didn't help that for many years very few of them would speak English.

Things were a bit different in the immediate post-war period, as I've said; there was a spasm of Italian leadership then. And I think it has been slightly different in recent years, in the last four or five years -- since I left Italy -- because of the changes in Italy's politics and some generational changes. At least some people have risen to the top or close to the top in Italy who speak English and know about the rest of the world. They still are not world-class figures but they are a little bit easier to deal with.

In the times that I was there, even in the late 1980's although there was some shift in the situation, the Embassy benefitted a little -- this may sound odd -- from the lack of direct communication between the top dogs in Washington and the Italian leaders. It was the other end of the scale what goes on between the United States and Canada and the United States and the UK where our Embassies in Ottawa or London often find out afterwards about high level direct phone calls between the two governments. Italy's role in the world was a limited one. Nevertheless, we at the Rome Embassy were left with a larger percentage of task of dealing with Italy than was the case for other significant U.S. bilateral relationships.

Q: What was sort of your, were there any Embassy problems that consumed a lot of time or...?

HOLMES: I could go through a long list but since you're not an Inspector and I don't have to give a complete list, I'll just talk about two things.

First, for one reason or another the Rome Embassy has traditionally not had very good morale. I never was entirely sure of the reasons for this. Morale wasn't as bad as in some other places I can think of but year in and year out there seemed to be a fair amount of disgruntlement. This was probably not true of the younger, brighter political officers, but they are after all a tiny percentage of the staff. It may have been because Italy was a country where you almost had to know the language to feel at home and a lot of our people did not speak Italian. Also, many people assigned to Rome, not just from State but from other agencies, had spent a lot of time in less developed countries where, oddly enough, they had enjoyed a cushier life. The US government did more for them at such posts. There was a government swimming pool, a club, things like that. In Italy, in contrast, they were left to entertain themselves. It wasn't an easy place for those who weren't at home in Italian ways and most of them weren't. That was one general problem that I don't say I had any systemic solution to but I did my best to try to deal with on the margins.

The second problem had no connection with the first. It was the question of the relationship with the CIA, which ever since the Second World War had had a strong presence in Italy. In the old days when we interfered strenuously in Italian politics it was a tandem operation with the State Department certainly to some degree, at any rate determining the policy and the CIA handling the implementation of it. There is enough evidence on the record of the amounts that were spent in Italy...

Q: The election of 1948 is of course...

HOLMES: This has been no secret for many years. And particularly since the Pike committee investigations of the 1970's. But the CIA was a large presence in Rome and there was always the gnawing feeling that we didn't know exactly what they were doing in all cases. Eventually we held more formal meetings in an effort to make sure we knew more of what was going on. It was one of these cases of "what you don't know, you don't know;" or, to use an image, like the proverbial blind man trying to imagine what an elephant was like. Having said that, I can't say that this was a gnawing concern. And I don't know of anything particularly monstrous or significant that went on that we didn't know about.

Q: Were you there when...maybe I've got the name wrong...when the Gladio operation?

HOLMES: No. That came after I left. The Gladio affair started with something that was well documented. Bill Colby died a few days ago, but he had basically set up what's been called Gladio, as far as I can tell given the murkiness of the current accounts and accusations. By the evidence of Colby's own autobiography he had set up what was called the "stay behind" program. The idea of this program was to have a network of people, connected to the U.S. (or to NATO) who would remain in territory if it was occupied by the Soviets and resist the Soviets. Colby had done this before, working in Scandinavia, and then he was transferred to Italy. This was something that the United States did in most countries in Europe (and maybe elsewhere, but the focus was initially in Europe).

What happened though to the Gladio program was that eventually the United States government seems to have lost significant interest in it but it continued, more as an interest to the Italians involved and there are allegations that it was being used as some sort of shadow government or at least a coup-making machine. And Cosiga, the President of the Republic during much of the time that I was there, got into trouble because of accusations that he knew about it and hadn't revealed it. (His response added to the controversy.)

Q: Basically it was stock-piling armament and being ready for...if Italy was overrun that the people that were, certain agents that were left behind could take up and do things or something.

HOLMES: That's right. And as I said, there's no doubt about the beginnings of the program. Where the controversy exists is in regards to its continuance thirty years later.

Q: Were you aware of it at all?

HOLMES: I barely heard of it when I was in Rome. I can't remember all of the detail but somehow or other I was told by the CIA station people about some of it. My impression was that we had basically reduced our interest in the whole project long before my time but that the CIA was aware of its continuing existence and maybe still had some contacts with it. That's about as far as I can go on the basis of my recollection.

Q: When you were, during this period, 1985-1990, what was your impression of the Italian government? Because we are now talking about 10 years later from the time you arrived there and the Italian government's gone through an earthquake.

HOLMES: Yes.

Q: Because of the political corruption and all that. But during the time you were there was it business as usual or what were you seeing?

HOLMES: Business as usual but maybe government was getting a little bit more corrupt and a little bit more dysfunctional. The 1985-90 period was hardly a tragic period for Italy. There had been a real time of troubles in the late 1970's and into the 1980's with terrorism being the main obvious problem, but with tremendous labor unrest and another thing that had really worried people from Kissinger on down in Washington, that is, what seemed to be the unbroken rise, the unstoppable rise of the Communist Party.

Q: You were saying terrorism...?

HOLMES: Internal terrorism, at least, was largely a dead issue by 1985. Middle Eastern terrorism had arisen but that was something essentially external. It was certainly of concern but the Red Brigades were only able, in the mid-1980's, to carry out about one terrorist operation per year. In fact, that's about what they did. But that was down from hundreds before. The labor situation had quieted down. The Communists had actually tailed off substantially from the peaks they reached in 1975-76. Italy was back: Italy's economy was growing quite smartly during the second half of the 1980's. That was the period when, partly by some adjustment of the national income accounts, the Italian government was able to trumpet the fact that Italy's GDP had surpassed that of Great Britain.

So, it was not a terrible period but it was clear even then that things were getting worse in some regards.

First, the Mafia had become a more obvious problem than it had been before. That was a double edged thing because the Italian government finally started backing up and assisting the magistrates in Palermo like Falcone and Borsolino, at least to some degree. The effort against the Mafia was better after 1985 than it had been before. But nevertheless, the Mafia was a clear, big danger. In fact criminality was rising throughout the South. In Naples, in Campania there was probably a worse problem than elsewhere, arguably even worse than in Sicily; and the same was true of Calabria.

The second problem was that corruption was obviously getting worse. The courts didn't pursue

it. The Italian judicial system has a well established tradition of paying attention to the political climate and one could even take their campaigns against corruption, starting in 1992, as being permitted, provoked, motivated by the fact that the shrewder minds among the magistrates realized the political situation was changing and they could, perhaps had to change their behavior. But in the late 1980s, while scandals occasionally made the newspapers and corruption was a clearly growing problem, very little was being done about it.

The government was also failing in terms of dealing with its economic management responsibilities. Italy kept running a high rate of inflation, long after most countries in Europe had got it under control. The public sector deficit kept swelling and Italy accumulated an extremely large debt burden.

Both the corruption and the failure in economic management seem to be products of a political system that had outlived its prime period. The need to satisfy more political forces, the loss of hegemony by the Christian Democrats, the new role of the Socialists who sought to make up for the years of not being part of the ruling class, the fragmentation of the ruling coalition and the need to satisfy everybody and offend nobody meant that there was no discipline on government spending just as there was no discipline on corruption.

I can't say that I predicted the collapse of the system which began in 1992 but the system was clearly functioning less well than it had in previous years, less well than in the 1950's or 1960's to make a comparison. This was reflected in public opinion polls which recorded a good deal of dissatisfaction on the part of the Italian public, and growing dissatisfaction, with the performance of the government.

It wasn't an ideal period but one had to look at it from the perspective of the American Embassy on the Via Veneto -- look at it differently from the way an Italian citizen would. Sure, if things were so bad that they would provoke revolt, the collapse of the system, not in a peaceful way but some sort of a take over of an unfriendly sort, then internal developments would matter to the United States. None of these developments were creating problems in US-Italian relations. Italy continued to be a very cooperative ally. Just as a few years before Italy had been the first continental European government to accept the cruise missiles under Cossiga (and then under Spadolini agreed to the actual basing of the missiles), in the late 1980's, when we wanted to find a place to put the F-16's that were expelled from Spain as a result of the collapse of the Spanish base agreements negotiation, the Italians turned out to be quite prepared to have an Air Base built at Crotona in Southern Italy. It never got built but that was because of Congressional unwillingness to put up the money.

Italy continued to be, if I can say it, a docile ally and having a docile ally, so long as that ally remained relatively stable, is what we wanted.

Q: Was there any concern about Italy and maybe some of the countries that we were worried about...Libya for example?

HOLMES: Yes. However, I would divide the period of 1985-90 into two unequal parts. Certainly in 1985-86 relations between the United States and Italy were strained over our policy

towards the Middle East, towards Libya, over the question of Middle East terrorism. There had been a divergence, I'd say, between US and Italian policy towards the Middle East since the 1960's. Maybe it began when Enrico Mattei, the condottiere who created ENI, the Italian state oil company, started competing with the American oil companies in the Middle East at the end of the 1950's. From then on there were strains. Later, not just ENI, but the Italian government began to take a more emollient, soft line towards the more radical, Islamic countries, and to be less friendly to Israel than the United States. I think this was a case of Italy behaving in a way that we usually associate with France. General de Gaulle's attitude, it seemed to me, was that the United States in the final analysis would use its nuclear deterrent to save France no matter what. He was liberated from the need to do what we wanted.

The Italians didn't push too far the independence that our protection gave them. They were never as verbally abrasive or independent as de Gaulle. But in terms of relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, particularly economic relations, but even more in relations with the Middle East, Italy from the 1960's began to take a somewhat independent, in any event different, line from the United States. And this interacted with the changes in Italian politics that started in the mid-1960's. As the Christian Democrats lost relative dominance, although they were still the leading political force, they began to seek allies on the left, at first the Socialists in the opening to the left. But then the idea of a "compromesso storico," a "historic compromise" with the Communists began to take shape. One of the things which the Italian Christian Democrats could offer to the left was a change in policy towards the Middle East, something which was desired by those parties.

I also think that there was a yearning, as Italy became more prosperous, to seek to advance Italy's national interests internationally. The Middle East was a traditional area of Italian interest, where the Italians thought they had a privileged entree, not having the burden of being an imperial power like the United States or even the memory of recently having been imperial like the UK and France.

I think the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the cut off of oil to Italy (and to other countries) had an important precipitating effect. Italy had already become less avuncular regarding Israel after the Seven Day War of 1967. The Yom Kippur War was to make Italians think they were suffering from their association with the United States, that they were sharing in the resentment of the United States which the Arab oil producing countries felt. Added to this, the Italians felt they weren't even being given compensation for this from the United States. There was considerable resentment, I recall, as late the 1980s, that supposedly the American oil companies which controlled a lot of crude in the mid-1970's, didn't give Italy its fair share when there was a penury of oil.

In any case, Italy began wheeling and dealing in the Middle East in ways that were slightly provocative to Washington and Italy was friendly to countries like Syria and Libya, that we eventually demonized, with good reason in both cases. Italy also had reached what I'm convinced was an agreement with the PLO after PLO terrorism developed in the 1970's, that the PLO would not target Italian persons or interests in return for which it would be given the ability to use Italy as a at least a transit zone. So that there was a series of points on which the Italians and the United States were not thinking in the same way. And, this situation was somewhat exacerbated

when the Reagan Administration came to power and talked in tougher terms than his predecessors about striking out at international terrorism.

Q: Were you, I can't remember the date of the Achille Lauro, did that happen during your watch?

HOLMES: Yes. That happened in October 1985. It was a significant crisis, in two senses. It was a crisis between the United States and Italy but it also had the effect that crises have in some illnesses. It led to a change in course and subsequent recuperation.

Q: You might explain what it was.

HOLMES: In early October 1985, four Arab terrorists hijacked an Italy cruise liner named the "Achille Lauro" which was on a cruise from Italy to the Middle East. They hijacked it when it left Alexandria on a brief excursion. During the days in which the hijackers were in control of the ship -- about four days, I recall; this was a very brief episode -- they killed one American passenger, an elderly Jewish American named Leon Klinghoffer.

I've written a fair amount about the Achille Lauro affair so it is hard to come up with a Readers Digest version. But, basically at the beginning of the crisis there was a certain amount of feeling out between the United States and Italy as to what should be done to recover the ship. The United States pressing from the first for a military action to recover the ship from the hijackers. The Italians were even less prepared than the United States was to run such an action. There isn't a great history of carrying out this sort of thing -- recapturing a ship from such a hostile force -- although it probably could have been done. The Italians played for time, which they used to seek a peaceful settlement of the crisis. They made use of the Egyptians and the PLO to bring the hijacking to an end. And in fact, they succeeded. The ship eventually came into Port Said with everybody on board safe -- except for Klinghoffer, who had been murdered.

There had been radio reports during this cruise to the effect that there had been some killings on board. The official word from the Italians at the time of the ending of the hijacking was that nobody had been killed. The hijackers were allowed off the ship as part of the deal which the Egyptians, the PLO and the Italians had worked out. We were certainly not pleased by that but we were even more displeased when a few hours later it was revealed that an American had been killed. We then began pushing the Italians to seek the extradition of the hijackers from Egypt.

Back in Washington, people essentially at the NSC but also at the Pentagon, and with the knowledge of the State Department, began trying to work out a way of capturing the hijackers. This was done when the hijackers were put aboard an Egyptian airplane which was to fly them to Tunis--the headquarters then of the PLO. The plane was intercepted by some American carrier-based jets and eventually forced down at Sigonella, which is an Italian-American shared air base in Eastern Sicily. We in the Embassy had been deeply involved in earlier stages of the operation but we certainly didn't know about the interception of the plane until we began getting urgent calls from Washington asking how to get in touch with Craxi [the Prime Minister], asking us to get [Foreign Minister] Andreotti on the line, etc.

The effort was, first, to try to get permission for the plane to land at Sigonella and it was granted by Craxi in a telephone conversation between him and the White House. Then the next step was to argue that the hijackers should be turned over to the United States for trial in the United States. Phone calls went out to every member of the Italian government. George Shultz called Andreotti; Ed Meese called the Minister of Interior; Cap Weinberger called the Minister of Defense; and so forth.

Meanwhile, at Sigonella a force of American Special Forces Unit under command of General Steiner had landed via subterfuge after the Egyptian airplane and surrounded that plane. They were in turn surrounded at the orders of the Italian Government by an Italian carabinieri (militarized police). The situation was very tense for several hours. Finally, we tried to persuade Washington that we were getting into an impossible situation. I remember calling up Mike Armacost [Under Secretary of State] and saying the Italians simply couldn't give in to this and that we risked, for the first time in a generation, a breakdown in our relations with Italy if we persisted in this attempt by force to take off the hijackers. And eventually Reagan relented on the basis of some rather cloudy promises by Craxi, the Prime Minister.

Q: Where was Rabb at this point?

HOLMES: Rabb, like most of the rest of us was down at the Embassy. This had been going on during the night in Rome. But I wound up being the one who called Armacost. Rabb didn't disagree in fact, he asked me to call Armacost, but was not sure of himself in terms of talking about this. So I did it. But I certainly made the point that I was speaking for Rabb.

In any case, finally the Special Forces withdrew. We then went into a new phase to make sure the Italians at the very least put the four hijackers on trial. But then Washington began to focus not on the hijackers themselves but on one of the other Palestinians on the plane, a man named Abu Abbas. On the basis of intercepts made largely by the Israelis of communications between Cairo and the ship when the PLO had been trying to bring the affair to an end, Washington decided that Abu Abbas, who was a fairly well known PLO terrorist leader and who had been acting seemingly as the mediator seeking to bring the hijacking to an end, was actually in all probability the mastermind of the affair. So, our focus was on trying to get the Italians not just to keep and try the four hijackers but to retain Abbas in custody at least until they could examine a U.S. request for his extradition.

The night after its landing at Sigonella, the Italians transferred the Egyptian airplane, which still had Abbas on board, from Sicily to Ciampino, an airport just outside Rome. They told us they were doing this, and I passed the news on. The American military commander, General Stiner -- with the support of Admiral Crowe, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, I now know -- pursued the Egyptian airplane in a T-28, a small American jet trainer, causing a lot of trouble as he did so. This led to my receiving an oral protest from the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry.

At any rate, the plane was now in Rome. Rabb was very wroth about this and wanted to drive to the airport and demand that Abbas be turned over to him. But I persuaded him that that was not a great idea.

During the course of that night, we got a request from Washington that we present a formal note requesting Abaas's provisional arrest (the first step in seeking extradition). The Federal district court in Washington had provided the necessary basis for this. I rounded up a bilingual Italo-American at the Embassy named Eric Terzuolo and got him to translate into Italian the note that I drafted. I short circuited the usual diplomatic processes and woke up in the middle of the night the Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice. At 5:30 in the morning, Rabb and I went to his house and gave him this note.

We then dropped by the office of the Prime Minister's diplomatic advisor -- we had been at the Prime Minister's office almost continuously during the crisis -- to provide a copy of the note and say what we were doing.

During the course of that day (Saturday, Oct. 12, 1985) we kept providing more information, hoping to bolster our case. But in the early afternoon we were told that the Ministry of Justice had decided not to accept our request for provisional arrest -- a fairly unheard of step by the Italians. Finally, in the early evening, Rabb and I went to the Prime Minister's office and made one more plea to his diplomatic advisor that Abbas be held...and we were told that he had already left the country. He had been conveyed from Champino to Fiumicino (Rome's principal airport) - - the Egyptian plane flew actually that short distance, I think -- and there he was put on board a Yugoslav airplane and he departed for Belgrade. The news of this caused a great deal of fury in Washington. There was also fury in Rome. Rabb somehow or other offended the Italian sensibilities by saying on TV, immediately after being told that Abaas had been helped to depart, that he wasn't entirely happy with what had happened. This was a phrase I had suggested to him. I thought it was ultra-diplomatic but it seemed somehow or other to evoke resentment. I still don't understand why.

Q: Couldn't the Italians understand the feeling about...

HOLMES: I later talked to somebody who I still will not name because he is still is an active politician and friend. Several weeks later he invited me to have lunch. He had been one of the two or three people deciding things at the Prime Minister's office during this period. Craxi typically had got sick at the last moment and had not really been in on the final acts although he was certainly responsible. My friend said, "Let's be frank. We had to satisfy or try to satisfy too many people. The Egyptians were being very tough about getting their plane back and not having Abbas taken and we had our relations with the Arab world to consider. We knew that you Americans would be angry but we were confident you would eventually forgive us and so we went ahead." Which was a fairly cold blooded calculation, but then Machiavelli was an Italian.

Reverting to my chronology, the next day (Sunday, October 13), Rabb and I went to see Andreotti, who was the Foreign Minister, and who, when Craxi got sick, had become the top decision maker on this issue in the Italian government, though, as I said, Craxi remained responsible. Rabb became really enraged when Andreotti tried to explain that Italy had taken the actions it did because it had to worry about the situation in Egypt. Rabb said that the United States was in a better position to worry about Egypt than Italy. During the conversation Rabb more than once rose up from his chair and I thought was going to assault Andreotti. I held Rabb by his suit coat to restrain him. It was an extraordinary meeting. It lasted a long time. Andreotti, as anyone who knew him might expect, was icy cool during the entire session.

I could go on and on. The details are still quite clear in my mind. It is the sort of thing that one doesn't forget. It all occurred during the span of about five or six days, although there were obvious sequels to it.

Q: What did this do? Were doors shut, or communications broken on either side?

HOLMES: Well, the next week, Spollini, the Defense Minister -- who had conveniently been in Milan on the crucial day [Oct. 12]; who had been the one arguing within the government for not offending the United States -- said he and his [Republican] party were quitting the government. So Craxi said you can't quit first, I'm leaving. Craxi made a powerful speech before the Italian Parliament. It must have been virtually the first time in the post-war history of Italy in which a Prime Minister spoke in nationalist terms of defending the national sovereignty. It was an extremely skillful job.

We were warned by Italians who said that they were worried about the relationship, that it wouldn't bode well for the relationship if the United States seemed to be responsible for the collapse of the Italian government. Renato Ruggiero, the MFA Secretary General, was the most effective carrier of this message to us. But what was even more significant was that Reagan was intent on holding a mini-summit preparatory to going to Reykjavik for his meeting with Gorbachev. Mitterrand had already said he wouldn't come and while the Italians may not count for much, for the Italians also to drop out and not attend the meeting would have left Reagan looking good. So, Washington decided that there were more important things than pursuing the Achille Lauro-Abu Abbas business. By that time Washington was also aware that its skirts were not entirely clean. What had gone on in Sigonella was really pretty outré from almost any point of view. So, Washington basically backed off. There was sweetness and light.

I don't mean to be too cynical. In fact, I think the whole affair wound up having some positive effects. The U.S.-Italian relationship did survive. While I'm not sure how deep the realization went, I believe Washington recognized that there were some limits to how far even the Italians could be pushed. The Italians didn't suffer any punishment for their behavior, which was less than we could legitimately expect of an ally (I refer particularly to their precipitous release of Abu Abbas). However, I think this affair was one of the two or three things that led to the decline in the Italian individualism with regard to the Middle East. I think that they realized that they were bumping up against the limits of what they could do without straining the relationship with the United States. I think they also began to see their relations with the PLO were not necessarily a guarantee of immunity to Middle East terrorism.

Q: It was an Italian ship...

HOLMES: Yes.

Q: How about the...was the raid on Libya during the time you were there?

HOLMES: Yes. I might first go back and comment further about the Achille Lauro business. It seems to me that it didn't, in the final analysis, provoke a real crisis in US-Italian relations. But it

does seem to me that the Italian behavior, although what they did wasn't entirely wrong at all times, was particularly provoking in Washington or to an American because of the deviousness of their approach. The Italian Ambassador in Egypt, Migliolo, was once quoted as saying that in order to solve the hijacking, an "inghippo," a sort of a sly trick, was needed. There has always been a question as to whether the Italians knew that Klinghoffer was dead when they reached the agreement to end the hijacking and let the four hijackers go.

Secondly, the Italians advanced all sorts of specious arguments for not honoring our request for provisional arrest for Abu Abbas. I think that we had a right to expect better treatment of our request, looked at from a legalistic point of view. But extradition is a political act. The Italians could have been more straightforward and said no, they simply were not going to hold Abu Abbas, that they were going to release him because of their own foreign policy interests. This would have caused problems. There was no painless way of getting out of this mess for anybody but I think that the Italian government displayed the same tendency as Italian governments have at times in the past, for instance, in the period between the armistice, between the fall of Mussolini and the armistice with the Allies in 1943, to be too clever for its own good.

The other thing I'd say is that there was some practical negative impact, though not very great, on US interests in Italy. Italian base commanders in lots of places suddenly became much more sticky about our freedom to use bases like Sigonella, at least for quite awhile thereafter. And I don't think we ever quite got back to the virtual "carte blanche" freedom of operation that we had up until then. But still we were left with a viable situation.

Before moving to the Libyan incident, I should note there was one intermediate development. The Achille Lauro events were in October of 1985. In December of 1985 [Dec. 27] there was a massacre at Fiumicino airport in Rome. A bunch of dissident Arab terrorists shot up the area used for embarking El Al passengers. Many people, including some Americans, were killed in that incident. This was strong proof that the truce with the PLO no longer was effective insurance against Middle East terrorism. In this case it was people not under the control of the PLO who perpetrated the attack. By this time there were lots of groups that were out from under the umbrella of the PLO. So, the old Italian policy of trying to achieve peace by negotiation wasn't working.

Moving to Libya....The Libyan crisis developed in the spring of 1986. Qadhafi had made menacing moves by his aircraft against US ships. Some of the aircraft had been shot down. Occasionally Qadhafi would send out motor patrol boats which would sort of challenge the US fleet. The US (aside from its policy differences with Qadhafi) held that his claim that the Gulf of Sidra was Libyan territorial waters was unjustifiable under international law. So we regularly sent US Navy ships into that Gulf.

Arguments went on between the United States and Italy about how to deal with Libya. The Italians had and have many interests in Libya. They still get a lot of oil and gas out of Libya. The number of Italians still resident in Libya is small but there are historic connections between Italy and Libya. Finally the Italians have always taken a negotiating rather than a confrontational approach to such matters. As Roz Ridgway once put it at a conference on US-Italian relations: the United States tends to be a risk taker in international relations and Italy is a risk avoider.

In the early spring of 1986 (to be precise, at the end of March), when all this was going on, George Shultz came through Rome just before Easter and, mainly to persuade the Italians to adopt a position like ours on Libya, had a series of meetings. One of the meetings was at the Presidential palace; where Cossiga was by then President. It was one of the most extraordinary of such events I've ever attended, a feeling shared by others who had experienced many diplomatic meetings. Shultz and the rest of us arrived at the palace and we were kept waiting for a god-awful length of time, which didn't please Shultz. (We learned later that perhaps one of our own people had been responsible for this. He had been sitting around the Quirinale, the Presidential palace, as a control officer. He noted that Neil Kinnock, then the leader of the British Labor Party, was cooling his heels in one of the waiting rooms. Our man called this to the attention of one of the President's diplomatic advisors, and Cossiga decided that he had to have a little chat with Kinnock although he was due for his meeting with Shultz.) Eventually, Andreotti, the Foreign Minister, arrived and, in Cossiga's absence, belatedly opened the meeting with Shultz. Shultz and Andreotti had a thorny relationship and this conversation didn't go very well; but when Cossiga finally arrived, things got worse. Cossiga lectured the United States about its confrontational policy towards Libya and Shultz, who had turned brick red by that point, told Cossiga almost literally that he was "full of shit;" it came pretty close to saying that. Shultz did say explicitly that what Cossiga had said was "ridiculous." Fortunately we then had to have lunch and the meeting and discussion ended.

Then there was a successive meeting between Shultz and Andreotti at the villa the Foreign Ministry used for official entertainment (Villa Madama). Andreotti arguing again that the dispute between the United States and Libya over the Gulf of Sidra should be referred to the World Court. Shultz said that was nonsense, that our rights were clear.

A few days later [April 5, 1986] there was a bombing of a discotheque in Berlin in which a couple of Americans were killed. Our intelligence people said on the basis of intercepts that this attack had been carried out at the dictate of Colonel Qadhafi. Washington's tactical response was to send Vernon Walters around Europe to talk up the need to deal severely with Libya with various governments. Partly because Craxi, who was still the Prime Minister, didn't seem very eager to see Walters sooner, it took time to set up a meeting. Walters wound up seeing Craxi at the end of his European swing [on April 14]. At that point, Andreotti was off at a European Foreign Ministers Council meeting discussing the same subject of what to do about Libya. In any case, Walters, Rabb and I went to see Craxi and a few of his advisors. While Walters talked around the point, he made it clear to any intelligent, informed person that the United States was about to do something militarily against Qadhafi. But he didn't say when, and while I think he made it reasonably clear military action would take place, he didn't put it in capital letters and certainly wasn't explicit. Craxi argued for restraint. Washington had great suspicions of Andreotti in particular and found it pleasing that Andreotti had not been present to take part in that meeting. (Andreotti had, as I recall, made attempts to contact Walters, an old friend, earlier in the latter's swing through Europe, but Walters, under pressure from Washington and our embassy, had, with the possible exception of one telephone call, evaded contact.) But Andreotti had meanwhile returned to Rome, and he stayed at Ciampino airport, through which Walters was leaving, and literally intercepted him there. Andreotti told Walters that the European Council of Ministers had decided on some economic sanctions against Libya, to which Walter's answer was

that this would have been fine at an earlier point but that it was now too late to matter.

In any case, while Walters was in Rome conducting these talks, the US planes had already, as we learned later, begun flying toward Libya. Some of them started from England and had a long route to Libya. The British knew about this but they had not told their European colleagues. But at any rate, the Italians found out about this the next day [April 15] when Benghazi and Tripoli were both attacked. The Italians registered protests, but the situation changed shortly thereafter because Qadhafi, to punish Italy for its providing bases for American forces, or so he said (although so far as I know none of the planes that attacked Libya came from Italian bases) fired a couple of SCUD missiles at the Italian island of Lampedusa, an island which is not very far from the Libyan coast. The missiles didn't do any damage. (I don't know whether Qadhafi was in any way influenced by the fact there then was a small American LORAN station on Lampedusa.)

Q: Which is purely a navigational station...

HOLMES: Yes....The upshot of Qadhafi's attacking Lampedusa was that the Italians were frightened in a way that played into American hands -- even though it could be argued that they were being punished for their alliance with the United States. The Italian reaction, as I recall it, was nervousness that Qadhafi might do something more serious. Who would protect them in that case?. Various high ranking Americans came through Rome in that period. I remember Spadolini, the Defense Minister, claiming that Italy had the right to demand that NATO defend it against Libya on the basis of Article 5 of the NATO treaty: that its territory was under attack, and under the NATO treaty, such an attack should be considered an attack on all NATO members, which should come to Italy's assistance. He didn't push that point too hard, however. I don't think Article 5 has ever actually been made use of, although its a key part of NATO. [There was discussion of this point when Turkey argued it needed protection during the Gulf War against Iraq.]. I remember another conversation, with Craxi, in which the latter talked of his ultimate willingness, if Qadhafi made further attacks, to take some direct military action against Qadhafi as the "ultima ratio."

I thought that the net effect of all this -- almost inconceivably given the sequence of events -- was to drive the Italians back into the protective arms of the United States. In any case, these events of 1985-86, the Achille Lauro hijacking, the Fiumicino massacre and then the dust up with Libya (that dust up with Libya came to an end with the firing of the SCUDS at Lampedusa; Qadhafi didn't do anything terribly provocative for some time there after -- he pulled in his horns), marked the end, I think, of the activist phase of an independent Italian policy in the Middle East. The Italians became much less inclined to take an independent line. And Andreotti tried to build up, in fact to restore relations with Israel, which had become quite bad.

The Italians were quite cooperative in matters like the Iran-Iraq War. I remember the Italians had sold a bunch of warships to Iraq. Under perennial harassment by the Embassy -- not so much by Washington -- they retained most of them and didn't ship them to Iraq, at considerable cost to themselves. Certainly, there were problems from time to time. There was a problem, I remember, when in November 1988 we refused to give a visa to Yasser Arafat to go to the UN in New York. It was one of the few times I got called in to receive a protest from the Foreign Ministry; on a Sunday, even! But with the Political Director apologizing for the bad manners of his

Minister (Andreotti) as he delivered the protest. But basically, what had been a significant although maybe not ultimately serious divergence between the United States and Italy over the Middle East narrowed substantially after 1985-86. In the rest of my time in Italy it was not a serious problem. The Italians became extremely cooperative in combating Middle East terrorism. We used to compare them very favorably to the French and the Greeks during that period, I recall. The Italian performance was pleasing not only to the State Department, but to the Justice Department and the DOD.

I could add more specifics but the point is that these rather small individual crises added up to a big crisis, a real turning point in Italian foreign policy. From then until now, there has been much less Italian activism in the Middle East than there had been between 1965 and 1985.

Q: You were there in 1989-90, what about the gradual...I guess the Soviet Union didn't dissolve when you were there but the Eastern Bloc dissolved and all. How did we see the Italians seeing this?

HOLMES: The Italians were not monolithic about this. But the main line Italian government position in the period 1985-89 was that the United States was insufficiently appreciative of what Gorbachev was doing in the Soviet Union, that we were too skeptical, that real changes of a desirable nature were taking place in the Soviet Union. This, I think, was not a cause of serious strain between our two countries, but the Italians did their best to make their views known to us. They were quite active in telling us their own experiences, about their contacts in the Soviet Union and about meetings they held there. They certainly sought to influence us to take a more "possibilista," a more open-minded, in their view more realistic, approach towards Gorbachev. And indeed, Washington did move, behind the Italians perhaps, did move to a more positive view of Gorbachev and of Soviet developments.

A more serious problem, though, came chronologically a little bit later when the Eastern Block began to break down and when the unification of Germany began to be a real possibility with the fall the Berlin Wall. I think that influential Italians in the government and outside the government became very nervous a) that the United States was acting over the heads of almost everybody in dealing with the Soviet Union and b) that the United States was insufficiently aware of the problem of reconstituting a united Germany. This was not something peculiar to Italy. People were saying the same thing certainly in Paris and elsewhere. Even a few people in Germany were saying this. Their message was, the world had lived happily for forty years with a divided Germany but it might not live so happily with a united one. And the United States was thought, correctly, to be acting fairly single mindedly to the unification of Germany and, they thought, ignoring the perils, the supposed perils, of what it was doing.

This dispute, played out in private for the most part, was a more serious dispute between Italy and the United States. But to repeat, Italy was certainly not the only place where these arguments were being made.

Q: As a matter of reality there wasn't a hell of a lot that any of us could have done anyway.

HOLMES: I think that is true. Maybe there could have been an influence on the speed with which German unification took place but not about the final result. It did contribute to the Italian

view, which is still held very strongly, that the United States, somewhere around that point determined that Germany, a united Germany, would be its main interlocutor in Europe, that the United States was, without perhaps recognizing it itself, was choosing Germany as "the" European power. I can understand why the Italians feel this way although I think it is a somewhat exaggerated estimate. It's true, from my own point of view, that if the United States in the last few years has behaved as if there is any special relationship with any European country that it is Germany. I think that the Italians pushed their estimate of our link with Germany beyond that.

Q: Looking at things as they were, Britain was not quite a European power...I mean, it was in and out. France was not a power that you could deal with particularly. Italy, as you said...Germany was almost the only game in town. If one wanted to be a little...to play this...I'm not sure we think that way.

HOLMES: I don't think that the United States tends, except very rarely, to think so schematically about these things. But, it simply is a fact that Germany is the biggest power in Europe, at least West of Russia; and Germany has generally taken positions that are pleasing or at least compatible with the American point of view. So that is the second reason for our attitude. I think, anyway, that 1989-90 was the beginning of suspicion in Italy regarding a U.S. choice of Germany as European leader. One doesn't see it discussed so much in the United States but the question of Germany and its potential European dominance is a very lively issue in Italy.

Q: Sort of a very basic question. Although I've served a very short time in Italy, I don't have a feel for it. Is there something in Italian education, the way there is something in the French education which sees everything as, I guess its "Cartesian". I mean everything has a form and there is a result, rather than I think the American way where we think of things as being somewhat erratic and all. Do the Italians see patterns where the Americans wouldn't see patterns?

HOLMES: I think that is right. In its crudest and most common form it's called "diestrologia," the idea that there is something, perhaps some conspiracy, at least a rationale, behind everything. Things don't just happen...there is some sort of scenario that is being worked out. A crude manifestation, as somebody said at a meeting I was at this week, is the idea that "not a sparrow drops in Italy without the CIA having a hand in it." The Italians themselves act this way. Italy is a country with a history of conspiracy. It is also is a country, as one Italian put it, which for fourteen hundred years was divided and largely under foreign subjugation. There is a sense that there's a rationale for things but it's a rationale dictated by others. Italy has to try to figure out what the underlying, occult game is so it can protect its interests. I think it isn't quite the French "Cartesian" approach, but it produces a similar misapprehension I think about the United States, whose approach tends to be much more one of muddling through.

Q: When George Bush became President he put a new Ambassador in, Peter Secchia. Who was initially was quite a controversial person. What was the feeling when you heard about him coming and how did this work out?

HOLMES: As was often the case, we heard more quickly about him through the Italians than

from Washington. The Italian newspapers were quickly filled with some of the cruder things that Secchia had said, sometimes with reference to Italy, in the past. Some Italians started running not very covert campaigns against him. The Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry was the instigator of a lot of the reports about Secchia, evidently hoping that somehow or other the bad publicity would abort his nomination. We were put in a difficult position. One couldn't deny that a lot of these things had been said but had to try to say that it all didn't matter.

I think Secchia was an unwise choice. I think that the Italians basically don't like having an Italo-American in that position. I mentioned earlier a book by Sergio Romano, called the "Unequal Exchange" or "Unequal Relationship," about US-Italian relations over the last 40 or 50 years. Towards the end he talks about American Ambassadors to Italy. There was an initial period when American Ambassadors to Rome -- James Dunn, Clare Boothe Luce, Zellerbach, Bunker -- had an almost pro-consular role. Some Italian Ambassadors in Washington had a significant role in that period also. It's been different in the last 35 years. Things have been less exciting, more normal. He thought, as I've already stated, that the period beginning in the 1960's the two best Ambassadors had been Fred Reinhardt and Max Rabb, neither of whom had any Italian connections. They didn't lose objectivity or have false ideas about their relationship to Italy because there was nothing Italian about them. I think there is something to that.

Secchia, in my judgement, was not a very good Ambassador. I think he was inferior to Rabb. Not that Rabb was some sort of Apollo of Ambassadors but he knew what not to do, which is sometimes more important sometimes than knowing, and certainly better than doing without knowing. He had a certain restraint which I think was desirable. He had a certain political sense which occasionally would serve him well in Italy, even if it was based on American experience. Secchia was like a hyperactive child who had reached the age of 50 or 55 without changing his personality. He tried to do too much without knowing enough to do the right things. I was there with Secchia for nine months and he treated me well enough. I have no personal complaints. I don't know that he did anything disastrous during his time. I don't think he made a very good impression either. I think he was one of the real examples of the problems with one sort of politically appointed Ambassador. Most of the Ambassadors I've known have been politically appointed but some have been good and some have not. I think that the ones who have been pretty good have been the ones who have come out of a background that at least exposed them to government, to public life in a sense, even if they have not been diplomats.

Q: I understand. Often a politician can understand politicians in a...

HOLMES: But a straightforward businessman, especially one who is an entrepreneurial type who is not used to dealing with bureaucracies of any sort and with no particular knowledge of politics of any kind, is not usually, I would think, a very good choice.

Q: Just to put at the end, when you left Rome, where did you go?

HOLMES: When I left Rome, I came back and I hung around the European Bureau for a year or so. I spent three month of that at the UN. And I then retired. I worked for three to three and a half years for the World Peace Foundation in Boston. And then more recently, I have been fully retired. Although I still write and attend conferences.

Let me in conclusion add one thing. Most of what I've said has been about working in Rome on Italian affairs. One thing I'd say about the State Department in general during recent years is -- my focus has been on Italy but I've talked to people like Monty Stearns and others -- is that if the State Department has anything it can sell or any uniqueness it can bring to its work, it is knowing about the countries it deals with. And I think Italy is one case, but Stearns says that the same was true of Greece and indeed of other countries and regions, where there is a declining expertise in the State Department. Certain central issues, like political-military issues, do attract a corps of people who do have an in depth knowledge and ability, but the State Department has been increasingly bad at preserving its regional expertise. I think the problem is probably getting worse. I know that in the last few years we've had people as Italian Desk Officer who had never served in Italy, which strikes me as an "outré" way of running a Foreign Ministry. There are several reasons why I'm glad to no longer be in the State Department. And one of the reasons is that I think it is becoming less competent in one of its core responsibilities...of knowing about the countries it's dealing with.

Q: Okay. Well, thanks.

CARL A. BASTIANI
Rotation Officer
Naples (1962-1964)

Mr. Bastiani was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Seminaries in Iowa and Illinois and at the University of Chicago and Georgetown University. A specialist in Italian and Romanian affairs, Mr. Bastiani served at four posts in Italy (Naples, Genoa, Rome and Turin) and in Romania and Poland. He also had several tours of duty at the State Department in Washington, DC. Mr. Bastiani was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Okay, now, you went to Naples and you were there from '62 to when?

BASTIANI: Sixty-two to '64.

Q: Okay. Let's talk about Naples. Who was Consul General and what was the situation like there?

BASTIANI: When I arrived in Naples Henderson was Consul General on his way out. I never really got to know him. But on his way in was one of the most colorful characters I ever knew in the Foreign Service, Homer Byington III. And he had been born in Naples, you know.

Q: Oh, yes, his father was, you know Consul General in Naples. I mean, it's a dynasty there.

BASTIANI: Yes. And he had just been ambassador to Malaysia, I believe, but he got what he wanted next; he went back to Naples. He spoke the Neapolitan dialect as well. And I have very

pleasant memories of him. In Naples I was on a junior officer rotation; you know six months in this office and six months in that. While I was doing my stint in the commercial section, we were much involved with the construction of his little cabin cruiser, Zio Sam III, Uncle Sam the Third. Then, frequently on weekends, he and his wife, Mrs. Byington, who is a character in herself, would invite an officer or a couple to be their guest on an outing on this boat, down the coast to a little bay, where we would anchor and swim and have a meal pre-packed by Mrs. Byington. As guests we weren't allowed to do anything. I couldn't be part of the crew; she was up on the prow doing everything while he ran the engine. The two or three outings we had with them on that little boat were among the most pleasant experiences we had in Naples.

The big problem was finding a residence for Homer Byington III because the villa that the Hendersons had occupied was for some reason no longer available. Before the Byingtons ended up in the penthouse apartment built over the Consulate General, they rented a place overlooking the bay on the Via Caracciolo.

Q: Yes, Via Caracciolo.

BASTIANI: Yes. The house was down on the cliff. To get there you parked on the right of Caracciolo going uphill from the city, took an elevator down to a tunnel which went back under the road to a path on the cliff which led to this house. The problem was that there was a nightclub just up the street, also perched on the cliff. The story goes that on a particularly noisy night Homer went out on his terrace in the wee hours of the morning and shouted, "*Silenzio! Silenzio!* (Quiet! Quiet!) Both the Byingtons were great persons, and much appreciated by staff, partly because of their idiosyncrasies. Mrs. Byington had the theory that every spouse should become adept at plumbing; she had her own tool kit, and once lectured the spouses on the subject.

Q: Did the Byingtons – were you there when they moved to the penthouse?

BASTIANI: I don't believe I was still there when they finally moved to the penthouse. The Byingtons were there forever, until '71 or '72 at least when they retired. For us, I did find an apartment much farther up off Via Caracciolo on the ground floor of a four flat building. We had a small front yard with a view of Vesuvius from our front yard across the neighbor's yard.

But getting on with what I did. I was on rotation to the various sections, but I spent most of my time as the non-immigrant visa officer. It was depressing; I disliked this work enormously because it was my job, every day, to refuse 60, 80 people as non *bona fide*, ineligible to receive a tourist visa. For example, Luigi, 18 years old, from a village south of Naples would apply for a visa to visit his uncle in Brooklyn who had filed a declaration of support for him. Then you find that Luigi had never traveled anywhere, not even to see Rome. Tourists are not allowed to work. The uncle owns a construction company. It's obvious that Luigi is trying to get into the states to work and become an illegal immigrant. It is such an open and shut case of ineligibility, so you have to refuse it; but at the same time I didn't like to be telling people...

Q: No, it's no fun.

BASTIANI: No fun whatsoever. I was almost hoarse, you know, by the end of a morning. And at the same time we were handling immigration visas and there was a lot of fraud involved in applications for first preference, to immigrate as a skilled worker in an occupation in which there were not enough skilled workers in the U.S. I got involved in an INS, Immigration and Naturalization Service, investigation of a lawyer in West Orange, New Jersey, who had set up an operation in Puglia to produce fraudulent affidavits attesting to the skills of an applicant, especially in landscaping and tailoring. This lawyer's chief collaborator was an official in the *municipio*, city hall, of a little town on a mountain in the region of Puglia. This guy would get local people to sign affidavits attesting to the skills of the applicant as a favor, or for a pittance.

INS collected hundreds of documents that they were sure were fraudulent, sent them to the INS officer in Naples, and asked him to get proof that the documents were fraudulent. Wohlstenholm as I recall was the name of the INS officer; I really liked him. Well, he got permission to have me as a vice consul to accompany him to this little mountaintop town in the middle of winter. What he had done was gone to the town official who was the center of the ring, and said, "Look, I've got enough evidence to put you in jail if I go to the Italian police on this, but I don't want to do that. What I'd like you to do is call in each one of the persons who signed these fraudulent documents testifying to the skill of applicants, and we will interview them." He of course complied. My job was, as vice consul, to authenticate the documents so they could be used in a U.S. court. And so for several days we interviewed these people in this cold, humid, dark hall, all of whom admitted to their lying Wohlstenholm sent them all back to INS. INS went to court; this lawyer had his own criminal lawyer front for him, and, as far as I know he was never convicted. But it was a fascinating experience for me.

When we interviewed immigrant applicants allegedly documented as tailors, we'd ask them to show the palms of their hands. If they had calluses, you knew they didn't come from designing and cutting clothing. We would ask them also to sketch the pattern of a suit coat.

Another task that I disliked was enforcing the 212(a)(9) provision making candidates ineligible for a crime involving "moral turpitude," which I think equated with a felony.

Q: I want to insert for the record that 212(a)(9) is a section of the Immigration Nationality Act.

BASTIANI: Thank you. We even had a special office with a full time local employee who did nothing else but obtain criminal records from the police so that we could determine whether an applicant's crimes involved "moral turpitude" and thus made him ineligible for a visa. And then of course there was the exclusion for being a member of the communist party, for which waivers could be obtained only for a visitor's visa. Since the largest labor union, the CGIL, was a handmaiden of the PCI, the Communist party, many otherwise qualified applicants were formally ineligible.

But I hated to say no. I learned something special about how to handle visa applicants in that job from Gene Zimmerman, who was head of the Visa Section for the initial time I was there. Gene was a seasoned consular officer; and he told me once, if you get a case that you sympathize with, which seems to be a meritorious case, but doesn't seem to fit the regulations, just send it to me, and I will decide it. And later on in Krakow, many years later, that's exactly what I told my vice

consuls, that if the case is compassionate and the applicant seems sincere but he doesn't, you know, fit the criteria that are laid out in the regulations – I'm not talking about the law now, but the regulations – well, just send the applicant to me and I'll make the decision.

In Naples I wish I had followed Gene's advice in one compassionate case especially. There was this guy who was married and separated from his wife; then another woman became what we here would call his common law wife. At this time there was no divorce in Italy. Over the years, decades, they had a number of children. One or the other of these children immigrated to the United States and, gradually, all the children and the mother got immigration visas. However, this guy, the father, was ineligible for an immigration visa.

Q: Because he wasn't a legal spouse of somebody who was in the United States.

BASTIANI: Yes. So when he applied for a visitor's visa, I, as a new visa officer, turned him down. It was hard to believe that he would return to Italy after a short stay in the U.S., given that his family ties by this time were in the U.S. rather than Italy. It was so compassionate a case. And if I burn in Purgatory someday, it's going to be because of that case. If Gene Zimmerman had gotten to me first, he may have gone; I don't know, he may even have gone later. Anyway, visa work was not the kind of work that I had entered the Service to do, or that I fantasized as doing. I did not, professionally, enjoy my tour in Naples.

Q: Now, I'm a professional consular officer but I found this true with a lot of my colleagues. I mean, it was always a problem. I would agonize, but at the same time I wasn't loathe to circumvent the regulations if I felt there was a compassionate situation, so I shut my eyes or something like that. But I think it's a matter of personality, of people who are or aren't this way. I did notice this.

BASTIANI: Well, the way I justified it and practiced it, after some time was: Under the *law* all the applicant has to do is convince the consular officer that he intends to go for a brief visit and return, and that he would not work while there. And I think that applicants in compassionate cases were *bona fide*, sincere, when they were talking to me; they had every intention of coming back after a visit. Now, quite a few of them you knew could later be persuaded by their families to stay in the U.S. and apply for a change of status, but that didn't make them an automatic refusal when they applied for the visa. And it didn't make it a mistake on my part when I issued it.

In Poland later on as the Principal Officer, I found out that the young vice consul's practice was to have the visa FSN, our Foreign Service National employee, collect the applications and passports of the maybe 40 people who had jammed into the waiting room that day, some of them having traveled for hours and hours, then quickly flip through them, and decide that most were what he called "statistical refusals." And then he would have the FSN give them back tell them they weren't eligible for visas. When I found out about that I called him on the carpet. I said there's no such thing as a "statistical refusal"; there are individual people and individual cases. Statistics are only an abstraction; every one of those people should be personally interviewed. And then I told him to send the compassionate cases which didn't seem to meet the criteria in the regulations to me. At this time we were getting lots of congressionals, letters from Congressmen

to whom constituents had appealed on behalf of relatives in Poland they had invited to visit. The Department required that we reply to these letters with explanations of the reasons for the refusals within three days.

There were complaints that the relatives applying for visas had been treated like cattle and what have you. In a communist country I liked to say that one of our greatest advantages was to show that we respected individuals as individuals, and not as members of a herd or group. So I really insisted that every applicant get a fair hearing. But I think I know how the statistical approach originated. If you're a young officer and you have been trained at "Consulate FSI" you are led to think that the regulations are to be applied as the law – I'm speaking of the *regulations*, the blue pages of the manual, not the *law* as passed by Congress. I could not see ever deliberately violating a law.

And I had one very sad experience in this matter. One day as I was doing immigration visas...

Q: This is in Naples?

BASTIANI: In Naples, still in Naples. A woman adopting a child came in with a petition already approved for that child's immigration visa. Our very sharp FSN – they often knew the regulations better than we did – pointed out that the petition was invalid. The law, at least at that time, required that the adoptive parent must have spent six months with the child before the child was eligible for an immigration visa, and she hadn't. She had tried to live with the child in a village for the six months but couldn't bear it. An INS officer apparently took mercy on her and signed the petition. I saw no way I could issue the visa. Next thing I knew, my supervisor, Norm Redden, who had replaced Gene Zimmerman was at my desk and as much as ordered me to issue the visa. Apparently, he had agreed to have it issued with the INS officer who signed it. Neither had said anything to me about it. I said I couldn't but, if he thought the visa could be issued, he could sign it himself. He didn't, at least not then and there, and I don't recall ever learning what happened with the case. At the worst, the adoptive parent could go back to the village and tough out the rest of the six months.

My refusal to sign the visa certainly didn't help me with Norm Redden when it came time to write my evaluation report. Shortly before I left post, he wrote the annual evaluation report on my performance which I later realized had me leaving the post with knives sticking out of my back, so to speak. At that time, I don't believe rating officers had to show their drafts to the rated officer to get their reactions before filing them. If he did, then what he showed me in draft did not seem that harmful. But I was naïve about these things then. Some months later in the cafeteria at FSI while in Romanian language training a gentleman came to my table, and asked if I was Carl Bastiani. When I said yes, he told me he had just sat on a panel which reviewed Redden's evaluation, and that the panel had decided in my favor. Otherwise I would have been out of the Service; I was still in probationary status. Norm Redden had made a name for himself in the visa field. He once complained that he couldn't reach me when he needed me. Well, for a lengthy period I was running from one end of the building to the other, between the visa office and the 212(a) (9) office, because the officer assigned was home with a severe case of measles; so I was actually covering two jobs. And it was a traumatic, emotional experience for me, coming out of Naples that way after having worked my tail off for the whole time I was there.

Q: Before we leave the crime subject, thing, was there any problem with members of the Camorra? The Camorra was the southern equivalent of the Mafia in Sicily. Were there ties to the United States that came to your attention?

BASTIANI: During my tour, perhaps not being as informed as I should have been about the Camorra, I don't recall that the subject came up.

We didn't do much political reporting, except at the time of the 1962 elections when the Christian Democrats opened up to the left.

Q: The Centro-Sinistra, or something like that.

BASTIANI: Yes. They called it the *Centro-Sinistra* to entice the Socialists into an alliance with the Christian Democrats, and wean them away from the communists. These were very important elections because there was a real threat that the communists would gain as a result. All the Consulate's officers as political officers to go out and interview people to find out what was going to happen. And so we did. We wrote our reports, and contrary to everything we had been told and reported, the communists made a big jump forward as changes in the politics of Italy are measured; always in small steps.

And then came the order to go back out all those people again to find out how it had happened. I especially enjoyed the political work and commercial work I did in Naples.

I played the major role in the Department of Commerce's exhibit at the Bari trade fair set up one year. It took me to Bari a couple of times with our outstanding local employee in the section to select and photograph the site for Commerce to.

Also, Cuban missile crisis occurred while I was in Naples; I remember heatedly discussing this with colleagues in the cafeteria. One woman officer, I don't recall her name, said after the Soviets had backed down and were removing the missiles, that there has to have been a *quid pro quo*, a concession we had made in exchange. I attributed it simply to the fact that the Soviets saw they if it came to an exchange of missiles, God forbid, they were outgunned and would get the worst of it. But later I learned there was a sort of *quid pro quo*: those missiles in Turkey that we quietly removed.

And it was through the missile crisis and Adlai Stevenson's too quick willingness to compromise – he was then our Ambassador to the UN – that that I came to realize was a time too when I came to realize that Plato was wrong when he said philosophers should be kings. Intellectuals, people who see too many sides of things, cannot really be good leaders. You need a leader who's willing to take a calculated risk, who does not insist on waiting for overwhelming evidence taking a decision to act in rapidly evolving situation. By that time, it's usually too late. You need somebody with leadership qualities and practical judgment, which is willing to take, as the Italians say, a *salto nel buio*, a leap in the dark; and Kennedy proved that that was the kind of person he was. Practical judgment is essential. The more academic, the more research oriented, you are to examine all sides of an issue, or anxious to get all advisers to agree, the less likely you

are to make a decision when it needs to be made.

This goes back a little bit to my FSI experience when Dean Rusk was Secretary of State. He was a great Secretary of State. I came to realize that in full only later on when, as a reviewer looking at documents to declassify or not in response to Freedom of Information requests, I went through a whole box of memcons of his conversations, of *his tête-à-têtes* with Gromyko. On Berlin he made clear: you take over Berlin, you will have a nuclear war. He said it in no uncertain terms, on the QT, of course – none of this was said in the press conferences.

But what really reminds me of Rusk is this point: He was all for reducing what he called layering in the Department which causes delays in deciding anything. He said if a decision on an issue is delayed because of the layered process – getting everyone to agree beforehand, or because we just can't make up our minds – that is a bad decision in itself. But if after looking at it closely, we decide it's best to put a decision off, then that's a good decision. I don't think the layering problem has been resolved to this day.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a little about life in Naples.

BASTIANI: You mean...

Q: You know, how you...

BASTIANI: ...The social environment?

Q: Yes. I mean, this is your first time abroad as a Foreign Service officer, you and your wife, and how did you find Naples?

BASTIANI: I think my wife never ceased telling people for the rest of our career that the nicest Italians she ever met were the Neapolitans. They couldn't have been nicer to us. At the same time, of course, Neapolitans have a reputation of being lazy and I recall one good joke they told on themselves. I have come to realize that a people which hasn't yet learned to laugh at itself is still up tight. Neapolitans certainly weren't. A they told me has a Neapolitan sleeping on the sidewalk, his back against the wall, his feet outstretched, when a tourist, an American tourist, comes along looking up with his open guide book in his hands. He trips over the Neapolitan's foot and wakes him up. The American apologizes profusely; but the Neapolitan says no, no apology's necessary; rather, I am in *your* debt. You did me a favor. I was dreaming that I was working.

Q: You know, when you look at Neapolitans, many of them had two jobs, an official job and the real job.

BASTIANI: That's true, that's very true. The black market, so-called, is a part of the economy that doesn't get into the official statistics, but yet you have to resort to it to explain what you see, how well most people are living.

Q: Well, did you find that you could you make many Neapolitan friends? Or was this a problem?

BASTIANI: No problem whatsoever. The only limitation on making friends was work; I mean, all the time and energy you had to spend working and taking care of your family left little time for much socializing outside the Consulate community. I remember another humorous experience that kind of shows the character of the policemen and their tolerant and friendly attitude towards the Americans. Naples in my time, because of the Sixth Fleet, had about 10,000 Americans all over the place.

One day I was in a hurry to get home and I barged into traffic on Via Caracciolo from a narrow side street without a stop sign. A cop flagged me down. Before I could say anything, he said don't you know that that you must yield to the traffic on Caracciolo, or, like other Americans, are you going to tell me that you don't know this rule? I was dumbfounded. Before I could answer, he simply waved me on. They tolerated us very well. In that time, of course, there was no open anti-Americanism at all – or anonymity. On a trip through southern Italy once, you know, I'm walking through a piazza of a southern Italian town and a guy comes running up to me to say in very friendly fashion, you're the American consular, aren't you? Another thing I noticed about Naples when I was there. There was still some nostalgia for Mussolini.

Q: Mussolini, I think, went once to Naples during his time and I think his hat was stolen. And the Pope had never been there, I mean in recent times. Naples was, you know, kind of looked down on by Italians from Rome up. They had a very poor opinion of the whole South.

BASTIANI: No question about it, even my mother, told me to beware of those Neapolitans; “*sono tutti ladri,*” they're all thieves.

Q: How about the younger officers; what sort of a group did you have, and what was your impression of them?

BASTIANI: There wasn't a single one I didn't admire. I think, in my time, they were bringing in really talented, well prepared officers. I saw them either on their first or second tours, John Holmes, for instance; he later became DCM in Rome when I was in Torino. And there was a young officer, his name was Crawford, I believe, who got to know more Neapolitans outside work than anyone. Nobody learned Italian faster than this young officer because he took up with a young lady. If you want to learn Italian, the local Italian in a hurry, that's the way to do it. And this was a very proper relationship, because every time he took her out the young lady's aunt was with them. Good families chaperoned their daughters on dates still at that time.

Q: Did Kennedy make a visit to Naples while you were there?

BASTIANI: Indeed, he did.

Q: Can you talk about that a bit?

BASTIANI: Okay. By this time I was such an admirer of Kennedy and he was so well received. He was considered, you know, a super person by the Italians. I will never forget watching from a Consulate window the cheering crowds along the sidewalks of Caracciolo as his open car passed.

He was idolized, and deeply mourned for a lengthy time after his assassination.

Italians were also grateful for the economic assistance they got from his administration. About this time the Italian lira was on very shaky ground, so much so that I got an request for help from my relatives – the only time they asked for any favor. A cousin made a special trip to Naples from the family home town in Ascoli Piceno on the Adriatic side, northeast of Rome, with a bagful of lira notes he wanted me to exchange for dollars. Of course I had to refuse, even if I had the dollars to do it. Fortunately, I was able to give him that news that the U.S. was about to grant a two billion line dollar line of credit to Italy that stabilized the lira, and put all the wild fears about the lira's devaluation to rest. And I would add that the Italy for most of the post-war period was our most loyal ally in Europe. In my time, Italians still remembered the 1948 crucial elections when it seemed possible that the Communists and Socialists would win. At this time those parties were close to and assisted by the Soviet Union.

Q: Very much so.

BASTIANI: Italy going communist would have created an enormous problem for all the other West Europeans. I am really proud of how we helped the anti-communists win in 1948; today a lot of people would call it intervention in violation of international law. We had people going to rural areas supplying food and other necessities well marked as from the United States. We were actively talking to and supporting the Christian Democrats and other pro-Western leaders, financially as well. Many of them stuck their necks way out in the campaign, and would have been finished if they had lost. And the Italians never forgot our assistance under the Marshall Plan which resurrected the European economies. Even as late as the 80s when I was in Torino on my last Italian assignment, that gratitude was still there. And we could always count on the Italians to support us in the UN.

Q: And also during the response to the SS-20; over where we could put our counter missiles. The Soviets were putting in intermediate missiles, and the Europeans, Western Europeans were sort of balking at having cruise missiles and Pershing missiles to counter them. But the Italians accepted the cruise missiles.

BASTIANI: Yes indeed.

Q: And it was extremely important help to actually to disarming the issue.

BASTIANI: Yes indeed.

Getting back to the visit of Kennedy, I didn't get a chance to greet him personally, but I went to an upper Consulate window that overlooked the main street down which the parade of automobiles came and had a good look at him and the cheering throngs. The picture is indelibly etched in my mind. I believe prior to that Vice President Johnson visited Naples and he I did meet him in the parking lot of the Consulate I have a picture of my daughter number one in Lyndon Johnson's arms. He was well received by the Italians, but with none of the enthusiasm and adulation they showed toward Kennedy. I was still in Naples when Kennedy was assassinated.

Q: Well, this would be '63.

BASTIANI: Yes.

Q: Sixty-two.

BASTIANI: I was there '62 to '64, and it was in '63. Yes, I remember the moment vividly. The outpouring of grief and sympathy as a result of his assassination went on for months. Each of us in the Consulate were going out to this or that town to represent the U.S. at a memorial mass and/or the naming of a street or piazza. I have vivid memories and some photos to show for an elaborate one I attended.

So, I was there during some historic events, but not a participant. I just witnessed how the Italians responded. We were inspected during my tour as well. By that time I had volunteered for Romania, Embassy Bucharest, and I remember one inspector asking why I wanted to go there. Everybody that goes there, gets divorced or worse. He was very discouraging about life there, but I saw Eastern Europe as a specialty I wanted to develop, and was happy to have been accepted for Romanian language training.

Q: Well, while were in Naples, was immigration a major industry, as you might say; I mean, for the Consulate General at that time?

BASTIANI: Indeed. We had well over 100,000 non-preference registered applicants. The Consulate's rather large basement, was full of file cabinets with visa files. Norm Redden had invented what was called the Montreal System, which reduced all these non-preference files to three by five cards, and he made his reputation there doing this. And so he had out to Naples to clean up the files. He put me in charge of a team of FSNs temporarily employed to go through these files and reduce them to these three by five cards. I hated this job as well because these employees knew that as soon as this job was finished, they would be let go. And I was the guy who was to make sure they did it as quickly as possible. We got it done.

I liked the commercial work, I liked the political work. I didn't like most of consular work, but, at the same time, developed an appreciation for some aspects of it, like Protection and Welfare. To me it's perhaps the most important of all the consular functions; protecting and assisting American citizens.

Q: Did you have any cases that stick in mind of welfare and protection?

BASTIANI: No, not there, I didn't get much time in the section. I do have memorable cases from Bucharest and other posts..

Q: Well, we'll come to that. On the commercial side, what sort of work were you doing?

BASTIANI: The big project when I was in the Commercial Section was getting the Department of Commerce's exhibit set up at the Bari trade fair. This trade fair caters to all the East

Mediterranean countries, the *Levante*, as the area was called, and the major function, practical function in commercial work, was trade opportunities, finding companies in Italy which were looking for a U.S. partner, or vice-versa. I traveled twice to Bari, along with our very experienced FSN, a woman, to contract a suitable site in the Fair for Commerce. I made good use of my amateur photography skills on this job.

Somehow, the most vivid memory I have of Bari was the insight I got into its traditional social environment while eating with the FSN in one of the best restaurants in the center of town. Small tables were arranged along the four walls. At most sat obviously affluent middle-aged or elderly males, each alone, with his back to the wall. No doubt their wives were home, also eating alone or serving other family members. About the only conversation underway was mine with the FSN, the only woman at any table.

Also, while I in the section Pittsburgh Plate Glass dedicated a big new plant not far from Naples in Salerno down the coast. Forschner, the commercial officer, for some reason couldn't go so I accompanied Consul General Byington. My wife came along because Mrs. Byington was ill. After the ceremony, we were escorted to the bar with innumerable options to drink on display. My wife's favorite drink at the time was sherry. Byington asked her what she wanted, and Dorothy, somewhat flustered at the priority given her could only think to say sherry. That's the one drink they didn't have, and with embarrassment chose the first thing offered instead. Well, Byington just thought this was funny – asking for sherry in Italy – and teased her about it in the car on the way back. At the residence he invited us in and went immediately to the bar saying, “Dorothy, you can now have your sherry; you ask for sherry in Spain, not in Italy,” and with a smile pours out a sherry for her. But Dorothy was so embarrassed. Byington liked to tease in this manner; he once did it to me in a similar situation once as well.

Q: Well, one of the problems in Naples was unemployment. Alfa Romeo, put in a plant, and they got kids from the farms around there to help build the place. Then when it came time to put in skilled workers the union – the local people – said no, you have to use our kids, you know, the same people who built the plant. In other words, jobs were extremely hard to get and, often recommendations were sought. This made it very difficult for an American firm, I would think.

BASTIANI: They were almost essential, because it was an employers' market, and people would come to us for *raccomandazioni* just to get an interview, just to have a hope for getting a job. The way the unemployment situation in the South, the *Mezzogiorno*, was to a great extent alleviated was by worker migration to the North. Many southerners migrated to the North to work at Fiat and other industrial plants, would marry northern Italian girls and establish families, but retain their attachment to the South. Meanwhile, the northerners who made use of all this labor complained about the investments in the South as a drain on the country's resources. Without these workers from the South, the North would never have been able to develop their industries as they did.

Some old-timers, told me in all seriousness during my tour in Turin that the stupidest mistake that Garibaldi and Cavour had made when they united Italy under Emanuel- Victor Emanuel II, was to go below Florence; they should never have extended Italy below Florence. This results from the fact that the Southern Italy has a different culture than Northern Italy. Most people

don't know that Southern Italy was under the domination of the Spanish for 400 years and gave it a definitely different culture. At the same time Southern Italy was much more exposed to migrations from all over the rest of the Mediterranean.

Q: The Normans were there.

BASTIANI: In fact. And so it's been a crossroads of migration.

Q: I was Consul General there from '79 to '81, and by that time emigration to the United States was a very minor factor, because most emigration was up to the North or to other parts of Europe; so it wasn't much of a factor.

BASTIANI: But in my day it was the main business of Consulate. And then in the '80s, I was upset to see them shutting down posts all over Italy, but that's a later story.

STEPHEN J. LEDOGAR
Administrative Officer
Milan (1962-1964)

Ambassador Stephen J. Ledogar was born in New York City in 1929. He served in the US Navy during the Korean War and attended Fordham University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1959, wherein he served in countries including Canada, Italy, Vietnam, France, Belgium, and Switzerland. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 1, 2000.

Q: You left Canada in '62 and went to Italy.

LEDOGAR: Via Italian language training at FSI. Again, this was a period of time before the rotational training of junior officers was institutionalized. I was still trying to get a variety of experiences, so I applied for an administrative job at a European post at the largest post where I would be in charge of the administrative section, with language training en route. So, that in effect meant someplace in Germany or Italy. I went to Milan.

Q: You were there from when to when?

LEDOGAR: '62-'64. I was the administrative officer of the U.S. Consulate General.

Q: Who was the consul general?

LEDOGAR: Earl T. Crain.

Q: How was he?

LEDOGAR: He was an old-school character who motivated his people with fear.

Q: He inspected me in Saudi Arabia a little earlier on, '59 or so. I didn't warm to him at all.

LEDOGAR: No. It was hard to warm to him. He was a very decent, conscientious fellow, but he had a forbidding exterior.

Q: He later was consul general for a long time in Paris.

LEDOGAR: Yes. That was just before he took over in Milan.

Q: What was your impression of Italy in this '62-'64 period?

LEDOGAR: Of course, that was the period where the prosperity in northern Italy suddenly burst forth and it became almost a joke about how suddenly the Milanese were superconsumers and conspicuous spenders. There was a lot of money floating around. Of course, the prosperity divisions between northern and southern Italy were very vivid. Milan was extremely vital and even exciting at that time. It was also quite smog-ridden and polluted. I don't know how it is today, but that was rather shocking. As an administrative officer, I didn't have the opportunity to get involved much in the economic and political questions.

Q: What were your major concerns in the administrative job?

LEDOGAR: The biggest surprise was my own naivete. I thought that if I took a publication called the "Foreign Service List" and looked up a post and it said there were 14 officers, I figured I was going to be administering 14 officers. I got there and found that I had well over a hundred personnel folders. Of course, I knew there had to be FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals, or local employees), but I didn't realize that I also had the U.S. Information Service [USIS] in Milan and all of their locals. But it didn't stop there by a long shot. All throughout the consular district, there were little pockets of American civilians, all of whom were administered by the nearest State Department administrative officer, namely me. I had a couple of people way up in the northern part near the lake district who were at a U.S. Air Force quality insurance inspection station because some Italian contractor was overhauling U.S. Air Force airplanes... At the railroad station in Milan there was a military non-commissioned officer who was stationed there to move U.S. service personnel from one train to another. At one point, a guy came in and said, "I understand I report to you for rations and quarters." I said, "What agency do you work for?" He said, "Tennessee Valley Authority." Sure enough, when I looked it up, when TVA has people assigned abroad, they are administered by the State Department. Here was a guy who was sent over to be a resident quality inspector at a pipe factory in Lecco and he was there for a couple of years. This was somebody else I had to... If he was going to hire an Italian secretary, I had to administer the secretary, and so on. It turned out to be a whole lot more personnel work than I had originally expected. On the other hand, we were not a fiscal servicing post. Most of the money stuff was done in Rome. So that aspect of administrative work was mostly taken care of by the Embassy.

Q: Who was the ambassador during this period?

LEDOGAR: For most of the time, it was Frederick Reinhart.

Q: From your point of view, was the embassy far away?

LEDOGAR: I thought support was quite good and timely for all of our vouchers and payrolls. Anything having to do with money was bounced off the Embassy. That was quite smooth. The Ambassador came up to Milan a number of times usually for big events like grand gala openings at La Scala, things where the upper level establishment of the province were involved. The biggest thing that occurred there that was directly in my area was the establishment of a U.S. Trade Center. In the early '60s President Kennedy became quite concerned over the U.S. balance of payment deficit. We had a big exercise known as BALPA [Balance of Payment]. This included all sorts of things. For example, USG (United States Government) personnel overseas could no longer buy foreign cars and have them shipped to the next post.

Another of the things was a program to establish U.S. trade centers in a number of commercially important cities around the world and Milan was selected for one of them. As resident U.S. administrative officer, I had the job of working with the U.S. Department of Commerce to identify the place, sign the lease, and get the contractor started to modify the space. Then some officers came from the Department of Commerce, but you had to get staff and transportation and all the things necessary to put another U.S. establishment in that city. That took quite a bit of attention and was very interesting. It was very satisfying to see the first U.S. trade show being put on at the new U.S. Trade Center. That all occurred while I was there. But as far as getting into provincial or even national politics, I really was not involved.

Q: Did you have any problems with all these scattered people all over the place? Were they behaving?

LEDOGAR: Pretty much. I don't remember difficulties. One problem we had was that people in the Trade Center, especially if they had been working on a temporary basis while we were getting it set up, really resisted the requirement that their staff personnel had to be integrated into the State Department staff system. They couldn't quite understand why dependents of American business people, who in many cases were more skilled and less expensive, couldn't be used if they were available. You had to explain to those folks - and it was a lesson I had to first learn myself - that in order to run a Foreign Service secretarial corps, there had to be worldwide assignability. You couldn't use up all the attractive positions in attractive cities in Europe with resident Americans so that when some gal who had labored away in Bangui came up for reassignment she found there was no place in Europe because all the positions were occupied. You had to keep a circular flow worldwide. That was understandable in theory, but was not terribly persuasive to an American official of the Department of Commerce who wanted to get his reports out immediately in English. So, we had some problems with that.

We also had a very interesting experience in my time that had a very heavy administrative angle to it. In summer of '63, President Kennedy was on a world tour. It was the same tour where he had gone to Berlin and visited the wall and did the "Ich bin ein Berliner" statement. Then he had gone to other places, including Ireland to visit the land of his ancestors. He was headed toward Rome as the last stop. But as happened to be the case, the College of Cardinals reached a

decision and white smoke appeared out of the chimney of the Sistine Chapel. I think it was the first John Paul. The Pope was identified and was to be coronated, and coronation was to occur on the day that the Kennedy party was to arrive in Rome. So, they made a quick change and decided, I think with encouragement from the Italian security officials, to delay 24 hours. So, the decision was to stop in northern Italy in our consular district to visit a place up in Bellaggio, which was a chateau and some property on Lake Como that the Ford Foundation had acquired and was using for scholarly purposes. They decided that that would be a good place for the Kennedy party to take a day off. That meant that suddenly at the U.S. Consulate General in Milan, we were putting on a presidential visit on very short notice. The Milan airfield was quite far away from Bellaggio, so you had all of the communications and all of the security and all of the transportation considerations, not to mention the staffing of a presidential visit, except that it was hastily thrown together. There was a lot of administrative responsibility there. But it worked out okay.

Q: Did you have any problems with the Italian unions?

LEDOGAR: No, I don't recall any. Dealing with the police was rather frustrating, but it was a different system that we had to get used to. In 1963 when Kennedy was shot, one of the administrative problems we had was dealing with the outpouring of spontaneous and very emotional reaction of the Italian people. The response to the invitation to come sign the book at the Consulate General was so great that there were lines around the block. We were up on the ninth floor of a skyscraper. The elevator was becoming so overloaded with pulling up one heavy load of mourners after another that we had to kind of shut things down for a while and then pace the elevator. It was astounding. People were weeping. It was a little bit surprising for those of us who were reading about politics in the United States, where Kennedy was not regarded as quite so god-like.

Q: Kennedy wasn't that popular at home. I was in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, at the time. We had the same thing there. It was a generational thing.

LEDOGAR: I think that's so. He appealed to the younger people. He was a younger president. He had a lot of glamour.

HENRY PRECHT
General Officer
Rome (1962-1964)

Henry Precht was born on June 15, 1932 in Savannah, Georgia. He attended Emory University and served in the US Navy. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961, wherein he served in countries including Italy, Egypt, Mauritius, and Iran. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 8, 2000.

PRECHT: So, I went four months to Navy OCS [Officer Candidate School] and after that miraculously was sent to Naples, Italy where I stayed three and a half years.

Q: This would be when?

PRECHT: This would be early 1954 to the summer of 1957. I was a communications officer which meant I stood watches. Then I became communications security officer, which meant I worked a five day week. I had plenty of time off. I had an apartment overlooking the Bay of Naples. I had a car and went everywhere. I went as far north as Verona and as far south as Sicily. I traveled every moment that I could. I was living in a golden age. First of all, there were all these opportunities to absorb Italian history and life and secondly, the booze was so cheap in the Officer's Club. Marian Olds, who later became my wife, was a school teacher there my last year and I extended six months until her year was up. Then I came home and got an assistantship at Emory University teaching freshman history. Marian was in Washington so I quit and decided I would go find a job up north. I failed to do so in New York because a recession began in January 1958 and I was unemployed for six months. I finally got a job as a typist in the Bureau of Public Roads.

Then I took what was called the management intern test and became a management intern in the Department of Labor where I stayed for three and a half years. We were married in 1958. Some time later I decided I wasn't going to advance in the Department of Labor unless I was either a lawyer or an economist and I was neither. So, I took the foreign service exam and passed it. In order to come aboard I had to take a substantial cut in salary, something like 40 percent, to become an FSO-8.

Q: What moved you towards the foreign service?

PRECHT: Well, I always had this interest in international affairs and I had lived in Italy for a long time. I wasn't interested in making money in private industry, I was interested in public service and I thought the foreign service would be that, and it would be overseas which would be pleasant and interesting. Why not live your life doing something that rewards you intellectually and aesthetically?

Q: Did you have any contacts with the consul general in Naples while you were there?

PRECHT: I used to date a young Italian woman who worked in the consulate. When some of the consular officers were having trouble filling their box in the opera they recruited me to be part of theirs at the San Carlo. [Other than that], I had limited contact with them. My circle was mainly in the Navy or with the few Italians that I knew.

Q: Did you get around Naples much?

PRECHT: Oh, yes. I knew Naples very well.

Q: A lot of the Navy people seemed to stay cooped up there.

PRECHT: But so were the consular people. It was two different worlds. I used to go to the Officers' Club, but less and less so, particularly after Marian arrived and we would do things in

the local community.

Q: In 1961, when you came in, did you have any idea of what you wanted to do?

PRECHT: I wanted to go to Italy and as I began to know a little bit more about it, I wanted to be a political officer. I ended up going to Italy but in those years you rotated jobs which was what I did for two years.

Q: When did you arrive in Italy?

PRECHT: I arrived in Italy in February 1962.

Q: So you were there from 1962-64. Where were you in Italy?

PRECHT: Rome.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you arrived?

PRECHT: Frederick Reinhardt.

Q: What were you doing?

PRECHT: I started off in the consular section and had the great good fortune to move into that section behind two other young FSOs, both of whom flunked out. They were failures for reasons of personality I guess. With my experience I was an accomplished bureaucrat and knew how to operate in a government environment. I did very well and was given plum assignments such as when Kennedy came and Johnson came, I was one of the control officers at the Excelsior Hotel. After the consular section, I moved to the commercial section, the economic section and then the political section.

Q: What was going on in Italy during this time?

PRECHT: The DCM [deputy chief of mission] was Outerbridge Horsey and he was adamantly against what was then known as the *apertura alla sinistra*, the opening to the left, that is bringing the Socialists into coalition with the Christian Democrats. That was the main issue, I suppose, in Italian politics. The left was still strong, the Communists and Socialists, and he didn't want to see any cracking in the control of the Christian Democrats. He controlled reporting out of the embassy it was said. It never touched me, but he was a very tough personality so I believe it was true. He wouldn't permit any reporting that would suggest a change in American policy towards the left might be thinkable. Finally after the inspectors came, he did permit some reports to get to Washington by adding a footnote at the end saying "of course this officer has only been here two years." He would put in a sort of demeaning comment at the end to make sure American policy remained solidly behind the Christian Democrats.

Q: What type of job did you have when you were doing political work?

PRECHT: My main job was to report the Italian press back to Washington every day. I also did other reports. During this time Eisenhower decided we had to reduce expenditure abroad and part of that was the closure of our consulate in Venice. I was assigned the job of going over to the foreign ministry to see some ambassador and tell him that we were going to bring Venice to an end. He said, "Mr. Precht, surely you have some officers who do not have the ability to make it to ambassador but who have worked very hard in very unpleasant places. Venice is a very decent way for them to end their careers with dignity." But, we closed it – being bereft of that kind of Italian sentiment.

I did more adventurous work in the commercial section. I spent two weeks manning a booth in the Bologna food fair, which was a wonderful place to be and eat. I handled a trade mission of leather manufacturers from the United States who were trying to sell leather goods in Italy. I think they were secretly trying to line up sources in Italy. Italy at that time in the '60s was moving into its boom period as contrasted with Italy in the '50s when I had been there in the Navy and the economy was just beginning to gather speed.

Q: At that time I assume contacts with the Communists were out.

PRECHT: We had one officer, Steve Peters, who was an Albanian American, who I think did the left wing of the two socialist parties. I think another officer, John Baker, did the Communists. I don't know if he had contact with them, but the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] must surely have had contact with them. We had ways of monitoring them.

Q: Was the feeling on the part of the younger officers that Outerbridge Horsey was sort of sitting on them re the left?

PRECHT: This was a different epoch. We weren't rebellious. We did our jobs. It was a golden assignment to be in Rome in those years. No one wanted to get into trouble. We weren't out to make a statement. Horsey was just one of the atmospheric factors that we had to deal with. I don't recall anyone protesting what he had to say. The first day I was in the embassy he summoned me to his office. Apparently the chief of the consular citizenship section, Doris Allen, had offended an American and he wanted me as a witness to that episode to tell him the story. So, I had to tattle on my superior. Horsey was that kind of guy, but I don't think anybody looked on it as an oppressive environment. We also succeeded with the Reinhardts and were frequently invited to the residence to do the young foreign service officer thing of greeting people, learning their names and introducing them to the ambassador at official functions.

Q: Did you get involved at all in the reporting of the political scene? It always seemed to me that the Italian government for so long was a very static situation with a continuing evolving set of people serving as cabinet ministers.

PRECHT: Yes, that's right. The same names lasted for decades. That was the nature of Italian politics and we didn't question it.

Q: You were there when Kennedy was assassinated. What happened then?

PRECHT: I was at a party, some embassy function, and we were telephoned. We went down to the embassy immediately. My job as junior officer was to greet dignitaries who began to come in to sign the condolence book. The next day, I had to go out to buy a black tie and went to a shop on the Via Veneto and asked to see one. It was 1600 lira. I exclaimed, "What?" The man in the back said to the clerk, "Isn't that the signore that we saw on television last night? Let him have it for a 1000 lira." Kennedy's assassination was a great blow to Italy where he was extremely popular.

Q: How did his visit to Rome go?

PRECHT: Very well. I was one of the control officers in the Excelsior, as I mentioned. At one point Kennedy was going to visit the mayor of Rome on the Capidoglio and a member of his staff came to me and said, "After his meeting he would like to speak to a crowd in the square when he comes out of the mayor's office." I said that there would be nobody up on the Capidoglio except for a few tourists at that time of morning. He said, "Make sure there is a crowd there." So, I got USIS [United States Information Service] to round up all of its staff and they reported to the square and cheered the president.

More interesting was the visit of President Johnson during which I was also on control officer duty. First of all, we had the preparation. The shower head in the Excelsior Hotel had to be precisely so many feet and inches from the floor. Cutty Sark scotch had to be in the room. The bed had to be such and such a size. All of these things were arranged. He came in on a Friday or Saturday after having been in Iran and Turkey. When he arrived in Rome he went off to dinner with PM [Prime Minister] Fanfani and others. Just at that time there was a big earthquake in Iran. Johnson said, "We will go back and offer our condolences." At his direction we sent a message to Washington saying, "Notify the White House that the Vice President plans to go back to Iran to offer condolences." He had invited Mrs. Fanfani and all the people sitting around him at dinner to ride on Air Force Two. Within a few hours a message came back from the White House: "Maintain schedule." But, Johnson wasn't put down. The next thing we knew the following morning, Sunday, was the Vice President wanted to buy a hundred ties and five oil paintings. He wanted the paintings not to cost more than \$125 each and preferably to include some cows. Well, on Sunday everything in Rome is closed down. I told Mr. Horsey that we couldn't buy these things. He said, "You take care of the paintings and I will take care of the ties." Somehow he got a Via Veneto merchant to open up and he sold a hundred ties that morning. I called USIS again and said, "We need five oil paintings, top price \$125, some with cows before the Vice President leaves tomorrow morning." Just as they were packing up, five paintings arrived from USIS. Most of them were abstracts of one kind or another, but there was one that was very blue and had a cow or two on it. It was still damp, cost exactly \$125 and was painted by a USIS employee.

Q: You left there when?

PRECHT: I left there some time in February, 1964 and was assigned to Alexandria, Egypt. The State Department had not heard that most of the Levantines had been obliged to leave Egypt by

Nasser's policies and they still thought of Alexandria as a French-speaking post. I had four months French training which I never used in Alexandria except with a few old ladies. I arrived in Alexandria in the summer of July 1964.

ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY
Consular Officer
Palermo (1962-1964)

Ambassador Rozanne L. Ridgway was born in Minnesota on August 22, 1935. She received a bachelor's degree from Hamline College in 1957 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. Ambassador Ridgway's career included positions in The Philippines, Norway, The Bahamas, Finland, and Germany. This interview was conducted by Willis Armstrong on June 4, 1991.

Q: *Beyond belief.*

RIDGWAY: ...beyond belief. And because the rotation program stopped, and I had to do two years in personnel -- I did one year doing American personnel, and one year doing Foreign Service nationals, I learned a lot about the regulations, I learned a lot about how you deal, from such a far distance, with a Washington bureaucracy that is bound by regulations. It's not that they're hidebound intellectually. They've got regulations. I learned how you could approach that bureaucracy when its regulations, either alone or in combination, were unreasonable. I found there were sensible people back there. You just had to know how to deal with them. But once again, I was in a woman's world. But I was in the world of women, a combination of women in the administrative section and the consular section, who saw another woman coming on board and could have reacted, Bill, with a great sense of jealousy. I was half their age. I was an examination entry FSO with a future in front of me that was different from their own, a Service in front of me that was different than the Service they had entered. This was the days of eight grades. They were mostly 6s. I arrived as an 8, became a 7, but clearly even with a mediocre career, I would pass them and their expectations. I did not encounter either that resentment or jealousy. Once again, I had a community that folded in around me, saw to it that I was part of the community, even though I had sort of been separated out from the traditional establishment. They taught me a lot. I think I taught them a lot also because I was so much different than they.

And when I went on from that experience with a richness of understanding about people overseas, and how embassies really work, I went off to Palermo as a vice consul.

Q: *Really. My wife was once a vice consul in Palermo.*

RIDGWAY: And you recall in those days...these were the days in which the regional bureaus had a lot to say in where you went. And the regional personnel officers were women. This is still the old Foreign Service. Great names: Evelyn Blue, Berny Whitfield; and Evelyn is still alive at Columbia Plaza. I see her, she still remembers every part of my early career. But I came out of Manila, passed on favorably to that group of regional personnel officers, and went off to Palermo

to be a vice consul, went through Italian -- I had already passed the language in Spanish -- took Italian; had a completely different experience from that large Manila experience a huge institution to a consular experience. I mean it was life for two years lived in Italian; a small group of people working very closely with Foreign Service nationals, again on these tough questions -- the very human questions of passports, and people in jail, and deaths, and social security benefits, a very substantial part of our work overseas. Good supervisors again, still a lot of women around, a few more men evaluating my...

Q: *How big a post is Palermo?*

RIDGWAY: At that time, about fourteen Americans ranged in age from 25 to about 62. I think we counted at one time that eleven of us were quite fluent in Italian, we all got along very, very well. It was a very easy time.

Q: *What years were these?*

RIDGWAY: '62-'64.

Q: *Louise was there '49-'50. It was a much smaller post. She had a tyrannical boss and got herself transferred.*

RIDGWAY: I never ran into that.

Q: *In a tiny post that can happen.*

RIDGWAY: I have given you three assignments in which experts today, analyzing why women have been held back in the Service, would say that each -- if you went by percentages -- should have harmed my career, and not a one of them did. Each produced growth. Each gave me an experience which later on, frankly, gave me an advantage over people whose careers were not broad enough. I knew how to work. I didn't know all of those good things were coming of it. I had no way of knowing that people, as supervisors, didn't routinely behave in this constructive fashion. I had no idea that these other things were happening to people. And I started telling this to explain why, later in my career, I didn't join the Womens' Action Organization, and things of that sort. I opted out of all the class action suits, because my experience simply was so different. And having come in at twenty-one, and become quickly skeptical about the Service as the Service became skeptical about me, I came out of this process of Washington- Manila-Palermo in 1964 just before my 29th birthday, much more mature, more confident. The Service, I think, felt different about me. Those were the days of rankings from 1 to 6, I don't think you could look at my file and find an awful lot of 6s.

It turned out I had a realistic file -- you could have those in those days...

Following are excerpts from an interview with Ambassador Ridgway by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

RIDGWAY: I returned to Washington in 1961. The next year, I went to FSI for Italian language

training. I had a chance to talk to Evelyn Blue and others. They knew about the Foreign Service officer case I just mentioned and were thankful that I had stayed on in my job for a second year without raising a fuss. As a result, they were very helpful in getting me the visa job in Palermo.

Q: When did you go to Palermo?

RIDGWAY: 1962. I stayed there for two years.

Q: Tell us a little about life in Palermo in the early 1960s?

RIDGWAY: It was terrific. I spent the first year as the immigration visa officer. In the second year, I concentrated on non-immigrant visas.

I managed to learn the Italian language quite well. The Sicilians will speak Italian, although they also use a dialect all of their own. Since Sicilian is mostly spoken on the islands, I didn't make much of an effort to learn it. In fact, one had to be careful in the usage of the Sicilian accent – a mushy southern accent. I remember checking into a hotel in Rome one time. I spoke to the clerk in Italian. When I gave him my identity card, he asked why, as an American, I spoke Italian with a Sicilian accent! So I switched to English for a while.

In Palermo I found the same syndrome I had found in other places: a wonderful, educated, long-suffering staff of Foreign Service nationals, who had to teach successive generations of young American officers the ins and outs of consular work.

Our quota was of course over-subscribed – 5,666 immigrant visas for all of Italy. I would guess that the waiting list probably had 500,000 people on it. It was tough! Every so often, Congress would pass a law allowing people, who had waited for extended periods, to enter the U.S. outside of the quota process. That had a mixed impact. In any case, I think the system in existence at that time was depressing to both the applicants and to the visa processors. I don't know if the present system is much of an improvement.

I must admit that in working on immigrant visa applications, I learnt a lot about the community I lived in. I got to know Sicily quite well. My language skills certainly improved, because Italian was the only language that I used in my work. I also learned how to work with another group of Foreign Service nationals.

As I said, in the second year in Palermo, I worked on non-immigrant visas, which were handled on the floor above the immigrant visa section. I used what I had learned about the island to establish the *bona fides* of an applicant. Lyndon Johnson was our president and the administration emphasized the need to increase the number of visitors to the U.S. We were under pressure to screen applicants as thoroughly as possible to eliminate as many of the “permanent” visitors (those who stayed in the U.S. after their visas had expired) while at the same time under pressure to reduce the number of refusals – entirely contradictory policies .

There were fourteen American officers and staff assigned to Palermo. Eleven of us were single. The ages of the singles ranged from 22 to 55. We all got along, although all eleven did not

necessarily “chum” together. The older ladies had their own circle, and the younger ones had theirs. We all had cars; we all spoke Italian and made our own friends in the local community. We did a lot of traveling around Sicily and had a great time. Palermo was a great assignment. Palermo was just a nice post. I liked it very much.

Q: Who was the Consul General during your tour?

RIDGWAY: Loren Carrol. His deputy was Joe Wiedenmayer. Phil Damon headed the consular office. Mary Chiavarini headed the passport and citizen section. I still see her at the Washington opera. Betty Jane Jones, who was one of my colleagues, still lives in the Washington area. Another Jones, Elizabeth R., was the administrative assistant to Marion Quinnery. Both of them, as well as Phil, have passed on.

Q: Did you get any feeling for the political situation in Sicily?

RIDGWAY: It didn't take too long to see it. The political reporting was done by someone else in the Consulate General, mostly by the CG himself. We had an economic officer. The deputy CG usually had an economic-commercial background. We had two senior locals who worked on substantive reporting. One was Johnny Parlazono, who eventually married an American Foreign Service staff person, Mary Del Fleming. The other one concentrated on economic matters. Both of these locals had offices on the top floor.

We in the consular section became aware of the political realities in Sicily such as the roles of the Church, the Christian Democratic Party, and the Mafia, etc. through our contacts with the local population. It was clear from my work in the immigrant visa section that the Church was the center of political life, in the tradition of a 16th century society.

Q: Did you find the great discrepancy in wealth that you had witnessed in the Philippines?

RIDGWAY: No. The whole island was poor. It was a completely different situation. In the first place, you found some social and political coherence in Sicily. The Philippines, even today, with all of its islands and languages and ethnic divisions, does not have the coherence that you would find in Sicily. The Sicilians are mono-culture Europeans, not the mixture of Pan-Asians, Pacific islanders, and Spanish you will find in the Philippines. It is true that Sicily had been invaded over the centuries by most of the world's great civilizations. One could go from Syracuse and the Greeks, to Educe and the Normans. It was an island of history. It probably was stripped of all of its trees to build warships by all of the invaders. The temperature was steaming hot; it took the nap right off one's tongue. The Sicilians were a hardy lot; dark skinned, family oriented, with a very rigid code of behavior enforced by the Mafia and the Church.

Q: Did you run into any problems trying to puzzle out family relationships and feuds?

RIDGWAY: No really. For the most part, these family issues were unrelated to immigration issues. Our clients were mostly a mother, a father and dependent children (under 18). The sad story in that situation was often that the parents had waited so long for visas that the children had grown up and were over 18 and therefore not eligible for immigrant visas under their parents'

quota number. We would have pathetic, wrenching scenes; all we could do was watch, because we had no way to avoid the family separations that we were causing.

Another issue that we faced stemmed from the refugee relief program, which had several years earlier allowed the issuance of certain categories of applicants above and beyond the quota. When the program was initiated in the 1950s, the Department sent a whole group of officers to the consulate to work exclusively on this refugee relief program. In Sicily we still had a number of people who had applied for visas under the refugee relief program, but who for one reason or another had been turned down. Those decisions may have been correct at the time they were made, but I spent a lot of time researching those cases, because we had requests to over-turn those decisions. For example, one might go to a small town in Sicily to find that the only playing field was owned by the Communists, and if you wanted to play soccer you had to join the Communist party. Those who did that were turned down by our officers as belonging to a Communist organization.

I well remember the one case that kept me busy fighting the bureaucracy. I finally won. It involved a sailor who had married an Italian woman in Naples. When they applied for a visa for her, the American officer discovered that in 1946 the lady had received from Florence a *foglio di via* (citation for suspected illicit activity). That was judged to have been an official citation for having received a payment for prostitution. I don't know whether it was or not. But I did know that for all of the years that this couple had been married she had stayed in Naples and he had stayed in the Navy. He got as many assignment as he could which would take him to, or base him in, Naples. This marriage had continued for many years. The basis for the citation was a matter of debate; it was not necessarily evidence of prostitution. I and others took on the case claiming that the original judgment had been erroneous, as there was not a scintilla of evidence of prostitution. Right after the war, cities all over Italy were pushing people out; if you didn't have a relation in the city who had been living in the city for decades, you were forced to leave. This woman might well have found herself in that position; she was living on her own. But in our mind, it was a leap to assume that she was a prostitute. We fought the original finding for a long time and finally won. We fought other cases where we were not so successful. I was proud of what we had done in the case of the sailor's wife.

We had a lot of similar issues. As I mentioned, our annual quota for immigrant visas for Italy was 5,666, with half a million applicants waiting for their number to come up. That put a lot pressure on the non-immigrant process; we had to be sure that the applicants were *bona fide*. Washington was pressuring us not to turn people down and not to hold family members hostage. So we were really in a bind.

Q: How often did you hear from Congressmen with Italian constituents?

RIDGWAY: Senator Keating was one of most avid correspondents. Then there were the people in the Buffalo area. We heard a lot from New Yorkers. All we could do was our best; we made sure that we kept full notes of our interviews and investigations. This was before the era of litigation. Today I think I would advise a consular officer not to keep any notes. Then, we kept thorough notes because we knew that when we turned an applicant down, it would soon be followed by a Congressional request for information. Of course, what a congressman heard from

a constituent was not always what we had heard from or learned about the applicant. We had to be in a position to defend our decisions and that is where good notes became invaluable.

Every so often, we would take on a fight with Washington. Sometimes it became more work than it was worth and we would drop our appeal. In other cases, as I have illustrated, we kept at it until a decision in our favor was made.

Q: It seems that despite the pressures, you did communicate with applicants, unlike the situation in many of our visa mills today, where an officer, sitting behind a bullet-proof glass shield, has "30 seconds" to talk to the applicants and pass judgment.

RIDGWAY: We never had an atmosphere in our visa section such as what I have seen as I travel around the world today. On my last trip, I was in Lithuania, where I called on the embassy; our ambassador was John Tefft, who used to work for me. As I tried to enter the chancery, I had to navigate my way through long lines of visa applicants. We never had anything like that in Sicily, even in the days when the pressure was on.

Occasionally, a travel agent would come in with a large stack of applications from people who had seats on a chartered aircraft going to the U.S. We also got requests to rush applications through; although most of the travel agents knew what would pass muster and what was likely to be turned down. We always had time to review each application and pass judgment on it. In some cases, we would ask the applicant to come for an interview; in others, we just passed judgment from the written record. It was nothing like what I have witnessed in Mexico City or anywhere else in the world.

Q: Did the Mafia ever pose a threat?

RIDGWAY: The Mafia was really not a concern. My one experience with that group had to do with a young man whose visa I had refused. He was about 18 years old. After I refused the application, I got a call from someone who told me that the young man worked for the Archbishop of Palermo. I was pretty sure that despite his efforts to disguise his voice, the caller was the applicant himself. Then I got some threatening letters which were made to appear as if the writer was a member of the Mafia; it had caskets and crosses all over the page. That got ugly and continued over the New Year. Someone even shot a bullet through a window in my apartment. The word then got out that I was having some problems with this applicant. I received an invitation through a travel agent to go to the town of Corleone, where the Mafia leadership wanted to inform me that they had nothing to do with all the unpleasantness that I was encountering. So, on a Sunday afternoon, I went to Corleone and walked into a house off the main *piazza*. I had a disgusting drink there.

As I understood the Mafia rules at the time, they were not to mess with American consular officers. The Mafia didn't believe that we were really essential to their activities; if they wanted someone to enter the U.S., they had their own means, which did not include a U.S. consular officer. We assumed that a Mafia person just went from Palermo to Tunis, and then to Marseilles, and perhaps from Marseilles to Florida or New York. We never saw applicants that were deemed Mafia members. In the course of this incident, I was briefed by Mafia emissaries

on life's realities. They said that they would insure that the young man would not bother me any longer. He didn't. He probably got to the States through the devious path I described earlier.

Q: Did you ever encounter any problems with the Mafia, such as payment of protection money, etc?

RIDGWAY: No. I lived in an apartment in the city. Some of my colleagues lived in nice homes by the sea and they had guards. It was clear to them that without guards they were likely to encounter problems. I didn't have to do that, although I did "lose" my car; that is, it was broken into on one occasion, and the radio and battery were taken by the thieves. As soon as those were replaced, the whole car was stolen. Three weeks later, the remnants, i.e., the chassis, were found. That is all there was – the barest remnants of a fully operating vehicle. It was found in a swamp outside of town. The insurance company insisted on taking these paltry remains and rebuilding the car. That was the only criminal problem I encountered.

Otherwise, we all faced the same difficulties. I still mention them when I talk to classes of Foreign Service officers. We would see the title to the same truck with a succession of people who came to us from the same town. They all would show us that title to prove that they had ties to Sicily and would therefore return after their visit to the U.S. This type of fraud popped up with other "evidence" of ties; they used the same title to a piece of land or a bank account, always with the same amount of money in it. We became quite familiar with these "communal" ownerships. We always had to face the question as to whether this questionable evidence was enough to warrant a refusal on "moral turpitude" grounds. I generally just smiled, handed the documents back to the applicant, and went on to the next case. We seldom received any complaints or inquiries when we refused visas to people who tried to get by with those games.

Q: My experience as a supervisory consular officer suggests that new Foreign Service officers take attempted fraud as a major sin, not recognizing that they are dealing with a foreign culture that views efforts to obtain a U.S. visa in a different light than they do.

RIDGWAY: One of the sad aspects of Sicily came to light after I left. It nevertheless was instructive for the rest of my career. Two of our Foreign Service nationals in the immigrant visa section were discovered to have been taking bribes over a period of years. They acted so consistently with the local culture that their malfeasance was not easy to detect. Applicants for immigrant visas received an invitation to come to the consular section for an interview. At the end of a working day, the American staff had a list of 80 immigrants who would be coming in the next day for their interviews. They were listed in the order of the date of their registration. The fraud worked like this: when they arrived the next day, the receptionist would "sell" them their place in line. Many of the applicants paid to be moved ahead in the schedule of interviews. In some cases, they paid for nothing because they were given the spot on the list which they had already been given by our system. At the end of the day, as the applicant paid for all the processing, x-rays, visas, etc., he or she was charged an extra sum for the "favor" received from the receptionist by the cashier. The receipt, of course, was only for the legitimate charges. No audit would have discovered this scheme, because the cash and the copy of the receipts were always in balance. The "extra" charge was a side deal with no record. It took us a long time to discover this scheme.

The CG was surprised at how smoothly this scheme had worked, given the mores of Sicilian society. No Sicilian was surprised. In the U.S., someone would have complained almost immediately – not in Sicily, as such schemes were part of their societal fabric. When I heard that, I realized – I still believe this today – that some of the most important questions to be asked, even in the corporate world, are about the process, the control points, and the checks and balances needed to minimize the potential of such “side” schemes being developed. I know that people will continue to try to beat the system, but it is important that any process have checks built in to it to minimize the potential for fraud.

Palermo was a wonderful assignment. When one knows the language, has a little more money than before, has a car – it was the first time I had had one since joining the Foreign Service – lives on the local economy with some personally acquired furniture, has Italian and American friends, has a job that was consuming although limited to roughly 40 hours per week, and lives in a place full of culture and sophistication, what more could anyone ask for? It was just wonderful.

Q: Did you run into any Italian-Americans who came to Sicily to find a bride?

RIDGWAY: No. It was the other way around. The potential brides used to come through the non-immigrant section trying to get a visa to the States, where they hoped to find a husband. We saw Italian Americans when we delivered Social Security checks or veterans’ benefits. In many cases, these people were quite well to do. They had returned to Sicily with accumulated dollar savings, which they put into building traditional Sicilian homes up in the hills. They lived quite well. Many fell ill, and then were dumped into convent hospitals; we used to deliver their monthly Social Security checks there to allow the convents to support these patients. Some looked terrible, so it wasn’t always clear what was happening to the money.

Q: Were you in Palermo when Kennedy was assassinated?

RIDGWAY: I was. I had been at an Italian movie, “Giant,” with a friend. We turned on the radio in my car and heard about Kennedy dying. We thought it was the father who had had a stroke. When we realized it was John Kennedy, we headed for the CG, where other staff members were also congregating. Some hadn’t heard. We headed for the home of the administrative officer, Marian Quinney. We woke her up and suggested that she go to the CG with us to lay out plans for the ceremonies which were bound to follow, such as lowering the flag, how it was to be displayed (our flag pole not being able to fly a half-mast flag), and getting a condolence book. This all happened before we had satellite transmission, and before we could receive long-distance television. Maybe our people in Rome had access to some TV feeds, but once the films were shown in Rome and then sent to Sicily, the footage was barely discernable. Radio reception was terrible. So, we were really out of the news-loop, except for a few crackling news reports on TV.

The whole island of Sicily wept. Kennedy was their guy. We issued visas with his picture right behind us. Very often, while Kennedy was still alive, people would see that photograph and fall on their knees, and cross themselves. People saw the U.S. and John Kennedy as one and the same. Because of this ‘reverence,’ we had lines and lines of people waiting to sign the

condolence books. We stood by the table and shook hands with all the visitors. We did this in shifts, which were long, since there were only 14 American staff members.

The Sicilians declared a holiday on the day of Kennedy's funeral. There was a huge parade down Palermo's main street. It was a very touching response from the Sicilians. For those who today say that it really doesn't matter what the world thinks of us, the fact of the matter is that then and now, the world looks at the U.S. for leadership and for a certain kind of public image. I was very touched by the Sicilian response in those few days. The local coffee shop sent coffee, biscottis, and other goodies to us to help us out while we greeted the mourners.

Q: You transferred from Palermo in 1964. What happened then?

WILLIAM B. WHITMAN
Consular Officer
Palermo (1962-1964)

William B. Whitman was born on November 28, 1935 in Orange, New Jersey. He attended the University of Colorado and Northwestern University. He entered the Foreign Service in 1960, wherein he served in countries including Italy, Bolivia, and Yugoslavia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on July 16, 2004.

Q: Where'd you go in Italy?

WHITMAN: Well, I went to Palermo and, this was '62. I took the ship. When I got on that ship, the first stop we made was Lisbon, and that's the first time I'd been out of the United States, and it was thrilling. So then I got back on the ship after a day in Lisbon and went to Palermo. It was a big visa post if you remember in those days.

Q: Yes.

WHITMAN: And we had a very congenial bunch of people. I was a citizenship officer, working for a woman named Mary Chiavarini who you may know.

Q: Yes I know Mary.

WHITMAN: And Mary and I got along quite well, and I was eager, I was doing work, I loved being in Palermo, had a big social life. Well, I shouldn't say big, but an adequate one. And it was Italy, and things were nice.

Q: Yup. I remember, you mentioned the ship, we came over on the ship together, I was a married man. I remember also there were a bunch of Australian, I think they were Australian physical instructresses or things like this, and you were having a ball, and there I was as a married man sort of wallowing [laughter].

WHITMAN: Well, as I said, I was not exactly a serious guy in those days. I remember that ship very well. Dick Martin was on it. Remember Dick? And Mary, and their children. And there was Rick Lawton, who was going to Naples. But then there was another, I thought about this many times, because later I went to Angola and there was an officer who got off at Lisbon who was going down to be Consul General in Luanda and they were very worried that the Portuguese authorities, the Salazar people, when we arrived in Lisbon, would try to take photographs and other things and link him with the administration in Portugal, and then down in Angola the press would print the picture, in effect saying to dissenters , "See here's your guy with our President," We didn't want that image of being associated with Portugal. But anyway, the ship, we got to Palermo, we had a very good group of people in the consulate. People who are my friends to this day. I had dinner with them last night.

Q: You were in Palermo from '62-'64?

WHITMAN: Right

Q: What was Palermo like?

WHITMAN: It was provincial. It was really tumultuous and hot and it was August. confusing in many ways. Just from the moment you set foot on the gangplank, there was just the docks, and it was southern Italian. And I, we had some interesting people. Roz Ridgeway was there, and Harlan Moen and others, and we all got along quite well, we saw each other socially, we had a good time. No one was married. I had a villa out in Mondello, which was a fishing village and beachfront suburb of Palermo, and I was a happy guy.

Q: You were doing what, citizenship?

WHITMAN: Yes, first year. First year I did citizenship work, I would do what they used to call the Nulla Osta, remember that? A lot of times come back from the US to get married in Sicily, and swear they had no other marriages in the US. But we had no way of really checking on that, so we found out later of course, a lot of people had wives in several parts of the world. I was also doing passport and protection work --- a lot of protection work, because you had a lot of street crime, tourists would get their pockets picked and passports stolen---things like that.

Q: What was the Mafia..?

WHITMAN: Ohhh... there were shootings right and left, it was a time of rivalry between the young Mafia which was involved in prostitution and drugs, and the old timers who didn't want to get into that stuff, men of honor. There were a lot of very gaudy shootings, killings and assassinations. I'll tell you a story you'll appreciate. One day there was an American woman who came into the Villa Igiea Hotel, best hotel in town, she passes the concierge desk and she's just distraught, tears and everything. The concierge said, "What's the matter?" and she said, "Well, I was just downtown and someone snatched my purse and everything I had was in it. My passport, my traveler's checks, my credit card, I mean everything I have. I don't even think I can pay you when I check out of this hotel." And the concierge said, "Well where were you?" She named the street corner she was at, and he said, "Well what time did this happen?" So she said, "Oh 11 in

the morning". He said, "Look, go upstairs, try to pull yourself together, get a rest and I'll see what I can do." About two or three hours later, there's a knock on her door, it's the concierge, "Can I come in?" She said "sure." He has the suitcase with him, and he opens the suitcase on the bed and he says, "Which of these is your purse?" And she points it out and there it is, everything is intact. And of course what he, the hotel had a deal with the Mafia. They knew exactly who was snatching purses on that corner at that hour. So they got, that's an example of what the Mafia could do for you.

Q: Well, did..

WHITMAN: My villa had a garage and a chauffeur's room which I was asked by the owners who, Giacomo, an old man in his seventies, and he lived with his mangy dog. Never bothered me, I'd see him usually drunk. And during that time in Mondello there were a lot of break-ins. Because it was mainly a summer place, there were houses that were unprotected by police during the winter.. But the whole time I was there I never was robbed. And the reason was that I was Giacomo's retirement plan. He had been a former capo Mafia from the town up the coast. And the landlady, to ensure that I didn't get broken into and her house didn't get damaged, hired Giacomo to live in the garage in exchange for protection. And that's the way it was. So no one touched me. Houses right and left being broken into, trucks backing up to haul off the furniture. That's what they did.

Q: Well, what about, who was the Consul General while you were there?

WHITMAN: The first consulate general was a man named Loren Carroll. A very nice man and a former Newsweek bureau chief in Paris, who got a political appointment as Consul General in Palermo, where he lived in sort of reclusion. And you never saw him really, very arm's length guy. Nice guy when you talked to him, but he didn't really want to mingle. Carroll was an intellectual, he didn't want to be bothered with coming and goings of a big consulate like that. His deputy, Joe Weidenmeyer who was essentially as much as he could trying to run the place. And then later, John Ordway who had been head of personnel. When he had presumably had his choice of positions after the personnel job, he decided to go take Palermo, I think he wanted just to--- it was his last post, and he wanted to retire. His son is still in the Foreign Service I guess. Those were the two principal officers when I was there.

Q: Back to the Mafia and all, did that, with protection of welfare, not when I was there at my old consulate district of Naples, with Lucky Luciano, but you had these Americans who were Mafia associated, or I guess they were American citizens who went back, I mean all one has to do is see the movie The Godfather...

WHITMAN: Sure, or the Sopranos for that matter.

Q: Did you have Americans who were wandering around doing their Mafia thing?

WHITMAN: You'd hear anecdotal stories. They never checked in with us, and they always made sure their passports were in order and things like that. Maybe they weren't Mafia but there were many Italian Americans who went back to their village with a giant Pontiac to show off with

their old friends and relatives about how they had made it big in America. Things like that. We never got any Lucky Lucianos or, Luciano was in Sicily for a while. You never heard from them. And there was very little you could do to deny anybody a visa who had alleged Mafia connections because they never had a conviction. So we get some people there, some people who were allegedly Mafia hit men, one of them who had been identified in a New Yorker article as a participant in the murder of Salvatore Giuliano, and I sent an advisory opinion back, I said, "What do we do about this," and the answer came back, "Got to issue the visa," because he has no arrest record. So we issued the visa.

Q: How about Americans getting into trouble? Did you have Americans get in jail and that sort of thing?

WHITMAN: Not many. Palermo is sort of off the beaten path, we were getting sailors, but the Navy took care of those. The fleet put in fairly often. That was one of my jobs, to do the welcoming conference. And the Navy patrol, the shore patrol, really took care of those. They didn't really ever need much help from us. And then, the only interesting things in maybe an oral history sense was the Bay of Pigs, when they pulled out the missiles from Cuba after the missile crisis of '62. We got a cable one day, instructing consular officers in seaports to check all Russian and Polish registry vessels to see if they have or don't have missiles aboard. Actually, I did one. It was a Yugoslav vessel, and I went aboard, it was right after lunch, and I talked to the captain, and I looked around the deck, and on the deck were strapped former DC Transit streetcars, including the "Silver Sightseer," I had seen these trolleys on the streets of DC a couple years earlier, and here they were in Palermo with their destination boards still marked "Georgetown" or "Union Station" on their way to new routes in the city of Sarajevo. Surreal.

Q: I saw a streetcar going on the streets of Sarajevo with "Cabin John" still on it.

WHITMAN: Yes, and I'm not surprised. Those were the streetcars that were on that vessel in '62. And I'll tell you more when we get to Sarajevo about the streetcars.

Q: Roy Chalk was the head of DC Transit, a figure of some notoriety in DC because he shut down the transport system from time to time.

WHITMAN: He was, I guess, not a very nice man. The streetcars, we all did all types of consular work like that along with the visa mill. I liked it, it was fun.

Q: What were you finding in the visa business in there, I mean I suppose it to have given you an insight into the American Italian community.

WHITMAN: Not really because these were all pure Italians. These were Sicilians out of the villages who were coming, speaking no Italian. They spoke only dialects, you'd have to have an interpreter sometimes. And that's who you were seeing.

Q: Were they potential wives?

WHITMAN: They were mothers, grandmothers, they were sisters, but basically they were all

relatives traveling under visa preferences in preferred visa categories. I don't think we had any visa numbers at all for people off the street, for people who didn't have a family connection with somebody in the US. It was interesting in those days--- you probably found this true in Naples--- our visa applicants all came from about 10 or 12 cities and towns. And other Sicilian towns we never heard from--- you never saw anybody from town X. The reason is that in town X, everyone went to Australia or to some other country like Argentina. It all depended on who went first and who set it up and that was it. But we were getting a lot of applicants. I forget how many visas we issued in total, but I issued 25 a day, four days a week, and there were three of us visa officers, so call it 300 a week.

[end side A]

[Side B]

So you can imagine, knowing Sicily and the Mafia, you can imagine what Sicilian politics was like, and it was thoroughly corrupt, and it ended up corrupting the national parties as well.

Q: At that point were there any attempts on the part of the government in Rome to send down special policeman to really clean up the mess?

WHITMAN: Well, yes, they did, there was General DiLorenzo and, yes, the one who was assassinated, but this was years later. They had what they called the Squadra Mobile and I think those were people, those were riot police essentially, but I don't remember any particular efforts. Mussolini had the "Prefect of Steel" who was going to go down and end the Mafia, but he never did, he got co-opted, he just couldn't do anything.

Q: Given the idea of southern Italy in those days, I went as consul general to Naples in '79 and the Pope came almost the day I came there, Pope John Paul, and this was the first time the Pope had gone to Naples since the 1920s. I mean, they just avoided these places.

WHITMAN: Well you have the church high level corruption too, I mean everybody was mixed up in this in the south. And the Cardinal of Palermo has famously said that there is no such thing as the Mafia, this is a creation for the foreign press, the sensational, the left-wing press. So, they weren't in denial, they knew perfectly well what was going on, but they were hand and glove in those days and I was taking an interest because that was where I lived and I was interested in Palermo and Sicily, but that wasn't what I did at work.

Q: Well, where did you, after two years there, wither? Oh, by the way, how did the, you were there during the assassination of President Kennedy. How did that play down there?

WHITMAN: Oh, it was tremendous, you had delegations come to the consulate with flowers, and signing the book, it was really quite an overwhelming experience. I heard about the assassination, I was on the Constitution actually and the shipping line had invited me aboard for drinks and dinner and I was in the bar and somebody said somebody shot Kennedy and so I went to, they told me that the ambassador designated to Switzerland was aboard so I went, I looked him up and, a man named True Davis and he made an announcement over the public system on

the boat that the president was shot dead and that they were going to close the bar and things like that. And then of course, as I was leaving a lot of the shore excursion people were coming back and they were getting the word. It was quite shocking. But there was a very big emotional outburst all over the world, but in Palermo which had, still has, very big ties with the United States. One time they wanted to be the 49th state.

Q: I think actually we had a consul there who I think was pushing this, this was in the 1860s or something like that.

WHITMAN: No, it was 1947. This was a Salvatore Giuliano business because he was, there was a separatist movement in Sicily and he was being used by them as a bandit to develop this movement to become the 49th state, totally off the wall, but, and maybe there was a consul general who..

Q: Back in the '60s or something, I think he recognized, well anyway

WHITMAN: Well the predecessor to Loren Carroll was a guy named James Keeley and Keeley was I guess kind of a wild man, a loose cannon, whatever you want to call it.

IRWIN PERNICK
Rotation Officer
Rome (1963-1965)

Mr. Pernick was born and raised in New York City and educated at City College of New York (CCNY). After service in the National Guard he joined the Foreign Service in 1963 and was posted to Rome. His other foreign posts were in Thailand, where he was Public Affairs Officer and, in Yugoslavia, Political Officer. At the State Department Mr. Pernick held a variety of positions dealing with a variety of issues including Political/Military Affairs, Military Sales, and Press and Public Affairs. Mr. Pernick was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 1997.

PERNICK: The first six months [I served] in the Foreign Service were in the economic section in Rome. This was the first official assignment, setting aside the INR (Bureau of Intelligence and Research) and the external relations and the Italian desk for two weeks and the congressional relations. It was difficult because my Italian was not as good as I would have liked it to be. I spent more time trying to court this lovely redhead than studying Italian.

Q: Four months is not very long.

PERNICK: It was not. They could get you to say hello, good morning and where is the bathroom? I started Italian there. There was a very top-notch group of people in the economic section. I was very impressed with the size of it too because it was not just a bunch of economic officers. Gene Wilkowski was the deputy. Sidney Mellon was the Counselor for Economic

Affairs. These were brilliant people who knew economics cold and who knew Italian cold and I felt like a moron. Treasury was represented, Commerce was represented, and I think the FBI had an agent in the section. Maritime administration. A whole group of different agencies and this really opened my eyes to a little about the Foreign Service. Especially that we work with a panoply of agencies that have foreign affairs interests.

Q: I was assigned to Rome about five or six years after you were there in the economic section and some of the same people, like Gene Wilkowski, came back again. I also worked with the Treasury Attaché, Ralph Korp.

PERNICK: I don't think he was there.

Q: I don't think he had come as early as this. He was really a super, experienced officer.

PERNICK: The next part of the rotation was the more interesting part for me. It was political work that I had for about nine months.

Q: What sort of political work were you doing?

PERNICK: Domestic and something called Pol/Mil. I had no idea what Pol/Mil was but I guess they thought since I had been in the army just a short while before maybe I knew something. I did not really do too much in Pol/Mil because there was a NATO person in the section as well as the attaches who were very interested and close to the Italian armed services. I thought things were happening. There weren't any coups or anything like that. The head of the Italian communist party died while I was there and I covered his funeral. This was a monstrous funeral to which half a million to a million people attended.

Q: Palmiro Togliatti?

PERNICK: Togliatti, exactly. He died when he got to the Soviet Union. He died in Moscow, I believe, and they sent him back and I was sent down to cover the funeral.

Q: You were probably the most junior political officer?

PERNICK: Yes, that I was. I was a show off in the embassy and I walked down that morning and I hooked on with a bunch of students who were about my age and we were sitting around yapping. Suddenly the entourage showed up and the casket was pulled out and put on this platform and all the right hands went up. I looked around and thought I was the only one without his right hand up in the air. I must be the only one not a member of the Italian communist party. It was very interesting to see that. There were events like that, which gave me my first experience in being a control officer. There were a lot of visitors. Rome seems to be of interest. Not for the politics necessarily.

Q: Were you involved in any of the external politics like dealing with the foreign ministry or the Vatican?

PERNICK: Occasionally. I mostly did very junior officer type functions like taking visitors over to the Vatican. I was Arthur Goldberg's control officer, for example, when he was on the Supreme Court. One of his interests was the Pope. The Pope invited him for a visit and of course I was excluded even though I took him all the way out to the Pope's summer retreat outside of Rome. It was interesting seeing Goldberg. I had him again ten years later in Yugoslavia under different circumstances. I delivered messages for the foreign ministry. I was never with the ambassador or the political counselor as a note taker but I did some reporting. It was very interesting though and I enjoyed it and thought that this is what I really wanted to do.

Q: Rotational assignments to a large embassy really give you an opportunity to see the range of Foreign Service work. You can't necessarily contribute much but you begin to understand what it is all about. I hope that rotational assignments will continue.

PERNICK: They should and junior officers should be sent. The one thing I must admit is that several things early in my career made a big impression on me. Going back to my economic time when Tony Cromo was my boss. He was the head of internal economics. During my first pay period in Rome the secretary had, for some reason, given me some comp time even though I hadn't asked for it. She pointed out that I had worked a few extra hours several days. I said that I didn't know that we had it. Well, Tony Cromo came screaming out of his office awhile later. "Irwin!" "Yes sir, I replied". "Foreign Service Officers, Irwin, are on duty 24 hours a day seven days a week. We do not earn comp time, we do not earn overtime". I said, "Fine, Tony". So I had some comp time on my card for the next ten or fifteen years because I never drew against it. The impression he made though was clear. When you are working overseas, even when you are at home, you are on duty all of the time. Even the younger people. I try to disabuse them of that but I don't have any legal standing because the law supports the notion that all you have to do is show up and work 30 or 40 hours a week and you get paid.

Q: On the other hand maybe we have overdone it over the years. We assumed that working overtime and Saturdays was normal and it was hard on our families.

PERNICK: Absolutely. No question about it. The jobs I had usually required Saturday work. I had to show up and read cables in the embassy or in the department. Being on duty meant that I would have a whole week blocked out to the exclusion of nearly everything else. Occasionally I worked Sundays and holidays. Still, I thought that if you worked for the State Department, the Federal government, you were really a career Foreign Service officer or civil servant and you were honored by having been selected for this job and so you should take it seriously.

Q: Before you left Rome it looks like you did some consular work. Visas I suppose?

PERNICK: Yes.

Q: That is an important early experience.

PERNICK: I think there were three sections of the consular section. Visas and passports and consular services or welfare. As you can imagine in Rome there was a lot of American citizen services. Rome is not an immigrant visa issuing post so we were suspicious and we were

instructed to be suspicious of everyone who walked in there. Everybody. It was hard to be that suspicious. Someone like myself who came from two immigrant parents thought that anyone who wanted to go deserved a pat on the back but obviously could not be allowed to go. It was difficult. The authority that the consul has cannot even be overcome by the Secretary. Well, I suppose it can.

Q: Certainly not by the ambassador.

PERNICK: No, not by the ambassador, indeed. It never came to that, fortunately. I never felt that kind of pressure from any of my supervisors in that particular job. They were always supportive. From time to time I would get notices that would say, "Hey jerk, the non-immigrant visa you have issued is now being flipped to immigrant status." Oh, shoot. You knew they had that in mind the whole time and they were defrauding the U.S. government. On the passport side you just checked up on people who lost their passports. There was one particular experience that was disturbing. A young American kid came into the embassy. He was in his early twenties and this was at the beginning of Vietnam noise back in the United States. It was hard to get an appreciation for that even reading what we did as there wasn't very television coverage of the world locally. He came in and wanted to denounce his American citizenship and I was really distressed by that. We tried to work with him and tried to counsel him but he did not want anything out of it. He said he was entitled to someone else's citizenship. One of his parents was not a native or American. We filled some stuff out that basically said this man was renouncing his citizenship. It was really distressing to me and he said it was the fault of the US government and the actions of the government that drove him in that direction. I couldn't believe it. I found it very hard.

Q: Subsequent Supreme Court decisions probably made that very difficult to do. I don't suppose you know what ever happened to him?

PERNICK: No, I don't.

Q: It is possible he could have gotten it back at some point.

PERNICK: Oh, I think so. My two children were born overseas. Their original birth certificates state they are Italian and Thai, respectively. Those countries probably have some legal claim.

Q: But they also have American citizenship?

PERNICK: Yes, indeed.

HENRY ALLEN HOLMES
Staff Assistant/Political-Military Officer
Rome (1963-1967)

Deputy Chief of Mission

Rome (1977-1979)

Ambassador Henry Allen Holmes was born on January 31, 1933 in Bucharest, Romania. He attended Princeton University and the University of Paris and served in the US Marine Corps. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957, wherein he served in countries including Cameroon, Italy, France, and Portugal. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 9, 1999.

Q: Well, you left that job in '63. Did you get involved during the Kennedy assassination?

HOLMES: The Kennedy assassination, I was already in Italy by that time. Wait a minute. That doesn't quite jibe. I guess when Johnson called McGhee, he must have called him as Vice President, because I remember very clearly Kennedy's assassination, because I was the staff assistant to Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt. He was on a trip in the north. I was out at Ciampino Airport, which is the military airport in Rome, standing in the dark on a little strip there, which was where the air attaché was allowed to land and take off. There was a small aircraft in those days that the air attaché had, and Reinhardt was on a trip in the north. It must have been around eight or nine o'clock in the evening. I was waiting in the dark for this. I knew this plane was going to come in. I had the car to meet him and tell him what was going on. And suddenly I heard somebody yelling, in Italian, and it was a young Italian officer, and he came up and asked me if I was from the American embassy. And I said, yes, I was. And he said, "Are you named Holmes? Well, there's a message in that President Kennedy has been shot, and we wanted you to know that because we know that you're waiting for your ambassador to arrive." And so while waiting for Reinhardt, I quickly went to a phone and got as much information as I could, and there wasn't much information, other than that he'd been shot. Then by the time Reinhardt got there and we went immediately to the embassy, it wasn't too long after that that word came in that he had died from gunshot wounds. So then that precipitated an extraordinary night and several days of the emotional outpourings of the Italian people, with people coming around to the embassy, and that night, to offer their condolences. I remember the taxicab drivers of Rome organized a cortège the next day, and there must have been a hundred taxicabs or more that came to the embassy and deposited wreaths and flowers. It was incredible.

Q: I went through that in, of all places, Belgrade, a place we are as of today bombing. When you went to Rome, was your initial job or full job as staff assistant?

HOLMES: Yes, my job was to be the staff assistant, and I did that for about 9 months, I guess, before rotating into the Political Section as the assistant pol-mil officer.

Q: Were you concerned about going from one staff assistant job to another staff assistant job rather than going into-

HOLMES: Well, I wasn't too concerned because I knew that the job was a rotating job, and that the ambassador did not like to keep people in that job for along time, that I would be rotated in to the Political Section, which is what I wanted to do. So I knew it was just a matter of time and also that I would learn something from an extremely experienced career Foreign Service officer and that this would be a good entrée for me.

Q: Could you talk a bit about Frederick Reinhardt?

HOLMES: Yes, Frederick Reinhardt was a great professional with a lot of experience. By the time he came to Rome as ambassador, he had been ambassador in Cairo and before that I believe he was our first ambassador to Saigon, after Dien Bien Phu, basically. And so he was an extraordinarily experienced, very analytical guy with tremendous judgment and a sort of a historical vision of where the United States was going, where it had been. In World War II, he was a Russian language officer in our embassy in Moscow, and when the German Army was advancing, most of the embassies were evacuated, and the only two that stayed were Freddie Reinhardt and Tommy Thompson. One looked after American interests and the other after British interests. I think Freddie was looking after British interests, which I always thought was kind of curious. But he was a terrific linguist. I mean he spoke fluent Russian, French, Italian, German, and Swiss German, and he spoke them all really well - enough to be able to negotiate and do his business in all those languages. And he liked learning languages well, thoroughly. He was extremely professional.

And he was much more interested than some of his predecessors had been in reaching out to new Italian political formations that had been unpopular in the past. For example, before the Kennedy Administration, there had been a kind of a hands-off attitude towards contact with the Socialist Party of Italy, which is kind of amazing when you think about it, but Freddie Reinhardt recognized that there was an Albanian American named Steve Peterson, a remarkable officer, who looked like Ben Gurion. He was short and had flowing white hair, like a lion's mane. He was an amazing figure. He spoke beautiful Italian, and he had contacts (which were not entirely approved) with members of the Socialist Party. And Reinhardt encouraged him to bring his friendship with Pietro Nenni, who was the head of the Socialist Party, out into the open because he wanted Washington to recognize that this was important to do. And he succeeded. Actually, in the Democratic Administration, Kennedy, it wasn't that difficult to get them to do that. Of course, the Communist Party was out of bounds. And we still handled relations with the Vatican through one officer in the Political Section in those days, and Reinhardt wanted to change that as well. But he was an extremely professional guy, and he was frequently asked to comment or make recommendations on policy areas outside of Italy because of his tremendous experience.

I remember one incident in particular that says something. He was staunchly, as you might imagine... we were all sort of Cold War warriors, and particularly given his experience in World War II, and he wasn't really allowed to go after the PCI, the Communist Party of Italy. But there was an interesting event that occurred. One of Reinhardt's duties as the American ambassador was to be part of the committee that looked after the Testaccio Cemetery in Rome, which was a cemetery for non-Catholics, basically - Russian Orthodox or Episcopalian or what have you. This, in the 18th century, had been a cemetery for nonbelievers and prostitutes, and it became sort of hallowed ground for the diplomatic community because there were all kinds of interesting people buried there, like - I can't remember if it was Keats or Shelley that was buried there - and various literary figures. It was quite an amazing institution, and it was run by this council of ambassadors. And at a certain point, one of the early leaders of the Italian Communist Party died, and his family wanted him to be buried in Testaccio Cemetery because they couldn't get him into a Catholic cemetery and he had spent many years in Russia, in the Soviet Union. So Reinhardt

was absolutely determined that he would not be buried in Testaccio Cemetery, and watching him operate - and we all worked with him on this - watching him mount a campaign of diplomatic persuasion and phone calls and moves and countermoves with the Italian Foreign Ministry was really quite remarkable. It was politically astute for the Christian Democratic-dominated Government of Italy to allow this to happen, because these sort of early glimmerings of what would come into full focus in the late '70s of a possible compromise - the *compromesso storico*, the "historic compromise" between Catholic Italy and the Communist Party of Italy - the early adumbrations of that were already occurring there in the '60s. So various people who had ambitions were trying their damndest - including the President of Italy - to have us bury this guy in Testaccio Cemetery. And Reinhardt was determined that this wasn't going to happen, and he succeeded. He even tracked down the guy who was head of the burial subcommittee, who was on leave - the Swedish ambassador - and he was on leave in Sweden and they had no forwarding address for him because he was up in the north woods in his cabin. So Reinhardt somehow got a friend in the embassy [in Stockholm] to track him down and get his vote, to prevent this from happening. And eventually this guy was dumped in some unhallowed ground of the municipal cemetery. He was concerned that if it happened that this burial spot would become a shrine for the Italian Communist movement. Anyway, it didn't happen; he succeeded. It was quite marvelous.

Q: Such is the world of diplomacy. And I can see his point. And this would mean that you would have sort of like Lenin's Tomb in... No, who's buried in... It's Marx that's buried in some British graveyard.

HOLMES: Yes, he's in a London cemetery, oh, absolutely. [Highgate Cemetery] We had that in mind, sure. I'll try to remember who it was now, the Communist Party leader. And it wasn't Gramsci. I'm quite sure it was not Gramsci.

Q: I was just thinking - I can't pronounce it - Togliatti?

HOLMES: Togliatti. It may have been Togliatti. It may well have been Togliatti. [died 21 August 1964]

Q: I would think so because Togliatti was really a big, big figure.

HOLMES: Yes, I believe it was Togliatti, but I'm not 100 percent certain, but I think you're right.

Q: When you went to the Political Section, what were you doing?

HOLMES: Political-military work. I was the assistant pol-mil officer.

Q: How is your feeling on time? Should we maybe stop?

HOLMES: At 11:00 I have to go.

Q: Okay, let's talk a bit about this. How did you view, both working with the ambassador and then in the Political Section, our involvement in the Italian political process? The percentages of change seemed so damn small for about 30 years practically after the '48 election and all. And it

seemed that we got awfully involved at a pretty minor level as far as reporting on the local nuances of Italian politics.

HOLMES: You're absolutely right. And that's another striking difference between what is considered important today, in terms of political reporting, and what was considered important then. We had a large political section. We had one officer who devoted full time to reporting on the Christian Democratic movement, who would sometimes get a little help from other junior officers because he also had to cover the Vatican. We had another officer reporting on the Socialist Party and the social democratic movement, another one on the right, and then there was the political counselor himself. So we probably had four or five people that were reporting on Italian politics, and then somebody reporting on the Communist Party. Of course we weren't allowed to have any contact with them. And we had a very large CIA section, with officers who had cover as diplomats and who were accredited, and some very experienced Italian hands there, who were practically bilingual in Italian and really knew the place - in the Agency's section.

My work at that time was largely political-military because we had probably 60 bases and installations throughout Italy, and there were all kinds of status-of-forces problems, and there was a lot to do.

Q: It's always struck me - I'm speaking now, I was consul general in Naples in the '79-81 period and I had been outside the area - and I was always struck by how we were reporting on the minutiae of politics there, and really not a hell of a lot had changed. It just seemed like we'd gotten caught up in this Rome-centric dance that went on, by the politicians there. It was beginning to change, but earlier on it must have... Did you have the feeling of sort of maybe we're overdoing this? Or were we so caught up with it that we didn't realize it?

HOLMES: I did not have a view that we were overdoing it, no. I think probably it's because the American stakes in what happened to Italy were very important in World War II and the immediate aftermath of World War II, and I had been sort of brought up with that realization, beginning with my father's role working as the civil affairs chief for Eisenhower. My dad played a major role, and Eisenhower and Bedell Smith agreed with him, in persuading... Major role - I mean, he proposed the idea of turning Italy into a co-belligerent against Nazi Germany. And this was not easy to do because the allied strategic goal was unconditional surrender of all the Axis powers. And my father was persuaded that it would take so many divisions to garrison Italy, and we were struggling to assemble an invasion force sufficient to do the job in Normandy. It just didn't make any sense to him, nor did it to Eisenhower. It took two runs to Roosevelt and Churchill to allow them to then proceed with a plan to put in Badoglio. And Badoglio was very nervous because the German Army was not that far north. The condition that Roosevelt and Churchill put down was that he would have to declare himself publicly on the side of the allies against Nazi Germany, and he was very nervous about that. But that finally happened.

So early on I had a kind of a dose of the importance of the Italian boot, and then afterwards, when Jimmy Dunn, who was a friend of my father's, was ambassador there in '48, it was a critical turning point - as you'll recall - when the referendum after the war, as to whether or not to become a republic or to remain a kingdom, it barely passed for the establishment of the democratic republic. It carried because the south voted largely to retain the kingdom, and the

north voted strongly to establish a republic, with a lot of help from the Communist Party. And it was a close vote. And then, with a lot of help from us... God, there was a movement to basically turn Italy to the Communist world, and Dunn played a big role in that in 1948, preventing that from happening. So it was always in people's minds. And it was a very strong party. The Communist movement in Italy was huge. They had played a role, the partisans-

Q: It ran close to a third of the vote at any time. I mean it was well entrenched.

HOLMES: Yes, but looking back on it, of course, we were overstaffed and we were a little bit obsessed. Yes, that's certainly true.

Q: Well, on the political-military side, how did you find the military fit in - I mean our military - because I've often heard people say that sometimes dealing with the Pentagon was a lot worse than dealing with a foreign country in which you're stationed?

HOLMES: Well, it's interesting that you say that because I can recall an incident. I was a young officer. I was a very eager political-military affairs officer, and the ambassador was very concerned about, basically, keeping control of the US military and where they were and what they were doing and getting his permission to carry out certain activities in the country. And so my boss and I were very attuned to that, and so I discovered at one point that there was an unauthorized Seventh Army unit operating in Italy, one that had not sought-

Q: The Seventh Army being stationed up in Heidelberg.

HOLMES: Up in Heidelberg. But this was Italy. And we had a lot of forces, of course, in Vicenza and Verona and Pisa and all over the place. We carefully kept track of all these because also we were the sort of linchpin with the Italian authorities, with the Ministry of Defense to make sure that we were operating with complete approval by the Italian authorities. We had very good deal in Italy, and we didn't want to disturb that. So at one point I discovered a unit which had not been declared to us, and it was a purchasing operation to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for the forces in Germany, so I exposed this. And it turned out that I blew the cover of an Army Intelligence operation, which did not please the Pentagon very much. The ambassador was basically... They didn't have his permission to do that either, and he recognized that people were pretty sore in Washington, but in a way he was sort of pleased that I had done this. He said, "Next time, check it out a little bit more carefully."

Q: At that time how did you find our status-of-forces agreement working with the Italians?

HOLMES: It worked pretty well. The Italians - and I had a second experience with that later, when I went back as deputy chief of mission - basically were very good hosts. You had to work at it and keep them informed and, oh, seek their authorization even though you knew it was almost automatic but it was just a question of diplomatic politeness. But they basically worked pretty well. And we had amazing access in Italian ports for nuclear powered ships and even for ships that had nuclear weapons on board. And the Italians, it didn't trouble them at all that we exercised the policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on our ships. At one point we had access to as many as six ports in Italy, in the Adriatic and the

Tyrrhenian.

Q: Did you find that the Communists in this period kept trying to throw a monkey wrench into the works?

HOLMES: Yes, particularly when they had an opportunity to deploy their labor forces, to have strikes. That was their major weapon. Or if we made a mistake, they would exploit that. And of course, a famous one in later years was when we pursued the terrorists that had attacked the *Achille Lauro*, you know? We forced them down in Sigonella, and then there was a standoff because we share a base there with the Italian Air Force. There was a standoff between our people and the Italian forces. That was embarrassing. That kind of incident obviously was always a setback, which is why we had a two-man political-military section working full-time on keeping everything regular, seeking approval where we needed to, keeping the Italians informed, and most of all tracking our own military to make sure that they did what they were required to do and coordinated on all of these things.

Q: Well, tax is a problem, because later I'm sure you got hit with the whole tax problem. These were Italian civilians who were working for our troops and all that. Was that a problem at the time?

HOLMES: I can't recall now in any detail, but there were, as part of the status-of-forces arrangements, there were tax problems, and there were disputes about what was exempt and what wasn't, and we would have our lawyers sit down together and hammer it out. And some of those discussions went on for months, if not years.

I've got to go.

Q: All right. Why don't we stop at this point. We have talked about... You were in Italy from when to when?

HOLMES: 1963 till 1967.

Q: Now we've talked about your time as the ambassador's aide and political-military. Do you want to think about it if there are any incidents or anything like that during this political-military time before we move on?

HOLMES: Yes, I'll think about it.

Q: Keep it in mind.

HOLMES: All right, great.

Q: Today is April 28, 1999. Allen before we move on, we're still in Italy, '63-67, in your political-military time there, what was your impression that you were getting both from your own

experience and from what you were hearing from our American military colleagues, about the Italian military at that time?

HOLMES: Well, you mean about the quality of the Italian military?

Q: The quality of response and all that.

HOLMES: Certainly Italian military leaders were, I would say, extremely responsive to the United States and to NATO in general. It was important to them, they knew, to be on good terms with the leader of the Alliance in the Alliance, not only from what they could learn from the association in terms of training and strategy, but also in terms of resources, because that meant that they could, in trying to align the military equipment of the Alliance along compatible systems, it was in Italy's interest to tap into that system of systems, if you will. The quality of the military - certain units were of extremely high quality. Certainly the Alpini, the Alpine troops, the Bersaglieri, the fellows that wear the wonderful green plumes that fluttered on the side - they were a crack unit. Certainly the Italian Navy frogmen - a long tradition going back to-

Q: -sinking a ship in Alexandria harbor.

HOLMES: Right, in World War II. Their paratroopers were first-rate. They had excellent fighter bomber pilots, and they certainly participated to the full in their combined NATO activities in the Mediterranean and obviously in the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic working through AFSOUTH (Allied Forces South) in Naples, working very closely with the United States, with Greece and Turkey, and occasionally France. Despite the fact that that was the period when France was leaving NATO, there were still French NATO exercises from time to time in the Mediterranean.

Q: Which continued, of course, until the present.

HOLMES: Until the present, yes.

Q: Allen, I served in Greece, and I was wondering - there, of course, Greece, as a member of NATO, was and continues to be more interested in Turkey than anything else. Were there any particular hang-ups that from our perspective the Italians had in the Mediterranean world, or not, as far as what they were concerned with and others weren't concerned with?

HOLMES: Not that I can remember. I do remember discussion with Italian military leaders who had served at NATO headquarters but more particularly at AFSOUTH. They shared almost the entire set of common headaches with us over squelching small, medium, and large Greek-Turkish disputes and staying on schedule with respect to exercises. They had the same frustrations that we had, but I can't think of anything special.

Q: I can't think of anything either. That's why I was asking, because nations have their own interests and all. What was the feeling from there, if it came up, towards Yugoslavia at that time? It was just basically a buffer zone, or was it felt to be-

HOLMES: No, it was really in the later period where Trieste became a land bridge for daytime

tourists, people coming over from Intra, that part of Yugoslavia, to Trieste on day trips and then waddling back across the border wearing six and seven pairs of jeans and whatever number of shirts and coats they could put on. The Yugoslav authorities allowed them to go over to Italy for the day. They could not come back with suitcases and packages filled with purchases, but they could come back with anything that they could wear. So you saw these curious stuffed individuals coming back across the border. That was beginning to happen then. The Italians were watching with interest Yugoslavia's own experiment in blended Communist-capitalism where they gradually allowed family-sized private enterprise and then that succeeded, and it grew, and they allowed bigger families - families would band together so you'd have all the cousins and aunts and uncles, and before you knew it you had a small business enterprise underway. The Italians watched that with great interest because it meant a growing marketplace for their own economy, including their gray economy.

Q: Well, this is a thing. With the Italians, of course, the gray economy is the one unreported. Maybe I mentioned it before - Naples doesn't have a single registered glove factory, but when I was there it was the glove capital of the world.

HOLMES: The same could be said of shoes in Tuscany or actual apparel, suits and sweaters and jackets the more you move north in Italy. So the gray economy was a thriving business in Italy. Nobody has ever succeeded in getting a very accurate estimate of the percentage of the Italian economy, but I can remember estimates ranging from 18 to 30 percent, fluctuating, clearly. The Italians are extremely industrious people; they just don't like to pay taxes.

Q: People would talk about, oh, these people don't work, and all. That was down in the south. This is 20 years later, but you'd go in there in the cellars and everybody is stitching away. The thing is they're not on their regular jobs; they're on their real job.

HOLMES: That's correct. They were very cagey about it though. Italians were very careful to acquire what they called *copertura* - 'coverage.' That meant that you got a job either in a government agency or in a parastatal business, and through that you got your health insurance and your retirement and the whole package of benefits, and then you basically shaved your workday to the extent that you could get away with it. If the workday was from nine to five, you'd show up maybe at 10 and leave about 3, and then you went to your real job, your productive job, where you were not reporting the income and you just made as much money as you could and stashed it away. And you didn't have to buy health insurance or life insurance because that was all under the government *copertura* system. So that was the way they operated.

Q: And it worked.

HOLMES: And they still do so today. I really don't know.

ALAN HARDY
Consular/Commercial Officer
Milan (1964-1965)

Ambassador Alan Hardy attended the University of Cincinnati and served in the US Army from 1957-1959. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956, wherein he served in countries including Canada, Madagascar, Somalia, Hungary, Equatorial Guinea, and Mexico. He was interviewed by Lewis Hoffacker on January 16, 2001.

HARDY: So to Milan. There I had a lot of big visa wastage again, because I was in the consular section issuing visas mechanically under criteria which rarely required any exercise of judgment. But the welfare protection, also one of my responsibilities, was much more interesting in Milan. There were a lot of substantive problems to deal with. A lot of public relations problems, a lot of problems where tourists would get in trouble, a lot of Americans there on Social Security and you had to verify that the Social Security money wasn't going down the drain or being stolen by a dishonest caretaker. Interesting. Something I learned there which perhaps contributed to later development is how some small matter can blow up and destroy the whole operation. Once in a while somebody makes errors. If it's picked up by a congressman, or if it becomes a controversy at all for the U.S. Government, some of these things can really blow up, and you need to know how to handle them.

I want to take this opportunity to immortalize Mel Sonne and George Kinter. I became commercial officer in part of my tour in Milan and I had to write a lot of commercial reports, some lengthy and some not, to be used by American businesses. And as I told you earlier, I couldn't, I didn't know how to write. Well, fortunately, Mel Sonne and George Kinter taught me how to write. So I want to give them credit here for the extra effort they committed to me far beyond what they might have been reasonably expected to contribute.

Q: They were your Foreign Service superiors?

HARDY: They were. George was an officer in the Economic and Commercial Section and Mel was Deputy Principal Officer. In those days, the Foreign Service did most of the commercial work and supplied five of the officers to the Section while Commerce supplied only two. In Milan, if I'm not mistaken, we had our first overseas trade center, which was new then and a big multi-million-dollar operation. Many of the reports we produced were to support the center, market surveys and things like that. That was very good. Some of the trade center was a numbers game because you'd always have to say, we promoted \$300 million dollars in sales and you get into that game and maybe you really only promoted \$50 million but it had to be \$300 million or it didn't look good. But it was a valuable operation which I am convinced paid off in the long term providing benefits that were not directly measurable but real nonetheless. Some of that game is still going on today, because my son is in the Department of Commerce in Washington, and he's working on it and I get that feedback from him. It's the same game. But it's a good game, and Milan was at the center of it at the time.

One of the problems always was that the big companies didn't need the help. The little ones didn't know how to capitalize on the help available, or didn't know where to come for help. So you were left there kind of in the middle, not having the little ones come to you so you couldn't help and big ones not coming to you because they thought they could do it themselves.

Nevertheless, whether it was with the medium ones, or maybe because every once in a while the big companies would need some political support and really need the U.S. government, for example, to step in and say: “listen, you can’t discriminate against us unfairly (or corruptly) and give this to some other company from another country.” We had sufficient work to do. For me Milan was a challenging and interesting post. On the personal side, I learned all about the Italian Renaissance, and became quite interested in Roman and Tuscan archeology and art. Milan was a lot of fun.

ALFRED JOSEPH WHITE
Deputy Principal Officer
Turin (1964-1966)

Economic Counselor
Rome (1984-1987)

Alfred Joseph White was born on August 16, 1929 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended Syracuse University and Georgetown University, and he also served in the US Army. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957, wherein he served in countries including Italy, Sudan, Austria, Turkey, and Venezuela. He was interviewed by John J. Harter on September 17, 1997.

Q: So you were then transferred to the American Consulate in Turin, [Italy]. Did you request an assignment there?

WHITE: No, I did not request an assignment to Turin. I must have put in a list of requests. Certainly, Germany must have been at the top of the list. To me, it would have made a lot of sense to go back to Germany.

I had a colleague in Bremen. When I was transferred to Africa for two years, he went to the U.S. Mission in Berlin. He had two back to back assignments to Germany. This kind of experience really lets you solidify your knowledge of a country, its language, its culture, and all of that. So I am certain that I indicated that I would like to go back to Germany, or at least to a German-speaking post in Europe.

Instead, the Department sent me to Italy. I had no background in Italian affairs. I had visited Italy and, of course, everyone loves to visit Italy. I didn't know Italian and had no particular interest in the country, other than the interest that any American might have in seeing its historical treasures and so on.

In fact, I did not want to go to Turin.

Q: You didn't?

WHITE: No, I did not. I left the Sudan in August, 1964. I had had to scrap all of my vacation

plans because my tour of duty in the Sudan had been extended because of the problem with the missionaries in the southern Sudan.

The plane was supposed to leave the Khartoum at 3:00 am. If this schedule had been followed, I would have seen almost nothing of the Nile from the air. However, the plane was delayed and I left at about 6:00 am. All the way from Khartoum to Cairo the plane virtually just followed along the Nile River, with the exception of a few places, where it took a more direct route. Because the air was so clear, I could see the Nile River clearly, which stood out against the desert. It was just like a picture postcard. I got an extraordinary view of that part of Africa. Of course I knew the general course of the Nile, but when you see something so vividly, it is really something to remember. I looked down and saw a long, very narrow green strip of cultivation, with a thin, blue line in the middle of it. Beyond, on both sides of the river was utter desolation, the kind of desolation that you read about in the Old Testament.

You know, it's really a rather fascinating thing. The three great, monotheistic religions that we know, that is, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, were all born in that part of the world. In fact, they are all very closely related. Islam is much more closely related to the other two religions than the average American realizes. For example, in Islam, Christ is a prophet.

Q: The theory is that these three religions are all derived from early Egyptian civilization. Was it called Amen-Re?

WHITE: The religious structure of ancient Egypt was quite polytheistic, as you know. But Amen-Re was the prime god. My own view is that this had something to do with the desert and the sameness of the desert and the sun. There is a kind of frozen immobility about it. In that kind of a situation, it is very easy to conceive of a God who is immobile in the sense that he has always been there and always will be. That is, there is something eternal about him like the sun. I think that there is some relationship there. There has to be, and I think that it has something to do with the desert.

I don't know whether you're familiar with desert climates, but there is something different about them. There are no seasons. There is little variation in the weather from one end of the year to the other.

Q: I have a sense that Joseph Kenneals talks about this. Did you know that Kenneals is the great expert on myths and camels?

WHITE: No, I don't recall him.

Q: He's the fellow whom Wim Hoyer introduced for several programs on the classics on TV. He was a great Egyptologist. Perhaps we can talk about this later, some time.

WHITE: In any case, you have the fact that these three religions were established within the same, rather closely circumscribed part of the world. These religions have contrasts and similarities. For much of their respective histories their adherents have been killing each other. However, in fact the three religions are very similar. They all came from the same area, and this

tells you that there has to be some explanation for that.

Anyway, to go back to my assignment to Turin, Italy, I went back to Washington from the Sudan. I told the personnel people I didn't want to go to Turin. They looked at me with astonishment. They thought, and I'm sure sincerely, that they were doing me a favor, because I had accepted a two-year assignment in a hardship post in the Sudan. So the Personnel people felt that they were rewarding me, so to speak. I had wanted to go to Europe, and the Consulate in Turin was in Europe. However, from my point of view, my first post had been what I call a medium sized Consulate General in Bremen.

Q: An assignment to Western Europe? Gee!

WHITE: I had then gone to a small Embassy, in Khartoum, where I had done a great many things. In terms of a natural career progression...

Q: It was time for a large post.

WHITE: Time for at least a large Consulate General, or maybe another Embassy, a medium-sized Embassy. I saw Turin, professionally, as a backwards step. I had done that kind of work. How does the saying go: "Been there, done that."

I said: "I would rather go back to Africa than go to Turin. I have no aversion to a hardship post. I want to do work that seems not only meaningful and reasonably important but work that I can justify in terms of a career progression."

Well, the personnel people didn't buy that. John, maybe this happens to all of us, but at that point I almost resigned from the Foreign Service.

Q: Huh!

WHITE: It was not because the assignment they were offering me was in Italy, which had obvious attractions. However, you have to justify a period of time to yourself. You have to convince yourself that a given assignment is worthwhile and that it makes sense, to put it in those terms.

Again, I was looking at international business. I now had friends in Mobil Oil whom I had known and worked with in Khartoum. In a small post like that you get to know people very well. I was just about on my way to New York to talk to the people in the oil industry. After all, I had a certain cachet. I had worked in the Arab world. I knew something about international business.

The personnel people in the State Department were adamant. Finally, they said: "Well, you know, something could open up in Rome, once you get to Turin. So why don't you go to Turin and see what happens?" That was the lure that they used. So, to make a long story short, I went off to Turin, not really convinced that, professionally, it made any sense to go there.

Q: So what did you think of Turin when you got there?

WHITE: When I got there, I found that Turin was a small post, as I had known that it would be. There was a Consul General, but the post was a Consulate. I was the Number Two officer in the Consulate. That was one consolation.

Q: You were the Deputy Principal Officer. Who was the Consul General?

WHITE: The Consul General was Wallace La Rue. He was an officer of the old school. We had one Consular Officer.

There was a fourth officer position, that of a junior officer. He did whatever was left over to be done.

Q: You had received a couple of promotions by this time?

WHITE: Yes. I was promoted for the first time to FSO-7 in 1960. My second promotion to FSO-6 came just before my tour in the Sudan began. So I had had two promotions by that time. These numbered grades were under the old system.

Consul General La Rue was a very interesting man. He had been very unpopular with some people. Wally La Rue had been in the Foreign Service for a long time. Somewhere along the way he had lost a lung. He had a cylinder of oxygen in the back of his car. He couldn't go any distance without that tank of oxygen. He was a frail but very cultured man, a man of the world in the best sense. He was a sort of Hollywood cast Ambassador. He looked the part, shall we say. He was tall, erect, and a bachelor at this time.

He ran the post in a very peculiar way. I think that he knew, even then, that this was his last post in the Foreign Service. He had a reputation as being very brilliant. However, at that point, he was not well, and there were limits to what he could do. He would come to the office at about 10:30 am, do whatever had to be done, and leave for home at around 3:00 pm.

Q: He would sign the letters that you had prepared?

WHITE: Yes, but it was more than that. He knew his job. He did it and he did it very well. He was a wonderful conversationalist. I would go in to see him, and he would come out from behind his desk. He was very courtly in manner, a sort of "Old World" figure. He would discuss whatever I wanted to talk to him about. He would then begin to talk about his days in North Africa. He would tell wonderful stories, reminiscing about the Foreign Service. Or he'd talk about art or literature.

As I say, he was a very cultured man. If, for example, there was an exhibition opening in Turin, he would always go to that sort of thing. He had a beautiful library. He always had very much the manners of a "Grand Signore," as the Italians say. The result of all of this was that after a while, he left the running of the post largely to me, not that there was that much to run.

I learned a few things at the Consulate in Turin. When I first arrived, the staff was small, with

four American officers and seven or eight local employees. We had one senior local employee [Foreign Service National], who was a legend in his own time. He had started to work in the Consulate in Turin as a boy. When World War II began, the Consulate was closed, and this man was persecuted for his association with the Americans. The Italian Fascists were convinced that he was an American spy. They threw him in jail and roughed him up. Of course, he had nothing to tell them. He had worked in the small American Consulate in Turin. What could he possibly know that would be of interest to the Fascists? They let him out of jail at one point, and he fled to the hills around Turin.

When World War II ended, he was up in the mountains, somewhere, hiding out from the Germans. It was a very nasty time for him. Then he came back to Turin and helped to reopen the Consulate. This is a past which is perhaps worth dwelling on, because this whole question of our Foreign Service local employees is an interesting one. This man had dedicated his life and risked it in a way for the American Government. He had married an American citizen of Italian origin who lived with him in Turin. They had no children. He was absolutely devoted to the United States.

We throw this word "dedication" around too much. However, you do encounter people, from time to time, who are really devoted to what they do. This man was really devoted to the American Government.

Q: What was his name?

WHITE: His name was Cesare Tavella. We always called him "Ches" for short. He regarded himself and was accepted as the number one local employee in the post. He was certainly that in terms of longevity of service. You might say that he was a sort of Special Aide to the Consul General. He knew everybody and everything in Turin. He knew the intricacies of European protocol, which can be very difficult for Americans to understand, but which is very important in the European context.

Several of the Consuls General over the years tried to get him some recognition for his services to the United States. One of the things that they tried to do was to get him some monetary compensation for those years, from 1942 to 1945, when he was not working in a Foreign Service job but was being persecuted for his relationship with the American Consulate in Turin. It never worked. Even I got involved in this effort. We were never able to arrange this. I've always thought that it was unfortunate that we were unable to help him in this respect. Oh, he got all sorts of awards, and that kind of recognition. But he didn't get the special kind of treatment which, I think, he should have gotten.

In any case he was very much a major presence in the American community in Turin. We had one economic assistant who was an older and very interesting man. He had taught in Italian schools in Alexandria, [Egypt]. He knew Arabic, among other languages. He was a very learned man. His name was Bassignana, and we called him "Professore Bassignana." The other members of our local staff were much younger. There was a generational gap here. One was still going to school and obviously had a good future ahead of him in business. He was a very bright young man. He was our Commercial Assistant. Most of the others were young women who did consular

work. So that was the local staff of our consulate.

Q: How about the American community in Turin?

WHITE: That's interesting, too. Our Consulate was a small post. I had heard, and I have no reason to doubt this, since I heard it many times, that in one of those periodic, economy waves that strike the Department like a disease...

Q: The Department wanted to close some posts.

WHITE: Yes. Back when John Kennedy was President, the Department had selected Turin as one of the posts to be closed. The story goes that President Kennedy received a phone call from Giovanni Agnelli, the President of FIAT and sort of the Henry Ford of Italy. The FIAT Company is the property of his family. He is a very important man in Italy and in Europe.

The story is that Agnelli simply called President Kennedy, who was in the same jet set with him and said: "Jack, I hear that you're closing the American Consulate in Turin." You know the Consulate is kind of convenient for me and my staff." So the Consulate wasn't closed.

The most important thing in Turin is FIAT [an acronym which in English stands for the "Italian Automobile Factory in Turin."]. This leads to a bit of history. The first American Embassy or legation in what later became Italy was in Turin, because Turin was the capital of the Kingdom of Piedmont. Cavour was the Prime Minister of Piedmont, which had been an independent country in Europe for hundreds of years.

Piedmont was the only independent country in Italy for centuries. It had its ruling dynasty, the House of Savoy. It controlled Sicily at one point and Nice [in France], which we all think of as a French city. Its name was "Nizza" in Italian. The province of Savoy was also ruled from Turin.

Piedmont was a medium sized kingdom, but it was the nucleus which Cavour used to create a modern, unified Italy. He did it through a combination of diplomacy and war, and that is his great place in modern European history. Like Bismark in Germany, Cavour created what had really never been there before. It had always been Italy, but there had never been a unified Italian state, unless you want to go back to the Roman Empire. Cavour's name was everywhere in Turin. There was a Piazza Cavour, a Via Cavour, Cavour restaurants, Cavour everything.

As I said, Turin was also the home of the FIAT automobile company. By the time I got to Turin, FIAT was one of the world's genuine, multi-national corporations.

Q: Could you say a few words about Agnelli?

WHITE: When I left Rome in 1987, a long time later, one of the last reports that I wrote was a long, biographical study of Giovanni Agnelli. I had seen him occasionally over the years. I met him first in Turin, then in Washington, when I was on the Italian desk. Later, and here I am jumping forward a number of years, I was Economic Counselor at the American Embassy in Rome. Of course, Agnelli was still very much on the scene and still is now.

His first name is Giovanni, but he is always called Gianni. When I first met him, in 1965, he was being groomed to be President of FIAT. Like the Ford Motor Company, FIAT is a family dominated company. His father had been President of FIAT. His grandfather had founded the company.

Q: When was it founded, in about 1910?

WHITE: Around the turn of the century. He was pretty much in the same timeframe as Henry Ford. As I said previously, the name FIAT is an acronym for the Italian Automobile Factory in Turin.

Agnelli was very personable and very much in the John Kennedy mold at that point. He was very dashing and affable and considered something of a playboy. We tend to think that anybody who has a lot of money when he is young is a playboy. I never believed that Agnelli was a playboy. I'm sure that he played, the way that Jack Kennedy did.

He was by no means a nonentity. He was an extremely intelligent man and had a very quick mind. He spoke flawless English because he was raised with English speaking governesses. I'm sure that he speaks flawless French as well. By the way, I think that there's another connection between FIAT and Ford. Henry Ford II was married to a woman of Italian background whose name was Cristina. She was Italian and circulated in the same, jet set circle as Henry Ford II and Agnelli.

You would often see pictures in the papers of Agnelli on his yacht, on the Riviera, or skiing, and all of this and that. In fact, as time has shown, he proved to be a very able and very serious minded man.

Our major beat in the Consulate in Turin was FIAT.

Q: Did you do economic reports on FIAT?

WHITE: We had an interesting arrangement in Italy. There were other, important automobile companies elsewhere in Italy, but FIAT clearly dominated the industry.

The Consulate in Turin had national reporting responsibilities for the automobile industry. Our reporting responsibility in this respect cut across consular district lines. For example, at one point I went to Milan to talk to the head of the Alfa Romeo automobile company. That was located in the district of the Consulate General in Milan. I was the one who went, although I brought someone from the Consulate General in Milan with me on this call. It was only proper and sensible to do that. However, I had national reporting responsibilities for the Italian automobile industry.

FIAT was much more than an automobile company. As I said, FIAT was already a multi-national company. This is where I really learned, from the inside, how a multi-national company works. FIAT was into other fields beside automobiles. It was involved in aviation, electronics,

marine engines, and construction. FIAT was very active in Latin America. It was very active all over Europe. FIAT had all kinds of licensing arrangements with U.S. companies and was very close to the U.S. military-industrial complex.

When I went to Turin, something very important was happening, which actually attracted high level attention in Washington. Remember, this was the 1960s, and we were still in the Cold War. There was a thaw, shall we say, in the Cold War.

The President of FIAT at that time was not Agnelli. The President, not only in name, but the real President and guiding hand of FIAT was quite old. I think that he was in his 80s. His name was Vittorio Valletta. He had been with FIAT for many years. I guess that he was the right hand man of Agnelli's grandfather. We knew Valletta very well. He was one of those geniuses of industrial development. He was a rather frail man, as I remember him, very sharp, quick, and decisive. He was the man who really built FIAT. Agnelli inherited what Valletta had built. Agnelli did well, but the fact is that FIAT had been built up by Valletta. There were three important men in the history of FIAT. There was the man who founded the company, the original Giovanni Agnelli. Then there was Vittorio Valletta, and Gianni Agnelli, the current President of the company.

During this thaw in the Cold War in the mid-'60s, FIAT was negotiating a deal with the Soviets to build an automobile factory in Russia. This factory would not turn out tanks, and that sort of thing, but automobiles for people to drive. This was Khrushchev's policy of putting a human face on communism, which he sometimes called "goulash communism." FIAT made a very ingenious arrangement with the Soviets. To remain competitive, FIAT had to keep replacing its production lines. They had a whole production line which they were going to replace. So what to do with it? Scrap it?

The solution, believe it or not, was to move the whole thing to Russia. Guess what the name of the city was where FIAT was going to locate this factory? It would be called "Togliattigrad." Does the name "Togliatti" come back to you? Palmiro Togliatti was the head of the Italian Communist Party during its very militant days following World War II.

Anyway, FIAT wanted to go ahead with this project, but they wouldn't do it without an approving nod from the United States. FIAT had too much to lose if it queered its relationship with the United States. Dean Rusk was the Secretary of State at the time and was apprised of the situation. These negotiations were going on when I arrived in Turin, so there was high level interest in Turin.

Q: I think that Dean Rusk paid a lot of attention to economic matters.

WHITE: Let me tell you something about Dean Rusk that is rather striking. He had a particular interest in Italy. This was not surprising. A lot of Americans are fascinated by Italy. I was telling you about Ches Tavella, a Foreign Service Local employee of the Consulate in Turin. Just before I arrived in Turin, I think that everybody who had ever worked with Ches Tavella chipped in to buy him a ticket to Washington. They arranged for him to call on Secretary Dean Rusk. This was a very nice thing to do.

Ches and, I'm sure, his wife, flew to Washington, stopping off in New York on the way. The appointment with Ches Tavella was on Secretary Rusk's calendar. Ches often told me about that. He was very proud of this meeting with Secretary Rusk. He was scheduled to be given the usual five minutes and then be escorted out the door. You know, there was to be a photo op, involving a handshake, and the picture would appear in the State Department Newsletter.

Q: Rusk could be very charming.

WHITE: Well, according to Ches, who told me this with great pride, the meeting went on for a half hour. Rusk sat down with Ches, and there's a picture of the two of them, sitting there, like world statesmen. According to Ches, Rusk was very interested in Italy and wanted to know all about Italy, Turin, and so forth.

The U.S. Government gave the nod to FIAT on this deal to build a factory in the Soviet Union.

Q: This is Wednesday, September 24, 1997. I'm John Harter. We're continuing our interview covering Al's experience with FIAT in Turin. Al, please continue.

WHITE: Valletta had obviously instructed his top people to be accessible to American officials and to keep in very close contact with them. Of course, Valletta had his own relationship with Freddy Reinhardt, our Ambassador in Rome. Reinhardt was a man who was as admired as he was able. I don't know whether you had any dealings with him.

Q: No, but he was extremely well known in the Department of State.

WHITE: He was well known and well liked. I got to see something of him.

Q: He was Ambassador to Italy for some time?

WHITE: Yes. When I arrived in Turin, he was the Ambassador. I think that he had been there for a while. Of course, Ambassador Reinhardt obviously had his own relationships with the FIAT high command.

Without being asked, the members of the FIAT high command would come to see us and brief us on the activities that they were engaged in around the world. This was a very close relationship. I was always struck by it. It was very obvious to me that this relationship had been established pursuant to a very high level decision. It was clear that the entire FIAT organization had been instructed to be open and cooperative with American officials. That included our people in the Consulate in Turin as well. Valletta, for example, always came to the Consul General's reception on July 4. He could have gone down to Rome and attended the Ambassador's July 4 reception, but he chose to come to the Consul General's reception. The entire FIAT high command came to this reception as well.

I remember one day that the Commercial Director of FIAT, a very senior official, came to see

the Consul General. I guess that we would call him Vice President for Sales. There was some problem about this meeting. The Consul General was out of the office and couldn't get back in time. So I was there to receive this man when he came to the Consulate.

We sat down in the Consul General's office. I was amazed at the man's candor. I, of course, was fairly junior, but here he was, telling me things that the company normally would not tell a perfect stranger.

Q: Could you give us an illustration of what he said?

WHITE: Well, even now, I think that some of it might still be considered sensitive. Let's just say that he was remarkably candid. He wasn't answering our questions. He was volunteering this information, to keep us informed. This was an excellent relationship with FIAT.

FIAT people were very helpful to me in my work. I had to write an annual report on the Italian automotive industry. That was a big report under the Department of State's "CERP" [Combined Economic Reporting Program] schedule. Of course, a lot of the work on that report was done by my Economic Assistant, "Professore" Bassignana. There were probably 25 or 30 tables that went in with this report. It was a "magnum opus." I was responsible for the analytical portion of it. As I said, I also went to Milan to talk to the President of the Alfa-Romeo Automobile Company.

Q: Were you also responsible for reporting on the activities of the Olivetti Company?

WHITE: Olivetti was also part of my responsibility. The Consular District of Turin included all of the historic Piedmont, the northwest quadrant of Italy, and it included...

Q: Bordering on Switzerland?

WHITE: Bordering on Switzerland and France, of course. It included Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta. Now the Val d'Aosta is just to the north of Piedmont. Its dialect is more French than Italian. It is part of Italy, but it has a very separate status. It is like an autonomous zone of some kind. In fact, De Gaulle occupied it at the end of World War II and left only when President Harry Truman forced the French to leave. This was an interesting little footnote to World War II. Of course, this didn't endear us to General De Gaulle. By the way, at the time that I was in Turin, De Gaulle was riding high in Paris. Lyndon Johnson had just been elected President, in his own right.

Q: That was in about 1964...

WHITE: 1964. De Gaulle was riding very high and was kicking the British around, who were then trying to get into the European Common Market. At that particular time I think that Harold Wilson was the British Prime Minister.

The Italian automotive establishment was part of my responsibility, including FIAT, Alfa-Romeo, Lancia, Ferrari, and the whole prestige line of Italian cars. By the way, I should mention that Turin was, and maybe still is, the mecca for automobile designers. In fact, when I was in

Turin, in my social set was a young American from Detroit who had been sent to Turin to learn automotive design. In terms of almost any kind of design, the Italians are considered number one. That includes automotive design. Many American cars have really been designed by people with an Italian connection. The most closely guarded places in Turin were the workshops where the various companies were designing new bodies for future automobiles. Of course, that is a highly competitive field.

This always amused me. We were always invited to visit factories. That is part of what an Economic Officer does. However, when we got to that one section in the course of a factory visit, we were politely told: "That's off limits." That was the reason.

Also Turin had, and still has, one of the world's greatest automotive shows. Many major countries have annual automotive shows, just as they have air shows. One of the oldest automotive shows in the world is the one in Turin, which is held annually in the fall of the year. For about a week everybody who is anybody in the automotive industry was there. That included General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. First of all, they had their cars on display. There is a week of wining and dining, cocktail receptions, speeches, and presentations of one kind or another. Traditionally, the American Ambassador went up to Turin from Rome for the annual automobile show.

Q: So you had to arrange for his accommodations?

WHITE: That's right. During my first year in Turin [1965] Ambassador Reinhardt came to attend the automobile show.

Q: So you got to know him pretty well.

WHITE: I saw him in Turin, yes. He was a wonderful man to deal with. He was very cordial, considerate, and thoughtful. He was a man who looked very much an Ambassador. He loved cars. He had a kid's fascination with cars. He knew a lot more about cars than you or I might know. He knew a lot about the technology of cars. I still have a memory of Ambassador Reinhardt, standing with Lamborghini. You've heard of Lamborghini?

Q: Yes.

WHITE: He was still alive at that point. Lamborghini was explaining to Ambassador Reinhardt something about the engine. I overheard their discussion, which dealt with very technical matters. Ambassador Reinhardt loved this. I also saw him at the Embassy in Rome, and I'll get to that later on.

However, because FIAT was involved in so many things, our reporting on FIAT developments got us into a lot of different areas. When I was in Turin the Italians also wanted to have their own aviation show. You know, the French had an aviation show, the Americans, of course, had one, and the British had the famous aviation show at Farnborough. So the Italians established their own aviation show while I was there. Because this was the first time that they held such a show, they came to us a great deal for advice and assistance. They wanted our influence in getting the

American aviation companies to come. I remember that we worked very hard to get a squadron of U.S. military aircraft up to Turin for the aviation show.

So I got deeply involved in the lore of big exhibitions up in Turin. There was the automobile show and then there was this new exhibition, the aviation show, and several others. I'm not sure how the Italian aviation show has prospered in later years and whether it's still being held or not.

You asked me about the Olivetti Company. Olivetti was in our consular district in Biella, maybe about an hour's drive outside of Turin. Olivetti was an industrial heavyweight then. They mainly produced electronic equipment for offices. They made electric typewriters. Again, even there, design was the key to their success. You know, for many years a typewriter was black. It was boxy and kind of ungainly. I remember pictures of young women banging away at typewriters. The Italians finally realized that, if you have to bang away at a typewriter all day long, why not make it attractive or pleasant in appearance? So all of a sudden we had colored typewriters.

Q: When did this start?

WHITE: I think that Olivetti probably started this trend in the late 1950s or early 1960s. They brought out red and green typewriters, and led the whole process of streamlining the humble, ordinary, day to day typewriter. Of course, women loved this sort of thing.

Olivetti was also getting into the early stages of the computer age. I remember once going up to the Olivetti factory. They were showing me how computers were made. They were producing a computer of some sort. It was almost like visiting a factory where women were sewing clothes. About 95% of the workers in the Olivetti factory were women. They were all weaving wires as you would thread. I was fascinated by this process. The end product was a computer, and it was obvious that these ladies knew nothing about the technology involved in these computers. Most of them were housewives. Then I found out how computers are made. You have an assembly line of people, none of whom knows what the final product will be. All that they know is that they're supposed to make a particular knot in a particular kind of wire.

Of course, there were engineers there, who ran the show. However, you didn't need many engineers. At the end of the production line you got computers, but even computers are produced in this way by people who just perform minor functions on a repetitive basis, all day long.

We knew the Olivetti people very well. Their engineers were always coming into the Consulate to get visas for travel to the United States. I've always been fascinated by this relationship between commercial work and consular work. People think that these are totally separate jobs. What could be more different than stamping visas and selling goods? However, that's how you find out who's visiting the United States.

At every post where I have served, I have made an effort, from the outset, to get the people who do the consular work to feed back certain information to substantive officers in the Political and Economic Sections. Very often, the first time you find out about something is when some businessman comes into the Consulate to get a visa. We saw these businessmen constantly, on their way to and from the United States. There would be FIAT, Olivetti, and other executives

going to the United States. We knew what they were doing. One of them would come in to the Consulate to get a visa. We would ask: "Why are you going to the United States?" So the visa process was a very good source of information.

I did the same thing when I was in the Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela. I've done it everywhere I've ever served. It's just one of various methods that you use to keep in contact with people and to find out what's on their minds. Very often, the people in the Consular Section would send these businessmen over to me. Or they would come across the hall and say to me: "By the way, Mr. White, another executive from FIAT has just come in to pick up his visa for the United States." Then I would meet him. It's a very simple thing, but very often these simple things are very important. They are often overlooked.

Another thing that I might mention about Turin. It was in Italy that I saw the real effects of American investment abroad. American companies had "discovered" Italy. Of course, some of them were there before World War II, but there was a surge of American business activity in Italy after World War II. This is the time when that famous French book was written about "The American Challenge."

Q: It was written by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber.

WHITE: Exactly. Europe was getting very concerned about this. De Gaulle was riding high. The French were very uppity about American penetration of Europe. American companies were flocking to Europe and to Italy. They were building or buying factories.

We saw both the positive and negative aspects of this. One company, Beloit of Italy, comes to mind in this regard. Beloit is or was a company which manufactured papermaking machinery. Its headquarters was in Wisconsin. They had established a factory near Turin. I had been to many of these openings, with the American and Italian flags prominently displayed. The head of the local province was there, and some politicians might come up from Rome. They always found some local bishop who looked as if he were 100 years old, all dressed up in his robes, who blessed the factory. The atmosphere was one of "Happy days are here again" and Italian-American cooperation.

However, when I was in Turin, Beloit laid off some of its workers. Papermaking machinery is cyclical work. People don't buy machines worth five million dollars every day to make paper. From the standpoint of the American company, laying off some of its workers was a perfectly natural thing to do. It was clearly understood that they would be called back later on. They weren't being fired. They were being laid off.

When these workers were laid off, all hell broke loose. Bear in mind that the Communist Party was very strong in Italy. Many although not all of the unions were communist-dominated. The unions in Italy were very politicized. Each of the major political parties had its own affiliated union. The Communists had a union, the Christian Democrats had a union, and the Socialists had a union.

Quite apart from the details of union affiliations, the political culture of any given country is very difficult for foreigners to understand. In Italy it is very hard to lay off workers. It was almost

never done. Whatever you do, a company has to find some means or mechanism by which to avoid laying off workers. At the end of the day if the company can't hack it or survive, it goes to the Italian Government in Rome, and the Government will try to provide the company with money to make it possible to avoid laying off workers or so it was at that time.

We tend to be a little too blase about these matters. The average American might think: "Well, Italy is a country just like the U.S. It has a free market economy." This is true, but there's a difference. Italy is very much like France. There is a tradition of a paternalistic state in these countries. The Italians have a life style that many people and many Americans admire. However, it does not include our kind of rough and ready, no holds barred, laissez faire economics. You don't lay off workers very readily in Italy. That's a problem in other European countries as well, and that's one of the reasons that the unemployment rate in Europe is so high right now. People are reluctant to hire, because it's so difficult to fire.

The point is that there is a kind of cultural clash between Italy and the U.S. in this respect. It got very nasty on this occasion, and the American Ambassador in Rome became very much involved in this. You could almost see the headlines: "Brutal American Capitalists Throwing Italian Workers Out of Their Jobs."

The junior officer in the Consulate in Turin had been assigned to follow labor relations. This was part of his job, so I was watching this situation from somewhat of a distance. Our Labor Attache in Rome was very much involved. Remember, labor unions in Italy are very politically oriented. This was at a time when the Cold War was still going on. The Italian communists were regarded as a menace. The Italian Communist Party was a very big party. It was not in the government, but we saw them as a constant threat. This labor conflict was really a public relations nightmare.

Like everything, this problem settled down with time. The American company, by the way, was very enlightened. They were caught off base by this dispute, but they understood the public relations aspect of this. They worked something out with the unions. I forget exactly what they did, but the dispute subsided. However, this was a good example of the kind of problems you can run into when you invest in a foreign country.

Another problem, of course, was the Italian view of taxation. It was very peculiar by our standards. I used to tell Italian friends that if I handled my income taxes the way Italians did, I'd be in jail. And I would be! Again, this relates to something that we were talking about earlier, that is, the whole subject of corruption. Italians view the state in a different light than we do. At bottom, I think, they believe that the state is out to get them, so they're out to avoid being taken by the state. Does anyone in Italy ever declare his or her full income for tax purposes? No. If they did, they would feel that they were being foolish, and the Italian Government authorities know that. So it's a kind of game played back and forth.

You take an American businessman and plunge him into this environment, and he doesn't quite know how to function. He may buy a company in Italy, and he finds out that the company has at least two separate sets of books. One set of books is for the American company's headquarters in the U.S., and the other set of books is for the Italian Government tax authorities. These are very difficult things to work out. Anyway, Turin was a good perch from which to view all of this.

Something else that I saw in Turin was this. I received a call from an American businessman who had come down to Italy from Switzerland. He said that he had a problem in Italy and asked if he could come to see me. I said: "Sure," and he came to my office. He came in and looked sort of awkward. He said: "You know, I'm not sure whether this is a problem which you can help me with at all. Maybe I'm just taking up your time. I was in the hotel last night. There was another American there. I was telling him about my problem. The other American said: 'There's an American Consulate here in Turin. Maybe they could help you.'" My visitor told me that he didn't know what a Consulate was. This was an American businessman, working out of Switzerland!

Not to go too far into the details, but his problem was that his company was shipping a chemical compound to be used for waterproofing roofs. It was a tar-like substance. However, this was big business. This compound came in by railroad tank car. This wasn't a matter of little packages. Then it was processed and distributed to the customers. He had been coming to Turin every month for some time. Every time the railroad cars transited the border between Italy and Switzerland, the product was charged a different custom fee by the Italians. For example, one car would be charged 12% ad valorem tax, the next car might be charged 18%, and the next one might only be charged 6%. He said: "Look, I don't care what the Italian customs duty is. I need a constant figure so that I will know what the duty is, so that we can work up our cost data." He said: "I can't run a business this way."

I took him in to see the Consul General. I'm getting a little ahead of myself. We had a new Consul General, a delightful man. Wallace La Rue, the former Consul General, had left Turin. The new Consul General was Givon Parsons, who has now retired and lives here in Virginia. We are in regular contact with each other.

Anyway, we discussed the problem with Consul General Parsons and quickly determined that this businessman was going out to the Customs shed and dealing with very low level Customs officials. I could see him out there in a windy, drafty, Customs shed. He wasn't getting anywhere with his problem. So the Consul General called the Director of Customs, "Il Direttore," in Italian. This was a big job, and this man was a big shot. So Il Direttore got a call from the "Console Generale," the Consul General of the United States. Within an hour we had an appointment with the local Director General of Customs. The American businessman was absolutely flabbergasted. He thought that he was going to see an intermediate level official. In Europe a senior official like this has a big office at the top of a big organization. The Director General was the "capo," the boss.

So the director called in one man, and I could hear them going back and forth in Italian. Then they would call in somebody else. Finally, we got to the problem, which was very simple. The waterproofing solution was not always the same. Every time that the Italians would test it, it had a different chemical composition. You know, customs procedures are terribly bureaucratic and boring. They went down the list. They found that the composition of the compound was different in each case, so the tariff charged was different. Yes, there was a solution. The company agreed that it would present the Italian Customs with all sorts of authorizations and authentications which would set out the formula for an homogeneous mix. You shook it all up and you got a

result. Italian Customs accepted that proposal. The problem was solved.

The American businessman, still amazed, told me, "You have solved a problem that I have been trying to solve for six months, and you dealt with it in one afternoon."

Q: This was the result of dealing with sensible people.

WHITE: You know, it made me realize how little many American businessmen know about what the U.S. Government can do for them. I have seen that kind of problem come up time and time again.

About two years ago I was asked to address the annual meeting of a trade association. It was held somewhere in Virginia, involving a group of about 50 very senior American business executives. They were sitting around a huge table. I could tell that they were already tired, having listened to one presentation after another. I spoke just after lunch, and they didn't greet me with any enthusiasm. I asked the man who was organizing this meeting: "What do you think that they want to hear? Do they want to hear about our trade negotiations or what we are doing with the Department of Commerce?" He said: "Keep it basic." I said: "Well, how basic?" He said: "Tell them what an Embassy is." I thought that he was joking.

Anyhow, I started on that tack, and you can always tell whether you have an audience with you. You can always tell if they are really listening to you or whether their eyes are glazing over. I started out by telling them what an Embassy is, how it's organized, and how it can help them. You know, I quickly had a very attentive audience listening to me. And these were senior business executives of major American companies. For example, I remember telling them that when their representatives go abroad to open an office, and they have to hire people, find housing, or find schools for their kids, they ought to consider going to the American Embassy or Consulate and asking questions about these matters. There are people in the Embassy or Consulate who can tell them what they need to know. I told them about the simple matter of registering their presence in a Consular District. They didn't know about this. They also didn't know that, once you are registered, if you lose a passport, you can get another passport very quickly because you and your passport number are registered with the Embassy or Consulate.

That problem has been with us for a long time, and I am convinced that we still have that problem. The American Government and the Department of State do a lousy job of advertising the services that they can provide American businessmen.

Q: We can go further into this at another point. Maybe you could now finish up with your time in Turin. You were Deputy Principal Officer at the Consulate in Turin. That would be a pretty big job.

WHITE: I was the Deputy. However, when Parsons arrived, it turned out that he had a very different style from that of Consul General La Rue. Parsons was very much an activist. He loved to get around and he pushed his officers to get out and circulate in the consular community. I remember that from time to time I would look up and see him standing in my door. He would say: "You know, you've been at your desk a lot this week. It's time to get out and circulate."

So I would get out. I visited all of the provincial capitals in the consular district. I would set up a whole day's schedule of calls on the chambers of commerce and the leading companies in that region. I would usually have lunch with the Chamber of Commerce and have other meetings in the mornings and afternoons. I did a great deal of that. I criss-crossed the consular district and found this very rewarding. I remember going out and attending the inauguration of a plant belonging to Scott Paper Company, which had opened up near Turin. I recall that the Italian Minister of Industry came up from Rome for that. The Minister was named Andreotti. He was Prime Minister many times after that and now is one of the grand old men of Italian politics.

I had some other problems there which were more administrative in nature. USIS [United States Information Service] had an information center there. It was in a prime location, on the Piazza San Carlo, a very prestigious address. In one of those spasms of economizing that the U.S. government always seems to carry out in a great hurry we got a telegram one day stating that the USIS center was going to be closed. The instructions to me were to close it. Just like that. You know, there were 12 or 15 local employees who had been with USIS since the end of World War II. It was not a very pleasant experience to deal with the bureaucrats down in the Embassy in Rome on this matter. They just wanted to walk away from this problem. The USIS local employees wanted to know about their benefits and the myriad questions that come up, including disposal of the property and all of that.

Once the Embassy decided to close the USIS office, they just wanted out, which I thought was scandalous. I remember at one point calling the Embassy in Rome and to read the riot act to the Director of USIS. Then I got a little action. This sort of conduct is very unsettling. The way that people often deal with their own subordinates is very reprehensible.

When I first arrived in Turin, morale was not good among the local employees of the Consulate. I asked "Ches" Davella, our senior local employee, what the problem was. He said: "They're not being paid the same salary that their counterparts in other American Consulates in Italy are being paid." We had Consulates in Turin, Genoa, Trieste, Naples, and Palermo.

Q: Did you prepare an annual wage survey?

WHITE: That was one of the factors. I looked into this. I called the Embassy Personnel Officer in Rome, whose name escapes me. She was very able. I explained the problem. Of course, our local employees at the various Consulates in Italy knew each other. Even at different Consulates, they know what their salaries were. They had their own little "underground" network. The Personnel Officer was very conscientious. She called me back a few days later and said: "Mr. White, all of your job descriptions are carefully matched against the salaries authorized, and those salaries are right for that level. However, the job descriptions haven't been amended..."

Q: For many years.

WHITE: That's right. She said: "Look at the positions." So I dropped everything for several weeks and rewrote every job description in the Consulate in Turin. I called the employees in, interviewed them, put it in the right format, and got Consul General La Rue to sign off on the

memorandum to the Embassy.

Q: Were you able to raise their salaries?

WHITE: Well, I updated their job descriptions, which was supposed to be done or at least certified to have been reviewed every year.

You know, a few weeks went by and I thought, nothing will happen. Do you know what came of this effort? All of our local employees with one exception received a promotion of one grade. One of them, our Commercial Assistant, got a promotion of two grades. He got a double promotion in the sense that he got an immediate promotion and then he was promised another grade increase in another year.

Now, American supervisors of these Consulate employees over a number of years hadn't been doing their job. The problem is that if you don't do your job, it has an impact on people. Everything is a kind of social contract. The people working for me owe me high standard work, integrity, and promptness in doing their jobs. If I want something to be done, I expect that it will be done. But there's another side to this. I have a responsibility to look after them.

Q: A reciprocal obligation.

WHITE: Absolutely. I must say that I was shocked to realize that this was the situation. And after this was my experience with the closure of the USIS office. You can't blame this on our local employees. This was the job of American supervisors, who were responsible. This failure to do their jobs had been going on over a period of years. Well, at the end of the day you have to blame the man in charge. They just weren't paying any attention. Probably a lot of junior, American officers over the years had not been properly trained, and so forth.

Anyway, there was a different situation with Consul General Parsons, who was very much an activist, as I said.

Q: But you had looked forward with enthusiasm to a transfer to the Embassy in Rome. That never happened, but at the end...

WHITE: Well, two things happened. There was an annual meeting of the Principal Officers at the various Consulates in Italy. Once a year the Principal Officers all gathered in Rome. They had such a meeting shortly after I arrived. Of course, Consul General La Rue usually represented the Consulate in Turin.

He called me in one day and said that he wasn't going to attend this meeting and that he expected me to go to represent the Consulate.

Q: Because he was feeling ill?

WHITE: I think that at that point it was more than that. I think that he had been told that he was probably going to have to retire from the Foreign Service, on grounds of disability. I think that that is what was behind this decision.

Anyway, I was sent down to Rome. I still remember that in Rome we used a huge conference room, which had a huge table in it. The Ambassador, the DCM, and all of the Embassy Section Chiefs were there.

Q: Who was the DCM?

WHITE: Frank Meloy was the DCM. Remember him?

Q: Oh, yes.

WHITE: He was a very nice chap and a very good DCM, as well as a good administrator. He was later killed in Lebanon, along with Bob Waring, an officer whom I knew. They were both gunned down together, in the same car, I think. Frank was very precise in manner, which you have to be. You know, administration requires a certain eye for detail. In fact, that's what administration is. It's the sum total of little details. Anyway, the senior officers of the Embassy were all at this meeting. I think that Homer Byington was the Consul General in Naples at that point. Tom Crain was Consul General in Milan. Steve Dorsey was the Supervisory Consul General in the Embassy. I was aware of a kind of a generation gap. All of these Consuls General were older men. There I was at the end of the table, representing the Consulate in Turin. [Laughter] Each of us had to give presentations on the situation in our respective consular districts. They went down the line, and I felt sort of out of place. Then it was my turn. I took a deep breath and plunged into my presentation about what was going on in "my" consular district.

While I was in Turin, I met a young lady over in Milan, and we got married eventually. So that's what happened to me in Turin. It was just a two year tour.

Q: You had just gone to Milan on an official trip?

WHITE: I was actually there on business. That's how I met her. And then I came back to the Department in Washington. By that time I had had three overseas posts in a row. It was time to go back to Washington.

Q: So you had a series of two-year assignments. What did you think of this series of short tours? Or would you have preferred longer tours?

WHITE: I think that for junior officers two-year tours are good. I also think that the more varied the assignments, the better.

Q: You had an excellent introduction to the Foreign Service, especially given your special interest in international business.

WHITE: There was a variety of assignments at each post. I did a number of things. Each post was very different from the others. I went from a North German port [Bremen] to the desert [Khartoum] and then to the foothills of the Alps [Turin]. Yes, it was an eventful period of seven years.

DOUGLAS G. HARTLEY
Consular/Economic Officer
Milan (1964-1967)

Aide to the Ambassador
Rome (1967-1968)

Douglas G. Hartley was born in March 1934 in London, England. He entered the Foreign Service in 1956, wherein he served in countries including Denmark, Austria, Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, England, and Brazil. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 22, 1998.

Q: So from late '64 to when were you in Milan?

HARTLEY: I was in Milan from late '64 to October, 1967. So I was there for about three years. I'll never forget--first of all--when I came there, I was met at the airport by Al Hardy; it was he who told me that I wasn't going to be going in the economic section, but I was going to replace him in the consular section. So I said, "Okay." He also said, "You are expected to attend today's staff meetings" the day I had arrived. When I met Crain, the first thing he said was - "Where is your black tie?" "My black tie, Mr. Crain?" He said, "Yes. Didn't you know? Herbert Hoover died." What a way to start a post! Crain was difficult to work for. I have to say that. He was the most picayune guy I've ever seen. You would come into your office and there were little signs festooned everywhere. They said "See me. ETC [Earl T. Crain]." There would be a picture out of alignment and he would say, "Crooked frame. See me. ETC). Or a typewriter that was uncovered: "See me. ETC." There was always a line of people who had transgressed in front of his office for him to deliver justice to. Anyway, I was in the consular section for six months and then I was transferred to the commercial section.

Q: Let's start with the consular section first. What sort of work were you doing?

HARTLEY: I was doing basically everything: citizenship, welfare, protection. It was not a very large consular section. It was presided over by Charlie Selak; Charlie was a lovely guy, but was wholly uninterested in consular work and, like many people on post, he was terrorized by Crain!

Q: There wasn't much immigration or movement. It was mostly not from that part of Italy.

HARTLEY: We didn't as I recall issue immigrant visas. But we had a fair amount of welfare, protection, citizen services and non-immigrant visas. I remember having to arrange to air-ambulance a guy out from a skiing area near Bolzano in the Italian Dolomites. Of course, that was part of our consular district. Our consular district consisted of basically all of northern Italy including the Alto Adige and Venice. We also had two military bases at that time: in Vicenza and Verona near Aviano. Since I was called on to perform various consular services for the military, it was a great opportunity to get out of town every few weeks - but somebody had to do

it.

Q: What was the situation in Italy at this particular time?

HARTLEY: Italy was in a stage of rapid evolution economically, especially northern Italy. There were no signs yet of the schisms between north and south - which emerged 20 years later. Milan is the engine that drives Italy, just as Sao Paulo is the engine driving Brazil. Milan is really a central European town and its people, though definitely Italian, have Swiss traits, something like the Burgundians. Politically, the Christian Democrats were firmly in the saddle, either that or the so-called centro-sinistra coalition with elements of the PCD, the Socialists, and a few other small groupings, governments featuring the likes of Giulio Andreotti, later tried and convicted for his mafia involvements. I remembered him as a particularly tiresome and long-winded speaker even by local standards. The Christian Democrats were firmly in the saddle at that time. It was the coalition between center parties, Christian parties, and the Socialists. This was before the rise of the revolutionary left-wing movements and the murder and kidnaping of Aldo Moro. Milan was peaceful; energies were absorbed by the economic explosion. The communists still dominated the principal labor union CGIL and we of course backed the CISL, the Christian-Democratic Union.

As an economic-commercial officer, a lot of what I had to do was connected with the Milan Trade Center. Milan was one of the areas where we had a trade center, the U.S. Trade Center which was connected in the Milan International Fair area. This was a pretty good organization run by a guy named Marty Stahl, a hustling, bustling little New Yorker who made things happen. Earl Crain was intensely suspicious of Marty who was one of the few there who refused to be intimidated by him. Although I worked in the consulate, I would prepare market surveys for the Trade Center which I did these with a local employee by the name of Gianni Scandelli. Gianni was not only a known alpinist, but he has since become a world class bicyclist. He has bicycled through the Himalayas, has bicycled all around Australia, across the United States, all through South America. He was an amazing fellow. These surveys took us into many a smaller factory in and around Milan, to see what the competition did and what they might need, and to find out if U.S. goods and equipment might be competitive in the particular market. I remember bookbinding equipment, frozen food equipment, printing equipment. The Italian products were cheap and good. This was a time when we were really feeling the competitive pinch, and when U.S. industry on the whole was just beginning to appreciate the competitive forces stacked up against them and everything that was needed. We, of course, did the surveys on our time, which cut out contractual fees and this saved money, plus we cut out the BS [bullshit] and focused on the essentials. Sometimes I did get involved in some political activities or did some special stuff for Crain who for some reason seemed to like me - perhaps, as Stu observed, it was that he liked Deborah, my wife! The deputy principle officer was Chuck Johnson, who is still here with us in the State Department. He later became consul general in Milan. That was in the '80s. Then he retired and works in historical review in the State Department. Crain was a guy who would eat you right up if you weren't careful. So, it tended to make for a nervous deputy principle officer, but Chuck in a low-keyed way, stood his ground.

Q: What were relations with the embassy, or was that much of a concern of yours?

HARTLEY: It wasn't really much of a concern of mine, because most of my reporting was done for the trade center. I did once, I remember, write an economic report. It was returned, probably rightly, with all sorts of comments by the economic officer in the embassy. I don't really fault them. I fault myself for not knowing how to really prepare a report and for the consulate in letting it go forward directly without clearance from the embassy. It was my first experience of strain between consulates and embassies when it comes to reporting and this was later to emerge in Brazil. We weren't really bothered much by the embassy. The ambassador at that time was Frederick Reinhardt, a distinguished career FSO, who came to visit us only once, as I recall. We would set up meetings and attend cocktail parties and the regular things.

Q: When you're doing commercial reports and all, was the economy that you were dealing with in the Milan district a fairly straightforward one? I refer back to my Naples time when you had--most of the economy was unregistered, unofficial, but it was thriving in a way. But I was wondering if that was a southern manifestation.

HARTLEY: I think there was certainly some parallel economy going on in Milan, too, but for the most part it was very much a western European city. You had tremendous growth of small industries in the valley of the River Po which is of course now one of the mainstays of the Italian economy. These small factories have transformed the once-beautiful plains of Lombardy sprinkled with grand old towns like Cremona into a string of little factories which were largely responsible for the economic development. These were just getting started. But there was a tremendous industrial base in Milan. It was growing like crazy. They were very competitive, so as I mentioned earlier, trying to hawk U.S. goods at that time was difficult and those fledgling US international banks who came to Europe more often than not fell on their backsides. The Italians of course, liked to copy everything they could and they are brilliant copiers! But no, it was a pretty sophisticated place. The one big problem as far as the living went there - oh, we had a good American school there, American community school - was smog. We had a horrible smog problem in Milan. The weather builds up against the Alps. You are at the end of the Alps, the end of the Po Valley. You have the river and you have the mountains. This creates an inversion. The fog comes up, right above Milan, and mixes with all the industrial smoke at a time when there was little heed paid to antipollution devices. It made for really very bad health conditions especially for respiratory conditions. I remember somebody saying that it was equivalent to smoking 10 packs of cigarettes per day! So what we did was, we found a house out above Lecco, the Lake of Lecco, adjoining Lake Como. We would haul all the kids in the car. There was usually not any weekend work, by the way. We would get them all in the car on Friday afternoon. We rented a part of a house for the year, actually. I remember going up from Milan to Lecco: the fog was so dense--it's the densest fog I've ever seen anywhere--as soon as you got up two or three hundred feet, there you were. There was the Alps, the mountains just magnificent--utterly clear and beautiful weather. We made a kind of pattern of that in the last year and a half to get some skiing in, get the kids some healthy air.

Q: How did Earl Crain relate to the Italian business community.

HARTLEY: Not very well. His knowledge of Italian was pretty scarce, as I remember. His wife liked to be in the smart set in Milan, in which there are a number--very large, the rich and nouveaux riches in Milan. They spent a lot of time hobnobbing with them. As far as having real

relationships with Italian businessmen per se, I would say there wasn't much help given by Earl T. Crain. He was very proud of the fact that he was dean of the Consular Corps. I remember arranging for a lunch at the famous hotel Villa d'Este on Lake Como. It was a very hot day and they served a mayonnaise-based salad and half the corps came down with bad stomach problems. Crain wasn't a happy camper.

Q: We had a consulate in Turin, didn't we? Was that pretty much a creature, almost, of Fiat? Was that why it was there?

HARTLEY: Turin kept going because Gianni Agnelli, head of FIAT, was a pal of JFK [John F. Kennedy]. For an amusing account of that consulate you should try talking to Ray Lombardi, who was there while I was in Milan. I went down to Piemonte - in Turin's consular district - a number of times. That was because of the Barolo and the wonderful restaurants there. We would go down there in the vineyards, just a beautiful part of the world. I also did some activities for USIA while I was in Milan. This was a good way to get out. I spoke pretty good Italian so I could get out there and do things substituting for the consul general, which was fun. I remember opening a road in honor of JFK. I remember - something I'll actually never forget - I had to be a judge in an Italian children's singing competition out in a place called Como Giovanni which means "young cuckold." That was a horrifying experience. These kids had vocal cords! As you can imagine, Italian kids. The paper referred to me as the U.S. consul general, Sir Hart Douglas. Crain picked this up in the paper and he was not amused. Anyway, the parents looked at me accusingly in case I turned thumbs down on their dear little children. And then there was that film *Years of Lightning, Day of Drums*. This was a USIA film on Kennedy and the assassination and that was good for going around showing the various people and then we would answer questions. I kind of enjoyed doing the USIA type of thing as well. So I was reasonably busy after the first six months, which were actually not so bad because we had some quite interesting consular stuff going on, too.

Q: Was there very much interest in the American civil rights action that was going on at this time?

HARTLEY: You know what was really the prime concern there was the Vietnam War. This was in '64 to '67. The war was escalating, students in particular were unhappy. I hate to think what the reaction would be now what with Internet and email. So we put on a big effort to try to talk to students. I did that myself. I talked to student groups and we had some Vietnamese, the minister of education came over, and we took him around I guess to show them what a really harmless little guy he was. Civil rights really didn't seem to be a big concern for the Italians, perhaps because they had had some colonial experience in Africa themselves.

Q: Well, then you left there in '67.

HARTLEY: I was asked to come to the embassy in Rome to be the ambassador's aide. Apparently I was one of two candidates. The other one was Ken Hartung, who we all know became more or less the head of the CDR, the Freedom of Information people at the State Department, after his retirement. Ken was the administrative officer in Genoa at the time. I only found out later that he had been considered first, and I was considered, and I was chosen. We, by

the way, had lived in an apartment in Milan, a very large apartment on the Via Leopardi, which was pretty close to the central park. Milan is not a great place for kids. It was a very urban type of city. There wasn't much that kids really could do there.

Q: Most Italian cities really aren't designed for children. There aren't many parks.

HARTLEY: And this park was close to us. But between us and the parks, there were two very busy main arteries. To cross them was a risk. But then when the poor children got to the park, if they tried to do anything kids like to do, like getting into the mud, somebody would - and I'll never forget - "non ti sporca, cara! - Don't get yourself dirty, dear!" So these Italian kids were not permitted to indulge in the kind of things that little kids should be indulging in. So that was a problem. And then we also had this dog, an cocker spaniel, Bessie. They felt that the dog was not proper, untrained, shouldn't be in the apartment, etc. I remember having an argument with the portinaia (the concierge), one of these typically Italian formidable female concierges. She was complaining about our dog yet again, how the dog was dirty and how we weren't brushing it properly and all of that. The dog was with me. I angrily denied her assertions then I looked down and saw that Bessie had just peed all over her floor. She looked at me and then looked at the dog. The dog looked at me, and then that was it. She won the round.

Anyway, getting back to the transfer, I drove down to Rome. My aunt, a longtime resident of Rome, had found us an apartment there in Via Bruno Buozzi in Rome near the Parioli district. I was, in one way, happy to get to Rome because I have family in Rome. My father's sister, my aunt, had married an Italian many years before. They have four sons and I had always been quite close to the family. That was nice. We left Milan in early November and stayed in Rome until July 1968, which would have been the expiration of my tour in Milan.

I was totally in awe of the embassy. You must have gone to that embassy. It is palatial. The ambassador's office is enormous. It's the size of a tennis court. I found it quite overwhelming, the whole place. Going there and sitting in the alcove in this enormous office. This, by the way is a part of my career which was not one of my strong points, but I'll go through it anyway. The DCM was a guy named Frank Meloy. Somebody described him as the original "iron hand in a velvet glove." It was a very good description of Meloy. He was very polished, very debonair, suave - a diplomat of the old school. But tough as nails underneath, I thought. Years later, Meloy was assassinated in Lebanon. The ambassador's secretary was Betty Foster, who had been there for years. The ambassador was the aforementioned Frederick Reinhardt. My job was extremely tedious and I also felt like an outsider, even though I had old friends there serving with me, like Goodie Cooke and Charlie Stout. The hours were long. I usually didn't get back to my family much before eight o'clock at night. I was constantly getting up in the middle of the night to read EXDIS telegrams. Reinhardt was the type who liked to sit around in his office for hours doodling over the cables, then he wanted a clarification on this or that, so basically you sat around twiddling your thumbs for quite a bit of the time, which I found extremely irksome. I remember - and this would have been about a month after I got there - Betty Foster got the phone and she asked me to pick it up. I picked it up and the guy on the other end apparently thought I was the ambassador. He said (Hartley uses a mock British accent.) "Freddie, it's Constantine here. I'm afraid I have a bit of a problem." It was King Constantine. He had just arrived in Italy, having fled the junta from Greece. He had stayed on for a while following the colonel's coup in April

1967, then decided to leave. So what did he do upon arrival but call his old friend, Freddie Reinhardt?

The most interesting thing, the most nerve-wracking thing, was the sudden visit of President Lyndon B. Johnson to Rome on December 23rd. This is a story in itself. I could go on and on about this.

Q: I think presidential visits are well worth talking about.

HARTLEY: We became aware of the fact that the Secret Service was in town. Italian police contacts mentioned that they thought the Secret Service was in town. Reinhart was pretty upset. He said, "Why the hell didn't somebody tell me about this?" The next thing we knew, Harry Shlaudeman, who was in the Secretariat, came in and I was there and had breakfast with him and the ambassador. He explained that Johnson, who was in Vietnam at the time visiting his troops, had decided on the spur of the moment that he wanted to go to the Pope so he could get a blessing for our boys. It would be seen as a good thing if he went and touched base with the Pope. This would have been just prior to Christmas in 1967. So the whole place was of course thrown into turmoil. We had just about a week to prepare for this thing. The next thing, an advance man called Foley--Frank Foley, I think--came in. He was an old Democratic politico, a friend of Humphrey's. He came in and he was sitting in my office with me at the embassy. Three armored limousines were flying from the States. They got them to Torrejon Air Force Base in Spain and then they were going to be airlifted to Rome. In any event, they never arrived because they got fogged in in Spain. And then the U.S. military helicopters that were also at Torrejon--which were meant to arrive at the airport twenty-four hours before Johnson was due to arrive--didn't actually get there until an hour before president arrived on Air Force One. So there was a tremendous amount of confusion going on. They also refused to allow Italians to pilot the helicopters. The U.S. military pilots were quite unfamiliar with the area. So we were going around trying to collect maps to show them how to get the helicopters to Saragat's place in the country and then helicopter directly from there to the Pope in the Vatican. While AF-1 was still en route from Vietnam, the ambassador had been on the phone with Johnson's entourage trying to explain that Johnson must, if he were to visit the Pope, also visit the president of Italy. He didn't want to bother with the president of Italy. He said "I don't want to see the president of Italy. I going here to see the Pope and I want to see the Pope." That's what happened. Finally, Freddy Reinhardt argued him into seeing that "You've simply got to see the president of Italy. It would be a grave breach of etiquette not to see the president of Italy and just go and see the Pope. The Vatican is in Italy even though it's independent and autonomous. It is, after all, located in Rome. As a courtesy you simply have to see the president." What, I think, may have been decided there and then was - if this fellow insists I see the president, "Okay, I'll go see the president, but I don't want to see him in Rome." For some reason, I don't know why, probably some security threat. Anyway, I stayed at the embassy, dealing with various things that came up--problems, of which there were thousands. The president duly got into the airport, duly got his helicopters, they found Saragat's place, had the meeting with him, and then headed for the Vatican. At the Vatican, all the cardinals were gathered together where helicopters were meant to land, but they unfortunately, landed in the wrong place. I wasn't there, fortunately. Goodie Cooke was there. He had an unforgettable tale of all these ancient cardinals gathering up all their robes and trying to rush to the place where the helicopters landed. According to him, the Secret Service

insisted in going in to see the Pope for the private interview with the president. Goodie had to almost get into fisticuffs to prevent them from going in to be in on the conversation. Finally, I think Goodie won!

I also think that Johnson decided then and there to replace Reinhardt as ambassador, because, just about twenty-four hours after Johnson left and the Reinhardts went on a two week vacation on one of the islands, we got a telegram requesting the Italian government's agreement (preliminary clearance) for the appointment of Gardner Ackley, the chairman of Johnson's Council of Economic Advisors, as the new ambassador. Even though the Reinhardts had been in Rome for six years, the news was totally unexpected. We couldn't help but think it might have had something to do with the fact that Reinhardt had been so adamant about this business of seeing the president.

Q: It sounds like a Johnson thing.

HARTLEY: He probably got on the airplane and said "Who is this guy Reinhardt! I've got my friend Gardner Ackley, who speaks Italian." In any event, I saw the Reinhardts off and, then, in March, Meloy decided to reinstall Ron Woods, who had been the aide in my place, while I went into the political section as number two in political/military, working with Bob Gordon. I was there until the end of my tour, which was July, 1968. I still don't know--I don't think, in retrospect, that I was particularly good at the aide job, I certainly didn't enjoy it!

Q: Well being an ambassador's aide or anybody's aide takes a particular type of person. I never was one. I know then and I know now deep in my heart that I would be a disaster. I can't operate like that. I'm just not that type of person. Some people are very good at this. You were in the political section during '68? Was it a different world that you were seeing from Milan and Naples?

HARTLEY: Well, only that when you're in the capital you are more in tune with the movers and the shakers. Plus you realize--when you're in Rome--that Milan, as far as Rome is concerned, is just another constituent post. Actually, the political problems centered on Rome. People didn't think much about what was happening in the rest of Italy. I think this had its repercussions later on in Italian politics, when you think about it. Later in the '90s with the Lombardi Movement and the Northern League and people like Umberto Bossi and these types. But we were still very much into the Cold War. Were they good guys or were they bad guys? Were they commies or were they us? There was a tide--the communists were beginning to seek respectability and we were totally adamant, totally anti-communist. I think Kennedy had given his approval to the idea of center-left. And so we went along with that and supported the center-left. But our contacts in the communists were very proscribed. I'm not even sure we had any. I certainly didn't. However, there's one little incident that strikes me as being quite Italian. We decided to close down one of the bases, I think in Tuscany somewhere. I can't even remember the name of the base now. This was publicized that the U.S. government intended to close down this air force base. By the way, this part of Italy is called the Red Belt. So we got a delegation from the Red Belt: the mayor of the town, the town council, and a few others. To a man, they were communists. They came to see us, begging us not to close this U.S. air force base on the grounds of the economic problems it would create.

Q: The communists in Italy were not doctrinaire. I know even when I was in Naples in '79-'81, Mayor Valenzi was a communist, but he was saying "Please keep the Sixth Fleet around." I mean, it's jobs.

HARTLEY: Right. Well, this was true certainly even in early '68, which was a decade closer to the times of the Cold War. It was a fairly short time I was in the political section.

Q: The impression I got--I was never an Italian Hand--and I only had a short time in Naples, but just looking at this really as an outsider, I thought we did an awful lot of reporting on the politics of Rome. Going on there, all these little coalitions that were forming and reforming and you had essentially the same--as static a situation as one can imagine since '48, with little openings here, changes here, but yet we're reporting in exquisite detail. I had the impression that our embassy got caught up in sort of the Roman merry-go-round and was paying too much attention to the "small picture."

HARTLEY: I think you're absolutely right. I think that the type of people we had in Rome, some of the officers there were so familiar with Italian politics that the staff meetings there were like sort of a delicately structured ballet. They had a lot of officers, and each one had his own party, so it was his bread and butter. If he could bring his party out and focus on that, or the other guy would have his party. Somebody would follow the Socialists--like Charlie Stout. I'll never forget Charlie. He could go on and on about it, God bless his soul, about the Socialist Party. I remember when I did go down there, I came down there to give a political briefing. I did some political work in Milan as well when the political officers were away. I had been to Rome and given them a briefing and talked about local politics with some rising political stars there, including a new very prominent leader, Piero Bassetti, and I don't think they paid any attention to me at all. And I, in turn, didn't know half of what they were talking about because I had no real idea of these little currents that were going on within these parties. I agree with you; in the big picture, all of this is very nitty and basically trivial. But you know what reporting was like in those days, because we had so many people. We just delivered a deluge of long reports in those days of despatches and telegrams and bloated staffing.

Q: And Italy, I found, was sort of interesting. I had never run across this before. It was a terribly ingrown place. Many of the people were on their third or fourth tour in Italy, which was unlike most other places, and caught up in a country that was friendly to us, really wasn't a challenge to us, and mainly needed some hand-holding and care-taking. And that was about it in the Big Picture. Then you had these people who were exquisitely tuned to the permutations in this party system.

HARTLEY: That's right. The ambassador's staff meetings had to be seen to be believed. Did you ever attend one of those things?

Q: Yes, once in a while.

HARTLEY: They had an *enormous* room. And they had a *huge* table with about 50 people. I never did find out what some of these people were doing there and what their responsibilities

were. I think it was a sort of heyday of the oversupply. There were too many Foreign Service people and there were too many people overseas. MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] was there. MAAG was enormous. Nobody could ever figure out what they were doing. I know Freddy Reinhardt could never figure out what they were all doing there. MAG. It was overkill. The whole embassy was overkill.

Q: Did you ever have any feel for the CIA's operation there?

HARTLEY: I didn't really get involved in that at all. There were a lot of them, but they kept pretty well to themselves. I did not get involved in that.

My tour in Italy came to an end. So in July 1968, we were finally able to wangle a boat crossing. We weren't able to manage the Italian line - but had to settle for the Constitution. The boat was appalling. It was the penultimate trip on the Constitution and we should have flown even though the kids had fun . The crew was rude; the food was almost inedible; you couldn't tell the difference between chicken and fish. I finally said "What the hell is this?" and they said "Well, we had this in the bottom of the freezer for months." It was just terrible. Of course, the boat was full of military people going home-- and us, all U.S. government people, so the crew didn't care. We returned in July 1968, had home leave up in New England with my then wife's parents in Harvard, Massachusetts, then I went down to DC and found a house on Woodley Road, just opposite the Cathedral.

CLARKE N. ELLIS
Consular Officer
Naples (1964-1967)

Consul General
Naples (1994-1997)

Clarke N. Ellis was born on August 24, 1939 in Boston, Massachusetts. He attended the University of Redlands, from which he received his BA in 1961, and he also attended the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Bologna for one year before entering the Foreign Service in 1962. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Germany, Italy, Eritrea, Austria, Switzerland, and Taiwan.

Q: You left there in 1964. Where did you go?

ELLIS: I had a direct transfer to Naples, Italy, so I drove from post to post.

Q: Did you get married in this time?

ELLIS: No, I didn't.

Q: So you were in Naples from when to when?

ELLIS: I was in Naples from the fall of 1964 until the spring of 1967, about two and one-half years.

Q: What type of work were you doing in Naples?

ELLIS: I think I had gotten a direct transfer to Naples because I had put Italy as one area of interest. Since I had gone to Bologna, I think it was assumed that I spoke Italian although I really didn't. Although I had studied in Italy for a year, I took German when I was in Bologna and learned enough German to be able to avoid going to language school at FSI, but I really didn't speak Italian at all. I arrived in Naples, and the consul general, I guess, thought I spoke it. He was Homer Byington. He said, "Well, you'd better learn," so I was put on as the NIV officer and that gave me a chance to practice and use the language every day interviewing. I did exclusively consular work during my time at Naples. I started out doing non-immigrant work for, I guess, about six months. Then, I did citizenship and passport work for about a year and, then, federal agencies work for a year.

Q: Please explain Federal agencies?

ELLIS: It consisted of Social Security and Veterans Administration work. At the time, both of those were very interesting. The citizenship passport work was also interesting because the Supreme Court had overturned a number of the laws under which people were held to have lost their citizenship by voting in foreign elections, serving in foreign armed services, and so forth. The work frequently was looking into these old cases where people had been held to lose their citizenship. We had volumes going back to the 1890s of all these records. Then, by writing up, in effect, a legal brief and submitting it to the Department, they would authorize issuance of a passport. I remember one case that had been reviewed earlier of a naturalized American, who had been stranded in Italy during World War II, who had been held to have lost his citizenship by serving in the post office during the war. I found, by going through the files, that he had actually been drafted first before having the position in the post office. Indeed, while he was under arms and, in fact, wearing a uniform, he had been assigned to the post office because of his knowledge of English to act as a censor. We were able to show that this was part of his military service instead of his separate civilian occupation and that, accordingly, he would have been turned down for a visitor's visa but he ended up with an American passport for himself and his family.

Q: Had the immigrant flow begun to cut off? At one point Naples was sort of the great Interpol of Italy for the United States.

ELLIS: It still was. That's why later on the immigrant visa issuing authority was centralized in Naples. Then, we had a very large visa section.

Q: Did you see any pattern of where people were going?

ELLIS: Many times immigrants would go where they had family or relatives in the States,

usually the east coast or large cities.

Q: Sometimes you are in a country where almost everybody goes to New Jersey or something right across the board.

ELLIS: If you look at the situation, individual towns may go to one particular area but, when you take the whole of Italy, it is very spread out.

Q: Could you describe Homer Byington. There are lots of stories about Homer Byington, particularly his time.

ELLIS: He was the third generation to be consul general in Naples. He was one of the last of the old school diplomats, I guess.

Q: How did you find him during the time you were there?

ELLIS: I had a very fine relationship with Homer Byington. Certainly, he was a no-nonsense, patriarchal figure but if you worked hard and did a good job, he certainly treated you very fairly. In my case, I had a very good time. The Byingtons liked to entertain both officially and privately on their boat, the Zio Sam (Uncle Sam), so he was always looking for a young officer to go out with them when he was entertaining to help take care of his guests. For me, the alternative was perhaps staying on the visa line or issuing passports, so the chance to go out on the beautiful Gulf of Naples on a boat with fascinating people - either Italian guests or high-ranking American visitors from the U.S. - was a much more stimulating and fun time.

Q: What was the situation in southern Italy during that time?

ELLIS: Let me just say first one other thing about the Byingtons. My father passed away shortly after I arrived in Naples and, particularly, when I proposed to and then applied to get married to a foreigner, Homer was very, very helpful to me. He was like a father. In those days, of course, I had to submit my resignation from the Foreign Service and at the same time request permission to marry a foreigner.

Q: Where was she from?

ELLIS: She is from Naples. He, of course, had to interview my prospective spouse and write a report on that. He gave me fatherly advice, and he was very helpful in this whole affair.

Q: How did you see the situation in the Mezzogiorno, the southern part of Italy, at that time?

ELLIS: Certainly, it was still relatively poor. There was a good deal of interest in the political situation there because there was the constant concern that Italy might "go Communist." Therefore, even for debates in the Naples city council, the political officer had to spend long hours going there and listening to the debates, and listening to what the Communists were saying and that sort of thing. There was a good deal of interest in the political situation at the time. There was interest because the national government had set up the Casa del Mezzogiorno, and

there was interest in seeing how successful economic development would be.

Q: Were some of these big developments starting, like Alfa Sud and abortive developments down in Colombia and all that?

ELLIS: Well, they hadn't started the project in Gioia Tauro at that time. Certainly, as I recall, they were starting the Alpha Sud plant, and there was an Olivetti plant and of course the Italsider, the big steel mill, which was actually very old and went back to the beginning of the century.

Q: How was our military force fitting in? Were there any problems?

ELLIS: Well, when I was there, the French decided to pull out of the joint command structure of NATO. Of course, we had a political advisor [POLAD] assigned to the NATO staff who handled most of the political affairs, but I got to know some of the more junior officers socially.

Q: Did you run across people coming from our embassy in Rome or elsewhere who were infected with the disease of looking down on everything south of Rome? Did you notice this?

ELLIS: No, I really didn't notice that.

Q: When I was there, I noticed that our people in Rome seemed to think that the whole of southern Italy was benighted.

ELLIS: No, I didn't notice that at the time. Of course, the consul general had quite a bit of clout, Homer Byington being a former ambassador and very prominent. At the time, we had a career ambassador in Rome, Frederick Reinhardt.

Q: Were there any elections while you were there?

ELLIS: Let me think. I can't recall.

Q: The elections tended to vary by one or two percentage points each time, so one ran into another. We got very worked up about them. Nothing really changed. From there, did you find yourself spending so much time as a consular officer, that you were moving into the consular business, or were you looking to break out and do something else?

ELLIS: I was interested and still looking at Atlantic affairs or European immigration affairs. That was the area of my interest and, of course, asking to marry a non-American, it was certain that I was going to be assigned to Washington. These were the days before cones and bid lists on assignments, and I was assigned to the Office of News in the Bureau of Public Affairs. In other words, I was a news officer, a briefing officer, in the office then directed by Bob McCloskey.

THEODORE E. RUSSELL

**Consular/Political Officer
Naples (1965-1967)**

**Principal Officer
Trieste (1971-1973)**

**Political Officer
Rome (1973-1976)**

Ambassador Theodore E. Russell was born on November 21, 1936 in Madras, India. He attended Yale University as well as the Fletcher School. He entered the Foreign Service in 1963, wherein he served in countries including Czechoslovakia, Italy, Denmark, and Slovakia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 22, 2000.

RUSSELL: At any rate, I had asked for the Executive Secretariat on my first tour. On my second tour I believe they were saying you are not going to get Central Europe or East Europe, so I asked for Italy. They said well since you speak Italian, we can save a buck, so they sent me to Naples as an immigrant visa officer. Now in Naples they issued thousands and thousands of immigrant visas. Southern Italy supplied by far the most immigrant visa applicants, so Consulate General Naples was an immigrant visa mill. I was very fortunate to get assigned to Italy, but I would not have been at all happy spending two years doing immigrant visas because it was very dull and grinding work. While you get a few good stories out of it, it was not something I would have been really happy to do for two years. Interestingly, the Consul General was Homer Byington, sort of a legend, because his grandfather had been Consul in Naples, his father had been Consul General in Naples and he was born in Naples. He went from being Ambassador in Malaya and had requested Naples and actually I think he stayed there for about 11 years.

Q: It was something like that.

RUSSELL: It was a long time. His son, Homer Byington III or "Terz" which was his nickname, went in the Foreign Service. Now, he was assigned to a visa mill somewhere, and resigned in disgust and went into banking, and made his father very sad. So the result of that was Homer Byington took pity on some of his junior officers. There were 31 Americans in the Consulate General in Naples in that period, an enormous post. He took pity on some of us and said, "Okay, actually, I think I am going to rotate you around." So after about four or five months he said, "How would you like to be Political Officer, because our assigned Political Officer has left and gone off to Hargeisa in Somalia as Principal Officer?" My colleague actually went off very happily to Hargeisa, but apparently came to dislike it. His wife hated it and he resigned from the service. So the CG was without a Political Officer, and one wasn't due out for six months or so, so he offered me the job. Then he said, "Why don't we rotate you over to USIS as Deputy Branch PAO." The PAO had an awful lot of work and needed some help. That was terrific; I loved it. Finally, the CG put me in charge of the Social Security and Veterans' Benefits program. We had 20,000 pensioners in southern Italy. My wife and I went to every hamlet and village in southern Italy, and I did political reporting on the side, which was perfect and turned out to be a great assignment. It beat doing immigration visas for two years.

Q: You were there '65-'67.

RUSSELL: That's right.

Q: Homer Byington, of course is one of the great characters, you know. Some years later I was Consul General in Naples.

RUSSELL: Oh, really!

Q: Yes, so Homer Byington was a big figure. How would you, I mean did you get a feel for his contacts. He was born in Naples actually. His contact to the Neapolitan structure there and how he seemed to operate.

RUSSELL: He was a real old school Foreign Service officer in that he was the senior officer and his spouse was the "senior wife". Those were the days of the senior wife. Everyone in the Consulate worked for the senior officer and the senior wife. We had one child and one on the way, and then two little kids, and we would get a call and it would be "Sally, Countess so and so has dropped out of my dinner party, could you come in two hours in evening dress for that and Ted could you come at eleven for drinks". We felt it was a hassle, but we didn't feel that it was outrageous. We liked the Byingtons. They were fascinating people. Certainly the CG, or "Chief" as he liked to be called, had been nice to us. But he did have this very paternalistic way of running things. For example my wife was informed at a certain point, although she had two little kids to take care of, that she was going to represent the Consulate in an international cooking competition that the press club was putting on. She put in many hours of preparation and her team won second prize. But it was that kind of a thing. On the other hand he was very generous on inviting staff. He had a series of boats if you remember. There was the Zio Sam (Uncle Sam) I and II. He would upgrade every few years. It was Zio Sam III by the time we got there. Every so often we would get invited out on his boat and anchor off Capri and have "timbalo" of macaroni and lots of red wine. I nearly drowned once when, after a heavy lunch, Mrs. Byington called, "time to get in the water" and I obediently rolled over the side. They were just a very old fashioned couple. But, while they could be quite demanding, they were not unpleasant. In terms of, getting back to your question, he had I thought, very heavily focused relations with the upper crust of Neapolitan society. The counts and countesses and those folks. On the other hand he got around a lot. He was interested in what went on politically. However, I think that the Department of State and Embassy Rome were not sitting around on pins and needles waiting to have the latest political report from Naples. So, it didn't really make a great deal of difference with whom he was talking as long as the Consulate General ran smoothly. He also had relations with the NATO and U.S. military base commanders. He had prickly relations with some of the military. I remember there was a big flap over where he would park in the commissary lot because as a Career Minister he was three star equivalent rank. He felt that should be reflected in his parking place.

Q: Well, I was just getting this yesterday in an interview I was doing with somebody who was political advisor during the '70s. I was saying...

RUSSELL: Not Dufour?

Q: No, he came later. This was Jack Starvard who was saying that his task he was given the job of trying to extricate the admiral from too close relations to the sort of moldy powerless group of elderly aristocrats who seemed to dominate the parties and all of that. How to get him out of sort of the social circle because they, and also that they tended to be pretty rightist, I mean MSI or something like that.

RUSSELL: Achille Lauro or someone like that if you remember was in power.

Q: Oh, yes, he was the Mayor and his family. MSI (Italian Social Movement). How did you find the political situation in Naples at the time when you were dealing?

RUSSELL: Well as I said there was limited interest in it. It was totally unpredictable, but then Italian politics tends to be. Our interest then, this was during Vietnam, was in trying to offset negative publicity from the left wing parties. I remember USIS would work very closely with local journalists. I remember talking to the Mayor and other leaders in the area about the negative statements that were being made and statements that they could make. I remember that the local political situation was pretty chaotic, very much based on personal concerns. I think there was a Christian Democrat Mayor when I was Political Officer. I remember dealing with a Mayor who was not MSI. I remember if you talked to a dozen people about what was going to happen, and they said "we have worked out the following deals" to save the government which otherwise would fall, and you reported that, sure as hell some odd ball thing would happen to throw the whole thing into a cocked hat. I remember once I did literally interview a dozen people on the state of the coalition in Naples. I was told that a deal had been struck; everything was copasetic. Then someone didn't get his award of Cavaliere del Lavoro from the President of the Republic, which was promised him as part of the deal, so he pulled out. As a result the whole thing collapsed. So that's my impression of Neapolitan politics. I remember talking with the Mayor at one point in the grand room of the castle. He described how an early ruler of Naples, tired of all of this nonsense had invited the local barons in for a conciliatory banquet, and then before dessert he withdrew, the archers appeared around the hall and slaughtered the recalcitrant nobility. I thought it was an interesting if outdated approach.

Q: Well, did you also get the feeling, I was not an Italian hand when I went there, and I watched with a certain amount of wonderment at the fascination in Rome about the minutiae of the political process there of who would do what to whom. It seemed like almost a pointless minuet. Christian Democrats had been there forever, and they would do a little flirtation here or there, but nothing changed. Did you look...?

RUSSELL: Exactly. No, nothing changed. I didn't find much interest in what was going on either on the part of the Embassy or the Department or indeed visitors. We had a stream of Congressional delegations there. It was such a nice place to come. I remember as a new Political Officer, the first time we had a delegation, I really prepared hard. I had a fine briefing ready about Neapolitan politics and economics and the situation in southern Italy. The question from the head of the delegation was "how do we get to the cameo factory? Where can we eat lunch?" They didn't want a briefing at all. I did not find that anyone was very much interested in the

political situation in Naples, although we were supposed to know what was going on. The main thing, and this was important, was that we were supposed to keep good relationships with the local movers and shakers, present our side of what the U.S. was doing, particularly in Vietnam, and generally convince people in southern Italy that the U.S. was a friendly power which wanted good relations with Italy.

Q: You had spent all this time at grad school on the Italian Communist Party, the PCI. What was your impression of it in southern Italy at that time?

RUSSELL: Well in southern Italy it was pretty weak. I mean as you mention, the MSI was very strong in southern Italy and in Sicily. If it wasn't the MSI, it was the Christian Democrats who had it pretty well sewn up through patronage deals and that sort of thing. Where the Italian Communist Party was strong was in those places where poor southerners without good jobs had emigrated to the north, and the Italian Communist Party would have people at the railroad station to meet them and help them find an apartment and do what the Communist Party did very well, try and create an entire cultural bubble around these people so you could live and die within its orbit. You would have friendship, you would have mutual support, and you would have a world view. You would have everything you needed and that was why they were so successful. A founder of the Italian Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci, who died in a Mussolini prison, really had that figured out pretty well. Had he survived, Stalin would have eliminated him in all likelihood as a right winger and Bukharinite. Palmiro Togliatti, Gramsci's disciple, was a more flexible operator. He came around under pressure to do as he was told by Stalin and later even tried to justify the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary which had alienated many European Communist intellectuals. He was very smart, but he was willing to compromise his basic beliefs in order to survive in the Stalinized international Communist movement. Gramsci was more of a philosopher. The Italian Communist Party was very successful particularly in Central Italy, the former Papal States, where there was an anti-religious sentiment to some extent, and in the north, Turin and Milan, where the southerners were welcomed in. In the south the PCI was weak and threatened. They didn't do very well in the south in those years.

Q: How did you find the relations with our embassy in Rome? Did you observe much there?

RUSSELL: As a very junior officer I wasn't privy to any problems that Homer Byington may or may not have been having with Rome. I didn't see there was much of a relationship. I am trying to think who the Ambassador was. Was it Frederick Reinhart?

Q: Could have been.

RUSSELL: I don't remember many visits from Rome. I remember endless Congressional delegations, but not many visitors coming down from Rome, not too much interaction.

Q: How about the economy, did you get any feel for the economy in southern Italy?

RUSSELL: Yes, the economy in southern Italy was extremely poor except in the Bari, Brindisi and Lecce area of our consular district. Lecce with its olive oil and some industry and Bari with a prosperous port were centers of decent prosperity in southern Italy. It was the Catanzaros and

Cosenzas that were very poor. Reggio Calabria was more prosperous, but Catanzaro was just...

Q: Sort of like West Virginia.

RUSSELL: I guess so – probably a good deal poorer. Cosenza at least had the beautiful Sila Grande range and tourist areas, but Catanzaro city was the pits in those days. In the most backward areas you had either the Christian Democrats or the MSI who were the strongest. The economy was not good. In Naples, of course there were a lot of very rich people, from shipping in particular, but there was a lot of grinding poverty as well. The city administration was extremely corrupt. There was an enormous amount of abusive building, streets collapsing when it rained because people would overbuild, plus the fact that Naples is built on a series of Roman caves.

Q: And filled in land too. Was that big factory Alfa Romeo Sud set up yet?

RUSSELL: I remember hearing about it. Whether they were just talking about it or had started to build it, I don't remember.

Q: Well then you left Naples in '67.

RUSSELL: '67, that's right.

CHARLES K. JOHNSON
Deputy Principle Officer
Milan (1965-1968)

Consul General
Milan (197?-198?)

Charles K. Johnson was born in Illinois and attended UCLA before transferring to Stanford University, from which he received his BA. He entered the Foreign Service in 1950, wherein he served in countries including Germany, Italy, and Belgium. He was interviewed by Jay P. Moffat in 2000.

Q: Finally we get to your reward for all your hard labors on German affairs in 1965 as you go off to be number two at our Consulate General in Milan.

JOHNSON: In 1965, Milan was one of seven consular posts in Italy, an unusual number for a country of Italy's size. The reasons were historical. Most of these posts had been established before Italy was united. Our oldest consulate was created by George Washington in Trieste in 1792 which was then in Austria-Hungary. You could find the same thing with Naples, same thing with Palermo, which belonged to the Spanish Bourbons. We always considered that Milan was the most important one since Milan was the second largest city in Italy. It was widely regarded as the economic, financial, and banking capital of Italy. It was also quite clear it was the

cultural capital of Italy, with the opera, the theater that functioned there, as well as the presence of most of the major Italian publishing houses. A varied metropolis of a million and three quarters people.

When I got there in 1965, Italy was governed by a center left coalition which had only been in existence for a few years. Up to 1963 the Socialists had not been in any government except, briefly, the Unity Government that was set up right after the liberation in 1945. The subject of socialist participation in the government in Italy was a controversial issue prior to '65. Primarily because the socialists had chosen to associate themselves with the Italian Communist Party in 1948 in the unity of action arrangement. It was a long time before the Socialists became sufficiently disillusioned with the communists to break off and move over toward support of the Christian Democratic Party, which was really the focal point and the foundation of every government in Italy from '45 on.

The entry of the Italian Socialist Party into the government was controversial. There was a lot of infighting in the Department of State and the White House on the issue. The people who opposed bringing them in were very negative on the Socialists. We were still fighting the Cold War and the opponents were skeptical that the Socialists had put enough daylight between themselves and the communists, particularly on issues like NATO. Pietro Nenni was the leader of what was called the autonomous group of the Socialists. Autonomous signified autonomy from the PCI (communist party). Once Nenni got control of the party apparatus and got 75 percent of his people behind him, then it was easier for the Christian Democrats to bring them into the government. My assignment coincided with the first years of their cooperation in running the government.

In the mid-'60s, Italy was a country which was beginning to show a tremendous recovery and already had one of the most developed economies in the world. They had also gone through, in the early '60s, a major political transformation. This was usually called "the opening to the left" but what it involved was bringing the Socialists into the government coalition with the Christian Democrats. This had been an issue which had been very divisive for many years, going all the way back to the famous American ambassador, Claire Booth Luce, who fought like a tigress to keep the Socialists as far away from the halls of government as she possibly could. The battle continued long after Mrs. Luce and there were remnants of opposition in the State Department up to the early Kennedy years. One of the things that happened at that particular point was that historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. joined the NSC staff and became, for whatever reason, a great partisan and arbiter of the center left, fighting what he perceived to be the "reactionary" European Bureau. The position of the ambassador, Freddie Reinhard, seemed to be in the middle of this issue. Bill Tyler was the Assistant Secretary of EUR and he had a very reasonable view. If I had been around at that time fighting that battle, I would probably have been on the side of the center left. I didn't see any point in forcing the Socialists to say they had always believed in NATO and swear on a stack of Bibles. I thought the mathematics of the thing was such that you just had to accept them and have confidence they would change their views. History has shown that not only was there a great transformation of the socialists, but Heaven forbid, there was a transformation of the communists in Italy. This is witnessed by the fact that one of them is now Prime Minister of Italy.

That's the background. What did a big consulate like Milan do in the mid-'60s in Italy? Probably less interesting things than it could have done, because of the attitude in the embassy in Rome that they didn't want these consulates getting out of hand. They didn't really want us to do political reporting, and not much economic reporting. We had some freedom on the latter because we were located in what everyone conceded was the economic and financial capital of the country and we were surrounded by the area which was making for this so called Italian miracle. While we were conceded some economic reporting, anything that was political had to be constructed in the form of a draft air gram which was sent down to whoever was political counselor. They would decide whether they wanted to send it or not. Sometimes they would take all of our names off and send it out as if they had written it. Other times they gave us a little credit. The big thing for an American mission at that time was commercial promotion. We were getting into this balance of payments problem period. We were very sensitive to balance of payments deficits and we were trying to promote, promote, and promote American business, particularly first-time exporters. So I suppose I spent fifty percent of my time in Milan on this. We had our U.S. Trade Center there, a Commerce Department establishment, which was located at the fairgrounds in Milan. That was a major operation which ran a seven or eight months long series of exhibitions of American products, usually items new to the Italian market. These American exhibitors who might number as many as 30 or 40, would come in with a hope of gaining a partnership or some sort of relationship with Italian importers. By and large, I think it was a successful operation. The Commerce Department trade center operation was in its heyday in the 1960s when I was there and we did what we could to help the operation. The centers were staffed by State Department FSOs, although the director was usually someone hired by the Department of Commerce. Altogether, there were perhaps five or six Americans whose office was at the Milan fairgrounds. We had our own commerce section in the consulate general, too, which did a lot of trade promotion. All of which was designed to move forward our objectives in exports.

During the three years I was in Milan a remarkable situation was unfolding in Rome. The Italians had the same Prime Minister the entire three years. In fact, he had already been in office a year before I got there and he was to last a year after I departed. That man was Aldo Moro. I think you would have to go a long way to find anyone who had held the job that long consecutively. Perhaps the Socialist Craxi in the '80s. Craxi's long tenure proved the walls didn't come down - the coliseum still stood and U.S. policy interests were not in any way damaged by having socialists running the government of Rome. In Milan, we were the largest consulate. Our consul general was the dean of the consular corps and had already been there six years when I arrived. I had been promised he would go home and retire after a few months. He stayed on a year and a half. This was Earl T. Crane. He was a person who believed you never turned down an invitation to anything. Since he had been there so long everybody knew him and he was Dean or "Decano" of the consular corps. I found myself going to some strange functions. I'll relate one thing that suddenly comes back to me. If he didn't want to go or couldn't go to something, he would always send the invitation in to me with a handwritten "represent me please." So one time I got this card and there was a memorial ceremony for a very controversial man who had founded an entity called ENI, which was the national petroleum trust. The man was quite controversial because he was trying to break into "seven sisters" society of big oil and gain some concessions on behalf of Italy. He kept complaining to Americans about the fact that Italy was being shut out. Controversial though he was, he was very able, was a supporter of the Christian Democrats, and

for the most part a spur in our hide. He died in a plane crash off the shores of Sicily. This was perhaps the third or fourth anniversary of his death, and I was dispatched to some little church to attend this. I'll never forget the strange looks I drew from all the officialdom there. They couldn't figure out why in the world an American had come to this affair. It was known he was not our favorite Italian, and his methods were not our preferred. Sometimes discretion did not guide where I ended up going. I was very glad to get back in the car and drive back to Milan after that one. But we continued to "show up" and show the U.S. flag in whatever way we could.

Q: Then you had a chance to see everything from the other side, as you went back to Washington.

JOHNSON: Leaving Italy in a rather calm period in 1968, but there wasn't calm everywhere in Europe at that time. This was the period when the French students were beginning to stir. Eventually in 1969, that movement infected the Italian students. This led to a certain amount of political instability, which combined with nationwide strikes over contract renewals gave the appearance of crisis, even though the situation was less than critical. So the students were first. Then you began to see the beginnings of what the Italians call "contestazione." What that really means - it doesn't translate very well - is something like political confrontation. The theory behind this was hatched among a group of sociology professors at Catholic faculties of several universities in the North. Trento was one of the universities that gave birth to these theories. There were others in Padua. This was the beginning of the Red Brigade movement. People didn't know exactly what to call them at this stage so sometimes they were called "Maoists." It was the beginning of a manifestation which was hatched in '69. I came back to Italy in 1979. We were still dealing rather dramatically, in some ways, with the Red Brigade. But back to the Department in 1968. Secretary Rusk had decided that the basic organizational unit in the geographic bureaus should be country directorates. What this meant was cutting back the size of the offices so that instead of having a grouping of five or six countries, you might have two or three or maybe just one. Back of this was the thought that when the Secretary wanted to know something about Italy, for instance, he knew he could call the country director for Italy on the phone and he would be able to respond to him directly. I'm not sure it worked out all that well. On the other hand, I'm not saying we had any problems with it. Italy was grouped with Austria and Switzerland at that particular point, and the Country Director of my grouping was Wells Stabler, who had a lot of experience in Italy and had been in Austria, too, and was a superb person to work for.

This form of organization endured until about 1972 or '73 and then a decision was made to re-amalgamate the offices. There was a reconstitution of the old Western European Affairs, which included our countries as well as France and Benelux. My position became deputy director of that office, although I continued to keep my hand in a lot of things of Italian interest. The early '70s were not the calmest days of government coalition of Italy. There was a lot of interparty scrapping and socialists kept worrying that they were losing votes on the left. But while appearance was otherwise, Italy was not unstable and this is the point I think always needs to be made. In general, people understandably assumed that the existence of 35 or 40 governments since 1945 indicated great instability. Well, that's not really true. Through all those periods of government shuffles, basically the same party, up until 1980, was the center of the whole show and that was the Christian Democratic Party. Sometimes they had the socialists and sometimes

the socialist democrats or the republicans with them in coalition. If they were going to the right, they would have the liberals in. Basically there was more storm about this than substance. The economy continued to expand while all these great political debates were going on. It continued and there were differences over personality, and there were differences between factions within parties like fault lines in these parties. If something shook a little bit then somebody had to be sacrificed and somebody could no longer be defense minister. So cabinet portfolios were shifted, but often the issues were not that serious. Basically, the Christian Democrats had accepted certain things to get the socialists in the government, like nationalization of electrical energy, and institution of the regional form of government. They had accepted some of the major points of the socialist agenda in order to get them into the government and to protect the left flank of the socialists against the PCI (the communists). The picture changed a bit from government to government. Sometimes you would find a minority government. Sometimes you would find a reconstituted center left. During this period we had a change over in ambassadors in Rome. Graham Martin, as most ambassadors, was granted an audience with the President before he embarked for Rome. In most circumstances the assistant secretary from the appropriate bureau or sometimes the office director would accompany. But in the case of Graham Martin, he insisted on going alone. So we only knew from Martin what the President's marching orders were, but we subsequently heard often from Martin about the President's hope to see the Italians move back to the middle of the political road. This would reflect the President's lingering suspicions of the socialists. When Martin got to Rome, he constructed in his own mind the ideal situation in which the socialists would be totally out of the majority. Thus began his efforts to encourage the centrist elements in the Christian Democratic Party.

During this period, the Socialists were undergoing one of their identity crises caused by fears that they were losing supporters through collaboration with the DC. So they chose to stay out of the government, and this meant the conservative elements of the DC emerged to take over the reins of government. Premiership went to Giulio Andreotti, one of the most durable of the DC politicians. He had been all over the left wing-right wing spectrum in the Christian Democratic Party. At this point, he was in the conservative spectrum and succeeded in forming a minority government. His reward was to be a visit to the White House. The problem no time slots were open in a calendar tightly scheduled by Protocol and the White House - at best, a real squeeze. But Martin, who was never one to sit on his hands, had been on the phone with whomever he dealt with in the White House pushing for this symbolic recognition that the Italian political spectrum was back to the middle of the road. We of course were making our own efforts in State Department channels to obtain White House approval, but weren't getting any answers out of Haldeman and the White House gatekeepers. At one point, I got a call from one of the deputy assistant secretaries in EUR, who at that time was Margaret Tibbetts. She said "I think we've got a slot for Andreotti at the White House. Would you call Rome and see if Andreotti could come March 17." I passed this message on to the DCM, Wells Stabler, and in due course we got a message back saying Andreotti would be delighted to accept the invitation. Silence from the White House, and the realization that the "invitation" was only "exploratory." There was only a potential open slot for Andreotti. The problem was - the fat was in the fire in Rome - an invitation had been issued and it was going to be very embarrassing to back off. Martin played this to the hilt to squeeze out a visit, and if it failed to materialize, there was a fall guy handy - me. Nothing happened for what seemed ages. We decided to go ahead and prepare the standard briefing book for the visit even though there was still no approved visit. In the end, the White

House came up with a slot - it must have been the first time in State Department history that a briefing book was completed before the visit was approved. So in the end, Andreotti and Ambassador Martin got their time at the White House. The White House gave him a big dinner and we had all the Italo-American football players (Franco Harris) and football coaches (Joe Paterno) there. The real prize was the after dinner entertainment. There was a time when Frank Sinatra was not exactly socially acceptable in Washington because he had gotten into a public brouhaha with a female correspondent at the Ritz Carlton. We were a little surprised to see that Sinatra was to be "rehabilitated" for the Andreotti White House dinner. Whether the somewhat bookish Andreotti cared about Sinatra was dubious, but we enjoyed his program thoroughly. The big irony: the White House visit was no help to keeping Andreotti in office. Ten days after Andreotti returned to Rome, his government fell. Then we went back to the center of the left. So much for "centrist" government. We were back to the center left.

Within a year or two, there was a vacancy at the embassy in Saigon and Graham Martin was chosen to be ambassador in Saigon. He departed the Italian scene and we had a solid strong Italo-American candidate to follow up in Rome. This was the former Governor of Massachusetts - John Volpe. He was a genial man. I briefed him, escorted him to a lot of his appointments through Washington. Of course he was well known already because of his active political career. He was one of the Italo-Americans who came from the region of Abruzzi in central Italy, which is not too far from Rome. He was Secretary of Transportation before he was appointed to Rome. He had found ways to make several special trips to Italy in his Coast Guard plane even before he was thought of as a replacement for Graham Martin. I think the only problem coming up with him was his Italian. As is so often the case, Italians who come from Italy bring to this country their own regional dialect and pronunciation. Quite frequently it is something different from the standard Tuscan Italian that most Italians speak and that became, after World War II, the standardized national language. I recall him speaking at the Chamber of Commerce in Milan, a very prestigious Italo-American body, and insisting on using Italian. I remember well businessmen coming up to me after the speech, asking, "What did he say? What did he say? I can't understand a word." As ambassador, he initially preferred to go alone on calls on the Foreign Minister. The embassy would sometimes receive calls from the foreign ministry afterward asking, "Just exactly what was he talking about?"

I had a chance to go be Political Counselor in Rome about 1973-74 when Bob Beaudry, old friend and colleague, became DCM. It was an assignment that I would have liked very much. Unfortunately, there was considerable illness in my family at the time and I was unable to leave when the opening came up. So I never got to Rome as political counselor. Another place I didn't get to was Cyprus. Wells Stabler, by that time one of the deputy assistant secretaries in EUR, took an interest in my onward assignment and one day introduced me to Roger Davies in NEA. Davies was going to become ambassador in Cyprus and was looking for a DCM. Wells introduced us and I had a long session with him. He seemed like a marvelous guy; everybody had only the finest things to say about him. He asked me if I would come as DCM and I said, "Yes, I would be very pleased to do that." So we began to make plans to go to Cyprus. I was in some sort of limbo - taking Greek lessons at the FSI and winding down my job in EUR/WE. One day, word came through that Davies had been killed by right wing Greek terrorists. The DCM, whom I was to replace, had just left the country en route to Washington. So what to do - the decision was to find the just departed DCM and send him back to Nicosia. By this time, warfare

had broken on Cyprus as the Turks invaded the northern part of the island.

MARY A. RYAN
Consular Officer
Naples (1966-1969)

Ambassador Mary A. Ryan was born in New York City in 1940. She attended St. John's University and entered the Foreign Service in 1966, wherein she served in countries including Italy, Honduras, Mexico, Ivory Coast, Sudan, and Swaziland. She was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 26, 2003.

Q: Well, your first post was Naples?

RYAN: Yes.

Q: You were in Naples from when to when?

RYAN: I was in Naples from 1966 to 1969. They had us do rotational assignments. You know, that was central complement where you were held against Washington and so the post was always happy for the little extra. And I started in the immigrant visa section, which was a very, very busy section at that time, with wonderful FSNs [Foreign Service nationals] with whom, as I used to tell the A100 classes, I never made a mistake. They never let a mistake of mine get out of the office, the FSNs. They fixed everything. They protected me. They were wonderful. And so consequently, people thought I was quite good at what I was doing, and I was completely and totally dependent on them to make sure I did everything right. It was just so much fun, because you would have these families...It was the old days where we had an office, a little office, and you would bring people into your little office, and you would sit down with them across the table and you would be able to talk to them. And not just interview questions, but, "How are things going?" and "What does your son do in the States?" and "How long has he been there?" And it was just nice and it was fun, and it was sort of helping those people buy their way into the American dream. It was terrific. It was just fabulous.

Q: Who was consul general at the time?

RYAN: Homer Byington.

Q: Oh boy. Well he had been sort of the "Prince of Naples". He was born there. His father was a...

RYAN: His father was a consul general. His wife was quite a power too. She used to summon us. It was just all women. The wives had to do all sorts of things for her, and then there were a few single women officers at that time and when she had a tea for the women, we had to go. All of us. You know, we had jobs. We were supposed to be working. We had to go to these teas, I remember that.

Q: Was he sort of a distant presence?

RYAN: A very distant presence. I was terrified of him. But he did have a boat. The Consulate boat, or his boat – Zio Sam. And he would invite people out on the boat. And it was a very pleasant way to spend a Sunday afternoon, you know, going off, anchoring off Capri or Ischia, and swimming and having lunch. The drinks they used to make were so strong, it was a wonder that we didn't drown looking back on it. But we just accepted everything. You know, that was the way it was supposed to be. They were worried about us – the single women. They made me live in the Consulate, upstairs in the Consulate, for a couple of years before I could get out of that. And that was very awkward because the consul general lived there, having had some sort of dispute with his neighbors when he lived on the outside. And then he moved to the top floor of the Consulate, where, I mean, there were two apartments farther down. And the communicator lived in one, and I lived in the other. And so it was very awkward, because sometimes he would be having parties and you would have to sneak into your own apartment.

Q: I know it well, because I was consul general and lived there.

RYAN: Well, it was very nice living there. It was beautiful, I thought, but it was awkward.

Q: What was Naples like at the time?

RYAN: I thought it was fabulous. It was very, almost stereotypical southern Italian. You know, there was wash hung from the windows across the little alleyways. The sheep hung in the butcher shops. And at Easter time, I remember coming around the corner and coming upon this butcher shop with all of these carcasses hung. I believed the Italians when they told me that I spoke Italian well, and so I had no inhibition whatsoever about speaking Italian. And by the time I left I did speak it well; when I arrived I did not, although I had good FSI [Foreign Service Institute] training, but I had a terrible accent. But I believed them, because they were so encouraging, so warm and nice and everything. And so I had no inhibition about speaking to anybody about anything at any time. And I had a wonderful, wonderful time. You had sort of the best of both worlds because you had Naples and Spaccanapoli and Capri, Ischia and Procida and then you also had the NATO base at AFSOUTH and we had the Navy, commissary and PX. So, I mean, it was paradise. In fact it was all like that, the Foreign Service. It was perfect.

Q: Where there a lot of consuls, vice consuls...

RYAN: Well, Bill Lehfeldt was the deputy principal officer. He was wonderful to me. He's the one who got me to stay the extra year. Our administrative officer was Chuck Cuenod, who I always think of as the best administrative officer I've ever met. And that was my area. I loved admin. Margaret Fagan was the chief of the consul section, and so I was very blessed because she was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful boss, and also a woman – and a very successful woman.

Q: She was, I think, the first consul and Margaret Hessman or someone, were the two consul officers who finally broke the FSO3 [Foreign Service officer] barrier, as FSO2s.

RYAN: Yes, yes, she was a “2” then when she was running the consulate section in Naples. She was wonderful. She was very gentle. She was a lovely woman. She would have dinners and parties and things like that that she always invited us all to. She took me when I first arrived, she was the first person to take me to Capri. What a nice thing to do for a green, unaware vice consul. So I was lucky. I was very blessed. We were all friendly. We were all young.

Q: Did you get any feel for what were the immigration patterns at that time?

RYAN: Well, there was still a lot of family, a tremendous number of immigrant visas. I mean really, that was a gigantic immigrant visa mill at that time, and what I remember being struck by is talking to these people who were going to the United States, who came from southern Italy – Reggio Calabria, and really poor, poor parts of Italy – and how their children had gone before them. And how they would show me pictures of their son’s house or his car and how successful people were. They didn’t have such terrific jobs. You looked back on it and this one worked in a barber shop and did something else, this one worked in a gas station. But they saved their money and they were bringing their parents over, or they were bringing their wives and children over, and they were successful and they were Americans.

Q: Did you do protection and welfare and that sort of thing?

RYAN: Yes, we did do protection and welfare. I have to say, even though I had all those years in CA, I know I’m not a real consular officer, because real consular officers love American citizen services, as we call it now (and protection and welfare as we called it then). I didn’t like it at all. I thought the Americans abroad were awful, abominable, stupid, mean, you know, anything you could think of. I always thought we should give an exam before we gave them a passport, and if they passed, they could have the passport and if they failed, they couldn’t because we didn’t want them out of the country.

My first experience with an American was when I was in citizenship, as we called it then. I was in passports. And this young woman came in – clearly an American – with her friend – who was also clearly an American – and the first woman had lost her passport. She was young, but you know, not younger than I. But her friend had a passport and her friend identified her as an American citizen and all of that. So we were going to document her as an American with a passport and I told her it would take about 45 minutes to get the passport, and she started to cry. And it wasn’t just, you know, little tears coming, it was heaving sobs, okay? So, what do I know? I didn’t know if she was in a hurry or what. She thought she was going to stay in Naples, or Italy, for the rest of her life because she had lost her passport. And that’s when I thought, they shouldn’t be allowed out of the country. I mean anybody that naive...and every day, every day, we had people come in who had been robbed of everything they owned with them, because they had left their cars, with all of their suitcases and everything clearly visible in the car, and went off to Capri or Amalfi or wherever they went, and came back and everything was gone. And of course, we would never do that. Even then we wouldn’t have done that in the United States. But it was all different, it was foreign, so you could do anything you want. They were upset and angry. And that’s when you’d get, “I pay your salary. You have to do this for me.” Not nice people.

Q: What about pensioners? Did you get involved with Americans, Italian-Americans...

RYAN: We had a lot of Italian-Americans who went back to Italy and lived on their social security. And when somebody died we used to do these social security trips, investigations, because social security would give a certain amount of money to bury the poor soul. And I remember being absolutely scandalized going to some town, not that far. I drove myself and went around to find out how much the funeral cost. And I remember talking to the parish priest who told me that the funeral was the equivalent of \$5,000, and \$5,000 would have bought and sold that town ten times over. And I remember being scandalized, because I knew he was lying, but he thought – they all thought – you're an American, America has everything, the United States has all this money. They didn't understand that there was a limit. And I thought social security was foolish to send us out and do these investigations, because if they paid whatever it was then, I forget, they should have just given that money.

Q: Yes, it wasn't that...

RYAN: It wasn't that much. Okay, so you find out that they didn't spend \$150, they spent \$130. Who cares? But it was interesting, because driving around Italy, a lot of pensioners came back. What I do remember is how many people had lost their citizenship because they had voted in Italian elections. Because we had encouraged them, of course...

Q: This was the election of '48.

RYAN: '48, yes. The Christian Democrats. You know, don't vote for a communist. And these poor souls voted and then we told them they were expatriated. And they had no intention of losing their citizenship or giving up their citizenship. They had voted because their relatives in the States told them to vote, and told them how to vote, and they did that. And so I thought the decisions of Afroyim and all of that were good decisions. I agreed with that, although a lot of my colleagues thought that was terrible, you know, that they should lose their citizenship, you know, they're not really Americans. But they really didn't intend to give up their American citizenship. It was terrible having to tell them. Terrible.

Q: Did you pick up this feeling of Naples being the south, or did you find that you were up against almost a snobbery on the part of our officers in Rome?

RYAN: Oh sure. Oh yes. Absolutely. Rome and north. They felt sorry for us. But then, of course, we felt sorry for them. One of our colleagues was transferred from Naples to Milan. What a wonderful assignment, you know, we told him. And the other FSNs were so sorry for him, because it was so grey there and the sun never shone in Milan. He would be so depressed. But yes, they did look down on us. And God love them, the poor souls, when they came back to Naples, they were excited. They came by ship, most of them. Airplanes were not quite as popular as they are now. Almost every docking, somebody died. They were so overcome with emotion at seeing Vesuvio again, coming into the bay, that they died.

Q: These are Italians.

RYAN: Italian-Americans. And then we also had people who didn't have passports. I was called down all the time when the ships came in, to document people as Americans with passports. I even wrote back, I guess it was Frances Knight at the time, because it was like, well, they didn't have time to get a passport, and they knew that they could get one in Naples when they got there. And she stopped it. I don't know how she did it, but after we wrote and said that this was wrong, and that they were always coming without passports, and they shouldn't be allowed do that. They would get in overnight, and I would have to go down to the dock, and everything. She was outraged, and they stopped, and it just didn't happen anymore. She was quite a powerful woman.

Q: Oh, absolutely! She and Ruth Snyder had run the passport office between them for about thirty or more years. I remember Barbara Watson at your job couldn't stand Fran. They just didn't ...

RYAN: Oh no. But Barbara Watson was a wonderful, wonderful assistant secretary for consular officers. She made us very proud to be doing consular work. She was just fantastic.

Q: Well then, you were in Naples until '69. How about the military? How did you find our military?

RYAN: Well, the Navy, we were all young. Of course, we were all friendly with them. I didn't find them difficult or anything. What I do remember is how many of the young boys married prostitutes, clearly prostitutes when I met them, God love them. One woman came in to see me, and she had a letter from her mother-in-law, a really beautiful letter, welcoming her to the family, and just such a nice kind of letter you'd hope you'd get from your mother-in-law. And I wondered, you know, when this woman got off the plane or off the boat or got to wherever she was going, that that woman had to know what she had done in Naples, and I wondered how she would have thought about her then, because, I mean, you just looked at them and you just knew. But, you know, I think that the marriages lasted. I don't think they were marrying them – maybe I was very naive then – but I don't think they were marrying those boys just to get to the States. It wasn't like that. And, you know, it was interesting.

WILLIAM W. LEHFELDT
Deputy Principal Officer
Naples (1966-1969)

William W. Lehfeltd was born in California on July 13, 1925. He served in the U.S. Army in a specialists role. Upon completion of his tour, Mr. Lehfeltd received a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1950. He entered the Foreign Service in 1952. His career included positions in Kabul, Bilbao, Buenos Aires, Cordoba, and Tehran. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 29, 1994.

Q: So you left Personnel in '66 and went off to...

LEHFELDT: To Naples.

Now some of this was driven by the fact that I had a deaf boy to educate. I had wanted to be assigned to London because the best school in the world, for the oral system of deaf education, was at that time in London. That's the lip-reading oral system. It was the Woodford School for Deaf Children, later known as the Winston Churchill School.

So I had, for instance, I had a couple of places. I could have gone to Africa as a DCM, one of the ambassadors wanted me. But we couldn't manage to get a 4 and a half year old boy from dark Africa to London to school all by himself. I certainly couldn't afford to pay for it all, to pay for someone to go with him.

Indeed the whole question of handicapped children's education allowance was totally inadequate at the time. I had to pay for a good deal of the early years education, until we made a case to the Department -- that away from post education for handicapped children was somehow an obligation to be assumed by the Department.

Q: *When did this happen?*

LEHFELDT: In the mid-'60s, '66 thereabouts.

At any rate, Homer Byington, who was the consul general in Naples, needed a new deputy principal officer. I had known Homer, he was DCM in Spain when I was consul in Bilbao; he was on my board when I entered the Foreign Service; and he knew something about me. While his wife, Jane, didn't know Mariella particularly, he figured that I would be all right. The Department thought I would be all right too because I could let him go on about his yachting and so forth, and run the consulate. Keep the staff from him and him from the staff, which is what my role was.

Homer was a very conservative, hard-working bright guy in many ways. His wife was certainly conservative, hard-nosed, very bright, a trained lawyer. They knew Naples as no one could.

Q: *He was born there, his father was born there.*

LEHFELDT: His grandfather was born there, his father was not. His grandfather said that anybody who goes into the Foreign Service is nuts. His great-grandfather had been assigned to Naples. He was a reporter at the Battle of Gettysburg. He took charge of the telegraph office and locked everybody else out, and sent the first word of the Norths' victory, I guess, or at least the standoff. That they had the South to clean up at any rate, to the New York, I forget which one it was, New York Post or one of them. He was later awarded, assigned or given a post to Naples as sort of a lagniappe.

Homer had run afoul of the Kennedys at the beginning of World War II. It's a funny tale.

Q: *What happened?*

LEHFELDT: He was in the embassy at Belgrade. He was duty officer one weekend and was down at the office. These two scruffy young men came wandering through and the guard called Homer and said, "These two kids are here and they want to read the classified reading file."

Homer went down and talked to them and said, "Hell, no."

They said, "Well, our father lets us do it all the time. I don't know why you won't."

It turned out they were Joe and Jack Kennedy from London. At any rate, they never forgot him. Joe died but Jack never forgot him. When Kennedy was elected, Homer had been first ambassador to what was then Malaysia. He wasn't about to get another ambassadorial post. So the old school network took care of him, assigned him as consul general to Naples which didn't require Senate or White House action. He stayed there happily from 1961 to about 1974.

Q: Could you talk, I have to put in the record here, from '79 to '81 I was Consul General in Naples and everybody talked about Homer Byington, not in particularly glowing terms. Could you talk about how they are? He's now dead but one of the icon figures, almost a mythical figure in the Foreign Service, particularly his connection with Naples. Could you describe how he lived, some of the stories about him?

LEHFELDT: He was well connected. It was in the old aristocratic circles that he was best connected. He could speak Neapolitan dialect better than almost many of our employees in the consulate. So he entertained. They had the Villa Pavoncelli to begin with, which was an old palazzo. Of course Mrs. Byington had lots of money, they entertained well. I hesitate to use the word "royally" but they did and they got along well with the Admirals and Generals of AFSOUTH.

But the problems of keeping up an old villa, and getting the Department to support it in the manner in which it was necessary, led them to eye the top two floors of the consulate building. I presume that you lived there too. I was there during that transformation. It was an experience. I think they created a very nice representative set of digs for a good Consul General. It may not have been good for somebody with a family, I don't know. It was not to everyone's taste because his successor first covered up all the beautiful tiles. They were treacherous out on the deck.

He and Jane, like I say, knew all the old aristocracy well. Fred Reinhardt was ambassador at the time in Rome, was an old friend of theirs. Doug MacArthur, in Vienna, was an old friend. A lot of these folks would come back and forth. They would go off on yacht trips together. He had his boat just across the way there. He could keep up his own with the high-style admirals with their barges. In terms of society, it was fine. He knew the Prefetto and the other people very well, he entertained them well, they appeared to like him. I mean, you know, what's there to report on particularly? And he didn't.

Q: There really isn't anything. It's really one keeping up appearances and also the passport, the visa business.

LEHFELDT: You didn't see what I did to that place, maybe someone told you about it. They probably all retired by the time you got there.

When I got there we had all the passport and citizenship records going back to about 1875. An enormous file that took 5 people to manage. Of course by that time all of those records should have been destroyed. I destroyed them and cleared it all out. We went through them, of course, and rescued what needed to be rescued. But the local employees were heartbroken when I did that because that was their baby.

Q: Also it requires intensive work, intensive. Jobs, of course, the major function in Naples of anything was to create jobs. That's what everything revolved about -- jobs.

LEHFELDT: I don't know.

Back to the Byingtons again. They were pillars of the Anglican church there, the little chapel. I don't know if Father Willy was still there when you were there or not.

Q: I don't remember.

LEHFELDT: I became a, what do they call them, I forgot, it was a funny name, largely at Homer's behest. They insisted before we even got there that we commit to take a villa that had been in the hands of the consulate for several years. I think it was finally given up to the French consul general, or the French consulate.

I had no real problem with the way Homer operated. He didn't bother me very much. I had a good political officer usually. Peter de Vos was one such, Dave Engel was another such. We had a decent commercial operation. The names escape me now. The consular operation was well run by Margaret Fagan. Of course one of the guys later ended up in jail, Steve Vitale. I had to fire our senior local employee at one point, Corrado D'ambrosio.

Q: Famous figure.

LEHFELDT: We caught him. We had a big health operation there, you know, the examinations. We had a big maritime administration, coast guard operation there. It was a big post for a consulate general. It's now down to practically nothing.

Q: How did Byington relate? I heard stories about how he cleared everybody out who were living up in the consulate building and all that.

LEHFELDT: Nobody wanted to live there anyway. They were nice enough apartments. Yes, he did clear them all out, no question about it. But in order to provide a good representational set of quarters for the consul general, the Department was persuaded.

Q: I think it made sense because, also, later in my era, protection became a problem.

LEHFELDT: Security was a problem.

Q: *This was secure.*

You know I gained the impression -- I went to Naples as sort of an outsider. I'd been consul general in Seoul, Korea. I came there, I was not a European hand, particularly I was a Balkan hand, so I was kind of an outsider. I had the feeling in Italy, particularly the political reporting, in those days anyway there was no real change in anything. The same party was in power. Our embassy in Rome would get very much involved in the minutiae of the political life which didn't mean a thing as far as American policy was concerned.

LEHFELDT: There was a periodic "crisi."

Q: *You had a crisis, certainly more than one a year.*

LEHFELDT: I would go off around the consular district once in a while. Peter de Vos went around with me once. We would stop in Catanzaro and in Consenza and in all those great places and talk to the various political types. Put together some local color and what was happening with the local parties. But it didn't amount to a hill of beans.

The major role of the consulate general, at that point, was maintaining relations with the Sixth Fleet and AFSOUTH. To make sure that they were well treated and so on. That's precisely what we did. We had a political adviser, as you know, I don't know who was there in your day. Bob Gordon was the POLMIL guy in Rome, he used to come down every once in a while. Phil Axelrod and Arnold Freshman and Dan Brewster were the POLADs about the time that I was there.

Everybody was busy with the exception of Homer and me. We were there to respond, it was a pleasant place.

PETER S. BRIDGES
Political Officer
Rome (1966-1971)

Deputy Chief of Mission
Rome (1981-1984)

Ambassador Peter S. Bridges was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in June 1932. He attended Dartmouth College and Columbia University, and he also served in the US Army in France. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957, wherein he served in countries including Panama, Germany, USSR, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Somalia. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 24, 2003.

BRIDGES: Then a friend of mine named Joseph Norbury called. Joe and I had also been

together in Moscow; he had been a political officer. He said he needed to talk to me about something and wanted my advice. So he rode his bike over one evening after dinner and said that he was about to get reassigned, who knows where, and Personnel told him he could take a job in Rome (they wanted a Soviet hand to follow the Italian political left), or he could go to Montevideo. So what did I think he ought to do? And I said, "Joe, if it were me, I would opt for Rome." He said, "Well, thanks very much, but I've been to Europe and I've never been to South America, so I think I'll go to Montevideo." So maybe a week later I heard he was being assigned to Montevideo and maybe a few days after that I ran into Bill Luers, my old Soviet colleague, in the hall. And he said, "Hey, have you heard, there's this good job in Rome that's going begging." And I said, "Yeah, why don't you take it?" He had been in Moscow, and in Naples as a vice consul, and he spoke Italian. He said, "I put in for it, but Personnel says I can't go because I have to be in the Department for at least two years and I've been back a year. Why don't you go?" And I said, "I can't." "Why not?" "I'm going into Bulgarian language training." "You're what?" And all of a sudden a sort of light went on in my mind, and I thought, hmm. So I went to see Malcolm Toon, whom I had worked for in Moscow and who was now deputy assistant secretary in the European bureau concerned with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And basically I said, "Mac, as you know I'm going to Sofia but if the needs of the Service should dictate, I want you to know I'm prepared to go to Rome." He said, "I see." And the Bridges went to Rome.

Q: You were in Rome from when to when?

BRIDGES: I was assigned to Rome for four years as a political officer and started in 1966. But in the end the ambassador asked me if I would stay a fifth year, so I stayed until 1971, and in 1971 he asked me if I would like to stay one more year. So I was going to stay a total of six years, which probably was going to cause a number of people in the Service and Department to wonder whether I was serious about life. I was.

Q: You went to Rome in '66. What was your job?

BRIDGES: I became a political officer in the political section. The basic job was to follow the Italian far left, mainly the Italian Communist party with whom we had no personal contacts. I was also given the Liberal party, a small party which was at the time in the government coalition, so I could make contact with at least some politicians. I went there with no Italian at all. I spoke good Spanish; I had been tested at four-plus, five-minus in Spanish which is pretty good. So I thought to myself I could convert my Spanish into Italian, and every morning at seven or seven-thirty I would have an hour of Italian tutoring. But it was hard. Not many months ago I had a letter from Ralph Ribble. He had been the administrative officer in the embassy in Panama when I was there. When I got to Rome I found that he was the counselor for administrative affairs in Rome. So we were friends, but it was only several months ago that he told me that when Frank Meloy, the deputy chief of mission, heard that I was being assigned to the political section in Rome he had expressed his concern to Ribble, saying he was afraid that my Italian was probably not very good. And Ribble told him that he remembered that I had spoken very good Spanish in Panama, so that Meloy agreed with Ribble that he would give me six months, and if I didn't shape up after six months Ribble agreed that he would find me another job. Well, what neither of them knew was that not only was my Italian not very good, it was nonexistent. But I worked on it, and after six months I could speak a kind of Italian.

Q: The ambassador was who at the time?

BRIDGES: The ambassador to Italy at the time was George Frederick Reinhardt who had been there several years, whom I knew of basically by his having been a Soviet hand years before. He had been ambassador to Vietnam and then to Egypt before going to Rome.

Q: The embassy in Rome was a big one. How did you find it being there? It was quite different from the other places you had been.

BRIDGES: Well, it was quite different. We lived and worked in elegant surroundings; of course the chancery had once been the residence of the Queen Mother, in the 1920s. At that time, in the late 1960s, there were no particular security problems, so people came in and out of the embassy pretty freely; Italians would come and see us, and we'd go see people. It didn't take me very long to meet a lot of Italians and although I was somewhat circumscribed on whom I could make contact with in the political parties, I met a number of senior Italian journalists who had served in the Soviet Union. So we had that in common and these were all interesting men; intellectual, educated men, good journalists. I had half a dozen friends like that.

Then my wife hit the ground running. She started studying Italian, she had already learned Spanish. She would put the kids on the school bus every morning and she and the dog would go look for an apartment for us, since the real estate agencies in Italy at the time were not very well organized. Basically it meant looking for rental signs on the side of a building. Meanwhile, she got to know the city, she and the dog, by walking around in it. She decided it was a grand place and she liked it very much. So we soon felt good about the place. All three of the children were at the American community school, called the Overseas School of Rome. There was not too much of a school athletic program, but I found that the Italian National Olympic Committee, CONI, had this great system of athletic courses for children and good facilities which were financed by one of the state lotteries. So we put the kids in the CONI program, and since my wife was willing to devote her time to take them back and forth they spent their afternoons after school with Italian kids at the big sports center at Acqua Acetosa, where our son was in diving and the two little girls were in swimming. So they got all the exercise they needed and wanted.

Q: When you arrived there in '66, what sort of government did you have?

BRIDGES: It was a center-left government. The Christian Democrats and the Socialists had come to terms before ever I got there. Italy was in good economic shape. We had been to Rome first in 1957 when I was an enlisted man in the Army in France. Mary Jane and I had taken the train to Rome because she was six or seven months pregnant, and we spent a week there. The differences between 1957 and 1966 were very considerable. Prosperity was already visible in 1957, but traffic was nonexistent in 1957 and was already a problem in '66. The Italians were still talking of themselves as a poor nation but it was very clear that the Italian economic miracle was a very considerable miracle and I soon decided it was in some ways equal to the accomplishments of postwar Germany. However, population and unemployment were still problems to the Italians. In the earlier postwar years the Southern Italians had migrated to the cities of the North. Now they were going to Northern Europe to work. I can remember discussing

with the labor officer my bad dream that there would be a Europe-wide recession and a lot of people would be put out of work and in Northern Europe obviously the first to be put out of work would be the foreigners. So the Italian economy would have a double-whammy because a lot of Italians who were making money and had jobs out of the country would come floating back into the country with nothing to do and nowhere to go. Well, it didn't happen, thank God, but that to me in the late '60s seemed to me a bad possibility. They hadn't solved all of their economic problems even in the late '60s.

Q: Who was the head of the Communist party at that point and where did it stand on various issues?

BRIDGES: Palmiro Togliatti had died. By the time I left the head of the party was Enrico Berlinguer. I'm forgetting somebody in the middle. There is an interesting story about Togliatti and Fred Reinhardt which has never been published, which Ambassador Reinhardt's widow Solie told me some time ago. In 1966 and later, I was only a mid-grade officer in the embassy and Mary Jane was the wife of a mid-grade officer, and the ambassador and his wife were far above us so we didn't see too much of them. After the ambassador died Mary Jane and I and Solie Reinhardt became good friends. What Solie told me was that when Togliatti died in the Soviet Union, which was in 1964, the Soviet ambassador in Italy went off to bring back his body and he told the Italian press before he left that he was going to bring back Togliatti's remains and they were going to be buried in the Protestant cemetery in Rome. The Protestant cemetery is properly the non-Catholic cemetery; it's just inside the old Aurelian wall by the famous pyramid of Cestius. It's a beautiful place. Keats and Shelley and a lot of other notables including Mr. Reinhardt are buried there. Anyway, the founder of the Italian Communist party, Antonio Gramsci, had been buried there. He lies there probably because he had a Russian wife and it could be argued that she was Russian Orthodox, therefore non-Catholic, so therefore he qualified. Anyway when Fred Reinhardt heard that the Soviet ambassador was going to bring back Togliatti for burial in the Protestant cemetery, Mr. Reinhardt, who was the chairman of the ambassador's group that ran the cemetery, said, "No way." So the Soviet ambassador soon discovered that Togliatti was not going to be buried there. The Soviet ambassador asked to see Mr. Reinhardt, and Mr. Reinhardt unfortunately was too busy to see him for a while, but finally did so. So the ambassador came by and said that he wanted to discuss how Togliatti might be buried in the non-Catholic cemetery. Mr. Reinhardt explained there were problems but then said, "Actually, maybe the way to do it is to identify him as not an Italian. I was at our Moscow embassy during World War II, and I remember very well that at some point the Soviet press reported that Togliatti had been given Soviet citizenship. So, all you have to do is give me a letter saying that Togliatti is a Soviet citizen, and we will get him buried the next day." And the next day he was buried in the main city cemetery.

Q: Well, Togliatti indicated that he came out of the old Stalinist system. There was the Italian Communist Party a real Stalinist Party or had were there any glimpses of Eurocommunism coming out?

BRIDGES: Oh, yes, indeed, I mean the Soviet Communist Party and the Italian Communist Party were very different creatures. One of the sad things was that the PCI, the Italian party, could not bring itself to be utterly critical of the Soviet Party, even when in 1956 the Soviet had

crushed the Hungarian regime. Although there had been a lot of disquiet in the PCI and a number of people had resigned, all in all the party had not split from the Soviet party. As we knew, the Italian party was still receiving a subsidy from the Soviet party, which was totally unnecessary; the Italians were not without their own resources. Anyway, after I had been there for some time it became clear to me that if political processes in Italy continued in their present course for another decade, the Italian Communists were going to be in the government. It was going to be a center-left, far-left government.

Aldo Moro, who was the greatest of the Christian Democratic leaders, wanted to see this happen. And the Italians would argue that this was going to bring about the final break between the Italian party and the Soviet. Anyway I convinced my bosses that we had to get Washington to do something about this. My immediate chief, the deputy head of the political section, was Robert Barbour who later was ambassador to Suriname, and the political counselor, his boss, was Samuel Gammon who was later ambassador to Mauritius. I said to them, "Look, guys, this is my belief, the PCI is moving toward the government and we've got to do something." And Sam said, "Well, if we send a telegram to the Department on this, it will get over-distributed and will probably get to Capitol Hill and there will be a terrible reaction from some of the Italian-American Members of Congress." I thought it was necessary to establish contact with the Italian Communist Party. This had happened already in Paris, where my friend Jack Perry, my old Moscow comrade who had a job like mine in the Paris embassy, had been permitted to start having contacts with the French Communists. I was told to draft a "memorandum for discussion" to be sent to the Italian desk in the State Department. It basically said that we think that time has come to open a very narrow, informal channel of communication with the Italian party. And it was agreed; one American, one Italian, me the American. Who was the Italian? I had already identified the guy that I wanted to see. He had been the correspondent in Moscow of the Italian Communist newspaper, L'Unita, and was now working on the paper in Rome. He was well thought of, and certainly critical of the Soviet Union, and I knew that he gotten into some difficulties with his own people in the Italian party. His name was Giuseppe Boffa. So how did we make contact? I had a good friend in Louis Fleming, the correspondent of the Los Angeles Times in Rome. Lou invited me to lunch and he also invited Giuseppe Boffa to lunch and the two of us met and I said to Boffa, "Maybe we could see each other occasionally." And so that was how all that started. I never revealed that until not too many years ago. Boffa, who later became a senator, wrote a memoir and mentioned me and explained how we had been in contact. So at that point I decided that I could go public too, and I did.

Q: What were we hoping to do? Just to keep a line open, or...

BRIDGES: To keep a line open, to make sure that these people were not self-deceived about the United States; we would explain to them in an authoritative voice what the truth was about American policy and what we were doing, not too easy a job since we were getting deeper and deeper into Vietnam. Not only the Communists but much of the Italian political spectrum was quite unhappy with what the U.S. was doing in Vietnam. Second, we would try to obtain what information we could about what was going on inside the party. Boffa would sometimes tell me things, not real party secrets. Third, to try if possible to nudge them a little bit farther away from the Soviet party. Again, Boffa himself had great misgivings about the Soviet Union but he never broke with the party. After I got to know him, the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 and

he criticized them very strongly. But he never got to the point of saying that the Soviets had been wrong in invading Hungary in 1956.

Q: Well, how did the Czechoslovak invasion go? Did the Communist Party come out with support for the Soviets?

BRIDGES: No, on the contrary. They were very critical of the invasion and in fact the Czechoslovak ambassador to Italy published something in L'Unita that was critical of Moscow, and I thought that it was going to be the end of him. But later when I served in Prague I found that he had come back to Prague and he had survived because of his good connections; he was a good old boy. But the Soviet invasion had a very deep, disheartening effect on the Italian Communist Party.

Q: You were there during the time of Berlinguer?

BRIDGES: Yes, I was. I never met him. They never tried to bury him in the Protestant cemetery, he was buried in the Rome municipal cemetery.

Q: Well, this is the beginning of Eurocommunism, which really scared us, Kissinger seeing it as a master plan which would put a friendlier face on Communism which would make it more powerful.

BRIDGES: Yes. If I can go back to Mr. Reinhardt, he resigned after a number of years as ambassador to Italy. He had a fine and honorable career which ended after President Johnson visited Rome. This was just before Christmas of 1968, when LBJ went to Vietnam, he wanted to visit his boys in the trenches. From Vietnam, instead of flying east he started flying west. The rumor was that he was going to stop in Rome to see his friend the Pope. Yet we were not officially informed that he was going to do this. On a Saturday morning I was in the embassy, and Frank Meloy, the Deputy Chief of Mission, told me to go see the Chief of Protocol in the Foreign Ministry and request six sedans with drivers at six o'clock that evening at Ciampino, the military airport. And I did, and the Chief of Protocol asked me, "Is this the means the U.S. government is taking us to inform us that the President of the United States is arriving in Rome this evening?" And I said, "Mr. Ambassador, I don't have any instructions on that." And it was another hour before we were authorized to tell him. Well, the President wanted to see his friend the Pope. Fred Reinhardt very bravely made clear that the President, if he came to Rome, would absolutely have to call on the President of the Republic before he called on the Pope. The Italians were adamant on this; no foreign chief of state could see the Pope before he went to see the Italian head of state. This rubbed LBJ the wrong way, but in the end he agreed and it was done. He landed at the military airport and took a helicopter to the presidential estate where the President, Giuseppe Saragat, was waiting with his daughter and her children around a Christmas tree. At this point the Italians were not strong on Christmas trees, in fact Pope Paul VI had said that they were a pagan northern custom. But there they were, the two presidents, and it was a big scene on television; LBJ spent 15 minutes with Saragat and then took a helicopter to St. Peter's square and saw his friend the Pope. But Mr. Reinhardt's resignation was accepted soon after that. I think that Mrs. Reinhardt says it wasn't exactly a case of LBJ getting rid of him, but the general belief was that LBJ had done so, that he had simply taken up the letter of resignation that Mr.

Reinhardt, like all other ambassadors, had had to give the President when he was appointed. He was then replaced by the former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Gardner Ackley, who had been a Fulbright professor in Italy. Ackley stayed only about a year and then he was replaced by Graham Martin.

Q: So how long did you have Graham Martin under your...

BRIDGES: Graham Martin came, and I continued doing what I was doing. Mr. Martin was I would say kind to mid-grade junior officers. He was death, as I recall, on his deputies, and I think that had also been the case when he was ambassador to Thailand, which was his first ambassadorship. Frank Meloy was replaced as Deputy Chief of Mission by Wells Stabler, a marvelous officer, still alive, who was later ambassador to Spain. I don't know whether Wells will agree but my impression at the time was that Graham Martin was extremely hard on Wells Stabler, and without reason. But again, kind to me; he was the one who asked me to stay on for a fifth year then for a sixth year. However, Graham Martin knew next to nothing about Italy. He thought he knew something about leadership, and indeed he was a good leader in many ways. He had not been there too long when he became concerned about what was going on in Chile; these were the days of Allende. And our ambassador to Chile was very anti-Communist, very anti-Allende and began to feed our embassy in Rome with reports about the regime leading Chile farther to the left. This resonated with Mr. Martin, who could imagine Italy going farther to the left and becoming an Allende kind of semi-Communist state. The rest of us didn't think that was going to happen no matter how influential the Italian Communist Party became. It simply was not something the United States needed to worry about.

At the same time Mr. Martin learned that there was a handful of high-ranking Italian military officers who thought that not only was Italy going too far left but that something might have to be done about it. There was a younger American businessman in Italy who knew one of these generals and he went to see Graham Martin and told him about this. Martin was a man with a kind of cleverness, not necessarily the same thing as being wise. So Graham Martin decided he had better get in touch with these generals and since he didn't utterly trust the CIA station, he asked the army attaché to get and stay in touch with them. Well, the army attaché was probably a good artillery officer but he was certainly not an intelligence officer. Sometime after I left to go to Prague, which was in November 1971, sometime in 1972 the whole story came out about the contacts that the American ambassador had been having with these generals who were known to be wondering whether the military should step in. It was quite a scandal.

Q: How did you view the Italian political scene? Everybody was worried about the Communist vote which was varied by three or four points in the election.

BRIDGES: Certainly the Christian Democratic leaders rotated through a session of jobs. Conventional wisdom in the U.S., which didn't know too much about Italy, was that the stupid Italians had a terrible government which fell every ten months". The fact was that after they fell, it was basically the same people who came back in. Now, there was a lot of corruption. It was clear to us that every party in Sicily, for example, had some sort of contact with the Mafia, including the Communists and Liberals who were supposedly the least corruptible of all. In the late '60s and '70s however, the Mafia was not the national problem that it became later.

Corruption indeed was rampant. The Italians decided to build a complete new railroad between Rome and Florence, and I remember hearing that the minister of transport, who was a Social Democrat was getting two percent of the contract and since the contract was a couple of billion dollars, that was a sizable amount of cash.

The Italian economy was becoming a place where even a poor man or woman could find a decent job, but Italian politics was not keeping up with much of the rest of Italian society. I thought that it was a great tragedy that Italians couldn't think up a better far-left party, a better main opposition party than the Communists.

Q: I never quite understood why the Socialists just went down like a punctured balloon and didn't present a viable alternative.

BRIDGES: I don't either. But in any case the fact was that the main opposition was always the Communists, which I thought was a terrible charge against the Italian nation. Why couldn't they devise a better Left that didn't have anything to do with the Soviet Union, Stalinism, with all that train of horrendous events? But they never did and history has a lot to do with it; people say that the Red Belt in central Italy, Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, became Red over a century ago because they were on the border of the Papal States, they were the hotbed of agitation against papal tyranny and they simply stayed far-left for the next century.

Q: How did you find, at that time, the role of the CIA? Was it around? You were away fishing in their waters.

BRIDGES: The CIA was around, the CIA station in Rome at that time was certainly overstaffed. They were looking for things to do and it caused me some concern personally only at one point. Aside from my duties in the political section following the Italian left, I started out by being the contact with the officers in the political affairs directorate in the foreign ministry who were concerned with Italian relations with the Communist world. There were two offices; one was concerned with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the other was concerned with China. One day I was in the office of Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, who was the director of the Soviet and East European office, when the usher brought in a calling card and Ferraris looked at it and then at me and said, "This guy says he wants to see me, he's waiting outside, do you know who he is?" And I looked at the business card and it was Robert Boies, first secretary, American embassy, who I knew was a CIA officer. And I said, "Oh, yeah, there must be a mistake, you don't need to see him now. In any case I'll see him when I get back to the embassy, I didn't know he was coming." So I get back and say to Boies, "Jesus Christ, what is this?" Boies said he was not going to see Ferraris to talk about Italian foreign affairs; but Ferraris knew a lot of Soviet and East European diplomats, and Boies's job was to recruit them. And I said, "You know, this is really embarrassing", and I told the political counselor and the DCM and said to Boies that I hoped this sort of thing didn't happen again. Incidentally, I read a few months ago, in a book by an Italian academic that I found in Rome, that Boies had met several times with the professor, both before and after he retired, to tell him in detail what he had been up to in Italy.

There was also a book published in Italy in around 1976 called The Americans in Italy which was written or at least researched by an American but published in Italy. The author had

managed to use the U.S. Freedom of Information Act to get just about every sort of paper out of the U.S. archives on the things we had been doing in post-war Italy around 1948, when we were concerned that the Communists might come out ahead in national elections. It's pretty detailed. I first heard about the book when I went with an AID team to Italy after the earthquakes in the northeast in 1976. We went to see the Vice Minister of Interior, who gave us a copy of the book. The head of our group, incidentally, was a USAID officer, Arturo Costantino, who was the son of an Italian diplomat and who spoke beautiful Italian. I was amazed by how much had been printed in the book about the CIA and U.S. subsidies to the Italian democratic parties in 1948. Again, that was '48. When I got to the embassy in 1966 I think that much less of that sort of stuff was still going on.

I enjoyed myself thoroughly in Rome. My Italian got quite good. I discovered that nobody in the embassy had been to Sardinia for a number of years, my boss agreed that I should go over there every now and then and talk to Sardinian politicians and leaders. So that made the job more interesting. Then Sam Gammon, our political counselor, realized at some point that there were as many political officers in the embassy, seven, as there were consular posts in Italy. So he talked to the principal officers of the consular posts, and they all agreed that occasional visits by a political officer would be useful for them and so each of us was given a consular district to be in touch with, and mine was Florence. The political officer at the consulate in Florence was Dufour Woolfley, who is still a good friend of mine. So, every couple of months or so I would go to Florence and Dufour and I would go travel through the Red Belt talking to politicians. It was very useful for me to get of Rome and do these things, and I think it was helpful to Woolfley, too.

Another thing happened, and that is that two staff reductions were put through by the Department; one was called BALPA and the other was called OPRED. I forget which was first, but in any case the effect was to reduce the number of officers in our political section by a couple. After this, from being the liaison with two offices in the foreign ministry, I was given the job of liaison with all 12 offices in the political affairs directorate of the foreign ministry, which made for a very busy day, since in addition I was still reporting on the Italian Left.. It was a great assignment. After Sam Gammon left, Bob Barbour replaced him as the political counselor and I stepped up to become number two in the section. In my five years there I felt that I had made some progress and gotten to know and appreciate the country, and I think I maintained my objectivity and didn't fall victim to localitis, which is a frequent problem.

HOWARD IMBREY
Worldwide Information Services
Rome (1967-1968)

Worldwide Information Services
Rome (1972-1976)

*Howard Imbrey was born in New Jersey in 1921 and grew up in New York City.
He attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and served in the US*

Army during World War II in the Pacific Theater. His career included positions in countries including India, Sri Lanka, Addis Ababa, Congo, France, Belgium, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 21, 2001.

Q: So, you were in Rome from '67 until?

IMBREY: '67 to '68. Now, when I moved to Rome, I did the same thing with meeting these guys in Rome instead of Paris or Brussels, and in Rome I fixed myself up nicely. I got a nice office, represented my firm and had a good backup story of why my firm had to move me, which was logical.

Q: This was still worldwide ... ?

IMBREY: Worldwide information services, yes. The cover held fine. There were reasons; I can go into if you ever want to. The chief of station in Rome was very exercised. He said, "You moved into Rome and I was not told anything about it or gave my permission for it." Then he said, "You're using up too much of my station's time." I had something like ten or twelve, maybe more, agents. Each time they would come they would give me a report. In those days I would take the report, digest it, type out my own report and hand it to a contact in the Embassy. He would then bring it back and they had to retype it onto official stationery or prepare it for a cable and that was taking up a lot of his time. Here I was calling the guy every fifteen minutes; come on over I got something for you. So, the chief of station was very annoyed. He said, "I didn't mind when you came in here, but when I see the amount of work it's causing us I don't have the people to handle it, so get the hell out of here." So, I was sent home.

Q: They didn't build up your staff; could they have built up your staff?

IMBREY: Well, you know all those things take a good deal of planning and money and decision and also good communications. My boss was Archie Roosevelt who was a very nice guy, but on the other hand, not too quick to act. So, we came home and I stayed home until my next post.

Q: When you came home what were you doing?

IMBREY: That's where we turn off the tape recorder.

Q: All right, well then, we'll just skip over that. When did you take off again where we can talk?

IMBREY: Let's see. I was sent back to Rome in '72. Turn it off for a while and I'll tell you about it.

Q: What should we talk about, the elections in Italy? You were in Rome from '72 to?

IMBREY: '72 to '76.

Q: It's been in the papers that the Christian Democrats were gaining an awful lot, I mean really since '48 anyway, the big election. So, who was going to spend more money, the Soviets or the

Americans? What were you up to?

IMBREY: Well, remember, let's see around '50 I think it was when this great thing that they had, a program where they had all the Americans of Italian ancestry writing to their relatives in Italy to vote Christian Democrat. That was one of the great successful ploys of all time. At any rate, we supported the Christian Democrats for years and the money was not ill spent. It didn't go into peoples' pockets. It went into across the roads, and banners and parades and all sorts of things, but it was highly successful. We kept the communists down to about 37% or 38% of the vote and the Christian Democrats always won. So, here's '72 and there are new problems on all sides and the communists are making good headway and we got in there with a lot of money. I think we had a couple of million dollars for this.

Then came our fight with Graham Martin, who was the ambassador at the time. Martin said, "That money is for me and I will spend it any way I like." Our chief of station said, "No, the CIA is supposed to deal out the money" and Graham said, "No, you deal it out and I'll tell you who to give it to." Well, he chose a man named Lorenzo Decarorechi, who was the head of the secret police in Rome. He and Lorenzo were great friends and Lorenzo was a great friend of ours, too, but was the wrong guy to give the money to in our estimation and we were very unhappy. At any rate we used the money the way Graham Martin wanted us to use it and the result was stupendous. For the first time I think we got the communist vote down by about 3% and the Christian Democrats ahead by about 4% and this was a tremendous victory. It took a great deal of running around and doing all sorts of peculiar work of the kind that I'd been doing before, undermining and having fun and games, but we did it. Then after that I was developing agents in newspapers and other literary elements writing came out a number of types of operations that I had done in the past in this case all to undermine the Soviet position in Italy. In Africa as well. I was again with my Africans.

Q: You were up against a change. You were beginning to get Euro-communism, and certainly presentable in public compared to some of the thugs that had risen out of the regular communist parties. Were you able to do much with the communists?

IMBREY: Oh, yes, we had agents in the trade unions, which were very important in Italy. The Catholic union we supported. They got plenty of help from the Catholics, but from other countries. We had our people in there. Youth organizations and at the time that they were developing the super communist parties, the terrorist gangs.

Q: The red brigades, primolina, some of those.

IMBREY: There were a couple of others that were publishing every day. We did what we could to discourage them.

Q: But they were much harder to penetrate, weren't they, or not?

IMBREY: No, no, we had sufficient penetration of them and we had a battalion of people who really could do that sort of thing very easily. After all if you tell the trade unions what you want them to do they have somebody who will do it and we did have people high up in the trade

unions who could do practically anything. I think there were at least five principal labor union organizations in Italy on whom we could count.

Q: I can't remember all the alphabet soup of them. Was this in cooperation with the Italian authorities or did we do our thing and they did their thing?

IMBREY: I imagine the Italians had a pretty good idea of what was going on. We didn't tell them who our agents were and I imagine they handed us a number of agents, but we never knew whether we could trust what they handed us. As I was saying, Lorenzo Federico, who was the principal friend of Graham Martin eventually tried to lead a coup d'etat. This was a famous one where they got police officers that work in the provinces and they had a march on Rome and the dumb bastards stop for a traffic light for just long enough for the forces of the government to turn them back. At any rate, Lorenzo went to jail, I think, or maybe paid his way out, who knows.

Q: Were you involved with this organization, under the Coladeus thing? From what I understand we had had this in some places, this sort of a stay-behind. If the Soviet army took over Italy we had arms and people ready to run guerrilla movements and all of that.

IMBREY: I have heard of that, but I have never had any experience with it.

Q: How about the Vatican, did you get involved with the Vatican?

IMBREY: Let's see. I had one source who worked for the newspaper, Osservatore Romano. That was all. He was an astute observer and so I got a lot of hints from him, which was not what you would call a penetration of the Vatican.

Q: Did you find yourself concentrating pretty much in the north of Italy? What about the Mezzogiorno?

IMBREY: No, we did very little in Mezzogiorno. As a matter of fact, we knew Johnny Agnelli well.

Q: Of course, he's up in Torino.

IMBREY: Let me tell you, we did not like him for what he did to us. Son of a bitch. Let's see, around 1973 or '74 there came out this publication, Who is the CIA. Do you remember that one? It was a Czech publication.

Q: Oh, yes, Who's Who in the CIA.

IMBREY: There were two of them. There was the one that was provided by the East Germans; the Cubans were actually the ones who got the information. They got it from our defector.

Q: Well, they got some stuff kind of wrong because the publication Who's Who in the CIA, I thumbed through that thing to see who I knew and there I was and I had never been in the CIA.

IMBREY: No, they had Eisenhower in that one. This was the second one, the one after that. I know that the information came from Agee and he knew who these guys were and somebody like Eisenhower, he said forget it. So, they had the right guys. The thing came out all over Italy and all of a sudden La Stampa published all the names of the guys who were in Italy, giving their home addresses, which was a little bit more than needed. We were furious about that and so one of our friends knew a lot of society people in New York with whom Agnelli hung out, so he told them the story. Agnelli went to New York and nobody would see him and so he got the message, but after that we were all taking different routes to work.

Q: Well, you were doing this until '76?

IMBREY: Yes.

Q: Where did you go after '76?

IMBREY: After '76 I went back to headquarters for two years and then retired.

MANUEL ABRAMS
Economic Minister
Rome (1967-1969)

Manuel Abrams was born in Pennsylvania and raised in New York City, where he attended City College. Throughout his career, he has served in countries including Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, and Switzerland. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 6, 1990.

Q: I have you going as economic minister to Rome in 1967 until 1969. What was the change for you? Here was Italy and it was quite a different matter.

ABRAMS: For me, the big change was work. Not the subject matter but the operation. Now in the Netherlands as I mentioned, there were at least two senior people, there were a number of others, whom I saw regularly, and if I had to see, would pick up the telephone, "Can I come see you?" "Sure, come on over."

Not in Italy. In Italy, working was very difficult. No government official, at least in the Foreign Office, was available in the morning, because they were busy with other things. Then came lunch which was 1:00 to 4:00, plus siesta, and then they'd get back and they'd have a few things to do. So you got to see them at seven. And then if it was an important issue, then you'd have to come back and write a telegram, go out. Work, as such, as not all that important. The social life was the big thing. So it was a very difficult place to operate in. I was lucky because I was a representative of the US, so I could get the door open. My poor Swiss colleague whom I had known in Paris, told me he was utterly devastated. He couldn't get to see anybody. They had no time for somebody from Switzerland. They were not being difficult for the sake of being

difficult. They really didn't have time because the "they" in the Italian government was a small group of competent officials; the rest of the staff was dead wood. It was a waste of time to see any but a handful of officials.

Q: Italy is a difficult country. I was consul general in Naples. It was a very difficult bureaucracy to deal with. The hours are peculiar and there are an awful lot of time servers.

What were the major issues you had to deal with?

ABRAMS: Alitalia and landing rights was an issue, and there too I reported on what was going on in Brussels as seen by Italian eyes. The Director General for Economic Affairs in the Italian Foreign Ministry was top notch, as were a few of the other senior officers, but there was much dead wood.

Trade was another important issue, as well as developments in the Italian economy.

Q: The Italian economy, if you look at statistics, looks like a disaster yet it has this black economy. For example in Naples, which has no glove factory per se registered in the world and yet it is the largest producer of gloves in the world. How did you first look at the economy, as a instrument and then how did you report on this peculiar economy?

ABRAMS: As you know, there's a large part of the economy that you can't report on, because there's nothing available on it. Another interesting thing about the Italian economy is its flexibility. For example, Mr. Kennedy in the election of 1960, promised U.S. textile manufacturers to do something to restrict the flow of imported textiles. He fulfilled that promise with a textile agreement. Part of this agreement involved restricting certain types of textiles. But every time we specified which textiles were being restricted, there was a group of manufacturers in Tuscany that would get around the restrictions by changing the product mix. No matter how hard Washington tried, it turned out to be impossible to prevent the flow of textiles from Tuscany. Nobody was ingenious enough to devise specifications that would keep out those Italian textiles.

Q: How did you feel about the Italian economy?

ABRAMS: The Italian economy during the period I was there was doing quite well. That was a period of very low inflation, happily for me. This is one of the problems that the Italian economy runs into periodically. They did later on, bouts of inflation, 10 to 20% a year. All through the post war period, you'd look at the economy and think, "Gee, there's all sorts of problems," and somehow it has gone on and done well. This is true to the present day.

They have an interesting mix of government and private initiative. They have these large government companies which operate to a large extent like private companies.

Q: Well, Alfa Romeo is one, ...

ABRAMS: IMI and IRI are the initials I remember, IMI is the petroleum group and IRI is steel.

Q: Who were your ambassadors?

ABRAMS: When I first came it was Freddy Reinhardt. He left in early 68 and then Gardner Ackley came in and left in mid-69 with the change of administration.

Q: Can you do a little comparing and contrasting? Reinhardt was a career and Ackley a non career.

ABRAMS: Yes, Gardner Ackley was a first rate economist and a first rate mind. Being an economist, he determined when he came to Rome, that he would devote 90% of his time to matters other than economics. He concentrated on political, public affairs, and so forth. I remember, everyone was commiserating with me; how can you be economic minister to Gardner Ackley? Well it was very easy, because he read whatever we turned out, and if he had any question, he called, but he did not try to get involved with the details of the economic work.

PETER K. MURPHY
Consular Officer
Milan (1967-1971)

Consul General
Genoa (1981-1984)

Peter K. Murphy was born on September 11, 1936 in Massachusetts. He received a bachelor's degree from Boston College in 1959, served in the U.S. Army from 1959-1960, and joined the Foreign Service in 1962. His career included positions in Paris, Milan, Nice, Genoa, The Vatican, Bonn, Germany, and Washington, DC. Mr. Murphy was interviewed by William D. Morgan on April 4, 1994.

Q: So it looked like your career was going to be doing more consular work?

MURPHY: It looked that way. I was assigned as number two officer in a rather large Consular Section at the Consulate General in Milan. Our consular district covered most of Northern Italy - including the former Venice consular district and the provinces north of Venice. It was a tourist-filled area - with a large sprinkling of American businessmen living in the Milan-Como area.

Q: Was this something you were happy about?

MURPHY: I was delighted. I always wanted to get to know Italy; I believe all Americans feel a great affinity for Italy - and for Italians in general. It is almost like a second country for many Americans. With over 26 million Italo-Americans in the USA - who can wonder!! Also, my work in Argentina was more Administrative and Political in content - with very little consular work. I was eager to get to know consular work better. I guess the main reason was that I like

people - and like to be with them, talk with them - and, if they are in difficulty, help them out! (This sounds like a good mix for a consular officer, don't you think?) I was interested to work in a medium-sized consular section, as opposed to a place like Paris where you were stuck doing the same job for a two year tour. (This was, Bill, before "rotational assignments".).

In any event... my work there in Italy. Let me described a bit the Consulate in Milan

Q: Maybe in terms of what it was like in Paris, to give the reader sort of a comparison of the two posts?

MURPHY: Sure.....I couldn't even wager a guess how many officers there were in the entire Embassy in Paris when I was there in 1962. But, as I noted previously, we had a total of 18 officers in the consular section alone.

In Milan we had a total of 21 officers in the entire Consulate General. The consular section was an important element of the post because of the numbers of Americans in and around Milan and also the US-NATO bases in the area at Aviano and Vicenza. The city of Milan, as you are aware, is the financial and business capital of the Italian Republic. In addition to the Consulate General proper, we had a large USIA operation and a permanent Trade Fair at the Milan Fair Grounds - which was operated by the Department of Commerce. Not a month went by when there was not an international show of some sector of business - and always a large American contingent present.

Q: So that number was the total American...?

MURPHY: I'd say about 18 American officers and staff members.

Q: ...including foreign service nationals?

MURPHY: No, just the Americans.

In the consular section itself, we had eighteen Italians and five officers. I was the number two officer. My boss at that time was a fellow named Charlie Selak. I don't know if you've ever run into Charlie. He was originally a Political Officer. Charlie who took a consular assignment to Italy as he always dreamed of living in Italy. He was, by inclination and education, a rather good historian. Charlie was certainly not a consular officer. He disliked intensely having to deal with the public - American or Italian! This caused innumerable problems, as you can well imagine!. He told me the only reason he accepted the consular assignment to Milan was because of the location of the city - and the fact that he was able to live in Italy!

Q: Had he been at all...the experience?

MURPHY: He had very little consular experience, but as he wanted to come back to Italy, he somehow arranged the Milan assignment. He retired in Milan - having no family back in the United States. Years later I learned he was seriously ill and is presently living in Sri Lanka - being taken care of by faithful servants who were with him in Milan - but came originally from Colombo.

Q: Milan was his reward probably?

MURPHY: A reward, yes....I suppose. His assignment most unsuccessful. Charlie was a very nice person - and quite knowledgeable. He is a very shy person, and did not like speaking with the public. We had a cross-section of applicants... visa applicants ...in that post. Many Iranians who resided in Milan, many Third World nationals. The Italians we had were usually visitors to the United States We did not issue immigrant visas; at that time they were issued in Genoa. But I must say that the business of non-immigrant visas was booming, absolutely booming. We had at least ten locals, Italian nationals, working on visas.

Q: And this was sixty-?

MURPHY: The dates that I was assigned to Milan: 1967 until 1972.

The Consulate in Venice had recently closed, so we had jurisdiction over Venice and that area of Italy. It was very nice for me, because during the busy summer tourist months, I went twice a week to Venice and took care of consular matters in Venice ... of which there were many.

Q: Mostly American services oriented?

MURPHY: American services oriented, or deaths, or hospitalizations. There was a mental hospital on one of the islands in the port and we always seemed to have Americans in residence. In addition, I visited the local jails, hospitals - and looked in on the various "Junior Year Abroad" headquarters of several large American universities. In those days, there was considerable open drug abuse - - so, I had my hands full.

Q: But no visa work?

MURPHY: No, we did not issue visas in Venice. There was, however, lots of welfare work. I recall that there was an American Anglican priest, - who had studied in England and was ordained in the Church of England - and who was very kind in helping us out from time to time. He resided in Venice (Victor ??) I remember that he had a very British accent and lived in very comfortable quarters right in the center of Venice. Victor was almost like someone out of a novel. I would leave him money from our small Welfare Fund - and if I couldn't make it to Venice, he would assist American citizens with real emergencies by lending money - or visiting the sick. I used to encourage him - telling him it was a great opportunity for practicing the Corporal Works of Mercy! (In effect - that is kind of what Overseas Citizen Services work is all about, isn't it, Bill!) The Venice Fire Department kept our motor boat for us. We were fortunate in having motor boat which had belonged to the old Consulate in Venice. Whenever I visited the city, I had great transportation. A fireman would meet me at the steps of the train station.....and off we'd go - down the Canale Grande!

The building itself, the Consulate building, which was on the Grand Canal - just next to Peggy Guggenheim's museum - was let by our Embassy in Rome for \$1 a year to Wake Forest University. This school was the *alma mater* of Graham Martin, who was Ambassador in Rome at

that time. That situation lasted for about a year, until one day I was passing this building and saw smoke pouring from the library window. Upon investigating, I found a group of students bombed out of their mind on drugs. They built a fire in the middle of the floor of the library.

Q: This was high drug period?

MURPHY: Very high !

Q: Let's stop here. Maybe Venice is a very good point to tell the reader more about the kinds of assistance that you give to destitute Americans, or troubled Americans, or "drugged Americans."

MURPHY: I'll try to explain what we were doing. I always found it a bit difficult doing work long distance - from Milan to Venice. When you are far from your office - you don't have the assistance, phones, secretaries, communications with Washington, etc. You are forced to become inventive as well as ingenious. We not only helped Americans who were ill - by arranging for medical assistance and visiting them in the hospital. We also spent a lot of time visiting prisoners in Venice. We spent much time with lawyers and in the city jails ...and at several police stations around the city.

Q: Visiting druggies mostly?

MURPHY: Mostly drug related cases - yes. And helping them with their legal representation, engaging attorneys. I also had several death cases in Venice.

Q: Death in Venice.

MURPHY: Yes - Bill - Death in Venice. But I began to think it was mostly "Suicide in Venice". I had a number of rather complicated suicides in Venice. And some were very messy suicides. And of course, we secure the estate for the relatives, and dispatch the bodies back home.

But, in addition, we also did commercial work.....a lot of it, in fact! We would look into commercial complaints. I'll never forget one day Bloomingdales of New York, ordered XXX number - a rather large quantity - of hand -blown glass figurines to be sold in Bloomingdales. Now - - these glass figures were all of Jewish characters. They were rabbis, cantors and representatives of typical Jewish characters living within the ghetto in Venice in the Middle Ages. There still exists a rather large ghetto in Venice - just near the main train station. Located in the ghetto are two or three Jewish glassblowers who produced these magnificent figurines. Many American companies believe these pieces of art are mass produced. They figured they could receive - let's say 2000 of these glass figurines - within a six month period. They complained to the Consulate when they didn't get their order filled on time. So I'd go to see these artisans.... and they would - of course - simply laugh. They'd explain, "Look it takes me nine hours to make one of these figures, and we just can't make 2000 in a short period. We've tried to explain it to these customers in New York - -they'll just have to wait." We got involved in a lot of this type of commercial work especially with the Murano glass works on the island off the coast.

Q: Commercial. I was going to say, you might make that distinction clear to the reader that the

Commercial Section in an Embassy doesn't normally handle commercial complaints. How did the other things vary from what you were doing in Paris? Was it the same kind of thing that you were doing?

MURPHY: The work in Milan was much more varied - - as I was involved in everything....all aspects of consular work. I mentioned the fact that Charlie Selak had no real interest in consular work and disliked having to deal with the public. Charlie retired a year after my arrival in Milan - and I was promoted to his position - as Chief of the Consular Section.

Q: There were a lot of American businessmen in northern Italy at the time, were there not? So you had financial people there, economic people?

MURPHY: That's right. They managed to keep our Section quite busy. For example, in our Notarial Unit, we had about two national employees just to do the work involved in notarizing documents, arranging for the taking of Court depositions, legalizing documents for use by American and Italian Courts. Much of the work was related to the enormous business interests which continues to exist between the two nations.

And then, we had, as I mentioned, a lot of Non-Immigrant Visa work, in addition to considerable passport and citizenship work in connection with the American business community and - above all - the presence of two large United States Military Bases within the consular district. There were at least 10,000 American residents of the city of Milan and surrounding areas. The Federal Benefits work (Social Security, Veterans Benefits, Black Lung, Railway Retirement, etc.) was also heavy - as was fraud within this area. Fraud investigations took a lot of our time. Our district extended all the way from Milan over to Venice, and in this area there is a lot of commerce. As we all know, the Italians are very clever and artistic people and they produce beautiful products. From that area of Italy the furniture, glasswork, china, silverware, firearms are all exceptional.

In addition, during my service in Milan we had several very difficult deaths of American citizens - caused by accidents, suicides as well as natural causes.

Q: A lot of these were Italian-Americans perhaps, or people with dual-citizenship?

MURPHY: Many were Italian-Americans. We had very complex situations involving cremation - a process little known in Italy in those days (pre-Vatican II). The cremations I was involved in were usually carried out in nearby Switzerland. I recall one particular death case of - - lets call him Mr. Jones. He died of old age in Venice where he and his wife owned a rather large *Palazzo*. One day Mrs. Jones called to let me know that her husband Jim had died. She said, "Jim died the way he would have wished to go. He was out in his *gondola* with their servant Giovanni at the helm". He simply had an acute heart attack. Mrs. Jones proceeded to tell me she had contacted the local undertaker - who would be coming to see me in Milan in the morning. Sure enough - at 9:00 AM in comes the undertaker - who happened to be the one the Consulate usually used in the city of Venice. Dressed entirely in black, and rubbing his hands together in that "Digger O'Dell" sort of way, he proceeded to tell me that he feared that he was not able to carry out Mrs. Jones' wishes in regard to her husband's final disposition. He then informed me Mrs. Jones had asked him to have her husband cremated - and "scatter his ashes over the Grand Canal in Venice.....the

city he loved so much." You can imagine the reaction of my Italian staff to this particular situation !! They were absolutely shocked to think of scattering human remains around the city of Venice! I managed to convince Mrs. Jones that the Italian Ministry of Health in Rome would never give permission for such a disposition of her husband's ashes. With resignation, she accepted the reply - and informed me that she would bring Jim's ashes to London - "because he was fond of that city, too!!"

We had many strange cases relating to the death of foreigners. For example, as the result of the clandestine burial of Evita Peron under a false name in the main Milan cemetery, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs directed that henceforth all foreign corpses had to be personally identified by the deceased's consular representative prior to burial or shipment to another country. From that day on, once or twice a week, I would go to the local city morgue to identify my fellow Americans - using the late citizen's passport photo as means of identification. I was usually joined - early in the morning - by some of my foreign diplomatic colleagues at the Milan City Morgue for the purpose of identifying corpses!! I assure you it was a very unpleasant task!

Q: Tell me, before you leave Milan..... just in comparison to Paris particularly. You saw in Paris an enormous bureaucracy, a lot of closed doors, a lack of communication, and incredible detail to sort of cover themselves, if you will.

MURPHY: Correct.

Q: Did Milan come out better? In leadership I'm sure it did.

MURPHY: The "old Foreign Service ways" were still alive when I was first assigned to Milan - but after a few years - things did improve in a dramatic way. Upon arrival in Milan, I found that the Consul General at post was treated as a God by the staff. His staff meetings were most unpleasant; in effect, he used his time to berate officers in front of their peers. As an example of his "management style" I'll provide an example: when I arrived at the post, I found a pile of three month's work of mail awaiting me. This had built up during the three months I was in transit (Home Leave, FSI training). Each piece of mail was opened - - and the stamps removed with scissors!

Q: The mail was actually opened so it could be read, or was read?

MURPHY: Well, I have no idea if it was read or not. I asked the Deputy Principal Officer, Chuck Johnson, what was going on. I was told that the Consul General's father-in-law in Switzerland was a stamp dealer. Thus, the Consul General took the liberty of opening all the incoming mail and cutting of the stamps for his father-in-law. Evidently the American staff was quite accepting of this fact - or else they were so intimidated by Mr. Earl T. Crain that they said nothing. I told Chuck that I objected to having anyone open my mail and that I intended to raise the matter at the first public opportunity. I was strongly counseled not to do this - for fear of reprisals. At my first staff meeting, with the Consul General and with eighteen or twenty Americans in the room, I proceeded to tell them what I had found on my arrival at Post. No one could believe I had the nerve to mention this fact. The Consul General was beside himself; he disclaimed all knowledge of the situation - - and directed the Administrative Officer to "look into

the matter". I am happy to report that from that day not a piece of private mail was opened at the Consulate General!!

Q: We probably still have prima donnas in America, people are people, but in those days they were...

MURPHY: They were special!!

Q: Things still were different than Paris - - in a smaller post?.

MURPHY: Yes Milan is a smaller post. I learned a lot;, we enjoyed our life in Milan, a place full of cultural amenities. The people at the post all worked together very well; everyone helped each other out in difficult situations. You know how it is in a small post. You become very friendly -- we still remain friendly with many of the officers assigned with us to Milan. As a matter of fact, last night I had dinner with someone who served at the post with me.

That was the time of, well let's see the interesting people at the post. Bradford Bishop comes to mind. I don't know if you remember Brad Bishop.

Q: The name I indeed remember. The man who disappeared after the murder of his family.

MURPHY: That's right. He murdered his entire family while on assignment in Washington following his posting in Milan.

Q: He has never been found.

MURPHY: Very strange. Here we have a Foreign Service Officer, a Yale graduate, very bright - with excellent career prospects. He was an Economic Officer in Milan. He had a wife and two children. He was the only son of a wealthy widowed mother - who came to see them often in Italy. His children were a bit older than ours but, on one occasion, we all went skiing together for a week in Barm - north of Milan, near Centra. Aside from being short tempered - and very critical of his wife, who came from a "less fortunate" background than he, Brad appeared to be a nice fellow. We were all shocked to hear of the tragic killing of all his family members - including his mother - a few years later in Washington. I recall inviting Annette and Brad to dinner, sometime towards the end of our tour in Milan - together with another couple - the French Consul General in Milan and his wife - Mr. et Mme. P. Amanrich. Strange as it may sound - six or seven years later this French Consul General also murdered his entire family! Following his Milan assignment, he was named Ambassador to the Holy See by President Pompidou. I recall that he, too, was a very intelligent - and most ambitious diplomatic officer. His wife, as I remember, was from a "good French family from the 16eme Arr. in Paris" which had lost most of their money - and she was thus forced to take a secretarial job - in the *Quai d'Orsay*. There she met her future husband. He was overjoyed with his appointment to the Vatican. As you are aware, Bill, this appointment is perhaps the most prestigious in the French diplomatic service. However, the joy did not last that long in Rome! In less than two years - immediately following the election of President Valery Giscard D'Estaing - Amanrich was recalled to Paris. It was reported that he was crushed after his relatively short tour at the Vatican.

Following his return to Paris, he "walked the halls" of the *Quai d'Orsay* for the next six months, during which time he turned down ambassadorships to several nations that he considered beneath him and his professional qualifications. After all, the ambassadorship to the Holy See for a French diplomat is a top assignment. Amanrich's predecessors were some of the most influential and noted men in France. After more than six months without an assignment in Paris,one evening while watching the TV news, Amanrich shot and killed his wife and children; went to an apartment on an upper floor in the same Paris apartment building and shot his mother-in-law. He then drove around the city all night and, in the early hours of the morning, gave himself up to the police. A few weeks later, he hanged himself in his prison cell.

Although we cannot be absolutely certain that Brad Bishop killed his family, all evidence points to the fact that it was he. It is an unbelievable coincidence that we had these two couples to dinner together in Milan years before these tragic events.

Q: Let's see. You have served in Milan along with them, and you also were involved in the Vatican.

MURPHY: That's right, Bill. A strange coincidence indeed, wouldn't you say?

MURPHY: Well - I was assigned to Genoa, Italy as Consul General.....but before going to Genoa, I was assigned to Senior Training. That took place at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. I spent six months there (fall 1980 to spring 1981). I was a member of the Class of 57 at the NATO Defense College - whose Commandant, at the time, was Admiral Sir Lancelot Bell Davis - (U.K.).

Q: What was that like? How did it prepare you for Genoa?

MURPHY: I had no idea what I was getting into, Bill - but, believe me, it was the most interesting and enjoyable training I ever experienced in the Foreign Service! First of all, my wife and youngest son, Marc, and I moved to Rome - to EUR, to be precise - that section of Rome created by Mussolini - between the city and the sea. It was a lovely area and we had a FSI furnished apartment on *Via delle Montagne Rocciose* (Rocky Mountain Road!!)

I was one of 55 students from various NATO nations. We were five civilians (mostly diplomats) and the rest were military - including four American Army, Naval and Air Force officers. Lectures were conducted in French and English (the NATO languages) - while the whole operation of the College - including the mess - was operated by the Italian military. The schedule consisted of a daily lecture - usually by someone of stature either in the academic or, political or military area. We frequently had Foreign Ministers, Ministers of Government or leading Military commanders from NATO Headquarters in Brussels or from one of the member states as our lecturer of the day. The lecture was divided into two hour long periods in the morning - after which we were free to pose any questions we wished. This was followed by a long Italian luncheon during which we again were free to engage our guest in conversation.

There were two major trips during my course: one to the US and Canada which stops in Europe at military bases in Lisbon, Portugal; Toronto & Ottawa in Canada; San Francisco, California; Cheyenne, Wyoming and Washington, DC A second tour, in Europe this time, included visits to military installations in Turkey, Greece, Germany, Holland, Belgium and France. At all these stops we were treated like kings and had the very best instruction available. Following a tour of a NATO military installation, or the Parliament of a country - we were addressed usually by the Minister of Defense and the Foreign Minister. All arrangements were military in their perfection - with the sole exception of our visit to the Department of State. We were to be addressed by three speakers - all Assistant Secretaries.....but none showed up for the briefing! The Germans, in particular, were disgusted with the Washington arrangements - and I heard about it for the rest of my time at the NATO Defense College!

The course ended with a mock NATO emergency situation - a “War Game”, as it were! I was - somehow - chosen to act the part of the Secretary General of NATO. It was all great fun - and most amazing to see how the military reacted to such situations! I must say that the civilians had more in common with each other - than they did with their military fellow citizens!

The NATO Defense College history is quite interesting: General Eisenhower established the College in Paris shortly after the formation of the Alliance in order that the leaders of the Alliance - both civilian and military - could get to know and work with each other. It certainly worked in my case: I became very friendly with all of the members of my course and, subsequently, when I would have a military-related problem with one of the NATO nations - I would call my buddy in the relevant capital or military base. The problem would be solved in no time flat!! Had this not been the case, from Genoa I would have had to contact our Embassy in Rome ; they, in turn, would have contacted the Italian Foreign Ministry: then they would go through their military - to the proper military base. Weeks would have been wasted!

I highly recommend the NATO Defense College for a senior officer being subsequently posted in Europe - for its academic content as well as the human experience of living and working with NATO members without a lot of protocol and diplomacy!!

Q: How did you enjoy your subsequent posting as Consul General in Genoa, Italy? How long were you there, Peter?

MURPHY: Immediately following the NATO Defense College, I was assigned to Genoa. I was there from 1981 through 1984. All in all, I consider this assignment to have been one of the most interesting in my career. Now- -- - I know you’ll say “I’ve heard this before”. But - to tell the truth, Bill, all of my assignments were interesting and I threw myself into the work with great abandon! I truly enjoyed the post; the American and Italian employees - and most of all the work with the fascinating and wonderful people of Northwest Italy!

The staff of the Consulate General consisted of a Political Officer, a Consular Officer, an Administrative/Communications Officer; a USIS Officer plus about 16 Italian employees. Genoa, as you perhaps know, is one of our oldest diplomatic posts - established in 1763. It is quite logical when you think of it: located in a major port in the commercially active Mediterranean Sea, the city and area was very important in commercial - and political terms - to

our fledgling nation at the time of the Consulate General's establishment.

During my tour there I had consular jurisdiction over the regions of Liguria, Piedmont and the Val d'Aosta. The consulate in Turin had been closed shortly prior to my arrival - so I had all that interesting and beautiful area to work with! I established close contacts with leading Italian industries which were important for American commerce: FIAT, Pirelli, Otto Melara, Ansaldo. I facilitated the entry of several American firms into the local Italian market as well as promoting cultural exchanges with major universities and colleges in the northwest of Italy. I was also active among the Jewish community - especially in Turin - where I made a major address at the main synagogue on the subject of Jewish integration in the United States. The evening was considered rather sensational - especially since the small Jewish community in Turin (reduced to 3,000 from a pre-war maximum of 30,000 in the city proper) was mainly composed of Communist professors from the university.

The political work of the Consulate General was also fascinating given the fact that most of the consular district was either Communist or Socialist in political representation. The Mayor of Genoa at the time, Fulvio Cerofolini, was no friend of the United States. In fact, Cerofolini went out of his way to ignore our Consulate - and me personally whenever it could earn him points among the electorate! Of course, the Communist Unions were very strong in the port of Genoa as they had been for the past two decades. It was actually because of the strength of the Left that the port of Genoa declined in importance - - it was just too expensive for large scale shipping. Thus - the ports to the south - Livorno and La Spezia - picked up much of Genoa's former business. Many of the political personalities with whom I had to work - Senators, Deputies, President of the Province, etc. were from Leftist parties (PC - Partito Comunista or PSI - Partito Socialista Italiana). I got along well with everyone - no matter their political ticket - and managed to travel frequently to the far reaches of the consular district to "wave the flag". I feel this is a most important part of being a Principal Officer in a constituent post in a country like Italy - or France. So often the officers in the Embassy are desk-bound - - and never see anyone except their counterparts in the Foreign Ministry or the Ministry of Defense.

Shortly after my arrival in Genoa I found that none of the Embassy experts I tried to invite to make official visits to the consular district were free to come because "of the press of business in Rome". I solved that! Shortly after the arrival at post of a new Commercial Counselor, Economic Minister or one of the Military Attachés - I would call them and invite them to hold a conference in - say - Imperia - or Asti - or Turin. They could hardly say that their calendars were full - - so were forced to agree with my suggestions!!

Richard N. Gardner was the first Ambassador for whom I worked in Italy. Shortly before leaving the NATO Defense College in Rome to go to Genoa, Gardner invited me to the *Villa Taverna* for a three hour discussion of the wonders of the Genoa consular district. I vividly recall his providing me with a long list of all the influential Italians who could "do things for me." When I inquired further into what he meant by this, Gardner proceeded to enumerate those influential people in Turin and Genoa who could lend me a ski chalet for the winter gratis; get me free ski passes; free weekends at mountain resorts, etc. Needless to say, I stayed clear of all of the "contacts" he gave me!

I enjoyed very much working with Ambassador Maxwell (Max) Rabb - and he was ambassador in Rome for almost my entire tour in Genoa. I recall his first visit to the consular district - when he and his wife, Ruth, first came to Turin. Max was very impressed with the President of FIAT - Avv. Gianni Agnelli, Carlo DiBenedetto and other well know industrialists in the area. We visited the usual round of local officials - Prefect, Mayor, Cardinal Archbishop, FIAT - and the American School in Turin. We then proceeded to Genoa where that same evening we had a black-tie dinner for over 400 Rotary members from throughout Northwest Italy. In the car going to the dinner - which was being held in honor of the new American Ambassador - Max said to me "I'll just speak for a few moments and then you give the main address". I almost fell over because all of the attendees - and most of the Italian press - would be there to hear what the new American Ambassador to Italy had to say for himself!! Well - somehow we got through the evening. Around midnight, as we were beginning to move towards the door (after such an exhausting day!), I received a call from the Prime Minister informing me that General Dozier - an American General stationed with NATO troops in the Brescia area - had just been kidnaped by terrorists at his home! All hell broke out! Max insisted on driving back to Rome that evening so that he could be at the Embassy the next day. At his age (he must have been 72 then) - and with him being completely exhausted after such a grueling day in Turin and Genoa - I don't know how he made it back to Rome - but he did! Throughout the next few weeks I played an intimate part in the search for Dozier's kidnappers - via contacts with FIAT security in Turin. It was a most interesting time in my Genoa assignment - and one which I would not care to repeat!

Shortly after this we had a very nice three day break since Princess Grace and Prince Rainier had invited us to be their guests at the Palace in Monaco for the celebrations of their 25th wedding anniversary. It was a splendid weekend - filled with dinners, concerts and lots of fun. However - the night before the actual anniversary - President Ronald Reagan was shot by Mr. Hinckley outside the Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC I remember Grace calling our room about midnight to let us know what had happened. She asked us to come to their private apartments to watch the newscast direct on their television from the United States. (CNN was unknown in those days and it was the first time in my life that I saw a direct broadcast live from abroad!) After such an event, I had to return at once to the consulate - as it would not have looked good for me to be enjoying myself at celebrations with our President in the hospital suffering from gun shot wounds! Jackie, however, stayed for the formal dinner and the private concert in the Throne Room offered by Miroslav (Slava) Rostropovich. Kindly - he sent me an autographed copy of the evening's program telling me that I was missed!

But...back to Genoa. I have so many great memories of Genoa - the wonderful Italian employees and warm, friendly Genovese we met, a very good group of American officers, as well; the fascinating work, the many CODELS (ugh!), the frequent walks through the "*vicoli*" - the narrow streets behind the consulate going towards the port; and, best of all, the travels around what I think is (or, I guess, "*was*" since it has closed now) the best and most interesting consular district in Italy! These streets were like an opera setting: people seemed to live outside in the good weather. There were beautiful churches, fruit-filled markets; old restaurants from which delicious odors floated at noon time; then - there were prostitutes galore on just about every corner- and even printed signs on various street corners in English left over from World War II warning American sailors not to frequent local prostitutes! We often went to the Cafe where Verdi took his afternoon coffee -- and to a nearby baker where he bought bread for his evening

meal.

I really could write a book on Genoa, Bill. The city is a treasure trove - - not from a tourist's point of view, for the city itself is rather ugly in spite of its spectacular location. But - inside the homes of the Genovese you will find artistic treasures found no where else in the world. I remember Marchesa Carlotta Cataneo Adorno showing me an original Raffaello in her bedroom! She was a friend of the Queen of England who, after a State Visit to Rome, came to Genoa for two days just to view Carlotta's art collection. The universities, too, were fantastic - both in Genoa and Turin. I recall that on one occasion, at the invitation of Alberto Bolaffi - grandson of the founder of the famed stamp house - I addressed Turin's Jews in the synagogue of the city on the subject of "Jews in America". Given the fact that most of the 4,000 Jews living in Turin (down from 200,000 before the war) were intellectuals - and thus leftists - it was a most interesting evening. Never have I seen such security precautions as when I visited the synagogue. The next day Ambassador Maxwell Rabb called from Rome after having read reports of my talk in the national press. "What in the world is a Murphy doing giving a talk about Jews," he said! He was simply delighted with the public reaction and told me that he could never get an officer from the Embassy in Rome to go out and talk to a group of people on such a subject. For this reason - as well as many others - I truly lament the fact that the government has closed so many consulates around the world. Nice is now closed; Genoa is closed -- as is Palermo, Venice.....and Florence is next on the list. Comparatively speaking, it costs so little to keep a permanent presence in a nation -- and the result of even a one man/woman consulate is unmeasurable -- if you happen to have the right officer in place!

Before leaving the Genoa segment of my career, I want to not how pleased I was that my work there was officially recognized by the Government of Italy. Shortly before departing the post, the Prefect of Liguria (Dr. Pupillo) decorated me with the order of Commander of the Italian Republic. This was a rare distinction for a Consul of any nation. It was the first time in history that an American Consul had been so honored - although several of our Ambassadors - including Ambassador Maxwell Rabb - had been decorated by the Italian government. I learned later that the decoration had been proposed by a group of Ligurian political figures who wanted to express their appreciation for the work I had accomplished in fostering Italo-American relations. In addition, I was made an honorary citizen of the town of Favale Di Malvaro (June 18, 1984) in the Fontana Buona. This was the birthplace of Giannino - founder of the Bank of America and Italy in San Francisco. There were several past and recent immigrants to California from that area and the affinity between the United States and that part of Italy was very close. Each year there was a day set aside to celebrate the "return of the Immigrants" - and return they did - together with their children and grandchildren. Jackie and I always participated in the day's celebrations - and we even visited the Ligurian community in California when we were on Home Leave from Genoa. I recall that it was a fantastic event - and we were welcomed with open arms! According to the declaration of the city council, I was granted honorary citizenship as follows "*Il consiglio comunale Di Favale Di Malvaro nella riunione del 18 giugno 1984 ha conferito al Dott. Mr. Peter K. Murphy, Console Generale degli Stati Uniti d'America a Genova - la cittadinanza onoraria Di questo comune - " per il suo amore verso l'Italia, per suo alto spirito Di comprensione e difesa dei dritti altrui, per sil suo delicato sentire nell'ascoltare e seguire le istanze degli emigranti liguirii in generale e Di quelli dell'entroterra chiavarese in particolare e, infine, per l'affettuosa amicizia e l'attaccamento Che il Dott. Murphy nutre per il comune Di*

Favale de Malvaro". I was very pleased to be so honored by this city in Italy which had contributed so many of its talented sons and daughters to the cultural and commercial enrichment of the state of California and the San Francisco area in particular.

ROBERT BARBOUR
Political Officer
Rome (1967-1972)

Ambassador Robert Barbour was born in December 1927 in Lakewood, Ohio. He attended the University of Tennessee and George Washington University. Throughout his career, he has served in countries including Iraq, Japan, Vietnam, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Surinam. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 30, 1992.

Q: Then you went back to language training?

BARBOUR: Back to Italian, then went to Rome in September of 1967, with my family by ship.

Q: The Constitution or Independence?

BARBOUR: The Atlantic; actually it was the last voyage. It was a one class ship, wonderful time; lots of children, lots of programs for children. Ten or twelve days to Naples via Casa Blanca, Gibraltar, Barcelona, Nice, Monaco, Genoa.

Q: What was your job?

BARBOUR: I started out as number two in the political section with the external portfolio, dealing with the Foreign Ministry. That was a very topical portfolio-- whatever was going on consult the Italians on, Africa, Europe, Middle East, Far East, whatever. It was Italian foreign policy which was, after France, very different from working with French policy.

Q: Who was the Ambassador, the DCM, and the chief political officer?

BARBOUR: Fred Reinhardt was the Ambassador, a superb Ambassador; a man of great of presence, knew the Italians, commanded wide respect. Frank Malloy was the DCM, obviously how I happened to go there, and Sam Gammon was the counselor for political affairs. Very strong.

Q: One has a pretty good shot at what French foreign policy is, even though it is at odds with the United States, but Italian policy seems hard to grasp. How would you describe the basics of Italian foreign policy and our role in it at that time?

BARBOUR: In the context of France, it was the mirror image. Dean Acheson said that de Gaulle created an image of a France that gave an impression of strength that did not exist. Italians had the wherewithal for an active and strong foreign policy but they chose not to exercise it. Their interests were Europe and the United States, and to some degree former Italian parts of Africa. They maintained relations with everybody, had Embassies all over the world, had commercial and economic interests, but foreign political interests of a world scale they did not have. I remember during my time in Washington when we created in NATO the nuclear planning group that was to have been of five countries; Italy was not included in the original group because it was a non-nuclear power. The Italians were terribly upset at being left out, and by dint of stirring up great commotion they managed to get themselves included. The reason that they were so concerned is very typical of their foreign policy interests--it would have looked bad for Italy to be left out. Impressions, appearance; appearances are very important. Appearances would have been bad to have been left out so they got themselves in and didn't play much of a role, of course.

Their Ambassador then was ..?.. who was somewhat the Italian counterpart of Alphant; he cut a wide swath in Washington society. Very active, lived in that residence up on Sixteenth Street where he was mugged once as I recall, and a rock was thrown through the window. It was not a happy neighborhood but they hung on there for a long time. He played a role in Washington that was disproportionate to their interests and disproportionately large to what they had to contribute, but disproportionately large in those areas that really mattered, relations with the United States and NATO. EC at that time was just in the developing stage.

Q: Did you find your political section working with your desk to make sure that the Italians were included in things?

BARBOUR: No, we didn't have to play that role; the Italians played that very successfully and skillfully for themselves. The reporting was basically on Italian politics, trying to keep things sorted out; who was up who was down, what party A was doing, what party B was doing. The reporting assignments were divided up so that one person did the Christian Democratic Party and the Vatican, one person did the left, the Socialists and Communists, and I think there was a third person who did all other parties. So we had three people on Italian domestic politics, which is, of course, a great game. The Italians invented the game and played it better than anybody else.

Q: You were a new boy on the block, you weren't one of the old Italian hands. I must say in my short time in Italy I wondered whether the game was worth it though it was interesting; nothing seemed to change. Did you ever have that feeling, wondering what it was all about?

BARBOUR: No, I don't think it was "what is this all about?". The first item of priority in Italian domestic politics at that time was relations with the communists, PCI; we didn't see them.

Q: We didn't have any contact with them at all?

BARBOUR: Overtly we had no contact, covertly we had some very low level, discrete, and unproductive and uninteresting contacts. They were not interested in dealing with us in that way, they wanted to talk to the Americans in the middle of the street and be seen doing it. So we were

very skittish of the communists and we were very skittish of the Italian establishment's dealings with them that were taking place all the time, even more than we knew. The Foreign Minister was, or became after I arrived, Pietro Nenni, a Socialist. There was a lot of ruffling of feathers in Washington because Socialists at that time were just one shade away from communists. So it was the Communist Party, its ups and downs, and ambitions, and presumptuousness that was our first concern. Secondly, and to a much greater extent as time passed, was the internal weakness of the Christian Democratic Party. We knew, and kept saying, that though governments came and went all the time that was stability not instability because look who was in them. You also had the opening to the left when the Socialists were brought in. That had taken place before I arrived but it was then in play, so the maneuverings had their interesting and important gradations and we were very much a part of reporting them and analyzing them. The interest was very high. You mentioned earlier the Congressional attitude toward France, it was much greater toward Italy because you had a small but very active, an occasionally emotional, Italian constituency there which the Italians knew how to work very well.

Q: Did this opening to the left make any difference?

BARBOUR: No, but we were afraid it might, that they might let the communists in and then goodness knows what might happen. We had, and I guess still do, some very important military facilities in Italy. We were concerned mostly about that; and we were concerned about keeping the establishment in office, helping it, supporting it, which was the reason that we would not undercut them by seeing the communists. It was all very active and at that time given great importance.

Q: Did you have a feeling that we were still giving CIA money to the Christian Democrats? It was certainly an open secret that we made tremendous contributions back in 1948 to the election, but the charge has been leveled at us today that by our contributions we helped sustain a very corrupt regime.

BARBOUR: I don't there there is any question, we were terribly afraid of the alternative. The alternative was the left--the Communists and the Socialists. We remained at that time very concerned about the possibilities that the Communists would gain strength.

Q: At that time, how did we view the Communists as being a tool of the Soviets?

BARBOUR: If you were in a communist party anywhere you were ipso facto a tool of the Soviets. I don't think we made any distinction between the two. The Italian Communists at that time still had the post Togliatti leadership, Enrico Berlinguer, and on foreign policy he toed the Soviet line, he never departed from it. On internal things he had his own ideas, but on NATO, Germany, he was very much a supporter of the communists; he was not the apologist that the French communists were but he certainly was a supporter. He had to, that was where his money was coming from.

Q: What about the Communists and NATO? We had Sixth fleet bases, air bases, a lot of stuff in Italy and a lot of the working force was communist.

BARBOUR: It was not an issue; I do not recall it being an issue. There would be occasional strikes and things like that. But don't forget that the Italian trade unions, each one of which belonged to a different party, were also very much a part of the establishment.

Q: There was not a use of the labor movement to disrupt NATO activities?

BARBOUR: No, the most serious events, with enormous implications for the following years, were the beginnings of extreme left radicalism. I remember that one day about noon I was going to the Foreign

Ministry in an Embassy car and we drove through a park, I forget its name, and suddenly we were surrounded by students and police. There was a big riot going on; we were not bothered as we were on the fringes. You could flag that as the beginning of the far left turmoil in Italian politics which went on for some years, and indeed the Red Brigades and others soon followed. That December, 1968 I guess, the Milan bombings and the Banca ..?.. bombing, which was just around the corner from the Embassy. One evening about six o'clock a big bang ..?.. the building, I walked over to see what was going on and somebody said the boiler had blown up. It was not that at all, it was a bomb. That was the episode and the beginning of a situation that became much worse in the ensuing two or three years.

Q: We had a Red Brigade killing in Naples in 1980. Were we getting any reporting on the development of these extreme left-wing groups?

BARBOUR: Not internally, nobody was. They were quite closed at the beginning. I think our estimate of them at the time was correct--unpredictable and dangerous, likely to grow. The Italian reaction at that time was somewhat confused; this was at the early stages, before the Italians got into them through their own drug addicts which really broke the backbone some years later. It was a difficult period.

Q: Did we have much of a feel for what was going on in the universities at that time?

BARBOUR: The Italian universities at that time were to a large degree written off by us as educational institutions. They were hotbeds of political extremism, the students were students in name only, their degrees were not worth anything. I don't know if I am answering your question. We accepted them as being hothouses of political radicalism.

Q: And what was the feeling? That most people would go through them and when they came out settle into the real world?

BARBOUR: No. These people were different, these people were really wild and they were killing people.

Other than that, that evaluation of the Italian university system--there were a couple that were considered least political; I think Pisa maintained a standard and maybe Torino. Certainly the University of Rome was really out of bounds.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover in your time in Rome?

BARBOUR: There were two phases. One when I was doing external affairs. In December of 1967, as I shaved that morning I heard that the King of Greece had arrived in the middle of the night, in exile from a failed anti-Colonels coup in Athens in April. I heard it on the radio and then as I walked to work past the Greek Embassy it was surrounded by police, television vans, and the usual turmoil that goes with that sort of thing. Late that afternoon I went over to the Spanish Embassy to call on a colleague and got back to the Embassy about 7:00 and was called in to see the Ambassador. He said that he had been on the phone with the Department about the King and they had said that they wanted to get in touch with him and keep in touch with him; "detail somebody to that job." So he wanted me to do that. He had arranged to call on the King that evening at 9:00 but was leaving by train at 10:30 to go skiing with his son. I would go with him to go see the King and do whatever was necessary after that. So off we went to see the King, who was in his cousin's--the Duke of Hesse--beautiful little villa smack in the middle of Rome, concealed from sight, behind walls, enclosing about ten acres; a little jewel. We talked to him and he gave us his version of what had happened, why he was there and who had let him down, things like that. Then we walked out through the paparazzi and the hordes of newspapermen and klieg lights to the car and Reinhardt said, "Don't stop." We went back to his house while he packed his bag and said to me, "Now you go back to the Embassy and I'll be up in (so-and-so) and call me if you need me." That was the beginning of an episode that lasted all the time I was in Rome.

Q: You mean a continuing relationship with the King?

BARBOUR: Yes.

Q: What was your impression of the King?

BARBOUR: I don't want to go into too much detail because he is still...I don't think it would be fair to him. I had an intimate relationship with him, I saw him frequently. During those days when Reinhardt was skiing, I saw him at least once a day, at his request. I climbed over fences and went through back walls and went back and wrote a telegram, never indicating that the Ambassador was out of town. "Constantine told us this afternoon..."

In response to Constantine's request for a meeting..." I never fingered the Ambassador for being away. In the early days it was an interesting and exciting period and we kept it quiet, I must say.

Q: What was our interest?

BARBOUR: We didn't know, we weren't sure what our interest was. This was 1967, Johnson was President. We didn't really know what to make of it, or him, or the situation in Greece. We were not comfortable with the Colonels; Constantine had had a good image in Washington, but we didn't know what to make of him and this may have been the first time that we ever had anyone who spent long hours with him while he talked. For somebody in my situation it was quite interesting.

Q: Was his mother, Queen Frederika, around, was she a factor?

BARBOUR: She was there when he arrived. He arrived with his mother, wife, two children and his sister, and Ambassador--I have forgotten his name--who was his Grand Chamberlain. The King wanted to talk about Greek personalities who were rather far off my screen at that time; but fortunately everything is phonetic, at least I could write down the sounds. It was an interesting period, interesting but I don't think very important.

Q: You continued this until the time you left in 1972?

BARBOUR: Yes. He moved out of the Embassy where the Ambassador was extremely uncomfortable having him as a guest; he moved from there to a hotel, another hotel, into a house on the Appian Way and then into a house in the country. I saw him, of course, with less and less frequency.

Q: Did you find a change in this relationship when the Nixon administration came in?

BARBOUR: Yes, there was a change because we no longer had any doubts. Kissinger came in with realpolitik, one hundred percent pragmatism exactly; the Colonels were in, the King was out, so be it.

Q: What did this do to this connection that you had?

BARBOUR: It had never been easy for him to establish a direct, substantive relationship with people in Washington at the highest levels, but there had been a semblance of interest and that semblance ended.

Q: I was consul general in Athens from 1970 to 1974 and that was a time when we were trying to deal with the Colonels straight on.

BARBOUR: Of course he always dreamed of going back and resuming his throne and was always led to believe by the various players that maybe a deal could be made or something would come of it. His dreams were always of resuming his throne. The people in Athens never told him it was utterly impossible, in fact the reverse. He kept his airplane for a long time, the airplane that he had flown to Rome on; it stayed there for some months, as I recall, and finally he sent it back. They maintained a civil list for him and he was in communication with them.

Q: It wasn't a violent break, he made his move but it wasn't a bloody one. The royal family there had never completely taken in Greece, it was a German family and Queen Frederika had gotten a lot of notoriety because of her political views. It wasn't a beloved relationship. Also he failed; if you do a coup and then fail, well the Greeks are political animals.

BARBOUR: He probably had a role there as a British type monarch, someone who represents national unity above the constant warring of the political parties.

Q: Was there something else we should cover?

BARBOUR: There was the worst Presidential visit I ever experienced.

Q: Oh good, I like to hear about those.

BARBOUR: Lyndon Johnson, December 1967, had gone to the funeral of the Australian Prime Minister who died while swimming. While there he felt he had to return by way of Vietnam, none of this had anything to do with Rome. In the third week of December, I suppose, Harry Shlaudeman, who was working for the Secretary then, showed up in Rome and was seen in and out of the Ambassador's office several times. I think, in retrospect, Harry had been sent there by the Secretary to tell Reinhardt very privately that something might happen. Sure enough, in Vietnam, by this time it was about December 21st or 22nd, the President had the brainstorm of thinking that in the context of Vietnam what could be better than to be in Rome with the Pope on Christmas Eve. Horace Busby and somebody else showed up in Rome and took rooms in the hotel across from the Embassy, where they stayed; no contact. On about the 22nd, I think, they came over and informed the Ambassador that the President had decided to visit the Pope on Christmas Eve and make an appeal for peace in Vietnam, but we were not to say anything to the Italians. I guess at that particular moment both Frank Malloy and Sam Gavin were away and I was sort of sitting in the DCM's office for reasons I am not sure, so I was in that meeting. Reinhardt said, "He can't come to Italy without seeing the President of Italy." One of them said that he didn't like that at all, he knew Johnson's mind, Johnson wanted to see the Pope, come in and leave. Reinhardt made his point again, it would be a national insult, he could not just come in and go without touching Italian base. One of them said, "I think we have to remember for whom we are working." Reinhardt said, "I know full well, I do not need to be told, for whom I am working; but he cannot come here without seeing the President of Italy." "So be it, but do not tell the Italians." This was at most three days before he was due to arrive.

Before long, the Italians were on to it themselves, in principle if not in detail; then we were authorized to discuss arrangements. Yes, he would go out to see the President of Italy at his Villa out near Fiumicino. But some of the details, such as where he would land were not to be revealed because a decision had not been made whether he would land at Fiumicino or Ciampino. All the vast machinery was set in place; the White House had sent some White House helicopters to Spain where they awaited orders, a vehicle was to be dropped at the airport, etc. So we began planning; by now it was the 23rd of December and he was due the next day.

Q: Italy sort of turns off around Christmas.

BARBOUR: What happened was that December 24th was a very foggy day in Spain, nothing could take off; no helicopters or aircraft with vehicles or anything else. So we brought some helicopters down from Aviano, American Army helicopters with pilots who had probably never seen Rome before, much less by dark. We staked out some landing grounds up behind St. Peters; did all the things we could, rushing like mad to make the necessary provisions for the visit. I remember, and regret to this day, that a colleague and friend who was working for President Saragat asked, "Tell us what airport he is going to use, for goodness sake." I said, "I don't know." And that was a lie; by that time we did know. I always regret that; it is the only time I ever told a colleague anything that wasn't true. I remember it and I still regret it. Anyhow, that afternoon, December 24th, we were told that he would land at Fiumicino and while on the ground he would

want his friends to do shopping for him, Christmas presents and things like that. I may be a day late, it may have been December 23rd because I believe it was also my birthday; but during such turmoil and confusion

I was not really sure which. The Secret Service came in and together we drove out to a field near the President of Italy's lodge where President Johnson was supposed to land in the helicopters. It was just a field, nothing more; to their great credit the Secret Service just looked at it and said, "Let's hope they don't suck anything up." So we put some automobiles around with their lights on and the Italians tolled off a couple of battalion helicopters to lead. The President landed, got in the helicopter at Fiumicino with the Chief of Protocol and Ambassador Reinhardt and turned to Reinhardt and the President's Ambassador Orlandi ..?.., a very distinguished man who spoke perfect English, and said to Reinhardt, "I only wanted to come here to see the Pope." Those were his true feelings, I am sure. They landed out there in total darkness, got down all right, had their meetings, got back on the helicopters to fly to see the Pope. The Italians leading, in to St. Peter's; there was a small field behind the North American College in the Vatican which was the landing site. There were some automobiles with headlights out on this patch of grass which was quite wet because it had been raining. We had somebody from the Embassy out in the middle of it waving a flashlight, that was where they were to touch down. The helicopter with the President in it did go down and as it landed, the ground being so wet, it sank in up to the middle of its wheels. The pilot reported it and the second helicopter said "Not me, I'm not going in there," and he landed smack in the middle of St. Peter's Square.

Then while all this was going on the President's friends were buying Christmas presents; paintings--he wanted so many paintings delivered to the airplane to pick from--and jewelry from stores that had to be opened up at 11:00 o'clock on the night of the 23rd. It was just a haze, I can't even remember the dates.

Anyhow he left leaving the Italians with a bad taste in their mouth, the Pope unwilling to commit himself to support the American policy in Vietnam. It was a Presidential visit the likes of which, fortunately, I never saw again.

Q: Did you have a lot of ruffled feathers or did the Italians just take the measure of the man and say okay?

BARBOUR: The Italians put the best face on it, as they know how to do better than anyone else in the world and portrayed it as a very successful, pleasant visit between two chiefs of state, after which he also called on the Pope.

Q: Shall we stop here? We will end the Rome business in 1972 and move on to what you did after that.

Q: Today is March 16, 1994. Did you have anything to add about Rome?

BARBOUR: Yes, there were a couple of points I wanted to go back to. In 1969 I became head of the political section, working for an amazing Ambassador, highly controversial, about whom, as

I once told him, no one has had mixed feelings, they are either very strongly for or very strongly against. That was Graham Martin. Graham Martin had a strength of personality that is very rare in the Foreign Service. He did not hesitate, when he felt strongly enough, to tell a Cabinet Minister that it would not be convenient for him to visit ..?.. at that time, tell another one that if he wanted to come at that time, he, Martin, would not be involved. On another occasion, this is purely anecdotal, after the Agricultural Attaché had been injured in an automobile accident and the medical bills were piling up and were not being paid to the great annoyance of the local hospital--the Department of Agriculture had shilly-shallied--Martin directed the Embassy to pay the bills and charge Agriculture. Then he sent the Secretary of Agriculture a telegram saying, "I have done this and I am sure had you known about it you would have done the same thing." And the thing was finished. He was an amazing individual.

As far as that related to me in the political section, there were two things that were significant. One was that we began to have contacts with the MSI, the Italian Socialist movement, the neo-fascists, the Mussolini descendants, who have now more or less gone out of business. Giorgio Almirante was the Secretary-General of that party. They had been wanting to have contacts with the Embassy for some time, but the policy had been that we would not deal with the extreme left, the communists, and we would not deal with the extreme right. In any case, Almirante, through intermediaries, sent word to Martin that he would like to talk to somebody in the Embassy, and Martin, who had a somewhat conspiratorial streak himself said fine. He called me in one day and said, "Mr. So-and-so will be calling you to arrange an appointment for Mr. Almirante and you should see him." With great trepidation and misgivings I agreed to receive him. We had a chat which I must say I found extremely interesting, refreshing. He was, I guess, in many ways a rascal; he started out in life, as I recall, as a clown in a circus where I think his parents were. I found the conversation refreshing because I had the feeling that he was being completely honest. When I asked if his group was responsible for an incident here, an incident there, he was quite clear. One of them he said, "Well, not really," another one he said, "No," another, "No, that was done by So-and-so," one was done by his party but he said, "That was a dumb thing to do; I told him not to do it and it won't be repeated." So I found this kind of candor refreshing and he was also an engaging fellow. He came to the Embassy several times and we had our first meetings with the MSI, and I thought they were quite rewarding. He came to Washington once and asked me to lunch and I told him that I was sorry but I couldn't. He said, "Well, I understand and I will not embarrass you."

The other thing of significance was that under Martin we developed a coherent effort with the Christian Democratic Party, to try to get them to clean up their act. Over and over again, every time we met with somebody, on his instructions, we would say, "The DC (Christian Democrats) should stop doing this, get out of this, do so and so, disassociate yourself." I did this in every meeting I had.

Q: When you say disassociate yourself, disassociate yourself from what?

BARBOUR: Practices, individuals known to be corrupt--of course we didn't know how corrupt the whole system was at that point, although we were fairly clear that some in the DC were very corrupt. So every meeting I had, at his instructions it was to get across that message, that support from the United States will depend on the Christian Democratic Party improving its stature and

its appeal to the voters and that means internal reform. Over and over again. Of course we did it not because we loved the Christian Democrats but because we feared inroads from the left. Obviously a weakened Christian Democratic party meant a weakened bulwark against the communists. So we had this as a coherent program throughout the last couple of years I was there.

Q: Graham Martin had the strength of his character but I have always thought of him as being "Louis the XI," the spider king sitting around there. I would think that as political counselor you would have had a hell of a time knowing what he was doing. I am told that when he came in he would read everything on your desk.

BARBOUR: Everything. He was enigmatic; he was disconcerting, he was upsetting, he was all kinds of things because he would roam around. I would be sitting at my desk and he would walk in and sit down beside me and ask, "What are you doing?" Then he would talk, that could be upsetting because he was not the kind of person that you were comfortable with. He was also disconcerting because he didn't sleep much and he would take everything home and read it late at night--the memcoms, the outgoing telegrams, this and that. Maybe three months later he would say, "But that's no what you said in your memcom of three months ago when you said such and such." It was something that kept one on one's toes. If there was something for him to sign in an outgoing telegram, I would take it in to him, hoping to drop it on his desk and say, "Here's the telegram about so-and-so," and get out. That rarely happened. He would say, "Sit down." Then he might put the telegram aside and talk about other things--probe, question, instruct. This was usually at lunch time and sometimes Bob ..?.., who was his staff aide, would bring in his lunch from the cafeteria and Martin would tell him to put it over there and continue. This might go on for another fifteen or twenty minutes, or half an hour, and the lunch was getting cold. I think he only ate lunch to keep alive. He seemed to have no interest in any sort of hedonistic pursuit; he was interested in people and power and zeroed in on them.

My relationship with him was, I must say, always very friendly. One day as I was about to go off and have lunch with an Under Secretary or somebody, he said, "I want you to tell him," and he ticked off five points all in the area of what to do within the party to straighten it out. We had lunch, we chatted, in the course of which I made the points, four of them at least. I went back and was writing my memcom when word came that the Ambassador wanted to see me. So I went in and he said, "Tell me about your lunch." So I did. "Did you tell him a, b, c, d?" "Yes sir." "Did you tell him e?" "No sir." He bridled, it got very cool, very frosty, which came quite easily to him. "Why not?" I took a deep gulp and said, "I forgot." And he laughed, to my astonishment. He said, "I was afraid you simply decided not to do what I told you to do." Well that was a great lesson.

Vis-a-vis the Christian Democratic Party, we became quite close to some of the reformers and were helpful to them. Some of the mavericks who were trying to do some dramatic things in the way of reform. Throwing out the old leadership, for example. We were quite sympathetic to them and helped them as much as we could.

Q: In the light of later and previous experience, did you find that Graham Martin had power in the Congress or the State Department that meant he could do his own thing more than others?

BARBOUR: When the telegram came back from the Secretary of Agriculture about paying the Agricultural Attaché's bill, it said exactly what it would have said if he had written it himself-- "Thank you for your message, I appreciate what you have done; you were quite right." I said to Martin, "Well, you have won another one." He looked up with those steel gray eyes of his and said, "I don't go into these to lose." Another day--these conversations at lunch were frequently on how to be a successful Ambassador, why he was a successful Ambassador. It was not focused on him, just his thoughts, lots of rumination about how he should have been doing then what you're doing now. He took on people at any level because he worked for the President, the Secretary of State was an intermediary; he worked for the President, he was the President's representative. I forget the observation I made, something about going to the mat on issues and he said, "I don't really like these fights, but people think I do and therefore I don't lose very many." So these were all lessons in the exercise of power.

Q: As long as we are on Graham Martin, were there any things that you carried over in your later career that you found were lessons learned from Graham Martin.

BARBOUR: Subconsciously I suppose. I never thought before doing something how Graham Martin would have done something. The person I asked myself about most was Frank Malloy, how he would have handled it, because he handled the most difficult situations with great finesse and they always seemed to come out exactly the way he wanted them to with no breakage. With Martin it was things like before you do anything you have to get your facts right, be sure of your ground, and if you are sure of your ground don't run away from it. I guess that's the basic message. Don't pick fights unnecessarily, but if you're sure, go ahead. I would never have the chutzpah to take a sledge hammer to a cabinet secretary the way he would not hesitate to do. I think I may have told you the story about when the Vice President came to Bangkok. Johnson was Vice President and he gave a State dinner and the question was the Vice President's return toast. Martin said that he would give it as he was the representative of the President.

In Rome he did not have much respect for the Secretary of State, Mr. Rogers, because he was not a power wielder. The power in the administration in foreign affairs Martin quickly perceived, and this was very early on, was Henry Kissinger. So when Rogers came with Nixon the first time, he invited the Secretary to stay at the residence--maybe it was just the Secretary alone. A couple of days before the visit Martin went home and found people stringing wires in the residence. He asked what that was all about and was told they were putting in this and that for the Secretary. Martin said, "No, this is my house, he is my guest and there will be no stringing of wires in my house. If he is not comfortable here he is welcome to stay in a hotel." Which he did, Rogers did. On another occasion during a Nixon visit the Secretary rode in a car with Martin and Mrs. Rogers rode in a separate car with Mrs. Martin. At the airport the car drove up and the right hand door in the rear opened and the Secretary got in and sat on the right side. Martin hesitated a moment and did not go around, he climbed over him. The next time the car drove up and the right rear door opened, Martin was already in the seat and he did not budge. Ditto for Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Rogers. My wife and I went along with them for a sightseeing trip, when we pulled up to something to see Mrs. Martin stayed in the car, on the right side, and Mrs. Rogers got out on the left. That was his way of showing his, what he would call, proper seniority; he, I think, took pleasure in embarrassing the Secretary of State for whom he did not have a lot of

respect. It was too bad, we all sympathized with the Secretary and Mrs. Rogers who did not bat an eye but must have been seething inside.

Q: Did you see at that time any connections between Kissinger and Graham Martin?

BARBOUR: No.

Q: Kissinger used to remark that when he went to Italy he found no one to talk to there. It was sort of a collegial type government which was friendly but that was all.

BARBOUR: To jump ahead, he had a lot of respect for Graham Martin. He obviously admired somebody who could be as ruthless in the exercise of power as he could be. When the time came in 1973 to change

Ambassadors in Vietnam, Kissinger, who was National Security Advisor, said in a meeting apropos of the

Ambassador, "Let's send that cold-eyed fellow, Graham Martin." And indeed, as I told you, his eyes were like steel. I liked him, he was always very courteous to me and my wife, very warm; I have very fond memories of him but I also have memories of a good deal of trepidation every time I was summoned into his presence. It was always, now what have I done wrong. My relationship with him was instructive, entertaining, amazing--I couldn't believe some of the things he used to do as Ambassador.

Q: How did his method of operation work on members of your political section? Sometimes if you are close and understand how it works it is acceptable, but if you are one or two removed it can cause problems. Did this have any effect on them?

BARBOUR: No, the one who bore the brunt of it was the DCM, Wells Stabler, who had a difficult job at times running the Embassy because he didn't know what the Ambassador had done or said or wanted. Their relationship was not very cordial.

ALEXANDER A. L. KLIEFORTH

Public Affairs Officer, USIS

Rome (1967-1973)

Alexander A. L. Klieforth received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin. He entered the Foreign Service as a State Department employee and later joined the USIA. Mr. Klieforth's career included positions in Colombia, Indonesia, Germany, and Washington, DC. The interview was conducted by Cliff Groce, August 1988.

Q: Following the Senior Seminar, you were named PAO in Rome. What did you do to establish yourself in your new role?

KLIEFORTH: As it happened, I had three assignments as PAO -- Rome, Jakarta and Bonn -- and

I came to each one following a bad inspection report. I got to pick up the pieces, which is in many ways an advantage. In the case of Rome, I had read the inspection report, and I thought that program was so far down the hill that it wasn't worth it. And it wasn't people in the Agency, it was people in the Department of State who convinced me to go to Rome. And I'm damn glad I did because the lady who cooked your lunch is one of the results of that assignment. So I went, and the program had become ossified. I can't think of a better word. It had been decimated by reductions, with the result that they kept cutting the branches from the tree, so to speak, so that you had a big fat trunk and little branches. It had become very centralized.

From the start I thought that several things were indicated. One, and that sounded strange for a West European industrial nation, was to bring in the concept of modernization. The other thing was to orient the program to young people. Now, Italy, as you know, had and still has the largest Communist party in Western Europe, and on the surface an unstable series of governments. But since the fall of the Empire they have managed to keep on going; how is one of their mysteries, which is very lovable. There was also a problem with NATO -- this was 1967 -- and the Italians were going through one of their traumas that we were going to pull out of NATO and leave them high and dry. And on the other hand they didn't think that NATO might do much good, so that there was a kind of mixed psychological climate, and not particularly good.

What I then tried to do was enliven the program by decentralizing from Rome, and sending troops out back into the seven, I think it was, branches, to have a great deal of flexibility. I reopened some, in one guise or another. Rooney had closed one of them, Florence, and when he was in Rome one time I told him, I said, "Chairman, I want to reopen Florence," and I told him why, and he says, "All right, but you've got to do it cagily, so it doesn't become obvious." So I did it by sliding in one Italian and then a second Italian. The Consul General happened to be a former officer of the Agency and I got room, I got books, and got the whole thing started, and what Mr. Rooney finally saw was the opening of a Reading Room in the consulate in Florence. We moved on from there, and eventually got an American officer.

But in this modernization game, one has to find what is germane to the culture that you're addressing, because not all American experiences, as you know, are transferable. One of the things that I seized on early was education. Despite the then student riots in the universities (in the U.S.), we were doing fantastic things, architecturally and in libraries, curriculum changes and so forth. So we devised this monster exhibit in the Palazzo dei Esposizione in Rome, which is an enormous thing, and was actually an aggregate of something like 120 separate little exhibits, of which the Agency furnished two, a book show and something to do with science, and the rest we got from the private sector and from various American institutions. For example, Univac was then opening its European office, and they put a terminal in this exhibit and programmed it to answer any questions in Italian or American history. Something like this had never been done before, and it was to the Italians wildly exciting. The other thing I decided was that whatever we did had to be multi-media, not just a static flat exhibit. So we had films, we had speakers, we had music.

And then, bless them, the ultra left bombed the exhibit on the evening after its opening, not with explosives but with tear gas. It was pretty ghastly. Gloria and I went in immediately without masks, and I'd been through those chambers before in the military, and it was pretty awful. But

that hit all of the newspapers in Italy, and the main Communist paper, Paese Sera, they'd been at the opening of the exhibit and thought it was great. They said this action was anti-cultural, they denounced it, we got fantastic television coverage, and the long and the short of it was, just about every educational institution in Italy sent people to Rome to be taken through this exhibit. We had to crank up guides, and so forth and so on. Then we broke up pieces of it and sent it on tour all around Italy. All we had in a political sense was, as you came in, there was a big -- not too big -- sign saying, roughly, "As you know, in the United States, we have demonstrations against our policy in Vietnam, we have campus unrest, we have uprisings of some of our black population, and so forth and so on, but you should know that beautiful things are being done in education. Come in and find out." That was it.

Then, also in modernization, there's a thing called the Casa para il Mezzogiorno, a government institution which is supposed to bring modernization to the Mezzogiorno, southern Italy, and it never got much support from the government. So with the ambassador's consent, I went and talked to these government entities. I said, "Look, I'm speaking from an American self-interest. Southern Italy needs to be raised up economically. We've got our bases in Naples and Taranto and so on. We know what the hinterland is like and we would like to participate." (There was no aid program in Italy.) We worked out a whole series of, in effect, programs with the Casa para il Mezzogiorno: seminars, lectures, demonstrations, and so on, and nothing like that had been done before. Did it work? To a certain extent. One has to overcome a tremendous inertia; this is true of the whole developing world, the sensitivity to doing something new. But yes, we made for some progress.

Q: What were some of your frustrations, your disappointments during that period?

KLIEFORTH: Well, as always, a certain lack of funds, but we managed all right because we worked out very good -- as indicated through the education exhibit -- co-op ventures with the private side of the U.S. presence in Italy. Then I started working things out with other agencies of the U.S. government. The Park Service, for example. The Park Service has a beautiful exhibits outfit; they really do. They turn out tremendous stuff. They turn out films, really attractive posters, and so forth. I always had to keep the Agency advised, but through a friend in the Park Service I was able to get all kinds of stuff and have nice little shows -- and again, multi-media.

The Commerce Department participated in a water desalinization and purification exhibit in Turin called Puraqua, so we worked together with them. And with the Department of Agriculture in the cattle show in Verona. You can ask, what the hell's the USIA doing in a cattle show in Verona? You start with something that is germane, as in that case the 4-Hs, and then you get into American youth, and the participation of American youth in this particular, which happens to be the farm sector, and the necessity for food, and you wind up with NATO, and have a NATO thing.

We had a tremendous collection of great American artists, particularly sculptors, in Rome specifically and in Italy. So I got them together -- some of them are very famous. We had some fierce arguments about Vietnam, and I said, "This isn't the issue. You're artists, you want people to see your stuff. All right, we'll show it, and let's leave politics out of it." We opened the first show in Rome in the USIS building, which I modernized the inside of, and the library, which I

turned into a usable center -- such simple things as putting bookshelves on rollers; if you want more space, push them out against the wall and you'll get usable space. Every three months until the time I left we had an absolutely first-rate art show, which didn't cost us anything, not even insurance, because I arranged something with the Tyler School of Art in Rome, and their policy would cover as long as some of their stuff was there. So the Tyler School always had some stuff there; but they had very good people working there. We were able to accomplish a good deal.

Q: It sounds like you were able to turn your frustrations into successes.

KLIEFORTH: Yeah. And one of the things we invented was the Electronic Dialogue. It started in Italy, and there was quite a bit of resistance in the Agency, strange as it may seem in retrospect. What we started out with was something very simple. We picked the individual, the Agency television people doing all the arrangements, and they would have him make a statement, talking to a specific audience, on whatever it was. We'd first show this VTR, and have an open phone line, and mikes all over the place so that people could talk to him, so there was backtalk. That was the original concept, and it worked out very well. One of those simple things, you wondered why somebody hadn't thought of it before. But there again, this was a team thing.

Q: Besides the things you've mentioned, do you have any other special memories of Rome that you'd like to talk about?

KLIEFORTH: I was there for six years, and served four ambassadors. The first one was Freddy Reinhardt, the second was Gardner Ackley, who had been chairman of the (Board of) Economic Advisers, the third one was the redoubtable Graham Martin, and the fourth one was John Volpe, ex-Secretary of Transportation and Governor of Massachusetts. As things went on -- and during that time I was appointed career minister -- but even before then, and particularly so during the time of Graham Martin, he picked a couple of people with whom he worked closely and that was it. So that I wound up being de facto assistant chief of mission, and was always acting DCM when the DCM was away, and I was charge a number of times. I had liaison with the FAO, and with the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, which has to do with population problems, and there I was in between the State Department's office of population problems, whatever it's called, and the Vatican and other entities in Italy which were a little uptight on the subject.

It broadened the responsibility. It brought about thereby a very good integration of the USIS element into the embassy so that you had an across-the-front public diplomacy program. I had enough authority that I could ask and even demand the economic minister, who happened to be a good friend from the Senior Seminar days, or whatever. And I also had purview over all the public information aspects of our military in Italy, which isn't usual. I had it again in Germany. That's the way Martin wanted it, and that's the way it worked out. It worked very well when we had a space exhibit. I talked RAI, the Italian network, into forking up \$60,000, I think it was, and NASA delivered a little moon rock, and that was the piece de resistance. It went throughout Italy, seen by literally millions of people. I talked the Air Force and the Army into giving all the transportation. That was because I had this purview and got to know all these people; it's a lot easier when you know people.

MARY CHIAVARINI
Consul General
Palermo, Sicily (1968-1973)

Ms. Chiavarini was born and raised in Massachusetts. After Secretarial training, she worked with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington DC before joining the Foreign Service in 1944. During her career with the State Department, Ms. Chiavarini served as secretary to the ambassador and other officers in Naples, Tirana, Manila, Seoul, Prague, Rome, Singapore and Warsaw. After her appointment in 1957 as Consul and Secretary in the Diplomatic Service she served in Palermo, Monrovia and Paris. She also served as special "trouble shooter" in Nicosia, Dublin and Riyadh. Ms. Chiavarini was interviewed by David T. Jones in 2007.

Q: This is January 10, 2008. We are resuming the session with Mary Chiavarini to move to her assignment in Palermo following her assignment in Paris and throughout during the 1968-69 period.

Mary, when I was last here with you we talked a good deal about your experiences in Paris during the upheavals of 1968. At that point we stopped and I will leave it to you to move forward from there.

Let's pick up from the end of your time in Paris. Where did you go after you completed your assignment in Paris? Wasn't this to Palermo? Can you tell me about your assignment as consul general in Palermo?

CHIAVARINI: Well, it came as a surprise. I was very happy of course, because I was consul general. I enjoyed myself there. I never had any problems with the mafia.

Q: Did you have any indication that they were operating in Palermo?

CHIAVARINI: Well, of course I knew they were operating but I couldn't do anything about it.

Q: And they didn't bother the American consulate?

CHIAVARINI: No; not at all.

Q: How was your staff?

CHIAVARINI: The staff was all right. Some of them were old-timers. And they were the ones that would give me a little problem, but not much. I enjoyed it.

Q: Did you enjoy travel in Sicily?

CHIAVARINI: I did. I did. I visited all the historical places--especially one up in the mountains.

It was the historic place that had had old mosaics. These were Roman; they had these gorgeous floors. I went there several times, and I enjoyed that very much.

Q: Did you have and junior American officers there with you.

CHIAVARINI: Yes. I did. One of them wasn't so helpful. In fact, on his last efficiency report, he blasted me because it wasn't all that he had had before. The previous consul general had praised him to the skies. And I didn't find any of those qualities he attributed. As a consequent, he blasted me.

Q: Did he stay in the foreign service?

CHIAVARINI: Well, he stayed for a while. Then he left.

Q: You were a keen observer of your subordinates.

CHIAVARINI: I don't know whether I was a keen observer, but I felt as though I was.

Q: Was there any special issue in Palermo while you were there?

CHIAVARINI: Yes there was, but I can't remember too well about it.

Q: What was the general circumstance then?

CHIAVARINI: Even that I find it difficult to remember.

Q: Did you deal with the Italian authorities there?

CHIAVARINI: Once in a while I did. I was well received by them.

Q: Did you have the ambassador from Rome come down to Sicily?

CHIAVARINI: He came down once, but it wasn't particularly to see me. He did praise me. So, I guess I did all right.

Q: Were you traveling outside of Sicily at this point at all?

CHIAVARINI: No. No, I didn't.

Q: Were there any particularly interesting consular cases that you recall?

CHIAVARINI: Not in particular. The most interesting case when I was in Palermo was during my first tour when there was a murder of an American citizen. I remember going around with the consul to investigate it. We did pretty well considering. We found an Italian who was guilty. As I mentioned earlier, he was eventually tried and jailed.

Q: How were the relations between the consulate and the embassy?

CHIAVARINI: Well, all right I think. I don't remember that there was anything against us.

Q: Were there any political issues in play at that time that you remember?

CHIAVARINI: No, I don't remember that there were any.

Q: Well, the way I understand it, you spent five years in Palermo.

CHIAVARINI: Yes.

Q: What was your retirement ceremony from Palermo like?

CHIAVARINI: Oh, there wasn't any.

Q: Nothing!

CHIAVARINI: I don't remember anything. They just let me go.

Q: Well, do you have any final wrap-up thoughts on Palermo?

CHIAVARINI: No, I really don't. I really had no problems there. I came and I went.

ISABEL CUMMING
Secretary, USIS
Rome (1968-1973)

Isabel Cumming was raised in Boston, Massachusetts. She joined the Foreign Service in 1957. Ms. Cumming held positions in Iran, Korea, Sweden, Poland, Japan, Yugoslavia, and Germany. This interview was conducted by G. Lewis Schmidt on January 15, 1990.

CUMMING: I went to Rome for four and a half years.

Q: That's quite a change.

CUMMING: I think they felt I needed a break. I think the Agency was being kind to me.

Of course, we had a lot going on in Rome. I worked for Alex Klieforth, and Alex Klieforth was the right-hand man of the Ambassador. So we were very, very involved.

Q: You say he was the right-hand man. What was Alex doing that was so substantial for the Ambassador? What was it that the Ambassador wanted to --

CUMMING: Well, anything having to do with the cultural program or, of course, the information program. The Ambassador relied on Alex and the Ambassador would have Alex do a lot of things that probably some of the embassy people should have been doing. But he thought so much of Alex that he asked him to do --

Q: Do you think in addition to trusting Alex then that, maybe Alec's reputation rubbed off on the post? He was also greatly trusted in the US Information Service.

CUMMING: Absolutely. Absolutely. Yes. The Ambassador was not very happy with one of our officers, but Alex could handle that and so he would go to Alex. He thought the world of us and it was -- he used us all the time for -- and I mean use. I say use in a very nice way. I don't mean - I think you know what I mean.

Q: Utilize your services --

CUMMING: Utilize the services of the program and the officers. We had a big library there, a very active library. We had a lot of programs at night in the library.

We had a very active cultural program and, of course, our information section was very active. It was big post for senators and visitors, as you can well imagine, including our President Nixon. He was there at least twice, if not three times; he was there at the time Nasser died and that was quite a thing in Rome at that time.

Q: You mentioned that there were some things you thought the Ambassador had USIA do that were really the duties other officers in the Embassy should have done. Do you have any particular examples in mind that you can think of?

CUMMING: Well, I can think of one. When the DCM was gone, Alex Klieforth would act as DCM and usually an Ambassador doesn't call on a USIS officer to do that even though Alex was probably one of the highest ranking officers, if not the highest ranking officer outside of the DCM, at that time.

Alex was very politically savvy as well as culturally and informationally which I think the Ambassador recognized and utilized him for that.

Q: At an earlier time, USIS had opened a library over in the labor section of Rome. This was back about '61 or '63 -- I guess it was '63 when Ed Shector was there as the deputy PAO. Later I know they had to close it. Do you know whether it was open at the time you were there or not?

CUMMING: I don't think so. The library was just across the street on the Via Veneto.

Q: Well, I know about that one, too.

CUMMING: Yes.

Q: But the one in the labor residential area was specifically designated too attract and influence the labor population.

CUMMING: The laborers?

Q: USIS was trying to make this special contact with the labor population.

CUMMING: It sort of rings a bell in the back of my head that there was something at the time. But whether it was still there or not. I don't know. I don't think so.

Maggie Hayferd was our librarian and I think she would be the type who would want to have everything in her control.

Q: And who was Alex's deputy?

CUMMING: Don Shea for part of the time and then -- Don Shea most of the time and -- oh gosh -- I have forgotten who the man who came in after Don Shea -- because Don Shea went back to the States and I can't remember. I think it was at the time when Don was getting that illness -- Parkinson's disease.

Q: He died last year.

CUMMING: Yes. Yes, I wrote to Johnnie.

Q: Yes. He deteriorated quite rapidly in the last couple of years.

CUMMING: That's what I heard.

Q: Do you have anything else you want to say about Rome? Anything you think is significant? Do you think we were carrying on a very successful program there then?

CUMMING: Oh, yes, I think so. We had a very good program.

That's the time when they shut down a lot of the offices. But that was due to the BALPA, or whatever it was called in those days. We lost the post in Sicily and we had the one in Naples.

The young man from Sicily came up to Naples and I can't remember -- I think they had closed some others, but I don't remember if it was at that time or before, but we did -- and then when Jack Shirley went in they opened them again.

Q: That may have been at the time when they lost the one over in the labor sector of Rome too. I don't know if that was the case.

CUMMING: It might have been. Yes, because they closed the offices. Of course, in some of the offices -- like I understand, we had a national running the Trieste office, and then of course an American went in later on and we didn't -- the offices, they were much smaller in the days that I

was there. But they were very effective. We had fantastic national employees. They were as good as any American.

Q: I suppose you had pretty extensive utilization by the Italians of your branches and your --

CUMMING: Oh. yes. Yes. Absolutely.

RAYMOND C. EWING
Financial Economist
Rome (1970-1973)

Ambassador Raymond C. Ewing was born in Cleveland, Ohio and raised in California. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Occidental College in 1957 and entered the Foreign Service in the same year. His career included positions in Cyprus, Ghana, Tanzania, Japan, Austria, Pakistan, and Switzerland. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 29, 1993.

Q: We got you out of Harvard finally. After this new-found polish of a Harvard education you went to [the Embassy in] Rome from 1970-73. Is that right?

EWING: Yes, I had obtained an MPA (Master's in Public Administration), studied Italian for about eight weeks in 1970, and then went to Rome as an Economic Officer. Initially, I served in a financial economist position, working for the Treasury Attaché, reporting on Italy's economic situation and financial matters. Subsequently, after about a year and a half doing this, I was moved over to be the head of the Economic Policy Unit in the Economic Section, doing things related to the Common Market, the Common Agricultural Policy, trade policy issues, and civil aviation.

Q: This may be a difficult question. What was your impression of the Italian economy during this period?

EWING: My recollection of the Italian economy at that time is that there already was a lot going on that wasn't fully reflected in the [government] statistics. The state sector already was unwieldy and having difficulty. The private sector -- Fiat, Olivetti, and so on -- was going along very well, and there was a lot of small entrepreneurial activity that really wasn't showing up in government statistics. Generally, we thought that things were better than they seemed to be on the surface.

Q: I remember being told later on, at the end of this decade -- in 1979 or in 1980 -- that the Naples area was the prime producer of gloves in the world. But there wasn't a single, registered glove factory in the area.

EWING: That was the sort of thing which was already evident. There were advantages in not being too public about activities -- not that they were illegal or illicit but more a matter of trouble

in dealing with the bureaucracy...

Q: *The tax question?*

EWING: Yes, taxes. If you could avoid contact with the bureaucracy, it was to your advantage.

Q: *What were our economic interests in Italy during this period, 1970 to 1973?*

EWING: We had, of course, substantial trade. There was a substantial American business presence in Italy. Those were economic interests. In terms of our economic diplomacy with Italy, we were beginning to think of Italy, not just as a country by itself, but as part of a larger European Community. We would try to influence the shaping of positions in Brussels at the European Community level by making representations in Rome, trying to encourage the Italians to take positions in Brussels that would be to our advantage and in our interest.

Q: *How did you find dealing with the economic side of the Italian Government?*

EWING: There were some very capable professionals, especially in the Bank of Italy. I had quite a bit to do with the Ministry of Foreign Trade. There were some able people there. I had the feeling that they were very "thin" in terms of numbers and were overworked. They sometimes had trouble with the political level of the government, because issues were often extensively politicized.

Q: *Did the politics of the country intrude on the economy?*

EWING: Oh, I think that they did. They already had coalition governments. The Socialists often had the Ministry of the Budget. I don't think that we were aware of a great deal of corruption or political "contributions" being used or misused. Given the role of the state in the economy, the question of who controlled a given ministry had a very important impact on what happened in the economy.

Q: *We were an influential country but did we ever make any noises about any of these state industries? I'm thinking of automobile factories such as Alfa-Sud and other such plants down in Naples which really did not seem to be economically viable. Was this something that we observed and reported on?*

EWING: I don't remember that we did. We certainly reported on the Mezzogiorno area [southern Italy], the disparity in income levels and prospects between the North and the South of Italy, and fiscal policy measures taken to try to compensate for that situation. In terms of the role of the state enterprises I don't think that we tried to influence them or to change the shape of the state-dominated sector. However, we could see the inefficiencies and the problems those industries were causing.

Q: *Our prime concern with Italy at that time was its allegiance to NATO and the Communist Party of Italy. How did we feel at that particular period about the Communist Party, its orientation, and its involvement in the economy?*

EWING: In some ways the Communist Party of Italy was not as "loyal" to Moscow as some of the other communist parties in Western Europe and elsewhere. They had tried to open up to others on the Left of the political spectrum. As I recall, our political officers had limited contact with Communist Party officials. I didn't have any contact myself. I think that we tended to think of the PCI as primarily a political party or mechanism, but in terms of the Communists' direct impact on the economy if they came into power or participated in the government -- that wasn't something, as I recall it, that we thought about very much. It hadn't happened yet, and we didn't expect that it would very soon, if ever.

Q: Were your dealings mainly with the people within the government at the professional level, as opposed to dealings with Italian Deputies from various areas?

EWING: I didn't have much contact with Italian politicians, members of Parliament or otherwise. In addition to the officials in the government I certainly had some contact with people in private sector banks. My knowledge of the Italian language was not as good as it ought to have been. You can't learn Italian in eight weeks.

Q: I went through the same thing. You just can't get started...

EWING: That was always a problem. I could use Italian in handling official business, but if I were dealing with somebody who spoke Italian, and I could understand him and then reply in English, I was much more comfortable. Or, if I were delivering a demarche, and the person I was talking to usually could read the document in English, I could understand their response in Italian. In terms of communication it wasn't by any means a perfect situation. Eight weeks of language study is too short a time to learn the language.

Q: How did we feel that the Italians were responding to the beginning of European economic unity at that time?

EWING: As I recall, the Italians were very positive. We thought that was good. They saw -- and, I think, we did, too -- that some of the solutions to the very clear problems of Italy were more likely to come in a European context, in a broader way, than just in Italy. We saw the critical disparities between the North and South of Italy. The Italians -- certainly, more than the French -- wanted a Europe that was open to the outside world. They valued their relationship with the United States and with some other parts of the world. They wanted to make sure that Europe was not a closed fortress but instead was open to others, to imports and other kinds of interaction. So we appreciated that as well.

Q: What about your Ambassador at that time, Graham Martin? He was one of the "characters" -- perhaps that's not the right term -- but a "presence" within the Foreign Service, due to his method of operation. How did you find it?

EWING: Again, I was pretty far down the line in terms of the Embassy hierarchy. Over me was the Treasury Attaché, then you had the Economic Minister-Counselor, then the DCM, and the Ambassador. So I didn't have all of that much to do with him directly. It really meant a lot to me

when he would read a cable which I had prepared on the Italian economy, could understand it, and would say something laudatory about it. That certainly happened from time to time. Wells Stabler was the DCM during most of the time I was there. I had great respect for him and had an opportunity to work directly with him on a couple of matters. I think, for example, of the visit of one of President Nixon's daughters. I was the Control Officer. There were also Congressional visits. A lot of our time in the Embassy in Rome, in addition to our day to day work, was involved with visitors.

Q: You got a lot of them. Did you have any presidential visits while you were there?

EWING: Yes, President Nixon came very soon after I arrived there in 1970. I think that he came in September or October of 1970. I had just arrived and wasn't really involved in the preparations for the visit. However, I was asked to be the "gift" officer. I delivered the presidential gift to both the Palazzo Quirinale, the Presidential Palace, for Italy, as well as to the Vatican. That was sort of a nice thing to do during the first few weeks that I was there.

Q: You mentioned the Vatican. Did you have anything to do with looking at the Vatican banking system, which later became quite a scandal. This was in the future, but I was wondering...

EWING: No. We really didn't, in terms of reporting. I was aware of the American Bishop [Archbishop Marcinkus] who later was involved in that scandal. We would see him around, but I didn't really know him personally. Already by that time Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was the President's representative to the Vatican. There was an officer in the Embassy who spent all of his time on matters relating to the Vatican. For that reason we really didn't think that that was an area for our reporting. We were pretty much concentrated on Italy.

Q: At that time did you at all look at the economic consequences of criminal issues, such as the Mafia, drug smuggling, and so forth?

EWING: Really, very little of that. Of course, we were interested in the Mafia, but it was very hard to get much information in terms of their economic activities, investments, or what they did with their money and so forth. Again, this was something which I never tried to learn about -- certainly not to do any reporting on.

HARRY COBURN
Political/Economic Officer
Rome (1970-1974)

Political/Economic Officer
Florence (1974-1976)

Political Counselor
Rome (1992-1995)

Harry Coburn was born and raised on Long Island in New York State. He received his BA from the College of the Holy Cross in 1956 and served in the US Air Force. He entered the Foreign Service in 1961, wherein he served in countries including Spain, the Fiji Islands, and Italy. He was interviewed by Michael Mahoney on July 22, 2002.

Q: So, now what year did you go to Rome?

COBURN: We went to Rome in 1970.

Q: In 1970. So, there was at that time there was no apart from a political officer in the embassy, there was no formal representation with the Vatican?

COBURN: No, that didn't happen until President Reagan. The U.S. had a personal representative. Henry Lodge was the first personal representative to the Pope. The Embassy political officer provided support to the personal representative.

Q: Henry Cabot Lodge?

COBURN: Henry Cabot Lodge.

Q: But that person didn't live in Rome. That was just kind of an honorary title.

COBURN: He came over periodically to pay his respects to the Pope.

Q: He wasn't in other words, he wasn't employed as a full time person in Washington to represent the U.S. It was more of an honorific with some occasional meetings and so forth?

COBURN: Right, but the day to day work was done by an embassy officer in Rome who had the contacts over at the Vatican.

Q: That's interesting, we'll come back to that. How big was the mission to the food and agricultural organization?

COBURN: We had two State Department officers and one Agency for International Development Officer and two secretaries, one from State and one from AID, so a sum total of five people.

Q: What did the work consist of? I mean what were we doing there?

COBURN: Well, we had several levels of activity. One was the financial because once again we were the main contributor to FAO and we had the Geneva group, which was the representatives from the major donor countries. Since the State Department budget was the source of money that supported our contributions to FAO, the State Department was the representative on the Geneva group. We would meet with the UK and France, Germany and Japan and other major donors and try and enforce some disciplines on the FAO administration so that they would use the money

wisely.

Q: What was their mission?

COBURN: The mission of?

Q: FAO.

COBURN: FAO was and is that part of the United Nations with the expertise and mission of helping developing countries develop their agriculture. It would be the repository of expertise in farming techniques, fertilization, crop improvements, clean water, all of the kinds of things necessary to help agricultural countries maximize their ability to feed their populations and export their surpluses.

Q: Did FAO contract this out or in effect did they have permanent people on its staff that would travel overseas for six months or a year?

COBURN: Both. There was a corps of experts at the headquarters in Rome and located overseas in major developing countries under the umbrella of the UNDP. The UNDP representative was the chief of mission for the UN in each country and on the staff would be representatives from the other specialized agencies; World Health Organization (WHO), International Labor Organization (ILO), etc. When there was not expertise in the staff, FAO could contract out assistance with universities or research institutions around the world to provide the specific knowledge needed. FAO also managed the World Food Program, which was specifically organized to supply surplus food from developed countries to developing countries needing help or to assist in providing emergency food stuffs for national emergencies around the world. FAO also served as a meeting point for experts to discuss problems regarding agriculture. For example, we had a whole series of meetings on specific food items where experts from the industries would meet and discuss common problems. Usually our office in the embassy backstopped these delegations providing support for attending the meetings, preparing reports, and providing social engagements for delegations. For some meetings such as the annual jute meeting and the citrus meeting, I would be the official U.S. representative attending the meetings under instruction from Washington.

Q: Did these meetings all take place in Rome?

COBURN: All these meetings were in Rome with experts from various countries. What they were trying to do was harmonize the trade in these commodities working together to overcome problems that they saw, getting access to markets, trying to develop a process so one country wasn't dumping its surpluses while another country was trying to find a market. These meetings would go on almost constantly.

Q: Did anything ever come of these meetings?

COBURN: Sometimes you wondered because a lot of it was pro forma. You would have a meeting. You would have people come from all over to make speeches, they would prepare

documents and they would go away. There was a lot of interaction among the people and over time as relationships developed, the people in Pakistan and the people in India and the people in Africa who were in these areas got to know each other and would share information. In that sense things changed and developed and FAO had its policies of trying to promote agricultural developments of sharing technologies, sharing equipment that would help in these various areas.

Q: How many people would you say worked at FAO, not just the American mission, but how big was it as an entity in Rome?

COBURN: It was large. It was a building that I would say housed several thousand people. It became something of a patronage, dumping ground where people just were taken care of. There was difficulty in finding hardworking, knowledgeable people in some of these areas. In fact my predecessor retired into FAO as associate protocol officer. He was very happy because he liked to live in Rome. The tendency I think was for a lot of people to retire in FAO. Part of the problem we had in both UNDP and in FAO was in pushing our agenda to make FAO a more efficient organization. We were thwarted by representatives from underdeveloped countries, who would make elaborate and emotional speeches about the poor and suffering in their countries. In one case I recall an Argentinean who made a very vitriolic talk about the suffering his people had to undergo because of the greed of developed countries. Of course, he was very well groomed and after his speech was driven off in his Mercedes. In many cases representatives would defend FAO against our efforts at reform only subsequently to be hired as staff members by the organization they were supposed to be governing. It was always a struggle to make any progress with such an unruly body of countries, all with their own agenda and many with representatives who acted on their own, rather than their countries, behalf.

Q: How did it come to be located in Rome?

COBURN: When the specialized agencies were established, many countries made an effort to have them established in their countries. France offered space to the Educational and Cultural Organization, Canada for the Civil Aeronautics Organization, and Switzerland for the International Labor Organization. After World War II when the specialized agencies were organized, countries saw these groups as revenue producing sites. Meetings would fill hotel space and provide business for restaurants and employment for citizens. There was also the "prestige" factors as being the headquarters for an international organization. The Italians found there were certain downsides because the FAO employee store sold more cigarettes, tax free, then could be smoked by the population of Rome. The same was true for hard liquor and beer. So tax revenue was being lost by the FAO staff members who used their access to secure these items.

Q: They have full duty, free privileges and so forth, yes?

COBURN: Yes, there was full diplomatic status for the senior staff. The other interesting part of this whole operation was the pulling and tugging between the State Department representative and the Department of Agriculture representative as to who was the senior representative to the FAO. My boss felt that international relations was a function of the Department of State and he, as the Permanent Representative to FAO, was the contact point. The Agricultural representative

felt that he was the expert on agricultural matters and the most knowledgeable U.S. official on the operations of the FAO. During my time in Rome, these two men engaged in a constant battle to be the top man. An additional factor was that the U.S. agricultural attache in Rome had originally been the Dutch agricultural representative in Washington. Subsequently he became an American citizen and was assigned to Rome as agricultural attache. His classmate back in Holland ended up being the director general of FAO. As a result, there were so many lines and cross lines during the general meetings of FAO that it was difficult to keep track of who was dealing with whom. I found it interesting to speculate on what agendas were being followed since the personal intrigues were quite complicated.

Q: As policy issues, I don't know if you can remember any examples of, can you give an example of where or anything you particularly remember that an issue that had a variety of interplays to an odd outcome. I mean you say they were trying to harmonize markets and so forth, but I mean in other words, where might Agriculture and State actually technically clash apart from the prestige issues of who's the chief representative today. Did they really differ seriously on some issues?

COBURN: I think only when it impacted on money. The Department, as an organization had no knowledge or expertise in agricultural activities, and in many aspects it really couldn't affect American exports of grains or other agricultural products. The senators and congressmen from farm states were very keen on pushing to get those advantages for their farmers. I can't remember specifically at the time any crisis that put Agriculture and State, as organizations, head to head. It was mainly the personalities that I carry as a history of how we did things. The position papers were always prepared in Washington and coordinated between State and Agriculture before the meetings. We always had position papers and most of that was done as it should have been done. It was only in the nitty gritty when we're trying to do the draft reports at the end of the session when there was usually conflict between developing and developed countries as to what the commitments would be vis a vis the developing countries. People were meeting late in the evenings trying to craft language that would cover disagreements so that they could come back with a final report that would be acceptable to all. I can't give you any specific instances of crises.

Q: Isn't there always this in a tension that your one part of the international system is pushing agricultural development in all these countries and yet another part within each country including our own naturally does not want the result of this agricultural development to be to displace the own commodities that it itself produces? It's a dilemma. Obviously it goes on forever, doesn't it? You encourage somebody to grow some kind of citrus somewhere where they have a good climate, but then obviously the people that grow citrus in the United States don't want their product displaced by a less expensive product coming from the Third World.

COBURN: Yes, I think that's true. There's always that displacement problem in developing a crop. We came across this when I was later in a narcotics program, trying to find substitution for drug crops. What impact did that have on the world markets in various commodities? So, all of these are factored into what you were trying to do. There's always a lot of pushing and tugging that goes on. In the end it's usually the market that solves the problem. You can sit around and make these determinations, but if a low cost producer can come forward with a product he's

going to drive the high cost producer out of the market.

Q: Except for something like sugar, right?

COBURN: Yes, or in steel or in other places where you put trade barriers. These things were issues for UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), which is another UN group, that was also in Geneva and sometimes impacted on what we were doing.

Q: Tell me again the difference between what FAO did in Rome and what went on in Geneva that you went back and forth to Geneva for?

COBURN: Well, Geneva was the site of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. In the United Nations structure, you'd have the Security Council which handles political affairs and you have an Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which supposedly handles everything else. So, there was parity when the UN was organized, but most people only hear about the Security Council.

On the ECOSOC agenda for the summer meetings in Geneva, there were several agenda items but the one that we were specifically responsible for was the United Nations Development Office and that would set the policies for the activities of the specialized agencies of which FAO was one. The FAO itself thought of itself as semi-independent. It didn't really want to take any guidance from anybody else. When I was in UNDP one of the projects was a study by Sir Robert Jackson who was an Australian. His report called the UNDP a dinosaur without a brain which I remember got Paul Hoffman, the head of UNDP, unhappy because it sounded like he didn't know what he was doing. The thrust was that there was this great weight of money that was operating without any clear direction because the UN system was decentralized. I read President Roosevelt wanted a decentralized United Nations because he felt if it was too centralized, and you had the wrong person running it, then a lot of harm could be done. But if you set up independent power centers, they would always, like the Congress and the executives, be measuring each other and balancing against each other. So, while you have inefficiency and waste you might have in the end a better operating system. It was the argument that you can make. Jackson's argument was that this system was so inefficient and wasteful that it wasn't accomplishing anything, except giving a lot of people high paying jobs in the system.

Nothing's changed. It still as far as I know operates the same way. The UNDP does some good work. The FAO does some good work. World Food Program does some good work. Could it be done more efficiently under a more effective organization and structure, sure.

Q: UNDP doesn't have offices in every country, at least I don't think so. Does it tend to have like regional offices?

COBURN: Right.

Q: So, if they have a regional office, is it just the people who are permanently in that office that in effect go around and give advice and so forth? Or do they then bring in experts separately in effect on contracts to advise how to grow more corn here or more oranges there? I mean is that

a fair description?

COBURN: Yes. That is. They bring people in from university. They bring experts from business. They have a whole series of activities that they support. If the local staff, because they need somebody who knows about hybrid corn, they would find somebody who is an expert and give them a contract and send them over for six months or a year to do the work to help the local people learn the techniques and technologies.

Q: So, how many years did you do this in Rome?

COBURN: Let's see, how many years did I do that in Rome? I did that.

Q: You went there in '70 I think you said?

COBURN: Yes, that was four years.

Q: '70 to '74.

COBURN: Right.

Q: Basically doing the same sort of thing all the way through?

COBURN: Yes, we were of the embassy in Rome, but not really part of it.

Q: I was going to say, how did you find that relationship worked?

COBURN: The embassy in Rome was so big that I don't think they probably were too aware that we were there. The ambassador was Graham Martin at the time and subsequently he was our ambassador in Vietnam. I had occasion to see him once or twice. He was a very strong leader. The Deputy Chief of Mission was Well Stabler who was a very effective Foreign Service Officer. Occasionally when they had the large staff meetings in the Embassy, I would go and sit there and listen to what everybody in the embassy was doing, but there was very little direct contact between our office and their office. Our contacts were mostly with Washington, with instructions and people coming to FAO. We had no real contact with the political and economic sections. We did have contact with the agricultural attache because, of course, he was always around because of his friendship with the director general of FAO. Normally you wouldn't have thought that would have happened, but that was because of the personal relationship at that time.

Q: Did the Department train you in Italian before you went there since it was not an assignment in a way to Italy?

COBURN: No, they didn't. They just dropped me into Rome and said God speed. The embassy at that time had no housing and so they just said, go find something and you'll have a housing allowance.

Q: Did you work administratively under the embassy rather than in effect through your own FAO mission?

COBURN: Yes, the local personnel office and the admin office provided us with support, which was reimbursed from the IO account.

Q: Did you take Italian while you were there on your own?

COBURN: I did. The embassy had classes and so I started at scratch in the embassy and took the class the whole time I was there. I faithfully tried to learn Italian. I had Spanish. In fact when we first got there Spanish, which is similar, but not exactly the same, helped us get our first apartment because we had to go around looking when we could to find a place to stay.

Q: People don't realize that there were small children of course.

COBURN: Oh yes. In fact the day the third day we were there my youngest was three years old got something in his eye that required an operation to extract it. It turned out to be a piece of metal that had been embedded in his eyeball. This was one of the problems of settling in and we didn't know where to go or how to do it. It was pretty tough going until we got settled.

Q: So, you spent four years in Rome working with the Food and Agricultural organization. Then what happened?

COBURN: Right. Then strangely enough as my tour was grinding to a close, there was no word on any assignment. My boss, who had arrived at the same time, told me that he was going to be reassigned back to Washington. He said, "What's the word on your assignment?" I said, "I haven't heard anything." We had people coming through periodically who supposedly were giving us guidance on our next assignment. They would always come through and then nothing would ever happen. I finally called Washington. My personnel officer said that there was an opening coming up in Vienna at their office for International Atomic Energy and we want you to go there. I thought, oh learning another language, German, and another office that's part of an embassy, but not part of an embassy probably just like the one in Rome where you have to do everything yourself and cope as best as you can. I said, well, I don't know.

Just at that time I got a call from my old boss in personnel, Bob Gordon, who was the Consul General in Florence and he said that his deputy had been forced to curtail his assignment due to family problems and would I be interested in going to Florence. I said, yes, but I didn't think the personnel system in Washington would be agreeable to sending someone from Rome to Florence. It would have been different with Rome to Vienna because that was considered IO and if you go into IO you become an IO officer and they transfer you around, but your career probably ends as a middle grade officer because it wouldn't be competitive for other senior assignments. Bob had a serious medical problem, which caused him to lose his eyesight, and by the time he was assigned to Florence he was legally blind. I think Bob wanted somebody that he knew to be his deputy. He told me that he was going back to Washington and that I shouldn't do anything until he contacted me. I think what happened is he went back to Washington and spoke with the Under Secretary for Management or Director General of the Foreign Service and made the plea for the need for someone he knew he could trust to be deputy for the remainder of his tour. The call came through that I could go either to Florence or Vienna. I said Florence. That's

what happened and we went along to Florence to spend the next two years.

Q: So your Italian was good enough by then?

COBURN: Yes. At the time we were assigned to Florence, in 1974 to 1976, it was a curious situation because the embassy had prohibition on any contacts with the communist party. The situation in Italy at the time was dominated by the fear that the communists would gain power. This fear had been present since 1948.

Q: I was going to say, did they have that prohibition since 1948 or for some reason had it just come in recently in the '70s?

COBURN: It had always been. In fact when I was in Rome in 1994, for the first time in history the ambassador met with the head of the communist party.

Q: No, I remember, we'll talk about that later. That's a fascinating turn. In other words, doesn't it seem strange though that here is the party, which is one of the two or three biggest political parties in the country.

COBURN: It was the biggest.

Q: Yes, and you can't have any contact with them. I mean wasn't that?

COBURN: It was odd.

Q: I mean was that really a function in effect a hangover from the McCarthy period in the United States, that to be safe the Department would or was it a function of their analysis of domestic Italian politics? They absolutely did not want to give any shred of legitimacy or attention to the kind of fear that that would somehow be misinterpreted in the broader Italian political circles?

COBURN: I think you put your finger on it. I think that was it. The Italians were so unsure of themselves politically. They had a rough patch in the Second World War. They had come out as a country that changed sides. So, the political class, which was eternal, but very extensive, read the palm leaves everyday as to what was going on. There was no strength. In fact after Mussolini had dominated Italy, it was almost politically correct not to be very strong. They looked at the United States as the guarantor of their liberties, at least the non-communist political structure did, and any sign that we were considering the alternative of a left-wing government in Italy would have sent them all running to the hills and it probably would have happened overnight. You know governments in Italy lasted I think an average of something like eight months. They were always shuffling cabinet portfolios.

Q: Although the country itself of course went on to bigger and better things constantly.

COBURN: The country was detached from the political square dance. The political infighting didn't have much relationship with what was happening in the wider world. Deals were made. Activities were performed. People lived their lives.

Q: The economy more or less prospered, huh?

COBURN: They did prosper because few paid attention to all the laws that were passed. They were unevenly enforced. It was a joke among some that if you wanted something done it was who you knew and many times the “Bustarella,” the little envelope with the money in it, was passed. That got things done. So, the country was unhealthy because it operated on several levels. In other words, again, like at FAO nobody understood what was happening unless you were really plugged in. Then you could get things done. I had several jobs in the consulate. The consular ones were the most memorable. One I remember was sending home a body of a boy who fell off the Leaning Tower of Pisa which was a tragic situation. Then I had another case of a body found in the Arno River, another American. We called the parents. They said they didn’t want anything to do with the body, “Just dispose of it any way you can. We’re not going to pay for it.” I had the USIA side of it, too, which was bringing over distinguished American lecturers to influence the local university. The region of Tuscany and the city of Florence were under communist political rule and had been since the war, which meant that our reporting was rather limited. The only people we could talk to were people who would never have a role in government because these areas always voted red, never white.

Q: Yet supposedly from my limited memory of it, the places that the communists controlled were apparently more or less sufficiently administered and not, I don’t know how to put it. Not downgraded by being governed by somebody with a socialist or communist ideology. I mean the economies didn’t stop functioning or anything.

COBURN: No.

Q: So, how do you explain that kind of situation?

COBURN: Well, first of all I think it was that the communists, as opposed to the ruling Christian Democratic Party, had a role of showing that they could run things more efficiently and effectively.

Q: Perhaps more honestly perhaps?

COBURN: More honestly. The Christian Democratic Party was tainted by corruption by nepotism and these were well known to the Italian public. The only reason the Christian Democratic Party was successful in its long life of political dominance in Italy was the fear of many of the church going Italians about a communist takeover. So, they kept this system in place and the communists who were traditionally strong in the anti-clerical parts of Italy in Bologna and in Tuscany tried to show that they could run efficient and effective administrations. They could pick up the garbage, bring in electricity, repair the roads and do these kinds of things which said this is how we will rule Italy should we ever come to power nationally. The more I traveled these areas, the more I realized that they, in many ways were similar to the Christian Democratic Party. If you wanted to get a government job in a city or in the region you had to vote the right way and they would take care of people that they thought were supporters. They did the same thing, but they did it more efficiently and effectively than the Christian Democrats,

who were busy tearing each other apart. The communists had a discipline in their party that meant that number one is number one and number two is number two. In the Christian Democratic Party there were like 12 or 14 bosses from different parts of Italy and they were always jockeying. They were like dukes jockeying for power while the communists had one king in charge. So, they had a more effective way of managing their party members.

Q: How did the communist ideology manifest itself apart from providing efficiency which in theory anybody could do apart from ideology if you could do it? How did it reflect itself? Did they provide more social benefits? Did they tax more? Did they try to level incomes in some way? Was it noticeable?

COBURN: They were a workers party and they fought to give more benefits and protect workers jobs. This meant that the whole country was bound up within rather rigid employment rules. You could not fire people, you could not change work hours, you could not do any kind of activities that would threaten the livelihood of the workers; in effect, a guaranteed lifetime employment for people. The communists fought to increase social benefits, vacation times, health benefits, etc. The schooling was effected in having open enrollment at the university so anyone who wanted could get an education at a very low cost. They also had developed a whole series of support activities, which they called unity festivals. Every year in Florence and I think all over the country the communist party would run these fairs where they would bring in political speakers and entertainers. There would be several days of activities of music, dancing, food and people would make contributions to these unity festivals which would go into the party's treasury. So, being a member of the communist party was in many ways like a member of the Catholic church. You had your parish hall, which was the communist hall. You could go read the newspapers and have a cup of coffee, talk to your friends and then you had the parades. They were always celebrating the war time partisan activities and many of the partisans were communists. But more as the years went on more people claimed to have been partisans and they would have these great rallies and they would talk about the heroes and the rebellion against fascism. So, a lot of it was theater.

Q: Why did Tuscany as you said have a tradition of anti-clericalism? Why would you say that? It came from there; they didn't have it in other parts of Italy?

COBURN: Central Italy once formed part of the papal states. The papal states extended as far as Bologna and the people who ran the papal states were often inept and in many cases corrupt. So, they had a definite anti-clerical attitude in Tuscany and Emilia Romagna, which is the province, that Bologna is in. You know, grandfather was anti-clerical, so the son was anti-clerical and the child was anti-clerical. There were church going people in all these places, but the majority voted for the communists.

Q: Now there was separately though a very big Italian socialist party right?

COBURN: Well, it wasn't that big, but it was in the middle so that it could play a game between the left and the right. The left in Italy split several times and even the communists had split to their left. We had a whole panoply of parties, but at the time the socialists had the swing vote so they were able give a lot more influence in the government than the roles they could play from

their actual size.

Q: In addition to the non-contact with the communists and those to the left of them, you also had to avoid contact with people on the far right, is that right? Because there was a kind of holdover inheritor very right wing party, too, I think.

COBURN: There was, yes, but in our part of Italy, Tuscany, they were hardly visible. They were more prominent in the south which is more conservative than the north. We had few right wing politicians. I don't recall being aware of their presence. The Christian Democrats were basically the people that we talked to and they were always worried about the communist takeover. They would say they need more American assistance, they need more help, you need to do more to prevent the communists from coming, etc.

Q: What does that mean assistance and help?

COBURN: Money.

Q: Right, which would have to be given under some other guise.

COBURN: We had various programs. We'd take people off to the United States to train them and bring scholars to Italy to discuss America.

Q: Cultural activities.

COBURN: I remember one specifically who came during the Vietnam War period. Any American who came to Italy was forced to respond to our activities in Vietnam. This particular professor said, "Well, America has learned how to lose because of Vietnam which is something that Italians have had a great deal of experience with." It did not go over well. We had some of those moments when we were dealing with these visitors.

Q: So you worked the consular side and then you worked the political side, but of course the main, to use the word, the main substantive issues were work in the embassy?

COBURN: Yes. The embassy staff would come up periodically. They would tell us things that they wanted us to do or if there was a conference. Usually the political officers would come. So, we'd go with them, but they would take the lead and do the reporting on it. Our reporting was mainly talking to the DC and Socialist secretaries.

Q: DC being Christian Democrat?

COBURN: Christian Democrat political chiefs who would discuss the local and political situation. Then there was some economic reporting. We'd prepare an annual shoe report we had to do reporting on the various wines of Tuscany. We had some interesting people who lived there. I remember one night the Gordons who always entertained very well had high profile people at their parties. I sat next to the ex-queen of Romania who talked about Sophie and Frederika, Sophie being the queen of Spain and Frederika being the queen of Greece. You could

find people like that in Florence. We had a lot of counts and barons who had wineries and were always engaged in the social set. It was a bit of a walk back in history. Then we had I Tatti, where Barenson had his villa.

Q: Bernard Barenson, the famous art critic?

COBURN: Exactly, I think I Tatti was eventually given to Harvard University. It is now operating as an art center for Tuscany. So, we had a lot of cultured people in the area and interesting people, plus tons and tons of tourists. The consulate was always besieged with people losing things.

Q: You also, did you cover San Marino then?

COBURN: Yes.

Q: Say a few words about the sovereign republic of San Marino.

COBURN: I'm glad you mentioned that because I was told that I was accredited to the sovereign republic of San Marino and I would have to present my credentials on a certain date when the chiefs of state, the co-regents, had their swearing in. This was every six months. The government changed every six months. The day I was supposed to go to San Marino which is on a mountaintop on the Adriatic side of Italy, the Gordons were in Rimini on the coast doing some business so they said, well, we're going to be there and we'd like you to join us for lunch.

Q: Be there at San Marino?

COBURN: At Rimini.

Q: Oh, at Rimini.

COBURN: Which is just down the mountain from San Marino. We were at this long lunch and I kept looking at my watch knowing that time was getting very short and finally I said I'm afraid I have to go because I have to be in San Marino at 3:00. This was around 2:15. We got in the car and my wife was with me. We go roaring up the mountain and just as I pull up in front of the hotel and I see the band with the procession coming down the street to escort me to the castle for my presentation. I left the car in the street and ran into the hotel and jumped in the elevator and started changing clothes. As soon as I got to the room the phone rang and I was told that the foreign minister was downstairs waiting to escort me. Sure enough I had to march up, with the band to the castle. I had a speech that I was supposed to give which got lost in the confusion. I just sort of spun something off the top of my head and then I had to sign the "golden book" they keep for important visitors.

Q: Now, this is an independent state, San Marino, at least to a large extent. What is the size of it?

COBURN: It's a few villages on the side of a mountain.

Q: Yes, but it has the lowland territory, too, you know, when you go up and down the mountain. It's a very odd and historical survival, my impression of it because it's represented at the UN.

COBURN: I know.

Q: When I say Monaco, which people think of as an independent entity, it's really for all practical purposes under the thumb of France and has no independent diplomatic representation, certainly not at the UN I don't think.

COBURN: I don't think so. Well, San Marino is certainly influenced by Italy.

Q: Oh, yes.

COBURN: Well, the stamps are different because they make a lot of money on their stamps. I think it was just neglected when Italy was unified. They really didn't think about it. So, it has survived as the oldest republic in the world and they get very upset when we call ourselves the oldest republic because they were there long before we were.

Q: So, although we don't have an ambassador to them and the ambassador to Italy is not in effect, but the consul in Florence is somehow?

COBURN: Accredited to the sovereign republic of San Marino.

Q: That's a big deal for them. They are very intent on keeping that contact alive.

COBURN: They would deal with the consulate when they wanted something from the United States which was infrequent, but occasionally we would get material from them to transmit to Washington.

Q: Fascinating. So, you had two years in Florence, up to '76?

COBURN: Yes, '76 its the time up again for reassignment and I was told that I was being replaced by a grievant settlement. Apparently the Department of State had a black officer who had grieved and as part of his settlement he said he would accept an assignment in Florence.

Q: Which is something that happened some years later, too actually.

COBURN: Maybe grievants do that as part of the process.

Q: Well, it's interesting how some places get repeated that way. So, an officer's part of the grievance process was assigned to Florence?

COBURN: Yes. Subsequently I was called from Washington and asked if I wanted to be part of the INR operation.

Q: INR being the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

COBURN: Yes. They wanted me to replace a man who was Italian born and fluent in Italian. In fact he had gone to school with Forlani who at that time was the minister of defense and he was very well hooked into some of the Italian politicians because of his background. He had been the man, so to speak, in this office writing reports on Italy and was very knowledgeable. It turns out that as his final assignment he was going to be named consul general in Genoa and he required a replacement and my name kept coming up. I probably said no six or seven times. In the end I was assigned to INR to replace him as the senior Italian analyst. When I got there I said, "Where are the junior Italian analysts?" They said, "Well, there aren't any. You're the Italian analyst." I said, "Oh."

Q: So, you had left Italy previously in 1976 after having spent six years there in FAO in the consulate in Florence. You return in '92 as political counselor and what do you find about Italy?

COBURN: A country in crisis. The whole system was on the verge of collapse.

Q: The political structure.

COBURN: The political structure.

Q: The economy just went on about its business.

COBURN: Well, they were disconnected and always had been.

Q: Right.

COBURN: Judge Falconi, who was an anti-mafia investigator, had been assassinated in May before my arriving in Rome.

Q: In '92?

COBURN: Yes.

Q: In Sicily?

COBURN: Yes. We arrived in August. The parliament was in a long drawn out process to elect a new president of the republic. Something that happened every six years. One of the leaders of the Christian Democrat Party, Giulio Andreotti, who had been over the years prime minister, foreign minister, and held other cabinet posts was seeking to be elected president of the Italian Republic. The election is held in the parliament and the contending political forces vote for the chief of state.

Q: This was in 1992?

COBURN: Yes. Andreotti was one candidate and Benito Craxi, the leader of the Socialist Party, was another. Craxi had skillfully used the position of the Socialist Party in the middle of the political spectrum to gain power and influence. However, the shock to the political system of the assassination made the politicians realize that the game had changed. Italy needed a new face to lead the country, one who had no history of involvement in the various political machinations. To the public surprise a little known backbencher, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, who had been in parliament since 1948 but hadn't belonged to any political faction, was elected. He was criticized by some as being too closely associated with the Roman Catholic Church.

Q: Was he a Christian Democrat?

COBURN: Yes. Some felt that he was "too religious" to be the head of the state. He was recognized as an honest man who wasn't associated with any of the many scandals that had plagued the country since 1948. The leading politicians felt he was a good symbol of Italy reeling from the Mafia assassinations. The first thing President Scalfaro did was block the appointment of Craxi as prime minister.

Q: Keep him from being Prime Minister?

COBURN: Prevented him from being leader of the government. Having a practicing Catholic as president forced many to believe that a socialist should be prime minister. Otherwise the strong anti-clerical political forces would make life difficult. To solve the dilemma, Giuliano Amato, a socialist advisor to Craxi, was named prime minister. Amato was very smart and a trained economist. In addition, he spoke excellent English, a rarity for an Italian politician, and had good contacts in the United States where he had studied. He actually lived across the street from our embassy on Via Veneto and was a charming man with an intelligent and attractive wife. Amato used his time in office to try and make some economic reforms. What was more important was that two honest men were at the helm when the "clean hands" investigations took place. The common impression was if Craxi had been prime minister, Antonio Di Pietro, the investigating magistrate who uncovered widespread corruption would have been transferred to Sardinia before he could have documented all the crime he discovered. Di Pietro's investigations spread widely and resulted in scandal, suicides, arrests and the destruction of the old political system.

Q: This is in essence a tremendous kind of political bribery, like a huge octopus with arms all over the political business structure of the country and it all just began to pour out around the fall of '92 and the beginning of '93?

COBURN: Exactly. That was the time that this was all happening. Everybody had known that there was corruption operating just under the surface but it had never been exposed to the public in such a dramatic way. So many people were disgraced as a result that the whole political dynamic of the country was altered. The Christian Democrat Party split, new parties were formed, and by the time of the next national elections, the past most powerful politician, Craxi, was gone.

Q: Craxi went into exile?

COBURN: Yes, he went to Tunisia, where he had a vacation villa and spent the rest of his days there until he died. The Socialist Party disappeared and various factions surfaced with new names. Alone untouched by the scandals was the Communist Party because it had always been kept out of government. But even that Party changed.

Q: The Communist Party changed its name and split itself though, not because of corruption, but after the fall of the Soviet Union, right?

COBURN: At the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fear of Soviet domination disappeared and this was one of the key elements that kept the Communist Party out of government. As a relatively “clean party,” the prospects of the Party increased with the meltdown of the other political forces in Italy. They changed their name to the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS using the Italian initials) and strived to make themselves more presentable to the middle class. By doing so, they also lost the more radical members of the old Communist Party who left and reconstituted themselves as the Refounded Communist Party. Into this confused situation strode the richest man in Italy, Berlusconi, who used his considerable wealth and business experience to organize a political force which he named Forza Italia. This term, which means either Go Ahead Italy or Hurray Italy, was a slogan used to urge on his soccer team to victory. Berlusconi forged alliances with an anti-establishment party located in the north of Italy and the old far right party together with the pieces of the old center parties to form a conservative balance to the newly organized PDS.

Q: Mussolini's granddaughter was a member of that far right party, right?

COBURN: Yes, she was one of the more photogenic members of the party and a relative of Sophia Loren which meant she received lots of press attention.

Q: What was the attitude of the United States government toward this whole swirling thing that was going on in Italy?

COBURN: We were very supportive of the efforts the Italians were making to clean up the system. At the time all this was happening, we had a change of ambassadors. When I arrived in 1992, a political appointee from the state of Michigan was the ambassador. He was a wealthy businessman who had been a key supporter of George Bush and been helpful in the president’s victory in the state of Michigan. He was a first generation Italian, very proud of his ancestry even though he couldn’t speak the language. He was a man larger than life in many respects, but somewhat difficult as a leader of men. First of all, he was more interested in the social aspects of the job that he was in anything having to do with internal politics. He spent a good deal of time traveling around the country but never brought back information which could be used in our political reports. The DCM at that time was also from outside the traditional Foreign Service, a man who had an economic background. There wasn’t much reporting being done during this period. The ambassador gave great parties and used to import food from Michigan for his affairs. I remember one party he gave which had an “old west” theme. The Ambassador got horses and cowboys from I can’t guess where and lit bonfires in the gardens of the residence to have cookouts. We as hosts were given cowboy hats and plastic pistols to give to the Italian guests as

they arrived at the hoe-down. It fell to me to give to the somewhat puzzled head of the Bank of Italy (and subsequently President of Italy) a cowboy hat to wear and to his wife, a pistol to hold. The Italians all dressed up in their finery were somewhat puzzled as to what they should do with this equipment as they entered the gardens to enjoy an old west experience. Shortly thereafter, I was in a car being driven by one of the embassy's Italian chauffeurs who said to me in Italian, "Mr. Coburn, do you mind if I ask you a question?" I replied, "No, what?" "I would like to know why the American government sends us Italian Americans as ambassadors. These people couldn't make a living in this country and had to leave to find work. Then they return and tell us how to run our country. It doesn't make sense to us." I said, "Well, we think they have a certain empathy for their country of origin." He replied, "You don't understand Italy at all if you think that." I have always remembered that conversation and wondered how widely that feeling was held in Italy. But the Ambassador had a style all his own. He was a big buff man who didn't hold the Foreign Service or the Government employees from any agency in high regard. He found government procedures bothersome and all the rules an inconvenience.

Q: Well, I mean as the political thing was going on, did the Italian political structure look at all to the Americans, I mean.

COBURN: They were always looking at us at everything we were doing. Many saw the United States as the "protector" of Italian democracy. At the same time many resented the U.S. Italians had a superiority and inferiority complex at the same time. As the inheritors of an ancient civilization, they tended to look down on Americans who could only speak one language who had, in their minds, a limited education. On the other hand, they saw themselves as a country lagging behind Europe with a political structure that was, to say the least, dysfunctional. Many of the Italians I talked to spoke of the Common Market or European Union as the salvation for Italy. They saw it giving Italy the discipline it needed. I was told on several occasions that "we need the discipline that comes from being part of Europe." Also implied in this statement was the thought that we will not need to depend on the United States once Italy is firmly in the European family.

Q: How did the United States present itself then to the Italians in this situation? I mean what, did we try to influence it or did we simply say, look it's up to you, you deal with it or what? How was it handled?

COBURN: We always publicly supported what was happening and in private told the Italian political leadership that we believed that the Italians had the strength and courage to handle the developing situation. So everything that we were doing at that time was to help Italy get through a difficult period. After all, a strong Italy could only strengthen the Western Alliance.

Q: And you didn't have any sense that behind the scenes the United States was pushing for a particular solution to this or favor a political coalition or group or anything like that?

COBURN: No. We didn't have any favorites in the political realm and as it turned out, the natural tendencies of the conservative forces to coalesce resulted in the development of the closest version of a two party system that Italy had ever experienced. The elimination of the threat of a Soviet takeover had allowed social and political interests to break down into liberal

and conservative groupings, as it found in most countries.

Q: So the political ambassador left at the end of the Bush administration?

COBURN: He made a big point of departing Italy at 12 noon on inauguration day.

Q: The day Clinton was being inaugurated? So what happened then as far as the embassy was concerned?

COBURN: Without an ambassador, the DCM became the charge. He indicated to the staff that his only goal was to make the embassy into a first rate institution by the time the new ambassador was in place. The interregnum lasted for about six months. The new ambassador was a senior State Department official. I can't say he was in the Foreign Service because he never was but he was in the State Department system for some time. When he arrived he was quick to tell us at the morning staff meeting that he had taken and passed the Foreign Service exam but had gone on to other things. Later in his career he had come to the State Department as an analyst and had, at one time worked for the Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. He spoke excellent Italian and his wife, a native of France, was welcomed into the Roman society where all the top officials spoke French but not all spoke English. Since both the ambassador and his wife were comfortable in French, they moved easily in the highest levels of society and had access to the kinds of people that their predecessor never could manage. The new ambassador did a lot of political reporting on his own based on personal conversations he had with the political leadership of the country. However, the new ambassador was somewhat aloof and kept his distance from the staff. I remember when he entered my office while I was holding the morning political officers meeting and told us all to stand up. His visit was unexpected and his approach expressed his view of his position vis a vis the staff. He did not encourage a spirit of fellowship among his senior staff, even though we saw him every morning and usually several times during the day. He did not want to "waste his time" on lesser priorities and required that I screen his invitation to ensure that he only went to the most important events. At one cocktail party, his wife came up to me upon entering and directed me to identify the "important people" to whom she should converse. Another time I recommended he attend a dinner at a second level embassy, but an important ally of the United States in the Far East. The next day I was the carpet since he considered the evening not very useful. He also cooled morning discussions when after a section head made a report, he would reply with the statement "don't tell me something I already know." To be fair, he probably learned some of these techniques at the foot of the master in Washington. However, overseas where teamwork is an important factor in the morale of the staff, affections of imperial style undermine the cooperation of the key elements of an embassy and cause muttering in mid and low level staff. The number of requests for curtailment of tour and transfer during his presence in Rome should have indicted that a change in style of was needed. In spite of these personality problems his obvious intelligence, knowledge of the language, and skill in developing contacts with the local important political and economic leadership, made his presence in Italy at such a crucial period important for the successful attainment of our goal to strengthen the Italian political process. In addition the fact that he had made the confidence of the leadership in Washington made the ending of the veto on contacts with the far right and far left parties much easier to attain.

Q: Let's talk about that because it is quite interesting. He "recognized" both parties at the same time. Is that a fair statement?

COBURN: Yes, we made formal and public contact with the leadership of the Reformed Communist Party and the neo-fascist party at the same time, thereby neutralizing any criticism from either the left or the right about our actions.

Q: But wasn't there the famous thing July 4th party where political leaders, never before invited, showed up? Let's talk about that a bit because I don't think that people realize these social functions sometimes carry very portentous implications.

COBURN: The first year I was in Rome during the start of the anti-corruption "clean hands" investigation, I purged the guest list of all the politicians and other figures who had been implicated in the scandals. So, that year a lot of the Christian Democratic political leaders didn't come. I felt that it was important for the United States to show that it was a new day and we would be dealing with those politicians who had good reputations and would hopefully become the future leaders of a strong Italian democracy.

Q: Italians watched this very carefully? Am I right? I mean they would know the people who went to that event.

COBURN: In political circles they would know. Since so many of the political class was at the party, the absence of some of the implicated figures would be obvious.

Q: They would know okay, so then.

COBURN: We were sending a subtle signal that the invitees were the responsible political leaders and we look forward to dealing with them while the others were less than welcome. At the same time, we were reaching out to the parties on the far right and far left which had been ignored in all the post war years. My deputy was one of the political officers who established contact with the far right party and arranged for a visit of three of their leaders to the United States on a visitor grant.

Q: We think of that group as the inheritors of the fascist party but they didn't call themselves fascist, did they?

COBURN: No, the name of the party was the Italian Socialist Movement or MSI, in Italian. They were called neo-fascists by some of their opponents and fascists by the communists.

Q: Right. None of them had ever been formally attended to by the embassy? They were invited to social events or anything like that? They were treated in the same way, in effect, as the communists had been for all those years.

COBURN: Yes. We concentrated our efforts on the party in the center of the political spectrum and ignored the far left and far right until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Empire. Then our political section established contacts with middle ranking officials in the

communist and MSI parties to learn of their plans and how they saw the political situation in Italy evolving. We did invite the leadership of the communist party of PDS to the Ambassador's residence.

Q: This was the big July 4th event?

COBURN: No, no. This was a private meeting which we expected would become public at some point. It was a face to face meeting between the Ambassador and the leadership of the PDS.

Q: The former communist party?

COBURN: Yes, the former communist party. The Ambassador and his senior staff met with the Party Secretary, Massimo D'Alema, for a social encounter. It was just a chance to chat and express our interest in meeting with him for time to time. Of course, this was all done in Italian because the PDS leadership did not speak English, although reportedly, some of them spoke Russian.

Q: What year was this? This was probably in '93 or '94?

COBURN: I think it was 1994.

Q: Yes, early in 1994. Okay. So, you talked with them for about 30 minutes?

COBURN: That was it. From then on we could have regular contacts at all levels of the embassy.

Q: But the signal went around in the Italian political class that the United States was now prepared to accord some recognition or attention to this entity.

COBURN: We were dropping any objection we had to the ex-communist party.

Q: And we didn't see them as any threat to Italian democracy.

COBURN: Right. With the end of the Soviet system and the potential threat to a takeover in Italy, the Italian political system could now operate in a more normal manner with the possibility of governments changing from conservative to liberal. Having a left wing or liberal government in Italy would not destabilize the Western alliance.

Q: The PDS itself was no longer running around saying NATO must go and all that type of propaganda?

COBURN: The PDS was acting more restrained but to the left of them was the Refounded Communist Party, which had broken away and still maintained the old anti-U.S., NATO, etc. line.

Q: But wasn't the head of the Refounded Communist Party at the July 4th event which I know the head of the MSI was present.

COBURN: What year are you remembering?

Q: Yes, this was the summer of '94 and because it was felt, and I remember the discussions, it was felt that in the staff meetings that I went to that if he was going to have the PDS at this event, that it was now time to have the MSI. I remember the ambassador coming to the staff meeting the next day and saying that he had shook the hand of the leader of the MSI.

COBURN: I am glad you remember that because I don't.

Q: That was in effect the balancing that if you had one party on the far left, you needed one party on the far right and therefore we would now talk to everybody. So these social events do have meaning.

COBURN: The July 4th party was the high point of the social year. It was always a grand affair held in the gardens of the ambassador's residence in the Parioli section of Rome. The villa was once the property of a cardinal and was beautifully laid out amongst the gardens. Do you remember the party after the departure of the political appointed ambassador? It was one of the best.

Q: No.

COBURN: It was a good opportunity to meet and mix with all the leaders of government, industry, and society. There were bankers, movie stars, politicians, industrialists, top governmental officials, etc. The setting was spectacular and the music and food were always top notch. Everyone came because they knew that it was a place to be seen.

Q: So, you think the embassy handled this Italian political crisis correctly and that it redounded to our good, to our reputation, that we did so?

COBURN: I think we steered through very choppy waters with a firm hand. We didn't interfere in the domestic political situation but made it clear by our public statements that we supported efforts to clean house and establish a healthy political system that could meet the needs of the Italian population.

Q: But the ambassador was, I mean it seems to me that this was a pretty good argument for having a very highly experienced professional at post. There were a lot of legends about how he got that job but, however it turned out, it appeared to be a reasonable choice, a good one, you know.

COBURN: Yes, it was. The Italian-American Foundation had said in public that they would only support an Italo-American for the post of ambassador. The new ambassador, as it turned out, had an Italian heritage so there was no objection on the part of the Foundation to his nomination. He also had good contacts in Washington and was well known from his previous jobs in the State Department by all the senior officials in the building. With that kind of background, he had credibility in both Washington and Rome.

Q: Does it make a difference individually? Because you see where somebody who couldn't handle himself could really have gotten in trouble.

COBURN: I suppose you could speculate on how things might have been different if we had a political appointee as ambassador at this time rather than one as well connected as the professional who was in place. Each embassy tends to evolve depending on the roles and interests of the principals. With an ambassador like we had who had a strong interest in the political developments of the country, the key leaders dealt with him directly and he reported on his conversations with little input from the rest of the staff. Lesser political figures became the contact point for the DCM, who was an old political officer. My main contacts were working level figures in the prime minister's office and the office of the president of the republic. My staff had working relationships with the desk officers in the foreign ministry and some of the political officers in the other embassies in Rome. I had excellent contacts with the political counselors in the British, French, Canadian, Indian, and Pakistan embassies. If you have a political appointee as ambassador and one who doesn't speak the local language, then the duties within the embassy are much different with the DCM and political counselor picking up much of the work.

An aspect of my job not well understood was the coordination role I played with the law enforcement elements and the military attaches. Our law enforcement community included the CIA, FBI, INS, Customs, the Secret Service, and the intelligence arms of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, with the addition of a special representative of the Attorney General. All of these people were dealing with counterparts in the Italian government. One of my jobs was to try and coordinate the information they all had so that we were sending the same message to various parts of the Italian government. As you know from your own experience, knowledge is power and trying to get each agency to share information was difficult. There was always a lot of reluctance and meetings sometimes resulted in merely sharing information on arrivals of various officials from Washington or other posts. We also had an intelligence committee which was chaired by the CIA station chief. This was just as difficult although it did provide a venue for members of the various elements to get to know each other. The staff of the embassy was so large that it would be possible to spend weeks without seeing someone unless there was the reason of a meeting.

With regard to the military, we constantly had to deal with parochial views among the various elements stationed in Rome and with military visitors who would arrive in Rome and sometimes try and act as if they were in the United States. We would have to remind them that they were in a foreign country and permission is required to do many of the things that they wish to do. At the time I was there we still didn't have a formal status of forces agreement which would regularize the rights and duties of the American forces in Italy. We were quite concerned that if a left leaning government ever came to power, there was no agreement to protect the military facilities which we had in the country. Negotiations on this agreement had been going on for years but little progress had been made. Fortunately a military officer who was assigned to the embassy at that time made it his personal crusade to get it done. To his credit he got it done before he was reassigned to Germany and promoted to General. He was one of the quality military people I met and I am glad that he was the right person at the right time. All too often the military assigned to Italy saw it as a pre-retirement post and enjoyed the country more than the job.

Q: As you said, it is very difficult to coordinate and obviously a big NATO presence. I remember there was a coordinating committee for Yugoslavia that was composed, I think, of the United States, England, and Russia, but not Italy. Yet all the bases that the U.S. was using were out of Italy. If my memory is correct this was a real question that the ambassador worked on intensely to get Italy into this committee.

COBURN: You are right. Italy felt that it was not being taken seriously and yet was expected to cooperate on all of these issues. France, Germany, and the UK were the leading European powers we always consulted. Italy wanted to get into that circle and complained to us often about imagined slights. When the Secretary of State or Deputy Secretary visited Europe, Italy always wanted to be a part of the visit. Since we expected Italy to provide resources, we really felt that Washington should be more forthcoming with the Italians and the ambassador worked on this directly.

Q: Were there any specific political issues that you remember?

COBURN: A few. One involved Ustica, which is an island off Sicily. An Italian domestic airliner crashed near there killing all on board. Immediately after the crash, there were charges that U.S. forces somehow were involved in the downing of the plane. This could be important in the law suits which followed for if the plane had been shot down, the insurance question would be different than if mechanical or pilot error were involved. Various conspiracy theories were put forward by the press including the speculation that the aircraft carrier stationed in Naples was part of the story. Someone in Naples, writing that all weddings in the city resulted in pictures being taken of the bridal couple with the bay in the background, suggested pictures of that day be produced to prove the aircraft carrier wasn't in port. Pictures were found and they showed that the carrier was in port that day.

Another continual political issue resulted from the arrest and imprisonment in the United States of an Italian woman terrorist, Silvia Baroldini. She had come to the U.S. as a baby and gotten involved in a bank robbery to support some radical movement. She was arrested and received a stiff prison sentence.

Q: Well, I think a policeman was killed in the robbery, right?

COBURN: She was the getaway car driver. She didn't fire the shot, but the men with her did and so she was an accessory. The Italians thought her imprisonment was harsh and there were committees seeking her release or return to Italy. Even the Pope got into the act. We had groups coming to the embassy with petitions all the time. Finally, it was agreed that she would be returned to Italy to finish her sentence in an area where her mother and other relatives could visit her.

Finally, when Yugoslavia did break up, Slovenia, which was on the border with Italy.

Q: Being the northernmost state or component of Yugoslavia.

COBURN: Yes, many Italians had lived there and at the end of World War II were expelled and their property was seized by the Yugoslavs.

Q: This was in the northeastern quarter of Italy?

COBURN: On the Adriatic. In this area you found a strong support for the far-right MSI party because of the number of refugees who had spent years looking across the border at their villas which had been seized by the Yugoslavs. Once the country dissolved, the Italians made appeals and put pressure on the Slovenians for recompensation for lost property and for adjustments to the border in such a manner to facilitate better border control. Our embassy in Slovenia got involved in some tits for tats and we tried to keep them from escalating. Italian diplomats made several trips to try and resolve all these issues.

Q: Yes, my memory is that Italy particularly was preventing Slovenia from getting into the European Union and because it had some kind of veto. Their argument to the Slovenians was that we want some kind of agreement on the property and the refugees complaints before we are going to let you in.

COBURN: Susanna Agnelli was the foreign minister. She was the sister of Gianni Agnelli, the owner of Fiat and she was quite a strong character. I remember her first meeting with the ambassador where, contrary to all diplomatic protocol, she was forthright and in dramatic terms said, "You have got to stop pushing us around because we're going to push you right back." I think our ambassador was a bit taken aback by her attitude. However, the government didn't last all that long and she wasn't around to follow up.

Q: Yes, it only lasted about seven months and then the northern separatist leader fell out with the prime minister and they had a government of technocrats for quite a while.

COBURN: I think Dini, who was the treasury man, became the technocrat prime minister to do the budget and keep things more on line until they could have another election and that's the one I think that Prodi supported by the ex-communist party, came to power because the Christian Democratic Party which had always had a conservative and liberal side to it, but it was held together by the church and by the fear of communist takeover. Once that fear dissipated then the Christian Democratic Party split into its natural parts with the social sensitive part going into the left coalition and a more conservative part ending up as part of the newly organized force of Berlusconi.

Q: So, Italy as usual goes on with not much government in a way actually, the native ability and the energies of its people carrying it along?

COBURN: That's right.

Q: It's an amazing place.

COBURN: It's a survivor's paradise.

Q: Fifth or sixth biggest economy in the world. Incredible.

COBURN: Must be on its 58th or 59th government since 1948.

Q: Right and to no noticeable difference I suppose for anyone.

COBURN: Well, the last time I was there it was just humming along. In fact it seemed to be much better and the streets were cleaner, the buildings were cleaner. They have I think maybe gotten control of their budget and they're doing a good job.

Q: And Berlusconi is now back as Prime Minister.

COBURN: Yes, and stronger than ever.

Q: So, any other observations you'd like to make about your career or your view of the State Department?

COBURN: I enjoyed my career in the Foreign Service. I consider myself fortunate in the friends I made, the posts I had, and all the events I experienced. There are not all that many careers that allow you to represent your country, travel and live overseas with your family, to meet top level people in the countries where you are assigned, hopefully make a difference. The Foreign Service is composed of some of the brightest and most ambitious Americans you will find anywhere. Unfortunately, political appointees tend to see the members of the Foreign Service as untrustworthy. On several occasions I have heard political appointees question the loyalty of the members of the Service to the political aims of whatever administration was in power at the time. This distrust harmed the effectiveness of whatever goals they were trying to achieve since many, but not all, of the political appointees I worked for were not of the caliber that you would hope to see in key positions. They owed their appointment to either money or work in the political campaigns. Often, they were not really interested in the jobs to which they were appointed. While the Foreign Service has quality people, the same cannot be said for the Department of State where many of the jobs held in Washington were filled with 9 to 5 types who didn't go out of their way to respond to the concerns of the staff assigned overseas. Not understanding the stress that overseas living can place on family members, there was sometimes a sense that overseas staff are spoiled and want to be taken care of all the time. The program to place some domestic staff on temporary duty overseas might go a long way to break down this feeling and give them a realistic taste of life on the front lines of diplomacy. Given the negatives and positives, I still believe that the Department of State, on balance, is the best organization in the federal government. My children had experiences that were unique and while many times they didn't appreciate being away from America, I hope that in the long run they will find that they gained more than they lost by being diplomatic vagabonds.

MICHAEL A. BOORSTEIN
Administrative Officer
Palermo, Sicily (1971-1973)

Mr. Boorstein was born in Washington, DC and was raised in that area. He was educated at Beloit College, the University of Colorado, Harvard University and the University of Turku in Finland. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, Mr. Boorstein specialized in administration and personnel, serving in Palermo, Rome, Ottawa, Warsaw Curacao, Moscow and Beijing. In addition, Mr. Boorstein played a major role in the planning and construction of US embassies in Moscow and Beijing and in the renovation of consulates and embassies throughout the globe. He spoke six foreign languages. Mr. Boorstein was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

BOORSTEIN: Yes. Anyway, a gentleman named Wayne Hanks who rose to be I think pretty much the top of the courier service was in that group. Jim Vandivier was also a senior courier ultimately. I believe he's still living, was in the group. Anyway, that took me through to early July when I took off for Palermo.

Q: You were in Palermo from when to when?

BOORSTEIN: Early July 1971 for two years almost to the day, to early July 1973. We arrived in a rather unusual fashion in that because of the summer tourist season we could not get a flight from Rome to Palermo. Through arrangements with the embassy in Rome, primarily the personnel officer, her name was Alice Westbrook who was a legendary personnel officer in the Foreign Service. She arranged for an embassy car and driver to pick us up at the airport in Rome and to drive us to Naples. There we spent the afternoon visiting with Ming and Paul Altemus with whom we'd been in language training and our daughter at that point was three and a half so she was tired and she took a nap. We just visited with them and freshened up a bit. That night we took the overnight ferry from Naples to Palermo, which was kind of neat. We arrived by ship in Palermo. Now, until about 1969 or 1970 people going to Italy were authorized travel by ship under the PL480 program, excess currency could be used to buy transatlantic ship passage and so the fellow I replaced came over on one of the American president line ships.

Q: Constitution and Independence.

BOORSTEIN: Yes, it was the ship that I took with my parents, the Constitution in 1961 when we went to Europe, which I believe I covered in the last segment. Anyway, we arrived and we were then taken to our hotel for temporary lodging which was on the beach near Palermo in a little resort area called Mondello and there we stayed for three months. I mean I went to work everyday, but my wife and daughter went to the beach everyday when they weren't assisting me in looking for a place to live because we had to find our own housing. We stayed for the whole 90 days that we were entitled to on the beach. The allowances were adequate to cover the hotel and the meals. I mean after a while it got a little bit long in the tooth, you eat all your meals in the dining room of the hotel, but the staff adored my daughter who was like I said three and a half, blonde, blue-eyed and very verbal. The Italians love children and the Sicilians particularly love children who are blonde. She thrived reasonably well, quite well.

After we were there I don't recall how long, we all went back on the ferry to Naples, my wife,

daughter and I because I was going up to Rome to pick up my car. My best friend from college, whose name is Jim Zimmerman, he was in the Navy and he was stationed at Gaeta which is between Rome and Naples and he had a little rented villa in the hills near Gaeta and we stayed with him and then one morning I just took the train up to Rome, picked up my car and drove back to Gaeta. It wasn't until a few months later that I actually went up to Rome for formal consultations with the embassy that I had to forego because it was urgency in me getting to the post, but that was nice to pick up my little red Fiat. I put it back on the ferryboat and went back to Palermo. Ultimately we moved into a nice apartment on the ground floor. It was a new apartment in a new apartment building. Like I said we had to buy two hot water heaters, wardrobes for the two bedrooms, a whole array of kitchen cabinets, combination washer, actually it wasn't a dryer. We had to hang the clothes up. We had a little balcony on the back that we could hang the clothes up to dry. The climate was such that they would basically dry pretty quickly. We really had no dryer. My daughter went off to nursery school and very quickly learned Italian and forgot her English. We made friends within the apartment complex. It was a nice, really, probably the most foreign living experience we had our entire time in the Foreign Service.

Q: What was the situation in Sicily, who was the consul general and also what were the currents going around at the time?

BOORSTEIN: Well, Sicily in the Italian context economically, culturally is sort of like Appalachia. It really was and perhaps it still is a real backwater and of course is Mafia country. The Italian government in Rome had a whole Department devoted to the problems of the South, which the Italians called the Mezzogiorno, like Le Midi in France, the same thing meaning "in the afternoon or midday." It was a very poor region. The traffic in Palermo was horrendous, very undisciplined drivers even by Italian standards. Very family oriented, but this chronic poverty particularly outside the main cities and you have Palermo, Catania, Messina, Siracusa, Agrigento were the towns of significant size. The rest were just little villages tucked into the mountains, poor, poor little places. You'd still see donkeys as the main beast of burden. As a matter of fact somewhere in my slide archives I have a picture of our household effects crate arrived in Palermo. It obviously came by ship and it was offloaded and it was delivered to our house on a flatbed cart drawn by two donkeys. That is just trying to give you a flavor of what it was like. The Consulate General had 50 Foreign Service National staff, I was the administrative officer and there were 10 Americans at the time in Palermo and that's pretty big. It closed in 1993. The consul general was Alfred Vigderman. Alfred Vigderman came into the Foreign Service as a mid-career entrant in the early '50s at a fairly high rank. He had spent a lot of years on Capitol Hill and so he came in like I said as an FSO-2 I believe which is already a senior officer. He had been political military counselor in Athens. He had been office director in the Department and Palermo was his retirement tour and he was at that point in his late '50s. His wife's name was Edith. Very nice normal people, but you know, kind of old school Foreign Service. I remember that my wife had to make a call on his wife and all of this and the protocol was expected to be just so. But they were warm people and Palermo as I said had a staff of 10 Americans and of the 10 Americans four of us were first tour junior officers. The only one who is still in the Service is Cameron Hume. Cameron Hume is currently the number two in the office of the inspector general. He recently completed his tour as our ambassador in South Africa. He had been our ambassador to Algeria and a couple of tours at the UN as part of our mission. He had been a

Peace Corps volunteer in Libya, a graduate of Princeton. He's a political officer, very well educated, well read, he's written a couple of books. He was on his first tour in the Foreign Service and spoke excellent Italian. He was a visa officer like everybody else was. The other two who were on their first tour was Russ La Mantia who is now retired. Russ rose into the senior ranks. He specialized in sort of European community and aviation affairs ultimately. He had a tour in Brussels. He had a tour in Canberra. I don't know that he ever served in any hardship post. Oh, well, he was economic counselor in Cairo, so that I suppose counts. His wife Kathy, they didn't have any kids at the time and they really were among our best friends.

Another couple actually, he was on his second tour because he curtailed from his first tour was Tom Longo. Tom is an Italian American and we're still very much in touch. He's been retired now for 10 years. He lives near Ocean City, Maryland. His wife Lili is Italian, born in Naples. I believe she still has some brothers in Italy and they were there with their son Eric who was a year younger than my daughter and their son Marc was born while we were there. Her aunt who we all knew affectionately as Zia Amelia was living with them as sort of a housekeeper and she was Neapolitan to the core. She spoke decent Italian, but it was hard for her, she preferred the Neapolitan dialect. Italian was sort of really a foreign language, but she could cook like nobody's business and was very good with the kids and very almost like a peasant in a way, but a cut above. Still very much that maternal kind of person. That was the junior officer group.

The consul general's secretary was a woman named Helen Kalkbrenner. Helen Kalkbrenner, you really, I think she's still living, you ought to get her oral history. This is a woman who was born in China. Her parents were White Russians who fled the revolution. Helen's got to be 80 years old if she's still alive and at the end of World War II she met a young American soldier and got married. Now because of her upbringing in China and the fact that her parents were Russian, her first language was Russian; her second language was Chinese. Because of the Japanese occupation, she learned Japanese. A real linguist. She married this man, had four children and they were in Rome sometime in the mid '60s and he left her. He left her high and dry. Don't know the circumstances, essentially abandoned her. Again, to show you what the Foreign Service was like in those days, there was no safety net for her. There was no well, we'll pay your airfare home, you'll get half his pension, nothing. She was left at the mercy of whatever charity she could get from the embassy. She was hired as a commissary manager in Rome and by that time she had picked up and became fluent in Italian and then ultimately was hired as a Foreign Service Secretary and was assigned to Palermo. She was good. Really a wonderful woman who at that time was probably in her late '40s.

Our number two in the consulate was a guy who spent his career doing consular work, Ernie Gutierrez and Ernie if he is still living has been long retired. He spoke Spanish of course with a name like Gutierrez. He then I think went to Guadalajara after he left and he was there when our consul general was kidnapped. You know that story from the mid '70s? I forget the name of our consul general.

Q: Oh, yes.

BOORSTEIN: He was there and he was basically in charge while he was being held for many months. Leon or Lindbergh?

Q: Leon Harvey or something like that.

BOORSTEIN: Yes, anyway and his wife's name was Maruka, a very unusual name. The other Foreign Service Officer was Carlotta Allen, Charlotte Allen. She was single. She was the passport and citizenship officer and had been in the Foreign Service for a long time. She is still living and to the best of my knowledge she is still living in Palermo. She had a boyfriend at the time. I have no idea, she's either living with him or found somebody else, but she's retired and living in Palermo. The other two Americans, I don't know if that totals up to 10, but more or less were Fred Davino and Aldo Settimo, these were the Italian American immigration officers and Aldo Settimo was from New Jersey. Fred Davino was probably from that part of the world, too. They had been in Italy since the mid '50s. They were there helping to process the immigrants under the Refugee Relief Act and after 10, 12 years in Naples they were then transferred to Palermo. They were wonderful people. They took all the junior officers under their wings. They knew everybody. I remember going with them to a country restaurant with some of the other junior officers and a place we never ever would have found. They were selling wine from the vineyards behind the restaurant that they had pressed and made themselves and they were just basically putting them into old mineral water bottles and stuffing a cork in it and taking it home. It was very young wine because I remember taking it home, putting it in the refrigerator and a few days later I opened it up and had a drink, poured a glass, put it back in the refrigerator and the next day it was vinegar. It turned just like that. They were very good sources of advice particularly to the officers who did the visa work and I was an administrative officer and I had no consular training. It was an adjustment for me. I was highly stressed. I was 24 years old. The bulk of my staff were in their late '40s or early '50s and I had almost 40, 45 Italians working for me. The drivers from the motor pool, the mechanic, the switchboard operator, virtually all of the specialties within the administration were all held by FSNs. Personnel, general services, budget and fiscal, the cashier, my secretary, these were all Italians, the supply clerk and so my little empire was 35, 40 maybe even more, FSNs. Got along fine with them. It was really a family atmosphere. My daughter went to nursery school and everyday my wife would take the bus down to pick her up and either take the bus back or walk to the consulate, meet me and they had a lengthy lunch period from like I don't know noon until 2:30. It was like a siesta time. It was just the way it was. There were four rush hours in Palermo. We all went home for lunch and we'd go to the bakery to get some fresh bread. We'd go to the Salumeria, and buy some good sliced ham and cheese. We'd have a nice lunch and I'd typically take a little nap and about a quarter to three I'd get up and drive back to work and stay at work until about 6:15 and then go home.

I was stressed in the sense that I was a little unsure of how to do my job. It was new to me. The consul general was good. He wasn't overbearing, but particularly his wife was very fussy about their residence and how it was cared for. There were problems with their internal hot water system. It was just a villa that they lived in. He brought in building engineers to look into this and it turned out it was a whistling problem that wouldn't go away when you turned the water on and the hot water heater had a sort of you know the air had to get bled out of it and it was just a whole mess. Finally we called in a specialist who found a defective valve and so he handed me the valve and I kept that as a symbol of perseverance and had it on my desk. He wasn't mean spirited, but he was just very persistent in things getting done. He wouldn't give me the more sensitive things to do in the admin area for example, the lease of the consular building was

coming up and he did the negotiations with the landlord. I sat in on the meeting, but he just clearly the one who wanted to do this. I don't recall resenting it at the time. I felt that it probably just lent some weight of importance and he never said I'm going to do it, he just did it. You know I think 10 years later I would have been a little bit annoyed at that kind of thing, but it was the correct thing to do.

The thing that was interesting about the tour as well was that I got to do other things than just being the administrative officer, which is a tribute to the consul general. I did some political reporting. In 1968 there was a very severe earthquake that struck Sicily, killed a number of people, displaced hundreds if not thousands that were all put into these little Quonset huts. It was a very poor region. Very much Mafia country. With the FSN political advisor or whatever his job was, who had his undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama. He obviously he was from Sicily, but he spoke English with a southern accent. It was really great to watch that sort of deteriorate over time. Michele Calderone. He ended up after the consulate was closed transferring up to Rome where he worked for many years in public diplomacy for the embassy. The two of us went off to this place, Valle del Belice in the mountainous region of Sicily, we were met by a local priest. He took us around and showed us the houses and talked about basically he thought it was a scandal of how mismanaged the effort to help the displaced people and how the Mafia skimmed the money. One of the things I'll never forget is that we came in a consular car, but the two of us got into his little Volkswagen to go around the area and the first time he got in the car, he puts the key in and he says to us sort of in an offhanded way, he said, "You know for a split second whenever I turn the ignition on I wonder if the car is going to blow up." He then proceeded to turn the key. You don't forget something like that. I wrote an airgram, you recall them, obviously I don't think they're used anymore, on that experience. I was really happy to have done it, the good training and career development. I tell you what, let's stop right now. I'm not quite finished with Palermo.

Q: All right. I've got one question I want to ask is the influence of the Mafia in your work. I mean you had jobs, you were dealing with money and all this and did this impact? Also, the problem of sometimes getting rid of people because I speak as a former consul general of Naples, you know, jobs were practically inherited and I mean this, it's a family thing. We'll talk about it.

BOORSTEIN: Yes, I do have a very interesting and fairly intricate story to tell about the Mafia.

Q: Okay and also did you get involved in seeing any of the trends and what the INS people were doing returning people and all that.

BOORSTEIN: I can talk about that. It also relates to the Mafia story and then also as another reminder to myself I can tell you about a CODEL that I assisted where we all went off to Mount Edna.

Q: Okay, great.

Q: Today is the 22nd of September.

BOORSTEIN: 27th.

Q: 27th oh, excuse me, 27th of September, 2005. Mike, you heard where we left off.

BOORSTEIN: Yes.

Q: In the first place you were in Palermo from when to when?

BOORSTEIN: July 1971 to July 1973.

Q: Okay.

BOORSTEIN: I have three vignettes to pass onto you, one of which relates to your last question about the Mafia. I was the administrative officer in Palermo the first officer assigned there for a full two-year tour as administrative officer in recent history. Prior to that the junior officers would be on a rotation where they'd spend three months, six months as the administrative officer, but went back to consular. In my case I was there on a full two-year assignment as a coned admin officer. There was no rotation unlike we have today, we've sort of gone back to the pure sense of the affairs of the admin officer and that's it. Well, the consul general had a different idea in mind. Probably about halfway through my tour I came down with severe stomach problems and I was, I thought I had appendicitis. I was medically evacuated to the navy hospital in Naples. They discovered that I simply had a bad case of gastroenteritis, but it shook up the consul general when he realized that by my being out of action for any significant period of time he didn't have a backup. He got it into his head that he was going to do a swap for about six weeks. He took another first tour duty officer named Russ La Mantia whom I talked about the last time and me and we basically swapped jobs. I went down to the non-immigrant visa section as the chief of that unit and he came upstairs to be the administrative officer for six weeks. I was very resentful of this initially, but after a while I realized that the consul general was doing me a favor because I acquired ultimately another skill code in the consular area. I learned a whole new set of Italian vocabulary and was able to manage another aspect of the operation.

During my time there, there was a natural gas explosion in Long Island and it killed 35 or 40 workers, most of whom were illegal Italian immigrants. One day shortly after that terrible incident, accident an elderly gentleman with his travel agent whom I knew showed up and he applied for an emergency visa to fly to New York to reclaim his nephew's body and fly him back to Italy for burial. In doing the name check on this elderly gentleman it was discovered in the mid '50s under the Refugee Relief Act he was denied an immigrant visa on the basis that he was found to be a member of the Mafia, under Section 212.A27 of the immigration code. That's a very rare finding. It means that they really had evidence that he was a participant in Mafia activities. So, I went to the INS officers for guidance and they said, you are the official empowered to either issue the visa or deny it. You're looking to us for advice, our advice to you is not to give a visa even though there are extraordinary humanitarian type reasons to do it, so this man's record is such that even though he is elderly this would not be the thing to do. I took their advice and I turned the visa down. This all happened over a period of a day or two. I turned the visa down and he was weeping in my office and he was going on and on. He said he had raised his nephew as his son because his parents had died and this and that. I was unmoved and I

stuck by my decision. About two or three weeks later in my mailbox at home, I lived in an apartment complex, so I had a lock type box for all local mail. I would only check it once a week or so because we had the Military Postal System and there in my mailbox a piece of you know how in Europe you have the paper, like graph paper that they use a lot like notebook paper, was a small piece of paper and written in blue ink were the following words *La Vecchia Mafia Vive* meaning the old Mafia will live or still lives. Then also in blue ink was a small crudely drawn picture of a knife and then in red ink there were little drops of blood that were put below the tip of the blade. I thought to myself, hum, this is something I should be concerned with. I immediately thought of the turn down of the visa for this elderly Mafioso. I took it into the office and showed it to the head of the consular operations and then ultimately it was shown to the consul general. He got on the phone with the chief of police and that same afternoon I had 24-hour coverage in front of my apartment by the Italian police. We had a police officer escort my wife and daughter to her nursery school every morning. There was an investigation. The old gentleman was called in. He denied everything and then eventually the protection was lifted and here I am to tell the tale. It was deemed to be highly unusual for the Mafia to move against a foreigner. This was in the era where the Mafia had not yet gotten into the illegal drug trade. So, pretty much whatever violence they committed was against other Italians, revenge on a killing others in the Mafia.. That was a rather disconcerting event and a product of my experience as a consular officer for six weeks.

Before we ended the last session I mentioned a story of my involvement in a CODEL (Congressional Delegation). We didn't have a lot of big wig official business in Palermo, but towards the end of my tour in the spring of 1973, we got word through a telegram that a professional delegation headed by Congressman Pogue who I believe was the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. A very big influential man from Waco, Texas was leading an Agriculture Committee CODEL to the Middle East and South Asia and had his own aircraft. At that time it was a U.S. air force DC-7, a propeller plane. Took it from Andrews all the way, I think it went as far as Kuwait and India and then on the way back they were starting out their last stop was Kuwait and they were flying from Kuwait back to the United States. Well, in order to do that they had to stop to refuel twice and one of their refueling stops was the naval air station in Sigonella in eastern Sicily. I think from there they flew to the Azores and then on to Washington. All they were doing was overnighiting. There were probably 15 members of Congress plus staffers. It was a pretty big deal to plan for this. They didn't want to fly into Palermo. They wanted to stop at the naval air station, which as I said was in Sigonella, which was very near to Catania and also very near to Mount Edna. I'm not sure whether we recommended it or they already knew from experience they wanted to stay at the Hotel San Domenico, which is a very famous resort above the ocean, above the sea.

Q: Is that in Taormina?

BOORSTEIN: It's in Taormina.

Q: I've stayed there.

BOORSTEIN: It's a Middle Ages monastery that's been transformed and renovated into a five star hotel.

Q: No, I didn't stay there. I didn't stay in any five star hotel, but I stayed at one of those places in Taormina.

BOORSTEIN: Anyway, so, it was necessary to do an advance trip. I worked with the protocol officer of the naval air base in Sigonella. He was navy lieutenant commander, a young fellow like me and we had a good time and we went up the slopes of Mount Edna because they wanted to do that as a day trip and we went to some local restaurants that they wanted to see and whatever. The planning went reasonably well and I was prepared. When they were going to arrive I believe my wife came with me, yes she did and went there the day before and we were allowed to stay in the Hotel San Domenico because after all I was the control officer. We arrived at the naval air base in Sigonella waiting for the plane to land. The time comes and no plane. We call up Embassy Rome. Embassy Rome calls down to the naval base in Naples. The information is relayed from the aircraft. The aircraft had already landed on the commercial side of the Catania airport. Then we had to high tail it over from the military side of the airport over to the civilian side, which you would think you could just sort of drive across the runway. Well, it didn't work that way. You have to go outside and go around. It took us about 45 minutes and the CODEL is cooling its heels. I thought to myself, oh my God, my career is over. Then the pilot gets off the plane with this piece of paper and just shoves it in my face saying, "Why weren't you waiting for us here? We cabled you about this." I looked at it, looked at all the addressees and Amconsul Palermo was not an addressee. The office that had dropped the ball was the visitors' office at Embassy Rome. They failed to call down to me or to the consular people and say be sure you meet the plane on the commercial side of the airport. That's what started out the CODEL visit.

I then I wanted to get the passports for the group because in those years whenever you stayed in a hotel in Italy, the security people required a record from the hotel of every guest plus their nationality and their passport number. The air force liaison officer refused to give it to me saying they're going to be locked up on the aircraft. We don't need them and I said, I guarantee you that when we get to the hotel the hotel will tell you to go back to the airport and get them. He said, I'll take my chances. Sure enough I was right and so I didn't go down with them. I think there was someone from the hotel who went down with him or maybe the navy liaison guy from Sigonella went down with him, but I didn't go and I basically said, look I told you so. He had to go down and get all the passports.

Then we had set up an evening of entertainment of Sicilian folk dancing and music at a local nightclub. None of the Congressmen wanted to go. All they wanted to do was sit around the bar and drink Johnny Walker Scotch. Particularly there was a Congressman from Arkansas named Bill Alexander who actually was in Congress for a long time, well into the late '80s, early '90s. He was one of the more prolific Scotch drinkers. It was nice music and whatever and so my wife at that time was about 24 or 25 years old. They liked to have this young blonde woman there to liven the evening and we were there and the next day we all went up. They did go on the tour of Taormina. That was my first CODEL experience.

The last thing I want to tell you about, actually no, it wasn't my last CODEL. It was my first large CODEL. I want to tell you about another misadventure of a CODEL that happened shortly

after I arrived in Palermo involving Congressman Rooney who of course at the time was the chairman on the subcommittee on appropriations for State, Commerce and Justice and had that position for many, many years. I was still living in the hotel and it was my turn to be duty officer. I get a phone call from the concierge of the consulate general office who in effect was my relay point. Obviously, that was before the era of cell phones and what have you. The embassy in Rome was calling. He gave me the phone number and I called back from the hotel and they said, Congressman Rooney and whoever was the assistant secretary for administration at the time, the name may come to me, but he's no longer living and I just don't remember now who he was. They were onboard the Christopher Colombo, the Italian line and they were literally taking that ship from New York. He was going on a fact finding trip of Europe and the means of transportation was the Christopher Colombo and it was sailing down to Palermo and it was only going to be in Palermo for about six hours and then it was going to turn around and go. Congressman Rooney wanted something to do. This was 10:00 in the morning and the ship was going to dock at 3:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon. I called the consul general, Alfred Vigderman, who thought very quickly on his feet. It was a Sunday, everything was closed. Didn't want to go to any museums or churches, he just wanted to find a nice restaurant and probably drink. The consul general had an honorary membership in a sailing club on the Mediterranean near the port. It was called the La Vela -- vela means sail. He said, look why don't you suggest to the escort officers, his name was Connelly, that you'll meet the ship and I will meet the congressman at the club and we'll sit outside, it was August and hotter than hell. We'll sit outside, there's a breeze off the port off the sea and we'll drink for a while and then we'll have dinner and Mike, why don't you go down ahead to the club and see if you can ask if they can open up the dining room at 6:00. Well, this was just unheard of. It wasn't as bad as having dinner in a restaurant, but the Sicilians wouldn't eat until 8:30 or 9:00 at night. I went down to the club and asked them to open up and I had tested at the two level in speaking at FSI before I left. My Italian was good, but it wasn't great. I didn't know how to say a member of congress. All I could think of which was simply to say member of parliament, the equivalent in Italian. I couldn't drag that out, but what I could drag out because at the time that reminds me of yet another story that I'll tell you, Kissinger had made his secret visit to China, so in the Italian press he was referred to as the consigliere del presidente, the counselor of the president. I touted Congressman Rooney to these people at the club that he was a consigliere del presidente. That made them stand up and salute and they did arrange to bring in the staff and the cook to have dinner at 6:00. The ship was going to sail to go back to Naples or Rome or wherever generally they went around 10:00 at night. Sure enough the ship docks around 4:30ish, we get to the club at 5:00. We sat outside and they drank and they drank and they drank. I'm sitting there in the wings. I had a Coca-Cola, that's the strongest thing I had so I could stay alert. 7:00 went by, 8:00 went by and the maitre d' came and said, are they going to eat or are they going to sit there and drink and I said I don't know. He looked at me and he said, altro che, meaning right away, they don't need any of this sarcasm. So, to make a long story short, they never ate. They simply drank until 9:30, went back to the ship and sailed and stop the tape for a second.

Q: I might mention that John Rooney was such a power that he made strong ambassadors wet their pants because he could cut off your funds. He used to talk about the liquor, which is our representation thing. Well, here he was the biggest boozer. You had to have certain bottles when he went on a trip, you had to have certain bottles, Johnny Walker or something available in the room.

BOORSTEIN: Palermo was my first tour and we had really good relations with other first tour officers on a family level. My Italian became quite good and it really has very fond memories as first tours often do. I was in touch with my career counselor towards the end of my tour on wanting to find a good second tour. My objectives were largely motivated by the need to go to a post and save money. As I had mentioned to you earlier I had borrowed money, a loan that Roberts co-signed. I wanted to go to a hardship post where my wife could teach and I could take the car that I acquired in Palermo, the Fiat and where there was furnished government housing. So, my career counselor said you know, it looked like I could go to Addis Ababa as the personnel officer. I originally was interested in that field and that didn't work out and then all of a sudden he called me up and said how would you like to go to Budapest as the admin officer via a year of Hungarian. This would be quite a feather in your cap on your second tour in the Foreign Service to be admin officer at an embassy. Would you be interested? I said, absolutely. I didn't think much of it. I thought it was going to be able to work. Two or three days later he called up and said, "You can't go to Budapest, Mike because we have to get special clearances from security for anybody going behind the Iron Curtain and your file shows that you have relatives in the Soviet Union", which I think I mentioned in my application earlier. "They will not clear you for an assignment to Budapest." I remember saying to my career counselor, who was Nick Baskey, very senior officer in the admin area. I said, "Nick, this is absurd. I can understand them not sending me to Moscow or Leningrad, but to close off all of Eastern Europe is outrageous. I'm going to write a letter to the head of the security department to protest." He said, "Mike you go ahead and do that, but meanwhile we have to find you an assignment." The assignment they found which turned out to be quite fine was to go to Kinshasa as personnel officer via French language training. I did write the letter to G. Marvin Gentile who was the deputy assistant secretary for SY in those days. It was part of the bureau of administration and pointed all these things out. He never answered my letter.

CARL A. BASTIANI
Deputy Consul General
Genoa (1971-1974)

Mr. Bastiani was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Seminaries in Iowa and Illinois and at the University of Chicago and Georgetown University. A specialist in Italian and Romanian affairs, Mr. Bastiani served at four posts in Italy (Naples, Genoa, Rome and Turin) and in Romania and Poland. He also had several tours of duty at the State Department in Washington, DC. Mr. Bastiani was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

BASTIANI: I went to Genoa. Then another officer who walked on water in the Service, Stromayer, was the number two man at our Consulate General in Genoa, and he had wrangled some good onward assignment. The Bureau's personnel officer, Joan Clark, offered me the opportunity to replace him. I had to resist an immediate transfer, because I had children in school and said no way until school ends in June. Once, someone facetiously remarked that with four assignments to Italy which was a so desirable place to serve, I should be investigated. But the

only one I really asked for was the direct transfer to Rome. I like to say I was thrown into breaches.

And so my next assignment was Genoa in 1971. Because of my Italian and previous experience in Italy I didn't need any special training. It was a good position, and I thoroughly enjoyed my tour there. I was deputy to the Consul General, and the economic/commercial/ political officer; just about every function outside of administrative and consular work; when substituting for the Consul General in his absence, I got into this as well.

Q: You were there from when to when?

BASTIANI: From '71 to '74.

Q: Who was the Consul General there?

BASTIANI: When I arrived the Consul General was Gori Bruno, who was about to retire. He was succeeded then by Tom Murfin, who had served in Japan. I found them both great people to work for.

Q: What was the political situation? What did the Genoa Consular District consist of, and what were our interests? I don't imagine shipping was big in those days.

BASTIANI: No. It was.

Q: It was?

BASTIANI: Genoa was and is a major port of Italy, especially for the shipment of containers. As for the general political situation, the center-left was depressed and worried; the Communists were coming on. Nationally, there was talk of the *Compromesso Storico*, the historic compromise, which would bring the Communists into the government. As far as consular work goes it, was not overly burdensome in Genoa. We did issue immigration visas. The head of the Consular Section for most of that time was Bob Ode, who was later a captive in Tehran when the Iranians took over our Embassy. At that time he was already retired, but working as a WAE, temporarily employed to help out there. We became close friends with him and his wife, Rita.

Q: O-D-E?

BASTIANI: O-D-E, yes.

VICTOR SKILES
Representative to International Food and Agricultural Programs
Rome (1972)

Victor Skiles was born in Idaho. He attended the University of Idaho at Moscow

and received his BA in 1940. He also served in the US Navy in Germany. His career has included positions in countries such as Greece, Israel, East Africa, Ceylon, and Afghanistan. He was interviewed by John Kean on December 4, 1995.

SKILES: Before I left Kabul I thought I was going fairly quickly to Rome as the AID representative to the World Food Program and the FAO, but that turned out to take more time than I had anticipated.

International organizations had always had a bit of a mystique for most of us. To the extent that we were internationalists, they were more than a little bit interesting but they'd never been a very big part of our operation or our consideration. They'd been somewhere out on the fringe. In the early '60s, we had a small cell in PPC which had come over from the State Department, concerned primarily, as I recall, with the Columbo Plan and the UNCTAD, the trade and development organization of the UN. By 1972, a lot of changes had been made program-wise and in terms of organization. There was a fairly large group in PPC working on international organizations. Several people on the UN proper and what were known as the specialized agencies -- one separate unit on contact with the IMF and IBRD (which there had been for some time), and limited numbers with the other functions with other UN agencies. Part of the process, as you recall, and this refers to the organization comments earlier, had been a growing recognition of AID in a role of responsibility for coordinating U.S. development assistance abroad (without necessarily relieving other agencies of their interests or corollary roles as we will see later); and at the same time the desire on the part of AID and the adoption of policies to rely more on the international agencies both to shape and to carry out assistance programs. Now, most of us -- certainly myself included -- had an interpretation far too narrow, having in mind primarily the reliance on the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the IMF to set policies with respect to given areas -- given countries -- and to help the country provide the framework for programs within which the rest of us would work. This, of course, was not new, we'd been doing it for some time in the countries where IBRD had taken an interest and had sent out survey teams. They were able to pick our brains as well as everybody else's and came up with some very reputable country development programs. Where this was the case it was advantageous for us to fit into it. And to a lot of people, this meant that we were no longer so involved in overall development concepts and problems as much as we were involved in picking out parts of that process which we tend to define as the projects.

Q: Or sectors?

SKILES: Or sector programs, yes. But to others it meant more than that. It meant the other UN agencies also increasing their roles in the development business, hence in PPC an increase in their role of working with the United Nations agencies. This also relates, of course, to the revised style and role of USAID's reorganization work which was going on at that time and was part of the complex that I walked into and that explains, to some extent, why it took so long for me to get to Rome. Let me hasten to say, though, that the main reasons for the delay were frictions and disagreements that had built up between the groups and the people involved. When I went through Washington on the way to Idaho to indulge in that favorite pastime that we call home leave, I was advised that the job was all set up, that I was the chosen instrument to carry it out.

There were a few little problems to work out with State but these would be taken care of while I was on home leave and when I came back I should expect to be going in short order. I suppose this was in mid '72, and, as it turned out those things had not been worked out with State and they weren't for quite a long time. I didn't get to Rome until April of 1973. So I had quite enough time in Washington to get a re-education -- something of an education on the international institutions and to work on various problems such as the one on implementation of the reorganization. During the process, I became convinced that some things we were doing with the international organizations were pretty bad, in the sense that, to use the example of the project approval process, what we were doing, it seemed to me, made it impossible for the UNDP to operate with any semblance of efficiency in carrying out a development program. It took forever to get clearance by members of the governing body for a project which UNDP wanted to carry out, partly because the function just wasn't taken all that seriously in AID / Washington, and there were not competent personnel assigned to the task of getting the job done.

Q: Let me see if I understand. Can you elaborate a little bit -- just to be specific -- whether the projects you were talking about were UNDP projects or USAID projects?

SKILES: UNDP projects. But the system that had been set up -- well, we'll come back to this later because it affects most of the whole UN system. The system that had been set up was for project clearance by members of the governing council of the international agency before the agency could go ahead with any kind of implementation. In AID Washington, there was a huge backlog of projects that had not been processed -- we had not said yes; we had not said no. I could just picture the guys at UNDP in New York holding their breath for month after month while we got around to deciding whether to clear a project or not. In other words, it just wasn't working.

Q: And was this a peculiar problem in the USAID relationship with UNDP or did other countries have similar problems or exercise similar foot dragging?

SKILES: I don't know how bad the problem was with other countries. Two points. First, especially if we are encouraging a growing role in development for them, we should do our best to try to bring about the conditions which will make it possible for the UN agency to be an efficient and effective operator of its program. Second, to the extent the U.S. takes on an operational role, we'd better get ourselves set up to do a decent job of operating. Frankly I did not find this in PPC - Program Policy and Coordination - which was the central body for United Nations activities in AID Washington. People were too busy writing papers, going to meetings, preparing position papers for an upcoming meeting - far less mundane things than making sure that the operational steps in a program of a UN agency were properly and expeditiously taken care of.

I think it will save time if I first try to sketch in a bit of the United Nations framework, then of the U.S. framework for working with the UN, then come more specifically to the FAO/WFP complex.

The UN is not a straight line hierarchy. It is not a top to bottom organization in the sense of approval, directive, and administration, though there are down and up reporting channels and in

some phases coordinating devices. Generally speaking, the General Assembly and the Security Council are the entities we tend to think of as the UN, headquarters New York City. They deal primarily with political and security affairs. They are serviced to considerable extent by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), also in New York, with respect to economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields. Then there are a number of specialized agencies dealing with such things as Development (UNDP), child feeding (UNICEF), health (WHO), education (UNESCO). I wouldn't care to get into a discussion of the degree of independence of the top structure (UNGA, Security Council, ECOSOC), but it does seem to me that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, or World Bank) are the most independent, perhaps FAO next, simply because it came into existence in 1945, even before the UN proper was organized. The World Food Program came much later (1962) and is a bit of a hybrid. Its title is UN-FAO World Food Program, which means that it does report to both FAO and ECOSOC.

Each of the agencies has a governing body on which the U.S. is represented. These are sometimes referred to as the legislative or authorizing authority. They set the policies, approve the programs and projects, the budgets and so on. Then the agency has the administration role.

On the U.S. side the State Department has the primary responsibility for international relations, conferences and organizations. These latter two head up in the Bureau for International Organization Affairs (IO), which functions on a fairly straightforward basis for political and security affairs, although the White House is a party not infrequently for the former and, as you can see, security matters pretty quickly get diffused or shared. For economic and social affairs and agencies there has been a greater tendency for the subject matter departments to take a leading role, and in more recent years (speaking now of the early 1970s) with increasing recognition of AID responsibilities in the development arena, the UN agencies' increasing involvement in development, and because it handles the funds in large part for a few other functions such as disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, AID is involved. For the most part this responsibility resides in PPC which has a unit corresponding to IO in State.

For FAO since the early days (1945) the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has had the primary substantive responsibilities for liaison, but other agencies including AID enter into it - and keeping in mind State's basic responsibility, there necessarily are interdepartmental and interagency arrangements for backstopping in Washington. Obviously such an arrangement leaves plenty of room for jealousies, overlap, bureaucratic interplay and sometimes friction.

The UN-FAO World Food Program was started while George McGovern was in the White House as the first Coordinator of Food for Peace, a job that was subsequently passed on to AID. In simple terms WFP was to be an international worldwide institution designed to use food for feeding people, for economic and social development and for meeting emergency situations; perhaps primarily to improve nutrition levels, food accessibility, and try to help improve the possibilities that recipient countries might avoid a recurrence of the causes of the food problem. Donor countries make the food available, as well as limited amounts of cash. WFP is the Administrator. The governing board, called the Intergovernmental Committee or IGC, is made up of a couple dozen member countries one-half elected by ECOSOC and one half by FAO Council.

This FAO Council in turn is elected by the FAO Conference and serves as the governing body between meetings of the Conference every other year. Both the Council and the IGC meet twice a year. The Council has a limited number of standing committees which carry on between meetings of the Council; IGC does not.

These, then, are the governing bodies for FAO and WFP - Conference, Council, IGC.

It is State's responsibility to follow the protocol and designate the delegation to each of the formal meetings of these bodies, but in practice the Secretary of Agriculture heads the delegation to the Conference, a senior officer of USDA (but not so senior as the Secretary) leads the delegation to the Council; and the leader of the IGC delegation rotates between USDA, usually the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Activities and the Coordinator for Food for Peace in AID.

We've been speaking of the governing bodies which set the policies, approve the programs and projects, authorize the financing and so on. With regard to the agencies, again keeping in mind State's responsibility for representation, the primary substantive contacts are USDA for FAO and AID for WFP. The backstopping in Washington for WFP follows in a sense the financing for Title II commodities (the grant program of PL 480) which is USDA for commodities and AID for administration. They participate jointly in the administration of Title II through an interagency staff Committee (which also includes Treasury, Commerce and OMB) as well as daily contacts. AID generally is responsible for program operations and USDA for commodity availabilities. To get Food for Peace (FFP) in context, I probably only need to point out that in 1972 the value of commodities for continuing operations were about 15 percent for WFP and 85 percent for non-governmental organizations and government to government programs, so obviously there is competition for commodities and a desire for consistency among clients. In AID it is FFP not PPC that backstops the World Food Program.

Backstopping for FAO is much more varied and follows along the lines of substantive interest. For AID I mentioned PPC in connection with the governing bodies, but it certainly is not the only unit interested and involved, and this applies even more so to contacts with the agency. There also are TA/AGR (agriculture staff of the technical assistance bureau), the regional bureaus (during my time for reasons which will become apparent later it was primarily the African bureau), the Office of Disaster Relief and FFP, the latter partly because of the relationship of WFP and FAO, and because FFP is concerned on a broader basis with world hunger and therefore special initiatives such as the World Food Conference. I also mentioned "primary substantive contacts" but of course this is only part of the story, partly because FAO is regarded as having more general capabilities than scientific agriculture as well as being part of the United Nations family of specialized agencies. The example closest to home is that PPC had decided to set up three jobs - one in Geneva, one in Paris and one in Rome - to help carry out the mandate to do more developmental activities through the specialized agencies. During the "period of patience" waiting for a resolution of the problems which already existed, largely between State and AID, or perhaps State and FFP, the Coordinator of FFP had put on hold the appointment for "his" job. PPC decided to go ahead with "their" Rome job along with appointments to Geneva and Paris, and once again I was designated to fill it. About this time the

problems got resolved and the Coordinator insisted in going ahead with my placement in that job, so naturally we worked out a sort of compromise and I finally went out. I arrived on April 13th.

Q: How would you characterize your mandate in relation to those agencies as operating institutions?

SKILES: They are quite different. PPC was mostly interested in pursuing the policy to increase the use of or reliance on the international institutions rather than bilateral programs for development assistance. Influence is to be achieved both in working with the headquarters of the agency and through the medium of participation in preparations for and the meetings of the governing bodies. Financing of activities is to be through the regular UN channels. In the case of Rome the specific target would be much more FAO than WFP. Food for Peace, on the other hand, has a more specific responsibility for commodities supplied with PL 480 resources and the mandate is to utilize the mechanism of the World Food Program to carry out a program of feeding and nutrition improvement with a concentration on development effects of WFP projects. Financing is from PL 480 and AID. Interest in the projects is rather universal and naturally the U.S. tries to see that they are consistent with or complementary to our bilateral programs. Commodity usage must also take into account another major FFP customer which is the non-governmental institutions. The mandate to FFP includes compliance or adherence to all those conditions and requirements, largely Congressionally mandated, that PL 480 works under. These go a lot further, it seems to me, than they do in the normal AID programs in terms of Congressional participation down to the nuts and bolts. It's partly because funding support comes from the farm and industry interests as well as the political interests, and because of the historically close relationships between the Administration and the Congress working through the Agriculture committees which in turn stay close to the industry and farm interests.

Q: Were these conditions related primarily to usual marketings, to non-interference in commercial trade or did they have to do with more on the development side?

SKILES: The conditions or restrictions deal more with things like usual marketing and non-trade interference. And of course, there are a number of other guidelines that have grown up over the years, such as self-help regulations with respect to selling commodities that are provided under PL 480, loan versus grant criteria, etc. But for the most part, I think it's a responsibility to the Hill and to the providers of the commodities to conform to commercial practices with respect to buying and moving commodities, to shipping and all this sort of thing. AID's interest goes beyond that, of course, to the feeding and development projects carried out by WFP.

Q: Now, the World Food Program projects that you were dealing with had what kind of characteristics?

SKILES: They varied tremendously, John. Improved nutrition and food supply always were primary considerations. The biggest projects were food for work activities - reclamation, irrigation, road building -but a lot of school feeding, mother and child care and so on. One of my main charges was to encourage them, wherever possible, to have the types of projects which would also have a developmental -- which would be using food as a major input but which

would have development or one of our other policy goals as a target. For example, when we enunciated the Women in Development movement, it was a fairly simple approach to try to make sure that projects financed or supplied by WFP paid attention to this element.

Q: Therefore, you'd have significant benefit for women's participation and women as beneficiaries of development action.

SKILES: Exactly. A significant kind of guidance was, in effect, an area guidance. We were placing heavy emphasis, along about that time, on a focus on the least developed countries. You recall, we go through swings on this thing. The islands of development concept was basically to take advantage of the promising areas --promising countries -- and try to make showcases out of them by ensuring that you got good development rapidly. This concept coincided with the sufficiency argument - insure adequate assistance so the total development effort will bring about self-financing abilities. Now, it's almost the other end of the spectrum to swing over and talk about concentrating on the least developed or the poorest countries, but this is what was happening.

Q: Not only that but the poorest people in the poorest countries.

SKILES: Right. This is what was happening and we were pursuing the principles in the UN organizations as well as with our bilateral programs.

Q: These programs could respond to both emergency situations and participate in longer run, larger scale development actions, right?

SKILES: Yes, At the extremes, these are quite separable, but they tend to come toward the middle. This probably will come up later, but I thought my efforts to help improve the competence of both FAO and WFP to handle emergency situations were much more effective than any influence on the longer-term projects, about which their concepts usually weren't much different than ours would have been. We had many cases, for example, where, well you just think of India or Bangladesh, any of those countries that have food shortages, and it's easy to see how, in supplying food to help make up for the immediate problem you can devise work programs or training programs directed toward avoidance or amelioration of recurrence of similar problems in the future. The biggest projects WFP had, I suppose, were Indian Food for Work projects (as they probably were in the case of the bilateral programs) in which a lot of labor to improve water utilization projects, rural roads, etc. was "paid for" by the imported food. Food for Work. Now, when it came to real short-term emergencies, where food was the main ingredient, WFP wasn't all that well equipped to take care of those except on an individual country basis. They had no over-all emergency handling apparatus. We worked diligently at improving this capacity. So, in answer to your question now, sure there were a lot of emergency or semi-emergency type things in the WFP projects and progressively the real short-term emergencies. There were a lot of supplementary feeding programs in areas like school lunches, mother and child care facilities, that sort of thing, and in a much broader sense, in rural development projects such as in Egypt where you had a fairly substantial contribution to a fairly substantial undertaking.

Q: Yes, and I suppose, if my experience indicates anything, there were a lot of instances where we were seeking to use WFP as an instrument to get rural development through the construction of roads and other facilities in rural areas which could be accomplished largely through labor under Food for Work arrangements.

SKILES: Right. Those probably were the largest single category of projects in terms of WFP's use of food aid. Actually WFP's priorities, aside from direct feeding, were not all that different from ours in AID. The main difference is that they had very little cash to work with; food was the coin of the realm.

Q: Who were the people you worked most directly with in your Rome assignment?

SKILES: John, let me get one other thought in here before I respond to that.

Q: Sure.

SKILES: What I was talking about earlier was complications within AID and between AID and other U.S. government agencies in getting prepared for and in working with these international institutions. On the UN side, which is the point I wanted to get in before we get to the work relationship aspects, it's just as complicated. You have the General Assembly making supposedly political or security decisions, then it's up to some other body to carry them out. Sometimes, these are very useful, as they were during the '73-74 food crisis when the Assembly passed a resolution calling for a World Food Conference. Incidentally this was quite consistent with U.S. policies and initiatives at the time.

Q: But it grew specifically out of the perceived world food crisis of that '73-74 period, right?

SKILES: Right. But I was trying to lay the groundwork for a sensible answer to your query about who you work with by emphasizing three things. One is the complex backstopping in Washington for UN activities.

The second is the UN framework, which I'll conclude by repeating that each of the UN agencies has its own governing body, of which the U.S. is one of the members. Third is the U.S. relationship directly with the UN agency with regard to the programs it carries out, which is aside from the U.S. participation in the governing body, but certainly related to it. The second is the authorizing or legislative function: the third, the administration function.

It seemed to me that a couple of things happened in Washington in 1972, and one world-wide perhaps more in '73, which had a great deal to do with what I worked on, and therefore with whom. The latter was the increased recognition that the world in general was in a real food crisis situation - shortages were showing up everywhere and the available buffer stocks even in the U.S. were being depleted; the significance of FAO and WFP in this emergent situation had widespread recognition. The former related to changes in operating relationships between the U.S. and WFP on the handling of commodities for agreed programs, and greatly simplified my tasks in Rome on that front. This is going to sound like minor stuff, but to simplify the concepts, let's just say that the major change was to permit WFP to call forward (USDA does the buying)

the commodities on a consolidated or program basis rather than continue doing it one project at a time. The technique is a "Blanket PA" - purchase authorization. The second was to give WFP much more latitude in arranging for its own shipping rather than being dependent on our process where the USDA...

Q: With all the 50-50 shipping provisions and all of the U.S. flag requirements and all that? Or, did those still apply?

SKILES: They still applied but it's much easier to do it on a bulk basis than it is on a project-by-project or commodity-by-commodity basis.

Q: In other words, as long as they complied in the overall, there were considered to be in compliance.

They didn't have to comply with these regulations for each small activity separately?

SKILES: Correct. Curiously enough that was a contentious argument for years, wasn't it? But I think by this time much of the argument had been dissipated so long as they conformed in general to the spirit of the requirement which was that at least 50 percent by type of shipping move on American ships. That wasn't so bad.

Q: My impression, as you talk, is that this was one hell of a complicated bureaucratic environment where you had to relate to many different policy centers in the U.S. Government and at the same time to examine many different issues that were funneling through WFP and FAO?

SKILES: Well, that's the way it seemed to me, yes. That's what makes it fun. And the other thing that was important to me, just as an individual, is that I not get lost -- not let all my time be taken up with matters like this which were essentially operational matters. Perhaps this is a good point to drop one of Jack Bell's old stories. Jack, as you recall, after having been the Mission Director in Pakistan, was our regional administrator in AID/W, and after a fairly short period on that job, he said that an individual's point of view seems to change a great deal depending on whether he's the operator of a vehicle or a pedestrian. I've always thought there was a lot of Mark Twain intelligence in that comment. And it was certainly true of us in Rome. I suppose you could say that my point of view was that WFP was a separate entity - an international organization set up to run a program - and that our role should be to make it possible for them to operate efficiently and effectively. We should exert our influence, but should not inject ourselves in an operational role or try to police them on individual operational steps, massaging and re-massaging. Those two simplifications that I mentioned in terms of WFP functions had, I think, a great deal to do with my opportunity to exercise a different kind of an ambition in Rome. These were the kinds of things that the USDA in particular wanted a careful look at. I remember Andy Maier (Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Activities, USDA) telling me when they were talking about a specific shipping problem and he said, "Well, hell, that's part of your job. That's why you were sent over here." Well, this was an eye-opener to me; I'd never heard that, but it was a matter of instantaneous recognition. Of course, that's one of the things that they were worried about when the job was set up, and what they'd been doing, apparently, for a long, long time: monitoring individual shipments, approving individual movements of commodities, even the charters. This

sort of thing is automatically policed in Washington anyway - why try to do it in both places? And I had been able to back away from that almost completely, thus giving myself a much better opportunity for more effective participation in the planning and arrangement of WFP's program activities.

Now, having said this if I can digress for a moment, I was rather startled in thumbing through some old appointments calendars, to see how much time I really did spend on commodity problems, for example negotiations with WFP on commodities for projects. There was a lot more of it than I . . .one that was carrying out field programs in development.

Q: Now you seem to be saying. . . increasingly during this period, FAO came to be the implementing agent of some or many UNDP programs, right?

SKILES: Oh, yes. What I was going to say is that gradually they got more into that kind of thing and by the time I got there they had a number of field programs and the department that handled field programs supposedly was to be my main contact in FAO as distinct from WFP. They were appointing more FAO country representatives, but this fairly quickly ran into budgetary problems, and the movement was largely overtaken by critical short-term problems. By budgetary problems I mean basically that UNDP was to finance these activities for which FAO had been asked to supply the manpower, but UNDP didn't get sufficient money to carry out their part of the deal, so the movement was not progressing very rapidly.

Q: Now you happened then to be in Rome during this very critical period that we mentioned before of the severe world food crisis and a great deal of responsibility fell to FAO for assessing the nature, extent, and priorities involved in meeting that crisis. Isn't that right?

SKILES: John, now you're setting the framework for the next chapter. I perhaps digressed a little too much in trying to give some examples of the roles of other backstoppers who were interested in things other than the WFP operation. But even they, in AID terms, it seems to me, acknowledged that for something like the World Food Conference, AID simply is not the number one organization involved in it. There are some people who are interested and involved as you go along but the basic responsibility for it is not in AID. It's a bit of a dilemma because the underlying problems are basic reasons for AID to be in existence, and the search for improvements in agricultural production and relief to the food shortage problems are indeed among our main responsibilities. Yet when it comes to fostering an international conference on the subject we are not the main players. We do, however, have the front-line responsibility on assistance and emergency relief. So this is a pattern that I tried to replicate in Rome. If it was something that AID had a number one interest in then I thought I ought to get into it without too many restraints. If it was something that USDA or State has basic responsibility for, then we had to sort of weigh the pros and cons and decide who was to do what on it.

Q: State had representatives in Rome in the Embassy and were they stepping on your toes?

SKILES: From their viewpoint, of course, it's the other way around. As I emphasized earlier, State is responsible for representation to international conferences and international organizations. In Rome, the FODAG, so-called, is always headed up by a State Department

officer, Counselor for FAO Affairs. Now the issues are not clear-cut and never can be, because the customers overlap. Because the interests of the backstoppers overlap, you're always going to have problems of this kind. Hopefully, they don't raise to the level of a crisis like they had before I went out and while I was waiting to go out. The competition between agencies and between parts of agencies continued during all the time I was out there. PPC always preferred to have its own man reporting directly to PPC, and they tried various proposals, usually in the form of sending out additional, more junior individual to concentrate on the World Food Program and have me freed up to work on developmental activities. Frankly, I wasn't all that anxious to have additional staff there, partly because a big part of the job was to keep from crossing wires with State. Second, the most important aspect is the degree of influence with FAO and WFP -- not really helped by additional staff. At the time I left, three different people were appointed: one just on Food for Peace, one on developmental activities, and one on African activities, primarily the Sahel. Now, how it worked out, I don't know.

Q: The latter was because the second round of drought crisis in Africa was emerging, right?

SKILES: Yes, but I think more because after the original thrust for emergency assistance in the Sahel in '72, '73, '74, a Sahel Development Program was organized and separately authorized by the Congress and this was going to go on for some time.

Q: Yeah, I forgot about that. That's right.

SKILES: By that time both WFP and FAO were heavily involved in carrying out programs - often with special AID funding. There was a desire on the part of AID to continue this arrangement and build on it.

One of the African Bureau people involved in and responsible for a lot of the Sahel stuff in Washington and who did have a lot of contacts with FAO and some with WFP had concluded that it was better to try to work out of Rome than from Washington and I think this was basically behind that appointment. Well, to get back on track and get at your main point, it seemed to me that the most major influence of all on what I was to work on was simply the signs of the times: the development of a food crisis almost everywhere.

Production was down in crisis proportions in a great many countries, and even aside from this, FAO studies by then had indicated that per capita increases in food production were going down in the developing world as a whole. The population was growing faster than food production was, particularly in Africa.

Q: In Africa, you had some countries even where it was beginning to be apparent that you were having absolute declines in the volume.

SKILES: Yes. A number of other things happened at somewhat the same time. One of them is that the Soviet Union came into the world market because of crop problems in their area and they bought a lot of both food and feed. Another was the oil crisis, the embargo that arose out of the Middle Eastern problems, which created shortages of various kinds in various quarters, including foreign exchange in the U.S. as well as in most of the countries we were working with, simply

because the price of oil for imports went up so much. We'll come later to the matter of fertilizers but fertilizer production was down; again there's a relationship to the oil embargo. Even in the U.S., our surplus food supplies were being drawn down and on a worldwide basis it was becoming apparent that there were going to be problems for some time in terms of total supply and even greater problems in terms of supply being in the places where it was needed. So it became -- in terms of my own working interests -- it became obvious that various elements of this problem were the things to be spending time on. Put another way, these were the problems that both FAO and WFP were going to be primarily concerned with.

I think this may be a good time to jump to the legislative side of the business because it brings in a lot of the stuff that you had in mind in the question you asked. Some of this is likely to be repetitive. The World Food Program was governed by an outfit called the Inter-Governmental Committee, as I mentioned earlier, elected half by the FAO Council and half by UNESCO. It met twice a year and the delegation from the U.S. normally rotated in terms of its chairmanship between the Food for Peace Coordinator and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs in USDA. These names will get confusing because for a long stretch there. . Well, as we said before, Andy Maier was the Agriculture man, he would head up one delegation; Hedges and AID would head up the next delegation, and then back to Agriculture. I guess, the way it worked was that the first IGC meeting I attended which was just about ten days after I arrived, was under the chairmanship of Agriculture, so Andy Maier was the head of the delegation. By the fall meeting, Andy Maier was the Food for Peace Coordinator so he still headed up the delegation.

Q: He came back again.

SKILES: He came back again but from a different position.

Q: That's interesting. That clarifies for me a confusion I had about his role. He happens to be a person I've had personal acquaintance with but not an official acquaintance with in these roles.

SKILES: Well, strangely enough, I had sort of tracked him around earlier but had never actually met him. He had been the administrative officer in Rome years earlier before he went to Kabul, and he'd been the administrative officer in the Embassy in Kabul but had left shortly before I arrived.

Q: And that's where I knew him.

SKILES: There was one other thing we had in common, that has to do with Agriculture. I hadn't actually met him until I started making the rounds in '72 to go to Rome and he was in the Agricultural function at that time. An old buddy of mine, named Ray Ioanes, was the administrator of Foreign Agriculture Service at that time and his first reaction when he heard I was interested in going was, "Go see Andy Maier. He's the one in Agriculture that looks out for that." Andy and Ray are old friends. Both must be good politicians.

Back to the IGC, it meets twice a year. This governing board has, I believe, 24 members. The meetings are held in the regular conference rooms at FAO -- very good arrangements, plenty of space, simultaneous translation facilities, all this sort of thing. The governing group approves the

policies, principles, programs, ration levels, the projects which WFP is supposed to operate until the next meeting and considers the evaluation reports both on projects and on special subjects such as nutrition and the role of fortified foods. This conditioned my attitude. If we're doing all of this on the governing board level, that's really where it ought to be done rather than in the operating details. I saw a lot that could be done to help improve WFP's capacity to prepare well for these meetings, to sharpen the issues the governing board should concentrate on.

Q: So did it move in that direction?

SKILES: Oh, definitely, yes. The second organization is the FAO Conference. I really should have put it as the first organization because it's, by all odds, the biggest and the most important, and being the UN/FAO World Food Program the IGC really reports both to the FAO Conference and ECOSOC. Let's deal with the Conference and the FAO Council together. The Conference is a group of ministerial representatives from the member nations, as I recall 108 at that time. The Council is an agent of the Conference, meets twice a year and among other things, does the preparatory work for the Conference. The Conference meets once every two years and puts on quite a show. That part of the Conference which meets as a Plenary, tends to run more to the political side than to the professional side. The Conference is divided up into three basic departments for carrying on the real work of the Conference. More later.

The Council, which is a much smaller organization, is the governing body between meetings of the Conference. Now, one of the idiosyncrasies at the time that I'm talking about -- the '73-'74 period -- is that the two main continuing bodies of the Council are the (A) the Program and Plan Committee, and (B) the Finance Committee. The idiosyncrasy is that the Program and Plan Committee was headed up by an American, a USDA official; on the Finance Committee, the U.S. also was represented, in the form of the State man, who was the Counselor of FAO Affairs in the Rome Embassy. Later, when he left Rome, he came back to State IO/AGR in Washington but he continued to function as a member of the Finance Committee of the FAO Council. This is almost a digression, but to me, those two things, plus the fact that I knew the State Department was not only interested in but jealous about its prerogatives with respect to the formal meetings and a fourth element which doesn't seem very big to us but was to them, goes by the label of "personnel" It's a little different than we normally regard personnel, but among other things, the various member countries were always trying to get their own nationals placed in FAO proper and WFP. We were no different. So those were the things I ought to stay away from -- try to keep my skirts clean on. But otherwise, responsibilities for following things were pretty much on a substantive basis. And anything dealing with assistance, whether food or agricultural (though the latter gets more contentious), and basically anything dealing with emergencies, seemed to be more my responsibility than State responsibility.

This is the basis on which we tried to sort things out. I would like to add "development" and that was true to a large degree, but FAO's ability to get into development activities relates directly to the Program and Plan and to Finance, so you can't lay full claim to that one either.

Q: And you found you had a reasonably good working relationship with the State people in Rome?

SKILES: Yeah. I thought so, particularly with the first FAO Counselor. With the second, I heard a few firecrackers back in Washington. And this, again, is the result of one of those normal, human reactions. The State man wants to feel that he heads an operational office and wants to be able to "supervise and direct" whereas AID generally tries to protect its position under a label such as "under the general guidance." (You may recall an earlier reference to the previous Ambassador. He can interject himself if he wants to. He is the President's representative. In my five years there he didn't). To some of them, depending on who the people are, AID is just a red flag, you know -- always has been. In other words, this is not unique to Rome. It's a problem with relationships everywhere.

In 1973, the Inter-Governmental Committee met within days of my arrival there, but in some respects, I felt like an old timer. I'd been on the job for 10 days. But the real point was that while I'd been in Washington, I'd had the chance to participate in the preparations for the first meeting and this was a good education. I meant to use it earlier as an example of how the Washington agencies fit together on these various things, too. In effect the prospective leader of the delegation - the FFP Coordinator or the USDA man - chairs an interagency group which prepares position papers and in this case at least, much of the work was done by people from USDA. More so, I would say, than from AID though they were both very much involved in it, as was State. This was even more true of the preparatory work for the FAO Council; it was chaired by a man from USDA, although generally not the actual delegate who was usually higher in the pecking order.

Q: What were the issues that they were struggling with?

SKILES: Are you thinking mainly of WFP or the Council?

Q: The Council.

SKILES: I don't know that I can say what they normally would be spending much of their time with, other than to point out that FAO and therefore the governing body, has responsibilities for a wide framework of activities that we don't pay much attention to except in the AG staff of the Technical Assistance Bureau. The codex alimenteris, for example; commodity committees, for example. They have a Committee on fisheries, they have a Committee on wines, they have a Committee on grains, they had a Committee on international agricultural adjustment which we'll see later turns out of be a world food security program under the aegis of the World Food Council. There are just lots of these things going on and some of them AID normally is not really all that concerned about, but Agriculture and State are. As I suggested earlier, much of the work between sessions of the Council is done by standing committees of which the Program and Plan and the Finance Committees are the main ones, and their report to the Council is in some ways the most important. It controls the budget. One of my points in describing this background again is to illustrate that while State has the responsibility for conferences, it's really usually somebody else who's doing the work on the substantive content. Now, again, and in partial answer to your question, the concern with most of these items was overtaken in '73 by the concern for the food crisis situation and what to do about it. By this time, something resembling a World Food Conference was already under consideration. So the items which were pressing on an organization devoted to food and agricultural problems in the world, and having antennae opened

for a likely worldwide conference to be held on these subjects, then naturally a good deal of their attention by this time was directed to the same problems that were going to be coming up later at the Conference.

Q: It became more macro -- focused on the world food situation than on the technical problems of individual commodities or sub-sectors?

SKILES: Yes. And, John, just to help make this clear, that particular meeting of the Council, which, I think, was in May of '73, was the last one (other than a short session) before the FAO Conference in the Fall. If you remember, this is held only every two years and it's a big hoe-down. So, most of the attention of the Council was given to what was going to be done at the Conference. Similarly, the Conference was the last meeting prior to what was going to turn out to be the World Food Conference. (More on this later). So a great deal of the attention at the FAO Conference was paid to these same problems -- same subject matter. The second meeting of the Council that I became involved in was a split session; it met for about a week before the Conference and for a couple of days after the Conference to clean up and this was the pattern every odd year when you have two meetings of the Council and one of the Conference. And then on the even years, you generally have spring and fall meetings of the Council. The practice of the World Food Program governing body (IGC) was two meetings each year -- spring and fall.

Q: And in all of those, you were present as a participant and/or an observer?

SKILES: Yes. I guess on all of those, I was a member of the U.S. delegation. Observer in their terminology means something a little different - not entitled to participate, to "take the chair," but invited to attend, and sometimes scheduled to speak, as in the case of the representative of a different UN agency.

The delegations were designated in Washington and always headed by Washington people. I've mentioned the rotating chairmanship of the Intergovernmental Committee representatives, the FAO Council representative was a senior officer from the Department of Agriculture. And, so far as I know, the Secretary of Agriculture was always the chairman of the delegation to the Conference. At least that was true during the years I was there. Now, occasionally you'd have another headliner, such as the Secretary of State for purposes largely of making a speech, but the delegate was Secretary of Agriculture Butts even when Kissinger came as the President's representative to make a speech.

Q: Were those FAO Conferences pretty substantive?

SKILES: Well, I think they were. They dealt with a wide range of problems. I mentioned earlier that the real working part of the Conference was basically divided into three commissions. Meetings of those commissions were held outside of the meetings of the Plenary, of the primary delegates who were basically ministers of agriculture from throughout the world and essentially were making speeches. There wasn't much give-and-take in the Plenary, but they all had a word to say when their scheduled time came. In our case, one of the interesting features was that a re-reading of some of the speeches from a decade or so earlier indicated that it would be no mistake at all to simply read those same speeches again. The issues were pretty much the same.

Q: That is, because the real problems were genuinely still there and basically the same? Or because they babbled and said nothing?

SKILES: Because the problems were still there; the issues being faced were still pretty much the same; the emphasis on the cures didn't change much from a decade earlier to Mr. Butz's remarks that year.

Throughout the whole period it was recognized that the real problems were in the developing countries and only the developing countries could bring about the cures; that the outsiders would be glad to help and even to provide interim assistance, that sort of thing, but basically the problem was simply that production was too low in too many of the underdeveloped countries and that this is what we'd have to do better at.

Q: And the developing countries, as I've understood it, it was often said that technology exists, the problem is we can't get it effectively out to farmers and have it applied.

SKILES: Well, there's a lot to that.

Q: But in those years, were any of the developing countries challenging the industrialized western countries over their highly industrialized agriculture very exploitative of the natural resource base and highly energy intensive, and destroying resources that were needed for the long run? Or was that not an issue?

SKILES: It came up from time to time, but I don't think it was as much of an issue. They were more interested in different kinds of adjustments. I'm tempted to say that rather than being concerned about our destroying resources in the industrialized countries, I think they were much more interested in transferring some of those facilities to their own area so they could take advantage of doing things that might result in higher production, even though it might also result in destruction of the common earth. But to answer the question another way, there certainly was a lot of interest in doing affirmative things to keep from spoiling the earth and the atmosphere, and straightening out the water supplies so that people could enjoy clean rather than poisonous water. Even in things like deforestation which many of those countries, as you know, are very guilty of, at least talking about the problem at the table they want to do something better about it. They don't want to see more destruction of their own forests, but a certain amount of exploitation is necessary.

Q: But to what extent was there discussion of issues like the terms of trade which forced many of those countries to over-exploit their natural resources or de-nude the land of forest when that wasn't the appropriate thing to do but the only thing that they had in the way of resources to redress their serious balance of payments difficulties? Were these issues on the table?

SKILES: Yes, very much so. And I guess partly because, to the extent that the Group of 77 countries brought up those issues in their own discussions, there was a means of getting them into the food and agriculture discussions. For example, not long before the UNGA decided to call for the World Food Conference, there was a meeting of the heads of state of the non-aligned

countries in Algiers and they addressed a number of these issues and ended up calling for an international conference sponsored jointly by UNCTAD and FAO. This was one of the events taken into account and credited, alongside Secretary Kissinger's speech and application to the General Assembly, for a World Food Conference. It was credited in the resolution which was passed first by ECOSOC and then by the General Assembly as background for the conference. And then pretty much the same spokesmen were at hand during the World Food Conference and could have been at the FAO Conference. I should say, though, that I think these discussions were rather sterile because the developed countries consistently took the position that terms of trade were the province of other bodies such as GATT, rather than the agriculture bodies.

Q: Now that Conference resulted in the proposal to establish IFAD, the International Fund for Agricultural Development. What was the upshot of that?

SKILES: Well, you're getting a little bit ahead of me here, John. And I don't really know what the upshot was in terms of whether it became a very effective institution or just what its history was. It took quite a while for it to get going because its coming into existence was predicated on a certain level of financial commitment to it.

Q: At the time, what was the rationale for having such an organization which in the agricultural sphere seems to me to be so duplicative of UNDP?

SKILES: The short answer is new money, but this really forces me to get back to what I had intended to be a train of thought in running through the various governing bodies and dealing to some extent with their legislative authorities over the programs of the specific international organizations involved. Then I was going to emphasize that the work of the FAO Conference in the fall of '73, was directed in large measure to the elements providing for an upcoming World Food Conference. And I might as well go ahead with that train of thought. Bear with me because some of this procedural stuff gets pretty thick, but I guess that's a way of life with the international organizations. The FAO Conference approved much of the Director

General's proposals for responding to the ECOSOC invitation for the Conference to consider the matter and report back on its deliberations. The Director General, Dr. Boerna, to my mind, was one of the good people of the earth who has sort of disappeared since leaving that office. He and his staff had done a good deal more than provide for consultations and views. He pretty well laid out the program for what he thought the results ought to be. Then the Conference dealt with these recommendations, in large measure approved his proposals and approved the use of up to a half million dollars out of FAO's capital fund, so that it (FAO) could be in a position to promise the UN not only to be able to provide facilities in Rome for a World Food Conference but to be able if necessary to finance some of the secretariat functions that would be required.

I almost have to go back a step or two, John. I referred earlier to the meeting in Algiers of the Heads of State of the Group of 77 and Secretary Kissinger's first major speech after he became Secretary of State and to his proposal to the United Nations for a World Food Conference. ECOSOC took up the proposal to recommend to the General Assembly that there be a World Food Conference in the fall of '73 but before the FAO Conference. Now, what ECOSOC did was take these various elements into account and decided to provide for a UN World Food

Conference, not an FAO/UNCTAD conference as the chiefs of state of the Group of 77 had proposed. So it was within this framework that the FAO Conference was asked for its views and was then able to come back and say that they had agreed that such a conference should be called and recommended that the issue be raised to the General Assembly for decision; that inquiries had been made and that November '74 would be a good time to hold the conference and the facilities could be made available within the framework of the FAO organization in Rome at that time. So these were elements of the resolution passed first by the ECOSOC Council and then by the United Nations General Assembly at the end of '73. ECOSOC had already created a preparatory commission and members had been designated to serve on the "prepcom." A secretary general for the conference had already been selected. I don't know just when it was legal to formally announce his designation. He was an "international citizen" Egyptian by the name of Said Marai. U.S. working group and we had quite a time, really because of the Israeli problem. Most of the delegations were also members of the Group of 77 and they wanted to go ahead with a charter that would fence out the Israelis and, of course, the U.S. position wouldn't countenance that sort of thing. It got to be a very ticklish kind of engagement. Parker finally said to me that "We just can't get this sort of thing done in this conference environment. Isn't there something else we can set up to just concentrate on this one issue?" And I told him, "Sure." The head of WFP had a suite of offices in the FAO building, but he not only was not using them, he was out of town, so I called the Deputy and readily got permission to use the suite. So we set up headquarters there. I say "we" it was mainly Dan Parker and the Israeli representative and I, with various kinds of messengers and contact people. During the course of it, Parker had to call the White House two or three times. It worked out all right but it took the better part of a night getting some kind of a compromise which was agreeable to the two sides. This was just another example of how well the Group of 77 was kind of organized at that time. Well, this went on for some days. Each morning he would say, "I'm not quite ready." So finally, it was getting up against the gun, and one morning I just had to say, "If Bernstein's going to have this breakfast, it has to be laid on. So I've made tentative arrangements at the hotel to go ahead and do it and if you really don't object then we'll go ahead on the basis of this schedule and I'll explain to Bernstein that you're tied up with these other things and, while he's invited you, I'm sure it's not going to hurt feelings if you don't attend." I guess he felt he wasn't really quite in a position to object to it on that basis so we went ahead with the breakfast. Well, when Humphrey told me that he wanted to have a chat with the Minister of Agriculture for China, I could just picture the problems if I brought this up in the delegation and yet I realized that I shouldn't really be doing such things without the official delegation head being at least informed about it. So this was a bit of a dilemma but what I did actually is I put the dilemma on Dr. Boerna's platter and he said he would be delighted to take me out of this problem and the room number is such and such and what time do you want to do it? He thought it was a great idea to bring them together informally so he set it up and as I recall there were just four of us plus an FAO interpreter in a small room -

Q: Do it under different auspices?

SKILES: Sure. Dr. Boerna made the contacts and the arrangements. That was a delightful little meeting.

Humphrey was just a master at that sort of thing. He carefully explained that he was not there speaking as a U.S. representative, he was speaking for himself. He was a senator who sometimes

people paid attention to and more often they didn't. But he had had for years a great interest in this food problem worldwide.

"In our country we're doing something on soybeans and have made considerable progress on it since the beginning of World War II but we know that you people have had it much longer and probably know a lot more than we do about it and I wanted to pick your brains." He ended up by saying that, "I hope you'll be able to come to the U.S. one of these days. I'm delighted that our countries are officially speaking to each other now and that the President is making a visit. I hope you'll be able to come to the United States and see some real good farms." I doubt that he ever did.

Q: Okay. Does that cover the Rome front?

SKILES: I think so, but as long as I'm name dropping, one other little tidbit I might tell you along the lines of the emergency activities. Another interesting experience comes to mind - that is when they had a very bad earthquake in northern Italy. It didn't happen until '76, I guess. Vice President Rockefeller came out to "show the flag" at the scene of the earthquake and the AID Administrator, Dan Parker, was to arrive a day or two ahead of time and meet the Vice President on arrival. Well, as you know, I had nothing to do with Italy; I was there to work with the international agencies, but the Minister of Economic Affairs was a man who had been our economic man in the Embassy in Ceylon when I was out there. He had the responsibility in the Rome Embassy for getting up a task force to handle U.S. backstopping in connection with the Italian Government and military, and while I had consulted with the task force a little I really hadn't much to do with it but when the Minister found that the Vice President and Parker were coming into North Italy nothing would do other than that I get out to the airbase near Rome and have a couple of the military guys fly me up to the base in Northern Italy near the scene of the quake and meet with Mr. Parker and be ready to help receive the Vice President, so of course I did. Spent several interesting days up there accompanying Parker for whom, naturally, some pretty impressive arrangements had been made. When you get him out of a business suit Parker is a delightful guy. He knew Italy better than I did. He'd been a race car driver before he got into the AID business and participated, as I recall, in the Monte Carlo race a couple of times as well as an Italian event called the Cinque Mille and toured all over Italy as a driver.

Q: All that and fountain pens too.

SKILES: Yes. Here's one of his fountain pens right here. Good one, too.

MICHAEL E.C. ELY
Economic Treasury Officer
Rome (1972-1975)

Michael E.C. Ely was born into a career military family and was raised in a number of military posts. He received a bachelor's degree in international affairs from Princeton University. He served in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant of

artillery during the Korean War. Mr. Ely entered the Foreign Service in 1955, serving in Kuala Lumpur, Paris, Algiers, Mogadishu, Tokyo, and Brussels. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 9, 1992.

Q: You went there from '72 to '75.

ELY: Yes, I was 43 when I got there. I'd been studying modern languages, economics, psychology, sociology, and political science. I knew nothing about classical languages, classical history, architecture, Roman history. You name it, I didn't know it. And I spent the next three years trying to become an educated man. Meanwhile, my marriage continued to deteriorate.

Q: The ambassador while you were there was John Volpe, wasn't it?

ELY: Yes. Originally, it was Graham Martin who selected me, on the recommendation of the DCM. Graham Martin was a shadowy, strange fellow from the admin. cone, who spent his time pulling strings.

Q: The Spider King is the allusion that's made of him from time to time.

ELY: Yes, that's right. They say he'd walk into your office and speed-read your correspondence upside down.

Q: Did he sort of scuttle away?

ELY: He would move people from other agencies around. He would pick a person to be his special representative for this or that, and have him detailed to the ambassador's office. He was able to do things that nobody else could do. Now I'm not sure these were particularly good ideas, but he did them.

For example, to my great pleasure, he had the program for strengthening Italian democracy and US-Italian relations, by active support of the Lions' Club. The Lions' Club in Italy is the little brother of the Rotary Club, and both are very prestigious organizations compared to their American counterparts. So I was always being sent off to give speeches to Lions' Clubs all over Italy. This invariably produced some very fine cuisine, some good architecture, beautiful women, and flowery speeches. I got to see a lot of Bologna and Vicenza. And this was all in the name of fighting the good fight and maintaining Italian democracy and keeping the influence of the United States alive. Well, I'm not sure it did any of the above, but it was better than staying home.

Q: What about dealing with the Italian government? There were these continual "crises," where there would be a very minor shuffle in the government, yet the same government seemed to have been there since 1948, and I think, except for death, it's still doing the same thing today.

ELY: Well, Andreotti was the prime minister then, and he was prime minister until two months ago.

Q: Did we really have an awful lot to do with the government, or were things sort of on a fairly even keel, so that really the embassy wasn't playing any major role?

ELY: Well, we were perceived to have a great deal of influence. And when Wells Stabler, the DCM, who spoke beautiful Italian, a man of great force of character, got on the phone, he could get to people. They were scared of him. He could get things done. He would talk to the prime minister's diplomatic advisor, and he would talk to the secretary general of the Foreign Ministry. And in that respect, we were important.

I got to know the people in the Finance Ministry, the Bank of Italy, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and, of course, the Foreign Ministry. My contacts were excellent, my access was good. My Italian eventually got quite good; I worked hard on it. I don't think my contacts were particularly effective, and so there wasn't really a great deal I could do with them.

This was the time, however, of the Tokyo round. We were having a big fight over trade negotiations, and I was getting calls from STR all day and all night, and continually going in to fight with the Italians on agriculture. And that was interesting.

It was also the time of the petroleum crisis. And the Italians really thought that maybe the country was going to slide into the Mediterranean.

It was also the time of a particularly acute financial crisis. People really thought that they were going to go under. Nowadays, people tend to disregard these crises, because the Italians have survived so many of them. They always go up to the precipice, and then back off. Then they really were out on the precipice, and people thought they were going to fall over.

But we in the embassy didn't. That's one of the things that I did there, to say, "Well, look, you know, things are bad, but not undoable. It can be turned around and should be..." So that was a small feather in my cap.

Q: How was John Volpe as an ambassador?

ELY: I liked him, he was a kind man, but he was not a good ambassador. He was a self-made man, with barely a high school education. He spoke execrable Italian.

Q: Probably with a...

ELY: Heavy... accent and very ungrammatical, and the Italians made fun of him behind his back. He was unable to say more than nine words without referring to his humble origins and how he was a self-made man. He had a heart of gold and was a decent person, but he didn't understand much, and the Italians had a low opinion of him.

Q: Today is November 5, 1992. Another interview with Mike Ely. Mike, we've still got you in Rome, in '73 to '75. Could you talk about the contacts with the Communists, the apertura a sinistra?

ELY: That was a time when it was widely accepted that sooner or later an opening to the left, a historic compromise between the Communists and the center party, the Christian Democrats, was inevitable. The Christian Democrats were losing both strength and credibility, and the Communists were showing tactical flexibility and cleverness. There were several factions of the Communist Party, but at least some of them were looking forward to joining the government, and were prepared to go to some lengths to reassure the Christian Democrats that they would be a viable partner.

The question for the embassy was: Would we or would we not accept this opening to the left? We remained opposed to it to the last, which, in retrospect, was admirable tenacity, because it would have been so easy to say, "Well, look, this is the way history's going. There are Communists and Communists. Maybe we can preempt these people. We can pull them out of the Stalinist camp," (where some of the party was) "or split the party by bringing in the good guys and isolating the bad guys."

We had a very carefully worked-out system by which a junior or middle-grade officer from the Political Section would meet from time to time with a corresponding, probably somewhat higher-ranking member of the Communist Party. They would have an exchange, and then they would go back and report on it. It was very much like contacts with the PLO.

Q: The Palestine Liberation Organization.

ELY: Everybody came with a prepared statement, made the statement and listened to the other person's prepared statement. Frequently there was no more. Then they would go home and would report that nothing happened. But the contact was maintained.

Italian politics are very personal, very complicated, very factional, and even then had kind of a miasma of corruption to them, the source of which was hard to identify, but you could tell that there was something there, particularly in southern Italy, in the way the Christian Democratic administration worked in the Mezzogiorno, the relationships between the Christian Democratic Party and the church and the local administration, and then, finally, vague but pervasive evidence of contacts with the Mafia crowd. These contacts are now becoming more and more marked, more and more resented, and, indeed, I was in Italy two weeks ago and it seems to me that Italy's coming close to some sort of change of formal government. The country's falling apart.

The beginning of this process was apparent in the '72-75 period. The same problems that plague the country now were appearing then; that is, a weakening of the public finances; unwillingness to find any serious long-term remedies toward the continuing budget deficits; ineffective government; unresponsiveness to both perceived and apparent needs; a growth of the underground economy; pervasive disregard of civic obligations, which goes back a long time in Italy and is certainly not new; the amount of income tax evasion; the amount of cheating on health systems; pension fraud. Even making allowances for my Anglo-Saxon viewpoint, it was bad and gradually getting worse, with no prospect for reform in sight. This was what made some people think that maybe a "compromesso storico" with the Communists, who were at least considered cleaner than the Christian Democrats, might have offered some remedy for this declining and neurotic society. It turned out, no.

Q: After all, in the Italian context, it wasn't as though the Communists were a bunch of people wearing overalls, sitting way off out of sight. In political gatherings and just normal social life, many of them were well integrated into the thing. So that, while we may have been talking, you know, formal statements, there must have been a lot of unofficial contacts, weren't there?

ELY: Well, not much. There were people of Communist persuasion around the society, but normally the ones in the Party structure, who were professional politicians, were well identified, and we kept our distance from those people. The Italian Communist Party had two identifiable wings; there were more than that. There was an intellectual current that went back to the beginning of the century, of a humanistic, idealistic, reformist, almost Utopian party of Gramsci, I forget the famous intellectual who died in prison. And then there were the Giolitti, and people like him, who were great friends of the Soviet Union, benefitted from Soviet support, and were real hard-liners.

The thought was that perhaps these two factions could be separated. In point of fact, the loss of the Cold War, the decline of Leninism, and the total discrediting of the Stalinist movement has led to kind of a split in the Italian Communist Party. But the political system since I served in the embassy has been transformed, and parallels are now almost impossible to make.

I used to have exchanges with the Political Section, saying, "If the compromesso storico is not acceptable to us, what's going to happen to this country? Where are they going to go?" It seemed to me that there was going to have to be some sort of arrangement between the Socialists and the Christian Democrats.

The response of the Political Section was, "That is impossible."

And my response was, "It's impossible now, but it seems to be the only alternate way."

That's the way things actually evolved.

Q: Do you think there's a certain mindset, in any situation, particularly one like the Italian, where people are saying, "Well, this is impossible"? There have been all sorts of arrangements between the Socialists and other parties, and I would have thought that someone sort of forward looking would have said, "Well, sure, something's going to happen like that."

ELY: Well, I think the numbers did it. The Christian Democrats, or at least factions of the Christian Democratic Party, will do anything to stay in power, and that includes dealing with the Communists. The Communists became less of a wave of the future and became more static, while the Socialists began picking up votes. This gave the Christian Democrats somebody else to deal with, people a bit easier to deal with; that is to say, the Socialists, and their splinter parties, Republicans and the Social Democrats. And by jiggering around between these various factions, it was possible for the Christian Democrats to maintain at least a portion of their political power, which meant patronage, participation in the state enterprises, a certain amount of guaranteed fund raising, which meant corruption. This was the only way they could maintain their entrenched position, so they were quite prepared to do it. Again, the Christian Democrats stood

for very little in the way of principle. Indeed, some of us thought, in a very general way, that the ideologists far behind the Christian Democratic Party wanted a weak central government; they were quite prepared to see the institutions of government weak and ineffective. It served their purposes very well that government be discredited.

In hindsight, this is a plausible explanation. But who these people were and how they operated escapes me.

Q: I was in Italy in the late '70s, in Naples, and I had very much the feeling that the people down there basically, including the political people, liked it very much that way. They'd had a strong government under Mussolini, and they didn't want any more, and things could, what is it, arranges, you could arrange matters if you didn't have a strong...

The Italians have a knack for this, but it seems to be running out. How did you find, looking at it from Rome, the aspects of regionalism? Reporting from the consulates and all this, how important were these?

ELY: The Italians, from the standpoint of public opinion polls, are the most enthusiastic Europeans of the Community; they and the Dutch for rather different reasons. One of the underlying reasons that Italians, particularly Italian intellectuals, looked to the Community is that they saw, in embedding Italy in a larger European context, the possibility of getting rid of this corrupt, inefficient central government and going to some sort of a regional arrangement by which Lombardy and Tuscany and Venezia would have a good deal of autonomy. Then they, with their better political systems, work ethic, and more honest people, would thereby do better; they would be released from the grasp of the corrupt and ineffective political apparatus, which was dominated by the Christian Democrats.

Q: In other words, almost drop the south, the Mezzogiorno.

ELY: And then the south would be treated as a less-developed region of the Community, and the northern regions would require more autonomy, within a European context. This was the regionalist approach to European federative structures.

As we've seen, not a great deal has come of this. People are still talking in these terms, but the nation states themselves, the member states that comprise the Community, aren't having this. The British are not about to let Scotland and Wales go, and the French are not going to let the Jura and Corsica, et cetera.

However, the Northern League movement in northern Italy is very strong. It is, however, not looking to Brussels for inspiration, it is looking to Rome and the Mezzogiorno and the Mafia for repulsion. They are using separatism as a lever to extract change. The measures would be more convincing had not the political system -- Christian Democrats and Socialists alike -- in Milan been bound to have engaged in very large-scale, massively corrupt practices, in the letting of government contracts, in sweeping off money not just to finance the political parties, but to enrich individuals. Very deep and expensive corruption that has deeply discredited...

Q: At the time, though, the embassy, there was an odor there, but there wasn't the...

ELY: No smoking gun.

Q: There was no smoking gun.

ELY: Having been back in Italy and talked to a few Italians and looked at the posters in the public squares and all, people are beginning to hunt down the Christian Democrats. And the trails seem to be leading toward Andreotti, that shadowy and...

Q: Who's been around since...

ELY: I had dinner with him...

Q: In 1948, he was...

ELY: And he's a very elusive, intelligent, cunning, charming, opaque person. Very opaque.

Anyhow, I left Italy after having had a really interesting tour. I enjoyed it.

Q: It's really the big time in politics, in a way, at a local level, isn't it?

ELY: Yes, and as a man of the north, the Italian experience really was quite fundamental.

Q: It sort of sucks you in and you get involved in this.

ELY: In Rome, that ancient and corrupt and beautiful city.

ROBERT C.F. GORDON
Consul General
Florence (1972-1978)

Ambassador Robert C.F. Gordon was born and raised in Colorado. He received a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of California at Berkeley in 1941. He joined the Foreign Service in 1954. Ambassador Gordon's career included positions in Iraq, Sudan, Tanzania, Italy, and Mauritius. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 25, 1989.

Q: You went to Florence as Consul General. How did this assignment come about?

GORDON: It came about like a lot of assignments to Italy. When they are looking for new officers at the senior grade they often look to find people who speak Italian, and that usually is somebody who has been in Italy before. Graham Martin was ambassador in Rome at the time. He was in Washington and we were talking about when my job as Ombudsman would finish up

because we knew that when the new grievance system was in, then there would be no place for me. The idea had been that I would only spend two years, anyway. And so I talked to him about the possibility of going to Florence, which had always sort of appealed to me. At that time my eyes were giving me an awful lot of trouble.

So, anyway, to make a long story short, he thought it was a great idea and it was arranged that I go to Florence. The man then in Florence went down to Rome to become political Counselor. And so that's how that came about and I stayed there from February of 1972 until September of 1978.

Q: What were our major interests in Florence. I mean, looking at it as if I were a complete outsider, I would say that Florence has some nice art galleries, but why have a consulate in Florence?

GORDON: That question is being asked all the time when they do these budget-cutting exercises. But, basically, there is a very large American community there. Over 30 American colleges and universities have programs in Florence. Therefore, there is what you might call the protection and welfare aspect of those American residents.

It is, of course, the center of the Red Belt of Communist influence so, therefore, the principal officer usually has a lot to do with mayors and others of the various cities, and presidents of the various provinces. Most of them are Communist or Socialists. You try to carry on some sort of dialogue with them to try to figure out what they are up to so that we can counter it, if we had to. So that was very interesting politically.

Another thing that was an aspect of that job, which was particularly interesting, was the consul general in Florence is accredited to the Republic of San Marino, which is a semi-autonomous city-state within Italy, sort of like Monte Carlo and Liechtenstein. San Marino is very, very active. They were one of the original members of the Helsinki meeting and accord. They had taken an active part in it. It was really a miniature embassy because you are always getting this, that, and the other thing from Washington concerning San Marino's attitude on various matters. And they wanted the views of San Marino mainly because it was a member of the Helsinki Accord (CSCE). It was very much in our interest to be sure of the attitude of the government because they could just cause unnecessary pain if it was governed by the wrong people. And, fortunately, it worked out very well. They've been very helpful to us on things in the CSCE meetings.

Q: CSCE is?

GORDON: I'm just trying to think. It's the thing that grew out of the Helsinki Accords. Committee on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I believe is what the acronym stands for. That added a lot of extra duties.

Q: What were your duties? I mean, did you go there?

GORDON: Oh, yes. I would go up there. They had a very interesting ceremony the first of April

and the first of October to preserve their democracy. There are two men chosen for a six month period called Captains Regent and they are the executive of the country. But they change every six months and that's to prevent anybody getting too good a toehold on executive power. And so they always have a big celebration. Originally, everybody was in top hat and striped trousers, but that was done away with eventually when the Socialists took over.

Then, as I say, you'd get messages from Washington and you'd have to go up there and talk to them about this and that so you would get the answers back. And the embassy in Rome, if they would send something up there they could forget about it. They would send it back and say, "We deal only through the consul general in Florence."

Q: Let me ask you a question. For the record, I might add, that later I was consul general in Naples so we're sort of speaking on collegial terms here. How did you deal with the local governments which are run by communists? I mean, after all, we represent sort of the antithesis of the communist ideal and all, being the United States. How did you deal with these people?

GORDON: Even in the places like Siena and Prato which were really communist, the vast majority, I don't recall having any difficulty dealing with a mayor, or the president of a province, a member of the city council who were communists. They always were polite and listened to what I had to say, whether it was a problem of somebody in jail, or it might have been just general attitudes towards Americans, or just listening to our point of view on things. I always found them very polite and civilized and had no difficulty in carrying on any type of business.

One of the best examples, I remember talking to the Mayor of Bologna. Bologna is one of the reddest cities and has been communist since gosh knows when. It's the seat of one of the great universities in Italy. I remember the Mayor of Bologna was also a professor at the university. And I was talking to him one day saying we were having a United States Information Agency, USIA exhibit coming through showing some of the spinoffs from our astronaut program. And he said, "Well, when is this going to be?" I told him the date and I said, "I hope you can come. I will let you know the details because I would love to have you there for the opening." He said, "Oh, I'll be there. Where's it going to be?" I said, "Well, we're trying to get this building, but there's some construction." He said, "I know that building and I don't think it's going to be finished in time. If you'd like to use the foyer of city hall, please do so." So that is an example of, I would say, sort of benign communism. At the same time, everybody knew we had different points of view when it came to security of Europe, and defense, and foreign affairs. But I think we all tried to get along. I can't remember anybody just turning me down flat because they were Communists.

Q: The Italians always struck me as being the most civilized people I ever had to deal with. I mean, they practically try to disassemble their government at times, but it seems to work.

GORDON: Was the mayor of Naples communist when you were there?

Q: Yes. Valenzi, I believe his name was.

GORDON: As part of my consular district, I had Livorno, which is a big US logistics military

base. We had real problems over there. There were a lot of people who thought we were storing nuclear weapons there. I knew we weren't so we got the president of the province and the president of the region and we all made a tour all through the base there and their criticism died down. And they were willing to go take a look at it, which was the interesting thing.

Q: They had practical concerns rather than just using this as a means of causing trouble?

GORDON: Oh, yes. They had to be sure to accentuate the difference between the Communists and the Christian Democrats regarding the storage of nuclear weapons in Italy.

Q: Let me ask a question. You mentioned you were having trouble with your eyesight. I'd like to get this on the record. Tell me how you operated in this way and what was the problem?

GORDON: Well, the problem is a disease called retinitis pigmentosa. There is no known cure for it, no known preventative for it. The pigment seeps in through someplace in the eye and blocks the retina so that when the light hits it it doesn't record. And they say it's genetic, though they are not absolutely sure of it. Outfits in the United States and in Europe are pouring money into researching this. I first knew it when I was in Rome and I started having trouble reading. Usually, it hits somebody by the time they are teenagers.

I've been blessed in my jobs of having absolutely first class secretaries who read the necessary mail to me and requests or telegrams that come in. And I dictate the answers or get them to put it together. That was how I worked as Counselor in Rome, the Ombudsman, as the Handicapped Coordinator, and as Ambassador in Mauritius for three and a half years. All places being blessed with exceptionally able, devoted secretaries. That, in a nutshell, is the answer to the question.

And when I had to get around, get from point to point, it's amazing how quickly officials in Rome, in Florence, and in Mauritius were aware of this. My driver or, if I got a taxi, the taxi driver would park his taxi and see that I got to the right door in city hall or something like that. And then somebody would see me out. So I was lucky in the sense that both in Florence and in Mauritius I had a car and a driver so I got to where I wanted to go with very little or no difficulty.

Q: Most of your work was absorbing information and making analyses, and that.

GORDON: Sure. In the morning my wife would read me the Italian newspapers when we were in Florence and also in Mauritius, where all the newspapers and magazines are published in French. The other half of it was a great amount of help at receptions and other official functions from my wife, who was with me all the time. A bachelor would have a hell of a time with that, I guess. In addition, both in Florence and in Mauritius my wife had her own top secret clearance when it was necessary for us to work on classified matters.

Q: Just out of interest, do you see that you could, in dealing with the handicapped side, anyway, say, have the equivalent of a reader go along or?

GORDON: That's another possibility. For instance, some blind people in the Department had

readers. I didn't depend entirely on my secretary. After all, in Florence she was also the teletype operator and the coder and decoder of telegrams. And lots of stuff would be sent by telegram, some economic analysis, or some particular political thing. Or even if I had good sight, I would sit down and talk to the other officers and say what do you think about this and what do we need to know that we don't know, and how are we going to get hold of what we need to know. Sometimes it would be a collegial answer and they would do the first draft. Sometimes I would do the first draft and have them work on it, depending on who we thought had more information.

WILLIAM LENDERKING
Johns Hopkins School of International Studies
Bologna (1973-1974)

Press Attaché
Rome (1974-1976)

A native of New York, Mr. Lenderking graduated from Dartmouth College and served a tour with the US Navy in the Far East before joining the Foreign Service of the US Information Agency in 1959. As Public Affairs, Press and Information Officer, he served in posts throughout the world and in Washington, D.C., where held senior level positions in USIA and the Department of State dealing with Policy, Plans and Research. Mr. Lenderking was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2007.

Q: Well then, about '73 you left that job. Then what?

LENDERKING: I was anxious to get out of East Asia for awhile and an opportunity arose to go to Europe. We used to have one person a year go to the Bologna Center of Johns Hopkins, part of the School of Advanced International Studies, and that was usually a springboard to getting an assignment in Europe. So I applied for that. I don't think many people knew about it, but it was an incredibly plum assignment. So I got it and went to Bologna for a year and quickly came to feel our policy in Italy was off track. Even in Bologna, where we did not have any representation at all but I as a USIA person was supposed to stay in contact with a few minor and mostly pro-American, anti-communist businessmen and give them encouragement and occasionally materials that they could use, the poverty of our imagination was evident to most people except the US Embassy in Rome. It was pathetic.

Q: Well, this is part of the Red Belt, was it not?

LENDERKING: Yes. Bologna was a communist city but a communist city unlike I had ever seen before. It was very prosperous and bourgeois. And I almost lost my job in Italy right off the bat, for recommending that Ambassador Volpe visit Bologna. I had run my idea by a few prominent citizens of Bologna, and they wanted to have a closer relationship and contacts with Americans, but they told me if Volpe came he would absolutely have to call on the Mayor, who was a popular figure and a Communist. Otherwise his visit would be seen as a snub by all

Bolognesi, and resented.

At the time, our firm policy in Italy was absolutely no contact with any communist official, university professor or journalist. The idea was that any contacts would “confer legitimacy” on the Communists and it was better to circle the wagons and isolate them. If you think that this idea is conceptually bankrupt, counter-productive, or simply ineffective, please consider that we are still clinging to something similar in regard to Iran in the year 2007. Anyway, after doing this informal canvassing, I duly relayed this information to the Embassy in Rome and after a while I was told I’d caused a ruckus and they were considering whether it was safe to have me come to Rome as press attache.

Anyway, I survived and after Bologna I did go to Rome as press attaché for two years and I did lose my job, eventually.

Q: Who was the head of the Bologna Center when you were there?

LENDERKING: A young scholar by the name of Simon Serfaty, who was there for several years. I was the oldest guy among the student body and all but one or two of the faculty and I was older than Simon. But I was there as a student and I got along with my fellow students, almost all of them recent graduates, and even a few undergraduates. There was a lot of suspicion of me at first, especially among the Europeans. They all thought I was a CIA agent come to spy on them and it took me awhile to just be a student along with them. So it was a very interesting assignment; of course, I’d had no experience in Europe and I plunged right into this kind of total immersion, with all the different nationalities of Europe represented. It was a really great educational experience – my subject was the international relations of Europe. I got along well with both the students and with the director and on occasion I was useful in an informal way when issues arose between the administration and the student body.

Q: Well what was the Bologna Center doing?

LENDERKING: The Bologna Center of SAIS was set up to train American and European graduate students, plus a few “outsiders,” in the social sciences of Europe. So it was basically international politics and the economics of Europe. Johns Hopkins offers a two year Masters, and there was an option to take the first year in Bologna. It was an excellent program, similar to the Fletcher School at Tufts University.

Q: What was the state of the art in teaching political science at the Center? I ask this because political science has changed over the years.

LENDERKING: The best way I can answer that is that we had a very international faculty, mostly Europeans, French, German, Italian, and English, plus a few Americans. They all brought their national and ideological perspectives to how they taught a particular course, whether it was Italian history from independence to the present day, or economies of France and Germany or something; they were regular university courses but you had very different perspectives among the faculty, and ideological leanings from conservative to radical socialist.

Q: Were ideological differences and methodological approaches very pronounced?

LENDERKING: I suppose so. There certainly were people who had sharp political views. There was a German professor who was very popular who said he was not a Marxist but certainly sounded like a Marxist to me. I took one of his courses and found it very interesting but he was clearly presenting a pro-Marxist point of view. And there was another one, an eminent Frenchman, who was quite the opposite, much more conservative. Most of the students, European and American and a smattering of others, were on the left.

Q: Did the Cold War intrude at all while you were there?

LENDERKING: Vietnam was a big issue, and there were frequent discussions, formal and informal, among students and faculty, which is what you'd expect in an academic atmosphere. It was stimulating and I wasn't horrified that most of the students were on the left. In due course, if they continued their studies, extremist views would be leavened out. I was there from September 1973 to June 1974.

Q: Did the ambassador ever get to Bologna or not?

LENDERKING: He did not.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

LENDERKING: It was John Volpe

Q: Yes, I have talked to people who served under Volpe. You served under him for awhile?

LENDERKING: Yes.

Q: Well, we'll talk about that.

LENDERKING: Okay.

Q: In '73, what would you say was the state of politics in Italy? Maybe the same state they were in '48, but how would you describe it?

LENDERKING: The overriding issue certainly for us and it seemed to me for Italians was the situation of the communists, the opening to the left and keeping...

Q: Apertura a sinistra.

LENDERKING: Yes, the Apertura a sinistra, the opening to the left; and whether the communists would be allowed into the government and if this would be the precursor for a takeover and the unraveling of our interests in Europe. So that was the issue. I think U.S. foreign policy was overdue for a change. It had become more than a bit creaky as far as Italy was concerned and did not take into account enormous changes that had occurred in Italian society

since 1945. That phenomenon is nothing new in U.S. foreign policy. In 2007, we're still suffering from the same obscured vision in various parts of the world. For example, finally in late 2006 we realized that our keystone alliance with South Korea, which buttressed all our vital interests in Northeast Asia, would come apart if we didn't make some changes. The main irritant was the huge American military presence in metropolitan Seoul, accompanied by the inevitable tragic incidents, in this case when a runaway military truck ran over and killed two Korean schoolgirls. Of course there was an uproar from the Koreans, fueled by many grievances. The Alliance, which remains of vital importance to us, could have been derailed had we not taken action. Finally, by mid-2007, months of negotiations had wrought a transformation, a key portion of which was the relocation of our GIs out of Seoul, at a cost of billions, to be paid by the ROK for some things such as land acquisition and relocation of Koreans, and the U.S. for new housing construction.

Anyway, back to Italy. The U.S. was rigidly holding onto attitudes in the embassy and back in Washington that were not related to the reality of Italian life and the policy was therefore a failure, and had become counterproductive.

Q: Well, talk about the embassy. What was your impression of Ambassador Volpe?

LENDERKING: He was a well meaning man. He had come from one of the poorest sections of Italy, and done well in America. He was self-made, very proud of his Italian heritage and very proud of being a prominent American. He became prosperous in the construction business. He had a lot of things in his résumé that he was proud of and I think he felt it was a culmination of his life and career to go back to Italy and represent his country to Italy, the country of his birth. That is a very commendable feeling and entirely natural but it was also a recipe for disaster. Unfortunately, sophisticated Italians in Rome, of course very conscious of the *bella figura*, and one's status, regarded John Volpe not as a returning native son they were proud of, but as a bumpkin from a provincial backwater of Italy. To them, Volpe's less than perfect Italian, laced with out of date phraseology from the provinces, was not impressive, and they mocked him in a way that I'm sure was hurtful to him. This does not reflect well on the Italians, but also, Volpe's behavior was also partly responsible. He sometimes tended to look down a bit on his former countrymen for the various things that had plagued Italy for many years. He also was a rigid anti-communist, and in my view failed to achieve a realistic understanding of the profound changes that were underway in Italy.

Q: Yes, perhaps it was a little bit like an Italian ambassador coming here and speaking hillbilly English.

LENDERKING: That's right. So in some ways he was treated maliciously by the Italians, especially the sophisticates of Rome and the big cities but also he did a lot to strengthen that stereotype by insensitive behavior. By this I mean that he was a very proper man and never did anything wrong in that sense but I don't think he had any real feel or understanding for contemporary Italy. Despite conservative institutions like the Church, in many ways Italy is not a conservative country politically and I think he felt that his way of doing things and looking at the world should be a lesson for the Italians to emulate, and they weren't buying that.

Q: Was anyone on the public diplomacy side trying to get to him and say, look, going out and speaking in your poor Italian does more harm than good and that sort of thing? Had anybody tried this?

LENDERKING: He had a special assistant who was a good guy, also quite politically conservative but smart and much more politically aware than the ambassador. He had also gone to Dartmouth; I did not know him then. But he was kind of an interlocutor and he could talk to Volpe but I don't think he had much success because Ambassador Volpe was a very proud man and not a good listener. He was also exceedingly sensitive to any perceived slights, so it was very difficult to even suggest to him in a roundabout way that you shouldn't say that because you will rub people the wrong way. I must admit, I didn't try that much, nor did my USIS bosses, the PAO and Deputy. It was a big embassy; I didn't have that much one-on-one time with him.

Q: Well let me see, you were the press attaché. Tell me what a press attaché does in a huge embassy like Rome.

LENDERKING: Well, I was the information officer for USIS as well, which meant I was in charge of a large information section that handled the various daily and long term information programs that were directed at giving Italians a more accurate picture of American society, culture and foreign policy and countering the many distortions and inaccuracies that dogged us every day. We had a pretty large section, but my time was almost totally devoted to dealing with the press, and that was also my personal inclination. This was where the action was, in both a policy and a practical sense.

For example, there were 12 or 13 daily newspapers in Rome alone that I had to read, or at least skim, in Italian, plus weekly political magazines, plus the English language press, to see what was going on. The media were pretty aggressive; they were looking out for the slightest indication that our policy might be changing and anything any of us said ran the risk of being inflated or distorted, with resulting big headlines. So I felt I was under the gun from the Italians all the time to answer inaccurate or distorted allegations, and the way I answered them would sometimes be distorted. We were holding the line on an outdated policy that I disagreed with, but I did my best to explain the policy and reasons for it, almost every day, it seemed. After all, even if trying to shun the communists was no longer a productive policy, it hadn't been formulated by idiots and there were genuine concerns about the communists coming to power and opening up the country to much wider Soviet interests.

Q: What was our policy, would you say?

LENDERKING: The policy was that we did not favor any communists in the government and we ourselves would not have any dealings with any communist party official. There was one person in the embassy other than the ambassador who was authorized to talk to communist party officials and he regularly met with some of the top people and he was a very close friend of mine.

Q: Who was that?

LENDERKING: Martin Wenick. He'd had experience in Moscow and was very wary of the communists, and especially the insistence of Italian communists that they were somehow different because they were part of a democratic country. But he was also scornful of the mindless and outdated knee-jerk anti-communism that radiated out from some of the guys in the political section and Washington. To this day, Martin is a very knowledgeable and pragmatic guy. You should get him to come for an interview because his recollections would be most valuable.

Q: Well, you know, you had been observing politics in other countries; what was your impression of Eurocommunism, as it was called at the time, and of Berlinguer, who was the communist party leader. This was supposed to be the new face of communism. What was your impression?

LENDERKING: Well, the communists always presented themselves that way, and it sometimes seemed it held open that promise, but there was still a lot to be skeptical about. Certainly the communists had open relationships with the Soviet Union. They had extensive trade, cultural relations, and close ties through the unions. But I found in Bologna I was not dealing with communist officials -- I was not that foolish -- but I certainly met in every day life people who supported the communist party for historical and purely Italian reasons. The problem is, the embassy and Washington made no distinction between the two, but the distinction was huge. Historically, the communists had been and still were the principal antagonists of the fascists, and to most Italians Mussolini was far worse than any Italian communist. Incidentally, I never heard any supporter of the PCI (Communist Party of Italy) praise Stalin, and they had more criticisms than praise of the Soviet Union. I always felt those attitudes could be exploited. Anyway, the communists were anti-fascist, they had been front and center in the fight against Mussolini. And in a city like Bologna some of the most eminent people in town -- you might meet them at a party after the opera and they would be in their tuxedos and looking very elegant, with beautiful manners and very bourgeois tastes, from the really good families, not radical people at all -- and they would tell you why they supported the communists. And they were not naïve at all about communism; it is not that they wanted a Soviet type government in Italy, but they were tired of the same old corruption and politics as usual year after year. And I guess that is why the policy was called, the *compromesso storico*, the historical compromise of the communist party. So it is hard to convey a sense of how volatile this issue was and it was volatile in the United States too. Most Italo-Americans were far more conservative in their political outlook than mainstream Italians, so there was a disconnect on that level too. And there were people like Jeanne Kirkpatrick, who became very eminent and a darling of the right wing, having evolved from her early Cold War position as a democratic socialist, later won her ambassadorship under Reagan at the UN by writing an article called "Dictators and Double Standards" in which she argued that communists were totalitarians and could not change and would not change, whereas other types of dictators, right wing dictators like Somoza or people like that would eventually go their way and they could evolve.

Well, it seems ridiculous at this point in time and in light of the astonishing demise of the Soviet Union, but the whole nub of my disagreement with American foreign policy is that I argued that nothing is inevitable and even communists can and would change and that the way to deal with them is not to ignore them or isolate them (because that is impossible) but challenge them to

work within the democratic system. That was the whole thing I was arguing about. And there was a very strong group of democratic socialists, not the conservative kind in the U.S. but people of the socialist party who were quite critical of the United States but also were committed democrats, small "d", and we would not talk to them either because they were critical of us and didn't like our policies. They wanted us to be more supportive of the democratic forces and not just rally our wagons around the conservatives, which was our traditional way of doing things in Italy.

Q: Were you under constraints as far as who you could talk to and who you could not?

LENDERKING: Yes. The farthest I could go was to meet on occasion with an unabashedly pro-communist journalist who spoke good English and had lived in America, so we had some pretty interesting conversations. Of course I didn't agree with him, but I came to understand his point of view, and on some issues, such as gradually expanding contacts, I thought it would do some good, especially since we seemed to be so sure that the communists were wrong and we were right. Emotionally, I felt that if we had so much confidence in our system and way of life, why were we so reluctant to challenge the communists? I also met a lot of other journalists regularly, over lunch, whatever. Most of them were very critical of the U.S. and our foreign policy, even if they were staunch anti-communists. My Italian was pretty good by then so I had no problem in a one-on-one conversation with an Italian journalist or if he wanted a quote over the telephone I could do that. But the pro-communist I mentioned spoke very good English and I used to go to lunch with him as often as I could because he had some interesting ideas and was always trying to get the embassy to welcome the editor of his paper, who was a cultured man of some fame, with an important art collection and so forth. I could not go too far in recommending that kind of testing the waters because I would have cut the ground from under myself. And also there were a number of Italians, respectable, centrist Italians who thought it was very dangerous and naïve of us to be having any contacts with the communists. And they didn't like our current policies either, but didn't want us to go very far in changing them.

At one disastrous small dinner party, I invited this communist journalist, who was not an official, and his American wife to sit down with a very eminent columnist from Corriere della Sera, which was the leading Italian newspaper, and I thought just getting the three of us together would be a good way of airing views. Well, they did not get along at all and the eminent columnist left as soon as it was polite for him to do so. So that was a disaster, and it was clearly a blunder on my part. There were a lot of cross-currents in Italian society, not just political enmities, and they were beyond the understanding of any American in the embassy. Of course we relied on an excellent Italian staff, but they too had their own special agendas, and one had to be careful not to become a prisoner of our Italian staffers. I'm sure you had the same kinds of experiences along the way.

Q: Were you picking up any emanations from Portugal at the time? Because Portugal was going through something perhaps similar; you had these young officers in '74, I think, who had basically taken over the government and they were quasi communist and Kissinger was talking about practically yanking all dealings with them, wiping them out of NATO (North American Treaty Organization) and all that. And Frank Carlucci -- and this is one of those great stories of the Foreign Service -- was sent there and had enough clout as having been a sub-cabinet

member and all, to essentially challenge Kissinger and say let me play this. And he played it masterfully and Portugal continued on its way. And I was wondering, this is where this whole debate about Eurocommunism was going on and was this something we could deal with, or at least the debate? But it sounds like you almost had a firewall about Italy back in Washington and within the embassy of not looking at this or dealing with it.

LENDERKING: The embassy was very rigid, although there were a few scattered silent dissenters like me, and it was under instruction from Washington to hold the line. Volpe, as I said, was not a sophisticated man and the nuances of Italian politics escaped him. He was a hardcore anti-communist and he certainly understood what Washington wanted. And his DCM (deputy chief of mission), who was a career Foreign Service officer-

Q: Who was that?

LENDERKING: Bob Beaudry; one of the few people in the embassy who actually was familiar with modern Italian history and understood something about Italy but he was very conservative, a devout Catholic, and his anti-communism sprang from his devout Catholicism. And many of the other people in the political section at that time, guys who had been around for quite awhile, and had served in Italy maybe ten or fifteen years before, came back in the 1970s and had a shock because they found out that the country had shifted to the left considerably and instead of understanding how that happened and what it was like they went into a kind of a paralysis that colored their views. There were a few exceptions, such as Marty Wenick, who was new to Italy but had a pragmatic experience with the Soviet Union, and who had no illusions about communism and a realistic understanding of contemporary Italy.

Q: Did the Vatican play a role? I realize we had separate diplomatic representation to the Vatican, which is a sovereign state, but the Vatican press and all that, was this something you dealt with?

LENDERKING: Not so much. Not surprisingly, a lot of Embassy officers had good contacts with the conservatives. They fed off each other, so one more rider in that wagon was not needed. I dealt more with the mainstream secular press. I can't remember any really substantive contacts I had with the L'Osservatore Romano, which I think is the name of the Vatican newspaper.

I felt the best thing I could do was try to open some contacts to the democratic left and I did that aggressively. I took some heat for it – the basic attitude was, “why would you want to have contacts with people who criticize us?” -- but that was not prohibited. I was also trying to advance the idea within the embassy that the way to confront communism was to challenge them to work within the democratic system. The communists were always talking about how they could and would do that, so okay, make them do it and hold them accountable, instead of treating them as outcasts.

Q: How about the Christian Democrats? They were the party in power; I mean, they were going through frequent changes of government... What did you think of them?

LENDERKING: Well, the Christian Democrats had a huge apparatus with all kinds of aspects to

it, and the communists were their counterparts on the left, with almost as large a following in national elections. In some ways they were mirror images of each other, although they were bitter enemies. The Christian Democrats ran the gamut from mainstream, very decent, solid interlocutors, to people who were so conservative that they sympathized with the fascists.

Q: You were up against sort of an Italian mafia within the embassy, to use a generic Italian term. I mean by this people who had been there for a long time, and this is one of the problems. Sometimes, you know, you get people who have become so attached to a country and also have been back so many times that they get rigid.

LENDERKING: Yes. And I think some of them thought that the best thing that could happen to them was to be invited by some rich family out for a day in the country in their villa outside of Rome, and the rest of Italy didn't exist for them.

Q: Did you pick up, I am speaking now as a former consul general in Naples, prejudice about the south?

LENDERKING: Sure; yes.

Q: I noticed I got it from my fellow officers when I went to Rome.

LENDERKING: Yes, it's true. And I guess from my viewpoint the justification was that Milano was such an important city in terms of public opinion and media in Italy, and Torino to a lesser extent, I really had much more reason to concentrate on the northern part of Italy than the southern part. So I did that, and Sicily and Naples, where we had consulates, did not get as much attention.

Q: Well the feeling was reciprocated. You know, there would be a change in the government and there would be an excited set of cables about the latest change in this governmental minuet, asking "What is the impression down in the Naples area about this? Well, the impression down there was an absolute shrug.

LENDERKING: Yes. But it is interesting that a lot of the guys in the embassy didn't seem to have much of a serious interest about Italy, which as you know is an extremely complex country. They weren't familiar with Italian history. There were very few fluent Italian speakers. I was a newcomer and my Italian was already better than some of theirs. I was shocked at seeing that, with still vivid memories of our Embassy in Japan, where people worked hard and enthusiastically about learning more about Japan.

Q: What about Italian congressmen? Did you find yourself having to deal with them, and many of them have strong family or parochial interests in Italy. Right now the speaker of the House is of Italian-American descent, Nancy Pelosi, and she seems pretty solid. Did Italo-American congressmen show a lot of interest?

LENDERKING: Actually I didn't meet many. Remember, my portfolio was the Italian and foreign media. Other people in the Embassy, mostly the political section, dealt with visiting

congressmen, and there must have been a bundle of them. I think we were more worried about Italian pro-fascists who would go to America and wangle a warm welcome from some American political VIPs, maybe get invited to the White House, and the press would be on us like Dobermans for flirting with Fascists. But among American congressmen, John Rooney came all the time. He'd buy a lot of things and who knows who ultimately paid for it. Certainly not Rooney, I'm reasonably sure. I remember him – he was very powerful.

Q: Oh yes; Brooklyn. Well I got a bellyful of them because we had an earthquake down in Naples when I was there in 1980 and every Italian-American in political office came down...

LENDERKING: I bet.

Q: -because this is where so many Italian-Americans came from, you know, so they were out appearing and showing their support...Now, on the Socialist side, did you get involved with the glitterati of the movie business at all?

LENDERKING: To some extent. I had a legitimate reason to deal with them and of course that was fun; the intellectuals, the culture gurus, and assorted opinion leaders. Of course, we could not socialize on their level, but occasionally an opportunity arose. For example, one time the great director Vicente Minnelli was in town making a picture, and I got the bright idea of asking him to do an informal meeting with us, maybe meet with students, intellectuals, aspiring film makers, whatever. We could pull together a good audience if we had an attractive headliner. So I just picked up the phone and called him at his hotel. He was very gracious and courteous and said, sure he'd be delighted to do it, no charge, provided his schedule permitted. Flushed with success, I promised to get right back to him and immediately went to enlist the aid of our head cultural programmer, plus the PAO and DPAO. I thought I'd landed a coup. Well, you wouldn't believe it – instead of snapping up an opportunity like that, they turned their backs and couldn't be bothered, simply because the idea wasn't theirs. So I had to abandon the project. There was a lot of that kind of territorial pettiness in the Rome Embassy and I found it unattractive.

But I did get to know some of the intellectuals who wrote columns for the leading newspapers. They were a fascinating group of people. As you know, many of the journalists there who are columnists are really considered essayists and they are part of the literary establishment as well because of their fluidity. And I had a number of good contacts among them. I'll give you an example. Do you remember Arrigo Levi of La Stampa, a socialist leaning newspaper in Turin but read nationally that often criticized us strongly? They were also strongly anti-communist and pro-democrat. Of course, many folks in the embassy couldn't make those distinctions.

Anyway, Levi was an elderly Italian Jewish intellectual, and one of the leading newspaper columnists in the country, widely quoted and with a number of well-regarded books published. And he was pretty hard on Volpe and American foreign policy, employing that marvelous facility for insult and vituperation that many Italians seem to have. When I arrived in Rome, I read his columns, and aside from the invective they were well-reasoned and made many good points. He was clearly a learned man. And so I went up to Turin and I said, would you have lunch with me? And he said sure. I think he sort of thought, here is this young naïve American, (I wasn't so young anymore but I was a lot younger than he), and he's the press attaché and he's

come to see me; okay, why not? So he takes me to lunch at an elegant restaurant that served divine truffles and we have a lovely lunch and are getting along well. So I said, the next time you're in Rome, if you have time drop by the Embassy and I'd love to introduce you to the ambassador. I didn't know what his response would be, but he was clearly pleased, and said "I'd enjoy that so much." You see, no one from our Embassy had ever bothered to talk to the guy, one of the most eminent columnists in Italy. He wanted an American of some importance to say, "We know who you are, we read your columns, we take you seriously even though we don't always agree, and we respect you." You know, just a simple gesture like that.

So he came down to Rome from Turin, and you always worried with Volpe because you didn't know what he would do, but he could be also very gracious and he welcomed Arrigo Levi. I guess he had him to dinner or something and paid some attention to him and Levi was delighted. I don't mean he sold his soul for a bit of flattery and attention from the American ambassador, and he didn't change his basic viewpoint, but his tone moderated and he became accessible. And this is one of the top newspaper people in the country and no one had ever bothered to talk to him. So, there were a lot of examples like that.

Q: Well then, you left there, you say you got kicked out, but what happened?

LENDERKING: I wrote a dissent and I went to Tom Trimarco, who was the ambassador's special assistant, and I gave him a copy, intending to use a special State Department mechanism called the dissent channel. It was set up with some difficulty because AFSA, the American Foreign Service Association, had been trying since the McCarthy era to set up a procedure for Foreign Service officers who disagreed with policies to register their views without fear of reprisal, or being punished, passed over, or whatever. It was a formal process, and anyone who submitted a dissent was guaranteed to receive a formal response from the head of the Department's Policy Planning Staff. It was a great idea, and sorely needed, but most years it didn't work all that well. True dissenters willing to put their views on paper even in a protected channel were rather rare – some years there were only a handful of entries for the annual awards given by AFSA for "creative dissent." You see, this was not supposed to be a channel for malcontents and those with personal grudges, but a serious forum on policy. And what happened to me is perhaps instructive, although I couldn't claim it was typical.

Anyway, my dissent was basically along the lines I have described to you; hardly a revolutionary or radical idea, but it was a way of dealing with the communists and I said the present policy is a disaster and is bound to fail. My suggestion of challenging the communists and pressuring them to work within the democratic system had never been tried – it was always considered too risky, or would open the Department to charges of "appeasement." Memories of the McCarthy era were still alive.

So Tom Trimarco, who I considered a friend as well as a colleague, said do not do this, it will end up hurting you. He offered this advice as a friend, but since he was also pragmatic, he could see no good coming of it, and might in fact get people worked up needlessly. I responded that it would be a test of the system. And Tom said, "You will test the system and find it wanting." All of those things came to pass, and my boss in USIS, the PAO in Rome, was no better; a nice guy who passed on about a year ago...

Q: Who was that?

LENDERKING: Bob Amerson. And you know, he just couldn't really cope with it so I didn't have any support in the embassy and I sent it off anyway. Amerson was basically a nice guy, but he was an old school minimalist. That is, press attaches in his eyes were flacks. He even told me one day, as a criticism, "we've never had a press attaché like you before," meaning I caused waves every now and then. Of course, I took it as a compliment. I was even invited to teach a course at Loyola University in Rome on Italian modern history since 1900, to a small class of American undergraduates, and Amerson nixed it, because he was afraid that I might say something controversial, in a small university classroom, to a group of American undergraduates. I couldn't believe it.

Press attaches, I guess, weren't supposed to think or use whatever brains they had. They were supposed to take what was given to them, a press guidance or whatever, and flack it to the media. That was never my concept for one minute, and the guys in USIA who were successful press officers – and there were a lot of them – felt the same way, in my experience. And a lot of them had trouble with the front office, always fearful that they might say too much, wander off the reservation, utter a nuance that might seem critical of our policy makers. Bosses can be unbelievably uptight, especially if we're dealing with a controversial situation and there's a feeling that the world's eyes are on us.

Anyway, I certainly didn't go to a place like Dartmouth, be a defense counsel in a military court-martial, work for the NY Times, and enter the foreign service just to flack press guidances prepared by the public affairs office. If you have a good education in the U.S. you are most of all taught to think for yourself, not just regurgitate received information.

Anyway, back to my dissent cable. Those few people in Washington who read it -- someone wrote me and said well, you can be assured that at least four people will read it -- said it was good, well-reasoned, and made good sense. The next step was to see what the Department's formal response would be. I must emphasize that dissent papers were never given wide distribution inside the Department – I don't recall seeing any of them other than my own – so it was not like they received any widespread distribution.

But some weeks later it was time for me to go on home leave and Bob Beaudry called me in and says okay, you're going on home leave and you're not going to come back. In those days, and maybe still, an assignment like Rome was normally four years, with a six week home leave break in between. And I said, "Am I being fired?" And he said "no, you're just not being invited back." Well, I had only been there for two years and I had signed up for a four year tour so I was really upset about that but I wasn't surprised. So Tom Trimarco was right and that was the end of that.

HERMAN J. ROSSI III
Commercial Officer
Rome (1973-1976)

Mr. Rossi was born in Florida and raised in Idaho. He was educated at Gonzaga University and Washington State University. In 1965, he entered the Foreign Service, specializing primarily in economic and African affairs. During his career, Mr. Rossi served in Kinshasa, Blantyre, Rome, Pretoria, Monrovia, Kingston and Libreville, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. He was Economic Counselor at several of his posts. In his Washington assignments, Mr. Rossi dealt with both African and Economic matters. Mr. Rossi was interviewed by Peter Eicher in 2007.

ROSSI: It was a two year tour. The next tour I was assigned to Rome. In order to go to Rome, I had to take the Italian course at FSI. Even though I have an Italian name, my father was far removed from his partial Italian/Swiss ancestry and neither of my parents spoke any foreign language.

Q: Were you choosing assignments at this point?

ROSSI: No, I wasn't. We were still submitting our general preferences. We were not choosing assignments; we did not know what assignments were coming open. In those days, there was an office in personnel that handled junior officer assignments. I think I was still an old FSO-05 (now 03). I hadn't completed my third tour yet. I was still under the junior officer control, and they decided (probably rightly) that I needed some non-African experience because I had been twice in Africa and once on an African desk.

My assignment to Rome involved six months of language training in Washington, so my wife and children went to stay with my wife's parents in California. I found I rather enjoyed studying the Italian language and still consider it the most beautiful European language.

Q: Today is July 27, 2007. This is a continuation of the interview of Herman Rossi. Herman, we left off last time, you had just been assigned to Italy and were returning to the United States for language training.

ROSSI: Right. I had six months of Italian language training. While I was in language training my wife and small children went with my wife's parents in Newport Beach. In August of 1973, we all arrived in Rome which is well known as the dead season in Rome. August is when the Romans (and Parisians) leave the cities for a month-long vacation. I arrived in a city that was very quiet and uncongested. I didn't realize this was not the real world.

Q: Today if you go to Rome in July or August, it is so full of tourists you can barely move. Was it the same then?

ROSSI: No. There were tourists there but not as many as there are now. Also, the tourists tend to stay in a certain areas, and if you got out of the tourist area into the residential areas, it got very quiet very quickly. More than half the stores particularly out of the tourist area are closed for August. Traffic was relatively light for Rome. I found August a pleasant time to stay in Rome. In the old days, epidemics would break out in the summertime. That was true in the U.S., too.

Anyone, who had any money, got out of the big cities for the summertime because they were unhealthy places.

That tradition has played through. Unlike Americans, who stagger their vacations, the Italians (and the French) all want to take their vacation at one time. It's a prestige thing. You're expected to be gone in August. There are stories of people who fell on financial hard times and couldn't afford to go away for August so they shuttered up their apartments and hid their car to make it look like they had gone so they didn't lose face with their neighbors. Just one of the many Italian stories I heard.

Italy was my only European post. It was a fascinating place. Rome is a very big and, except for August, a very congested city. Roman-Italian culture is fascinating. Although I have an Italian name, I'm only a small part Italian and even that was filtered through Switzerland. I had to learn to re-pronounce my own name from "Rossi" (as in the Scottish Ross) to "Rrrow-si" because the Italians couldn't understand if I pronounced it the American way..

There are no perfect Foreign Service posts and Rome was no exception. The good points were a fascinating culture and history which I had studied and was fairly knowledgeable about. The people are cultured, dynamic and interesting. Of course, the food and wine were great; the best I ever had and both were rather reasonable at the time I was there. The downside is that Rome is not a particularly good place to raise small children. The city is very congested. The Embassy-owned apartment building where we lived had very little play space for kids and the city itself is rather deficient in parks.

It seems there are no quiet times in Italy, and my three years there was no exception. There were major strikes, frequent changes of government but through it all the country and the people carried on as usual. The terrorism problem was still in its early stages and did not reach its peak until the late 70's after we had left.

My job in the embassy was as a commercial officer; I had done some commercial work in the African posts I had been assigned to, but this was the first time I had done it full time. This was also back to the period before the Foreign Commercial Service came into being. The embassy had a commercial section under the minister-counselor for economic-commercial affairs. There was an economic section and a commercial section, so I was doing commercial work. I am afraid I would have to add the nature of my work to the negative side of my Rome experience. I much preferred economic work and did not find commercial work as satisfying.

One other good side of the tour was that my wife had been a student in Florence, at Gonzaga University in Florence, so she knew Florence the way a student does. Rome was so congested, and Florence was really a nice change. Thus we would try and get up to Florence whenever we could. Sometime we took the kids but more often we would leave them with the au pair for a weekend to get away. Florence, outside the summer tourist season, is quite a congenial city.

Florentines are cultured and very courteous; this last is not a quality which comes immediately to mind in speaking of the Romans. I found with the Italian I learned at FSI, I could understand the people on the streets in Florence because that's where standard Italian comes from. I often could

not understand two Romans speaking together because they would be speaking in Roman dialect.

Driving in Rome was a real acquired taste. It is extraordinarily difficult due to the combination of far too much traffic for the narrow winding streets and the Italian competitive driving approach. Every Roman male seems to think he is Mario Andretti. However I learned to cope and, while I never drove as aggressively as the Romans, I eventually found I could hold my own.

Q: You had four kids by this time?

ROSSI: We had four kids. As I mentioned, Rome was not a great post for small children. It is apartment living, the city is congested and has relatively few parks per capita. We probably hit Rome at a bad time in our lives. If the kids had been older or if we had hit in before we had the kids, it would have been better. There's a lot to see and do in Rome and the Italian countryside, very historic and cultural, but the facilities for children were very limited.

The housing was adequate although not roomy, but it was apartment living, and the outside play-area for the children was very small. Thus we were not very happy with the situation for the kids there, but for the adults, it was a magnificent place. I came to love the Italian language. It is a beautiful language that flows off the tongue. I much preferred it to French.

Q: I need to interject here because you can't see it on the tape, but as soon as you started talking about the Italian language, you started gesturing with your hands.

ROSSI: Right! That 15% or so Italian blood comes out, or maybe it's just my memories of Italy talking. I still do that to some degree. It's amazing. Italy was a fun place, and its culture has its quirks, but they're fun quirks.

Italy has this concept of *bella figura* which is the image you present to the outside world: your dress, the way you speak, the way you behave, the whole package. It's important in every culture, but it's especially important in the Italian culture. Dress is very important.

One of my Italian stories is when I first got to Rome, there was a little kiosk about a block away from our apartment that sold newspapers. On Saturday and Sunday, I put on my sweatshirt and jeans and went down to the kiosk to buy a newspaper or two. Everybody else there I noticed were in sports jackets and things like this. No problem. They were friendly, but I clearly stood out as a foreigner. After a few months, I got tired of standing out as the foreigner, so I started putting on slacks and decent sweater and went down to buy my newspapers. I found I preferred to blend into local culture.

I got to like the amount of care the Italians put into their appearance. When I got back to the States, it was a bit of a shock to be reminded how casual (sometimes even sloppy) people dress here when going out. Even the Kennedy Center seems to get its share of jeans and tee shirts.

Again there were good points and bad points about our Rome tour. We made some good friends there. It was much more of a nine-to-five job than the jobs in Africa had been because the diplomatic social life there is mainly for the more senior Embassy officers. It was a very big

embassy, probably 100 Americans on the diplomatic list there and many, many agencies. It was a good education to see a big embassy at work, dozens of different agencies.

Q: Were you at the office of the beautiful embassy on the Via Veneto?

ROSSI: Yes. That was one of the great things about working in Rome. The Embassy was in an historic villa, which had belonged to an old noble family. It's right on the Via Veneto, a beautiful place. The *piano nobile* which is the second floor in Italian buildings—big, important Italian buildings—was the floor where the noble family would live. That's where the ambassador, DCM and political section had their offices. The tapestries on that floor were incredible. The ceilings were about 13' high. Absolutely beautiful! It was almost a pleasure being duty officer there because you spent Saturday morning in the Ambassador's suite.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

ROSSI: John Volpe was the ambassador. He was a political appointee as most of the U.S. ambassadors in Italy are. He had been governor of Massachusetts. He arrived a little bit before I got there. I didn't have many dealings with him. I was well down the totem pole from him. I'd see him once in a while at receptions or things like that, although I do remember that I was the duty officer the day that Nixon formally resigned, so I had to take him the cable advising of the resignation. But I didn't know him very well. He seemed congenial to the extent that I had any contact with him, a pleasant person. Once in a while he'd invite the junior officers over to his house which was a beautiful villa with a pool.

That was my Italian tour, and to this day I look fondly back to it. I wish I had stayed longer. I never had another tour in Italy. My next tour was Pretoria.

ROBERT M. BEAUDRY
Deputy Chief of Mission
Rome (1973-1977)

Robert M. Beaudry was born and raised in Maine. He received a bachelor's degree from Catholic University and took the Foreign Service exam serving in the military. Mr. Beaudry entered the Foreign Service in June of 1946. His career included positions in Dublin, Casablanca, Koblenz, Suriname, Bern, and Brussels. The interview was conducted by C. Stuart Kennedy on October 5, 1992.

Q: Then you went to Rome from 1973-77. How did you get the job?

BEAUDRY: I got that job because the system...John Volpe, who was the Secretary of Transportation and former Governor of Massachusetts, went to Rome because Haldeman and Ehrlichman wanted to get him out of town. John Volpe is a very honest man. He kept trying to tell Nixon that people were doing things to him behind his back. His understanding of Nixon may have been a little naive, but nonetheless ...these guys wanted him out of town, so they gave

him an offer that he couldn't refuse, Ambassador to Rome. And he took it.

So he needed a DCM. Wells Stabler had the job and had been there about four years and was due out. Bill Hall was Director General and I was on the short list. But then Volpe kept getting bombarded by messages from all over the world from people saying, "I have just the perfect guy for you." He didn't know, he didn't have any personal candidates. So he went to the system and asked what was happening. I barely knew Bill Hall. He was no great friend or anything. I forget how come I was the one he went to bat for, but he talked Volpe into interviewing me. We had the interview, Volpe and I and my wife. My wife is not tall and this was of major importance, I think, that neither of us were much taller than Volpe. Basically we got along very well.

He looked on me, as I've heard him say, like he looked on the Lt. Governor of Massachusetts when he was Governor. He was demanding and could be difficult but never in that way with me. I obviously occupied a different niche from the rest of his staff. But, as I say, an honest man whose main interest was in things Italian and bilateral. He didn't have a whole lot of interest in multilateral affairs. NATO, in general, but...he had no background in the specifics...and the European Community was even less interesting to him.

Q: How did he operate?

BEAUDRY: One year he traveled. He wanted to visit every province and there were 90 provinces. He got damn near it. He liked that. He would go and be received and be an event. He could talk to people. He was very conscious of being the son of an immigrant. Somebody said to him once that he spoke funny Italian. He said that a few looked down their noses at him, but the other 95 percent thought it was great that a son of an immigrant had done so well.

Q: What did you think of the Embassy that you were managing.

BEAUDRY: Of course I had worked on it. I was well acquainted from the Desk point of view. I knew the principal American personnel.

Q: Yes, would you pick up on that?

BEAUDRY: After the election in 1968 we had a new team. They asked John Leddy to stay but he turned it down for personal reasons. So Martin Hillenbrand came in as Assistant Secretary. I thought it was time for me to leave. I had done the job for a couple of years. Marty and I had good relations, but nothing special.

So I left just as a job opened up of Country Director for Italy, Austria and Switzerland. So back to Switzerland. That is when I got into Italian affairs. I should have mentioned that earlier when talking about my selection as DCM. Having held this job was a major factor. I was up on all the issues, etc.

Q: Let's go back to that time when you were dealing with that from 1969-72. Where did Italy stand in our policy? What were we after from Italy?

BEAUDRY: We had 700 plus ship visits a year to Italy. The Command of the Sixth Fleet was located in Naples. We had a missile defense organization in northeastern Italy. We had a paratroop regiment in Vicenza. We had a fighter aircraft base in Amiano. We had a small Navy base at Sigonella which became a large base. And CINCSOUTH, the NATO Commander, was at Naples as well as the Sixth Fleet Command. So that was the big item.

Then we wanted Italian support in all international bodies, and we largely got it. And we have a large segment of the American people who are of Italian origin and therefore are interested in what happens there. Italians have been big in international financial matters most of the post-war period. They have high quality people running their central bank and have been important financial players.

But those were the real reasons. The Italians have had one consistent policy since modern Italy became a state. Italy always has to be at the meeting, no matter what. If the big powers are there Italy has to be there, too. One of the major developments of that period was the economic summits. When Giscard d'Estaing started these things there were five countries. The Italians screamed and yelled and jumped up and down and insisted that they be included. Well, the result was that we added Italy and Canada, so it became the seven. But the Italians, by and large, to be honest, don't contribute a whole lot at the policy level, but they are there. And they generally supported the kind of policies that we are interested in. I don't want to create the impression that they don't understand the game and they don't have ideas, they do. But they had serious problems in pulling everything together.

I became quite sympathetic to Italy. Look at the way they handled the terrorist Red Brigades. They overcame that problem without destroying democratic rights. Now they have to fight organized crime and seem to be making progress.

Q: In Kissinger's book he talked about a call on Italy and you got the feeling it was more symbolic because there was nobody with whom he could really deal. It is a coalition government so there is nobody that a man like Kissinger would want to sit down one to one to talk with.

BEAUDRY: And some of the things he said were outrageous, I thought. His contempt for the Italians showed. He was absolutely right in that sense, that the Italians didn't have much to say, but the problem of not meeting with the Italians became more trouble than it is worth. And generally speaking you don't want to go around alienating people who usually support what you are trying to do.

Q: You were essentially the Desk Officer for Italy, did you find that you were having to keep your nose in everybody's business in Western Europe just to assure Italy's participation?

BEAUDRY: It wasn't so much with the other Europeans, it was with the Washington establishment. The average American gets an amused look on his face when you mention Italy. They don't realize that in the meantime Italy has moved ahead of Britain as an economic power and that these guys are very successful at what they do. But that is one of the problems on the Italian scene. You are always fighting each time, or making sure they are not left out.

Q: When you got to Rome, did you find the constant reminding people about Italy persist -- on trips of important people, etc.?

BEAUDRY: Yes. If you are going to come to Europe you have to come to Rome too. That got Ambassador Reinhardt in trouble with Lyndon Johnson. He was on his famous around the world trip and wanted to spend Christmas Eve with the Pope. This was when he made that infamous trip to Vietnam just before Christmas. I forget what year it was. So this was a big issue. Reinhardt fell on his sword. You have to call on the President of Italy. Johnson wanted no part of that. He finally did call, but he was mad at Reinhardt ever after, I gather. That was prior to my time.

Q: Well, when you were there what was your impression of the Embassy staff? I have to state my prejudices this time. I later came from outside as Consul at Naples for a short time. I was not part of the Foreign Service Italian group. There were some people who had been there for a long, long time and had gotten immersed in Italian life.

BEAUDRY: One of the reasons for that was that the Italians are not good linguists, they speak only Italian pretty much. They don't travel a lot because they figure why go any place else which is not as good as here. Americans as a rule didn't learn Italian in school. So almost all officers who could speak Italian learned it in Italy. You had a small number of people who grew up in Italian speaking families, but not many. So you would have people like Bill Barnsdale who had, I think, five different Italian posts. There was an officer down in Palermo who had been in Milan, for example.

You tend to get repeaters because you are always looking for someone who has good Italian and the only ones you have are these repeaters. So you are quite right. I was an outsider in that sense. But there were consular people, too, who kept repeating.

I went to Rome a month after Volpe arrived and about two weeks after Stabler left. It had been Graham Martin's Embassy. He had it for four years. He was an accomplished administrator. He had a good Embassy, it worked. We had good people in the political section who dealt with the various parties. On the economic side we had good people. I thought the consulates were pretty good. One of your predecessors had grown up in Naples when his father was stationed there.

But I felt the mission to Italy, by and large, worked well for what we had to do. You had the problem of replacing people from time to time when you got certain slippage and one thing or another. The Ambassador did no harm and he did certain things that I think were a plus. Coming from the political life he didn't have a thin skin about public attacks. He could take it. If he took a position that people didn't like in Italy, he didn't crumble at the first whiff of criticism. That wasn't true of other people.

Q: What about one of the policy debates that assumed almost religious overtones, the opening of the left and dealing with the Communists? How was that treated during your time there?

BEAUDRY: As you know that had been a real trauma at the beginning of the Kennedy administration. The opening to the left had happened. They were talking there, let us be clear, of

socialists. In my time we were attacked for being rather rigid about Communists and out of touch with reality. We were there during the Euro-Communist period. My own view about that was altered as I learned more about Italy. There were a couple of problems. One, the Italian Communists had a smiling face. They were benign, decent chaps. But they insisted in retaining their original charter which called for democratic centralism and which really was a hardline Stalinist core. They never quite got around to changing that. I said, "I really don't care how you take care of your trash or deliver your water supply, etc. But I do care about how you are going to deal with us and the military with this kind of Stalinist background."

You know Italian politics has been affected by outside forces at least from the time of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. There was a German party, a Vatican party, a French party, Austrian party. We were the American party and the Christian Democrats were our local friends. And there was a Russian party represented by the Communist Party.

We had to play our role, not because we didn't understand how the Communists were evolving, changing, but if we started giving visas to Communists, for instance, they weren't going to harm America, but it might give the wrong signal to the Christian Democrats. So we were locked into a rigidity that we perhaps didn't welcome but felt we really had to keep up.

For instance, there was a famous written interview that Volpe had with one of the news magazine. He was always getting requests to answer questions, etc. I can't remember which year it was, but we were pulling our ships out of Greece. I think we had an aircraft carrier based out there and we were going to pull it back.

Q: We had a home port arrangement set up during the time of the Colonels and then the situation changed and we had to pull it back.

BEAUDRY: In the process, the Italian Left, Communists in particular, had a big campaign in the local press stating they were not going to let us bring it to Italy. I don't think we intended to bring it there, but the point was that after about three months of this raving, we couldn't have brought it to Italy if we wanted to.

Well, the following year, between Carter's election and inauguration, when Euro-Communism was at its height Rome rumors insisted that the Americans were all set to talk to the Communists. We were going to change our stance of total abstinence with some kind of relationship.

Well, this question came in from this magazine and we had a very able man by the name of Martin Wenick, who was our specialist on the Communist Party. He had been in Moscow and later went to Prague. He was very knowledgeable and he had good Italian. So he knew these people. It wasn't that we had no relations whatsoever, but none that you could put your finger on. Anyway, we persuaded Volpe to sign the letter in which we went out of our way to make the point that the US government was not about to sit down with the Communists. It was a hard line that wasn't appreciated by a lot of people including some of our own. If I might digress, the American intelligence community at that point had persuaded itself that the Communists were in fact going to come into government through this Euro-Communist group and that we ought to be ready to deal. Our view was that we didn't think they were going to make it because the Italians

had too many domestic reasons, among other things to keep these guys out of power. And if we were indifferent or silent about this, we would end up with the same situation we had about the aircraft carrier the year before. These people through their public relations would have created a situation where we would be presented with a *fait accompli* that we couldn't change.

So we took this hard line, which was based, I might add, on things that Kissinger had previously told the Italians. We got some flak, but this is where Volpe's ability to take it came to the fore. He wasn't upset. When you are in politics you get this stuff. And it worked because they never really did get into power. They got close, but we never had to make a deal with them at a time when it would have had some significance. Now I don't know what we do with these guys.

Q: They call themselves something else anyway.

BEAUDRY: I think the Socialist Party of the Left or something like that. Anyway all of those countries including France, Germany and maybe even England and Italy are going to change governments, as I think, perhaps the United States is going to change governments.

Q: Is there any thing else you would like to note?

BEAUDRY: I don't think so.

Q: Just one thing. What was your feeling about the consistently shifting Italian political scene which was always the same? It seemed to me that the political section would get into exquisite detail about this little minuet that essentially in your time and my time hadn't changed since 1948.

BEAUDRY: That is the problem. You get these bright young men and they are not going to sit there and say that nothing happened this month. They get mesmerized with all the little deals that are happening, you know.

One thing I must say, that sort of intrigues me. In 1975 the administrative elections were the high water mark of the Communists. They reached a higher percentage than they had ever had. That was the time when the American intelligence community concluded that in the other elections in 1976 they would make it. Well, we carried on a campaign trying to convince them...and I must say that our best weapon in trying to support our side was USIA. We got people around and started talking up the Western position. Anyway, in the next election the DC did better and the Communists did worse. About that time our man in the political section who covered the Christian Democratic Party, Ted Russell, was being transferred. We were having a farewell reception at our house. He had been talking to one of his close contacts, who said, "I am sorry that I am late to the party, but a man from the Russian Embassy had been in talking to me about the Christian Democrats, etc. and I told him that I was sorry I have to leave because I am going to the American Minister's house to a reception. And the Russian said, 'What is it, a victory celebration?'" We had managed in that election, the one they thought was going to be their breakthrough and it wasn't.

It was a pleasant time. I felt, in personal terms, that it was as good a job as I had done and that

was it.

ROBERT RACKMALES
Principal Officer
Trieste (1973-1976)

Political Officer
Rome (1980-1983)

Robert Rackmales was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1937. He received a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1958. After graduation, Rackmales received a Fulbright scholarship at The University of Mainz (in Germany) for one year. Mr. Rackmales entered the Foreign Service in 1963, serving in Lagos, Zagreb, Mogadishu, Kaduna, and Belgrade. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy on May 11, 1995.

Q: *Then your next post you went to Trieste.*

RACKMALES: Right, talk about a change.

Q: *Yes, from '73 to '76. Well, it's on the water. What were you doing there?*

RACKMALES: I was the principal officer. Trieste, right after the war was quite an important post because in the uncertainty about the long term status, it was a free city for a while, and then there were negotiations which were concluded in 1954 and set what eventually turned out to be the final boundary between Yugoslavia and Italy. But that was not formalized until 1975. In 1968, as part of one of the wave of reductions in posts for budgetary reasons the State Department announced, that Trieste would be closed and its functions transferred to Milan. The Italian government reacted so strongly to that that their president personally intervened with President Johnson. So we canceled the plans to close the post, but it was reduced in size. At the time I arrived, there was only one American employee, the principal officer, and six Italian employees. I was able to get a second officer assigned in my second year.

Q: *Was the reason for saving it...I've always thought it was it sort of a political one because if we closed the post it would show we were no longer interested in Trieste, and the Italians wanted to keep this as a territory and we were instrumental in their getting it. So it was almost internally political, rather than just the convenience of doing consular work.*

RACKMALES: Keeping it open was primarily a gesture to the Italians. But in early 1974 the Yugoslavs decided that they were not content with the provisional status of the borders, so they put up signs that said you are now entering Yugoslavia. This was a technical violation of the London agreement of 1954 because under those agreements you were not entering Yugoslavia, you were entering Zone B. The Italians naturally strongly objected and you had right wing groups in Italy holding rallies, in Trieste and elsewhere. It looked for a time as if it was not out of

the question that there would be a military clash. The Yugoslavs started moving tanks up near the border, and took other steps that was probably part of a war of nerves to convince the Italians that they were serious. So they were putting in bunkers and things like that. And we were able to do some good reporting despite the fact that we didn't have any classified reporting capability. The Navy sent a destroyer at that time up which docked in Trieste just to reassure the Italians and remind the Yugoslavs that Italy is part of NATO. With that ship in port we were able to step up our reporting which I think was very useful to the Department at the time. The dispute was finally settled in 1975 with the Treaty of Osimo, that confirmed what was obvious to most people, that the borders weren't going to be changed, and that they are the official state borders. So the sign at that point became legitimate. Even the disintegration of Yugoslavia didn't change that although it changed the wording of the sign. After Osimo it probably was just a question of time before Trieste closed. I think it was finally closed around 1985, about ten years later. By that point there was not a lot of either commercial or other activity. Trieste isn't a major tourist center, American businesses don't have much of a presence there. So in an era where there are continuing rounds of closing of posts, it would be hard to justify keeping Trieste open.

Q: Obviously the Italians were quite open, I mean, you could deal with anybody, I suppose.

RACKMALES: Oh, absolutely. As I said it was a total and dramatic contrast from Somalia. The issues that I started out concentrating on were not so much the Yugoslav issues because domestically Italy was going through a period of great ferment. The divorce referendum was the first sign of a big secular change in Italy. Trieste was among the areas that kind of led the trend towards moving Italy into the mainstream European moderate secular consensus. It was a shock to some when Italy voted to abandon its previous divorce laws, and then abortion followed.

Q: Did you find...I'm not sure of the term, is it Triesteni, the people of Trieste were a breed apart, or not.

RACKMALES: Oh, yes, very much so. Many of them longed for the Austro-Hungarian empire. Of course Trieste's glory days were when it was the principal port for the Austro-Hungarian empire, and when it lost its Slovak hinterland a lot of its economic rationale disappeared, because it's way off in a little corner of Italy next to Yugoslavia. It continued to be an important retail center for Yugoslavs. You remember I'm sure, the busloads of people from Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana. On weekends you couldn't move in downtown Trieste because the Yugoslavs were everywhere buying jeans and other western goods. But it was not a very balanced or healthy economy. The city was the oldest city in Italy because a lot of the young people would leave for better employment opportunities in the rest of Italy, particularly Lombardy. As the American consul, I was pressured to join the Rotary Club which I did. It had maybe a hundred members. There were two of us under forty, and there weren't more than half a dozen under sixty. And I would say that fully half of the members were over eighty. So the meetings were not especially lively, but it reflected an aging city. We were always treated very graciously. We had complete access and entre to everybody.

Q: Did the embassy use you much? Or did you exist on your own?

RACKMALES: I think at the beginning I was pretty much on my own, but there were two times

when I had very intensive and close coordination with the embassy. First during the crisis, if that's the right word, with Yugoslavia which lasted for a couple months in 1974. I was pleased that given the sensitivity of the issues the embassy did not try to censor or tell me what to report and I think they were fairly pleased on the reporting on that. And then later the earthquake that hit the area in 1976.

Q: Was it in your area, in your district?

RACKMALES: Oh yes, very much. The epicenter was probably about a hundred miles northwest in the part of the Friuli north of Udine. The earthquake was strong enough that there was significant damage even in Trieste. We were in a restaurant and we heard a sound that sounded like a train passing nearby, and suddenly the chandeliers started to sway. I had never been through a real earthquake before so it took me a few seconds longer than some to realize what was going on. I had been scheduled to leave the following morning to give a talk in Florence. I woke up early and I turned on the radio and it was very clear from those early broadcasts that this had been a major earthquake, and it was in my district so I called Bob Gordon, the principal officer in Florence, and I said, "Bob, I can't come down today, we've had a major earthquake and I have to stay up here." So we started immediately checking our registration files to see what American citizens were in that area, and trying to reach them. The vice consul focused on that, and I was able to arrange with an American who worked for Bell Helicopter and had a helicopter in Trieste, and I got the embassy's concurrence to rent the helicopter. We flew over the damaged area for several hours, landing in some of the worst-affected zones. I think we gave probably one of the best early reports on the earthquake. When I realized the scope of the tragedy I moved from Trieste to the Aviano Air Force Base because it was right in that area and had excellent communications and spent the next three weeks doing nothing but earthquake related activities. We had a visit by the vice president several days after the quake and the U.S. Congress provided \$25 million in earthquake assistance.

Q: The Vice President was...

RACKMALES: Rockefeller.

Q: How did the population respond to the earthquake?

RACKMALES: The Friulani are sober, hard working people who tend to be stoical. The first thing that strikes you when you land in an area that's just been hit by a catastrophe, is that people are still numb and in a state of shock. I was tremendously impressed though by the resilience of people, by their determination that "we'll ride this out, and rebuild, and we'll start again." I worked very closely with the Italian government's earthquake commissioner. He established his base in Udine, and I spent a lot of time with him. He was good enough afterwards to get me the decoration of Commendatore, the equivalent of an OBE from the Italian government. And then just to finish off that little sub-segment, when there was an earthquake south of Naples in 1980, a few months after I had arrived in Rome, the DCM remembered that I had been involved in '76 and said, "Go down and see if the consul general needs help."

Q: I was just thinking you're talking about the reaction of the people up there was completely

different. I was down in southern Italy, and it was not impressive. They did not respond with dignity and waited for someone to come and help them.

RACKMALES: Anyway, well actually you were there when I walked in.

Q: It brought Zamberletti down. No, that was considered the Alpini organizations that were quite helpful too, weren't they. The alumni of the military Alpini were very much involved in rescuing...

RACKMALES: That's right, yes, they were. And actually it was a kind of race. There was a lot of outside assistance, the Germans were quite active, and each country sort of adopted one area.

Q: You left there when?

RACKMALES: In 1980, and went on to Rome as the political officer responsible for the Italian communist party, and Italy's relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Q: So you were in Rome from when to when?

RACKMALES: 1980 to 1983.

Q: What was the political situation would you say in Italy in that period?

RACKMALES: It was the aftermath of the kidnaping and murder of the Prime Minister which took place in 1978, and terrorism, the Red Brigades were still a major problem. In fact, during the time we were there was a major episode of terrorism directed at the United States when the Red Brigades kidnaped General Dozier, and held him prisoner for several months. So terrorism was a major concern. Also, whether the center-left coalition, which governed Italy, could maintain its cohesiveness. There was still great concern in Washington that as the result of differences among the coalition parties that the Italian communists which at that point were the second largest party in Italy in terms of popular support, and which had very strong and stable base in central Italy, would enter the government. So our reporting on the Italian communist party got a lot of attention in Washington, and there was continued concern over that. Fortunately, we were in a period where we could exercise greater flexibility, and have wider contacts. It had only been I think in the mid-'70s, that we began low-level overt contacts with the PCI. We had always had some people in the station who surreptitiously would meet with some members of the party. But it was only in '75, as I recall, that there was an overt channel between one of my predecessors, Marty Wenick and a member of the communist party. It started with someone who had no official position, but was a journalist. It was considered too sensitive to meet with someone who was in the formal structure of the party. The ground rules eased by 1980 so that my predecessor had had called on some of the lower level officials of the party. And then Dick Gardner, who was the ambassador when I arrived involved himself in this, caused some people some heartburn, but he would go to social events which were arranged so that he could meet with Giorgio Napolitano, who was one of the three or four most important leaders in the communist party at that time. That was done quietly, and his reporting on that was not shared with the embassy staff. But he was sympathetic to broadening our contacts with the parties. So in my first few months I established contact with many more of the officials of the party including

several members of their top executive body, the executive committee, it used to be called the Politburo. Perhaps my best informed contact was Aytonio Tato, the party's press secretary, who doubled as personal assistant to Enrico Berlinguer, the top communist leader, Tato's office was just on the other side of Berlinguer's.

Q: We're talking about a small room about ten feet away.

RACKMALES: Yes, basically ten feet away, so you had to pass through his office to get to Berlinguer's.

Q: Berlinguer was the Secretary General.

RACKMALES: General Secretary.

Q: I went down with him on an elevator one time. He didn't say anything to me, and I didn't say anything to him during the earthquake time in Naples. This was, what was it national communism was the term at that time, and Italy was supposed to be different. I'm talking about the 1980s when he came out there. How did we see the Italian communism?

RACKMALES: We saw them in that period as threatening our strategic interests in the area. In other words, even though we had a more sophisticated understanding of the fact that these people were not simply tools of the Soviets we were convinced that their values and priorities indicated that if they were given power in Italy they would be extremely unlikely to support the kind of policies in the Mediterranean that we were trying to implement in the wake of the Soviet deployment of the SS-20s. If you remember, that was the period when the Reagan administration...

Q: ...medium range, a missile which was very threatening to Europe and was destabilizing.

RACKMALES: Right, and Italy was really in the forefront of the countries that accepted U.S. proposals to put countervailing forces in, cruise missiles. And offered a base at Comiso in Sicily. And that was opposed by the Italian communists, so here we were again, although we understood that the Italian communists were not simply tools of the Soviet Union, and I think the assessment was that objectively the policies they would have followed in power given their opposition to confrontational policies in Europe; the fact that yes, we don't approve what the Soviets did but let's handle this in a negotiated way, let's not ratchet up tensions by putting more arms and weapons in. And that was taken as threatening to our objectives, the idea of an Italian communist government, or a government that had significant Italian communist influence would have worried a lot of people in Washington.

Q: How did the embassy assess Berlinguer and particularly the...were they different or...

RACKMALES: Well, my own assessment of Berlinguer, which I guess was the embassy's assessment because nobody quarreled with the stuff I was writing, is that in some ways, if you have to have a very large communist party, potentially a lot of electoral appeal, Berlinguer was probably the least bad kind of leader for that party to have. He was essentially a status quo kind

of politician, and he did not like to rock boats. And what that meant was that he was depleting the enthusiasm of the ideologically committed communists who viewed him as far too cautious. He was a reassuring figure to the Italian population as a whole because he wasn't threatening. He seemed, and probably was basically a fairly honest, decent person. So what you got was a gradually declining Italian communist party which I argued was in some ways in the Italian context a safer situation than a dramatic split in the party, or something which would cause a party which instead of having 30% of the vote, might have only 20%, but it might be much more militant. So it was not a bad solution for Italy at that particular time to have this rather cautious bureaucratic Enrico Berlinguer, an able politician in some ways but not someone who was going to fundamentally change the direction of the Italian communist party, which was in slow decline.

Q: What was the analysis of why was 30% of the Italian population voting communist? I always used to have a problem. Every time I came over from Yugoslavia and see these signs in your old area of Italy saying, "Vote the Cominista," and I would think, "Good God fellows, just go across the border and take a look, it doesn't work very well." What was your analysis?

RACKMALES: Well, for starters, historical reasons, the communists in many areas helped form the backbone of the resistance movement to Fascism. There were also Christian Democrats and Socialists who were anti-Fascists, and also there were Christian partisan elements as well as communist elements. But, as in neighboring Yugoslavia, it was the Italian communists who formed probably the largest, most active, and in some areas the most successful units, and who actually took control in some areas until Allied forces arrived. It was Italian communists who captured Mussolini for example and executed him. So the first part of the answer is that at the end of the war you had a lot of Italians who had fought with partisans, or appreciated what the partisans had done. The party had an able leadership and were well organized. Their dominance in the labor movement was very strong. Even into the '70s the communist segment of the labor movement was by far the largest. And they had a strong base in central Italy. Their record there of governance was good, and in fact it mostly continues to be governed by leftist coalitions. As far as I can recall, there had never been a non-communist government in either Tuscany or in the Emilia-Romagna, two of the wealthiest and perhaps best administered regions in all of Italy. So that added to their appeal as well. They were much less strong in the south, and in the northeast, in Friuli, for example, they were not a significant force. So basically they had a strong regional base that they had inherited as result of the war, and as the result of taking over a lot of local administrations, and running them fairly well.

Q: You're a little off to one side so you weren't as caught up as maybe in the CDU -- we're talking about the early '80s.

RACKMALES: The CDU was very much caught up with internal power concerns. It was really a coalition of factions. The Italian communists had their factions too, but at that time they played much less of a role than the CDU factions did. My colleagues who worked with the CDU were struck by some of the things that ultimately came to undo the party, corruption being one. And as I say, these personal power struggles among the barons of the parties who seemed to spend more time figuring out how to get one up on their fellow CDU member as to competing with other political parties as any kind of a united force.

Q: How does an embassy...I mean you being where you were in Rome, treat the issue of corruption? Corruption is a major force, it can also very much undo a government, it's a sign of weakness among other things. But at the same time if you over-report on the thing, it can have consequences you really don't like back in Washington. I mean, you can play that note too often. It can mean you almost can't deal with the government. Did you find that you as one of the reporting officers find corruption a problem?

RACKMALES: Even then there were occasional episodes of communists in local administrations involved in bribery and more have come to light in the 90's. But to my knowledge no national PCI leaders were implicated in the line of corruption that has so tarnished the socialists and (former) CDU. I will relate one episode that goes back to 1976 when I was in Trieste. Aldo Moro, subsequently murdered by the Red Brigade, was then Prime Minister and was making overtures to the Italian communists, that caused us concern. And I remember that all of the principal officers who were down for a principal officers conference in Rome, and they called all of us in to a secure room, and the station chief said, "We of course don't want this passed on to anybody, but you guys should know that Aldo Moro is involved in..." and he described some episode of corruption, or apparent corruption. And we left figuratively sort of scratching our heads, and finally came to the conclusion that we were not supposed to take seriously the part about "now of course we don't want you passing this on," because there was otherwise no reason for him to tell us this information. But it showed that we were prepared to use corruption allegations against people who we thought were endangering aspects of our policy, even if they were the Prime Minister and a member of a party that we otherwise supported.

Q: It sounds like this was the CIA trying to get an undercurrent of people on the official side to kind of mutter about...

RACKMALES: Yes. I have to assume though that since there was not much else said at that brief meeting, he had gotten clearance from the front office to do that. I'm not sure he would have done it strictly on his own.

Q: How about the communist party and the Red Brigades, in other words the extremists. Really very vicious at that time. We were having murders and kidnaping.

RACKMALES: You mentioned the communist party, and they were not...

Q: I know, but how did the communist party relate to these, because these people most of them were coming from the left. I won't say most because there was that very bad explosion that came apparently from the right. Was it Milan?

RACKMALES: Bologna. Yes, that was a rightist group. The Italian communist party, I think, was as genuinely concerned about the Red Brigades, viewed them as a threat; would even share information to the extent that they had any, not that they had a lot of detailed information on the Red Brigades. These extremist leftist groups were as suspicious of the Italian communist party, as they were of any of the other big parties, viewed it as having sold out long, long ago. One of the first telephone calls that came in when General Dozier was kidnaped was to me from one of

the top leaders of the Italian communist party who was their expert on terrorism to express shock and dismay and offer any support and help they could provide. They regularly denounced it in their press, and I think that they genuinely saw it as a threat to themselves. There might have been a few people who thought there were surreptitious links. I never saw any evidence of that or believed it.

Q: These relatively new links that were between the American embassy and the Italian communist party; what were they getting from you, and you getting from them?

RACKMALES: What they were hoping to get from us, and got to a limited extent in those three years, was simply a sign that they were no longer considered beyond the pale. In other words, a sign of a degree of respectability because they knew that a part of the obstacle that they faced in increasing their share of the vote, was that a lot of the Italians viewed a strong Italian communist party as incompatible with good relations with the west, and with the United States in particular. And anything that could soften that image and indicate that we viewed the Italian communist party as a democratic party at least to the extent that we accepted their participation in the political process, was in their view helpful. So one of the things that happened in that period was that for the first time an official Italian communist party got invited to the ambassador's Fourth of July big, huge reception. That was actually not so much my doing because I didn't have strong feelings one way or the other. My boss, the political counselor was adamantly opposed. Gardner had brought over Joe LaPalombara, who stayed on after Gardner left. Joe had been the head of the political science department at Yale and was considered one of the leading, if not the leading, U.S. experts on Italian politics. And he had a particular interest in the Italian communist party. And he made the political counselor extremely uncomfortable because he suspected that the ambassador was using Joe as an alternative conduit to the Italian communists. So one of my tasks given me by the political counselor was to keep an eye on Joe, keep him honest.

Q: What was his position?

RACKMALES: Cultural attaché. But his background was not in cultural affairs, it was political analysis. He had written a number of books on the Italian political process. One of my sources of satisfaction in my three years there was, I think, despite Joe's academic background and really much longer in-depth experience in Italy...I think I stayed at least a step and a half ahead of him on developments in the Italian communist party. I remember making a bet with him at the time of the Italian communist party congress as to how it was going to come out. It was a pleasure to collect.

Q: What were we getting from our contacts?

RACKMALES: We were getting a much better sense, I think, than we had before of what this animal was like. We were exposed to a wider range of the leadership. I think our reporting became much more focused and accurate. We were able to call election results pretty closely. I remember predicting that the Italian communist party would lose a couple of percentage points in the '83 elections, and this was within a percentage point or two of the actual results. So we had a better sense of the party. They had some awfully smart and acute people and I think we gained insights, not only into the party itself, but over the whole spectrum of the Italian scene. So I think

it was very helpful to have been able to tap into some of their key people.

Q: Did you get out into the field and talk the iron belt, the red belt, to the communist leaders out in the field?

RACKMALES: Yes, yes. I did. I never went south partly because the Italian communist party in the south was not that strong, and also just time. But I did get to the party's strongholds. And I would go out to Milan and together with the deputy principal officer up there to meet with communist party officials in other areas. So, everywhere the party was strong I tried to visit and get a sense of the party at the grassroots level.

Q: Within the communist party at this time was there anti-Americanism because we were the great opponents of communists around the world.

RACKMALES: I would say among the minority of the party that affiliated with leaders who opposed Berlinguer, such as Ingrao, where base of support were industrial workers in large factories who tended to inherit a kind of late 1940s conventional communist thinking about the world. You know, the good guys are Soviets and the Americans are the bad guys. That was the branch of the party that we had the least contact with, and it was then and has remained a minority and one that Berlinguer was able to contain, and not have to make too many concessions to because they had nowhere else to go. The people who got too fed up would join one of the small fringe groups. That was the only part of the Italian communist party where there was any strong anti-Americanism. I think within the groups who affiliated with the center, or the social democratic wing of the Italian communist party, there was probably a lot of sympathy for the United States as a democracy. They would be critical of aspects of our foreign policy, Vietnam for example was strongly opposed by the Italian communist party across the board. And there was concern about Reagan when he first came in. In fact, I remember...

Q: This was 1981.

RACKMALES: 1981, and one of their senior officials wrote a signed commentary in L'Unita, the party organ, calling it a black day in human history. I called my closest contact who was a member of the executive committee, and I said, "Look, you guys are trying to change your image, and trying to show that you're not extremists...and this is the kind of thing you people are running." The very next day there was an unsigned and therefore more authoritative front page editorial in effect apologizing for that statement, and saying we're not going to rush to condemn anybody, and essentially withdrawing that commentary which indicates that they were in fact quite sensitive to our perception of them, and willing to make at least symbolic concessions to the point of backtracking publicly, and in effect apologizing to their readers for an overly harsh judgement which was kind of interesting.

Q: One of the most burning issues was with the missile business, whether we could put in these essentially medium range missiles to counter the Soviet missiles that came in. Again all of Europe was upset because even though the Soviets started it, they didn't like the idea of more nuclear weapons being put on the continent which we were doing. So Italy became the key place to get acceptance. Did you get involved with this as far as dealing with the communist party on

this issue?

RACKMALES: Although they would never use these exact words, it was pretty clear to me from my contacts with them, and in discussions on this issue, that the party, while not supporting deployment in parliament and making speeches saying this is not the right response to Soviet misbehavior it was in fact conducting a soft opposition. They did not get people out in the streets or use inflammatory rhetoric. There were some local groups in Sicily that tried to conduct sit-ins and that kind of thing. But it was obvious that the communist party was not putting anything like a full press against deployment. It could have complicated life for us and the Italian government had they gone all out. But either because as part of their respectability campaign, or because they had their own misgivings about Soviet actions, their opposition to the deployment of the Cruise missiles was a very muted, soft opposition.

Q: Did you get a feel for the attitude of the communist party towards the Soviet Union at this time? The Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, and Brezhnev who was the leader but he was obviously failing, and he was very unimpressive, and disillusionment even within the Soviet Union of the old system. Were you getting any of that?

RACKMALES: They were very disillusioned, and had no illusions about the future. One of their top leaders told me that the relations with the Soviets had been on a downward spiral for a number of years. And he said, "I think it's going to continue to go down," because he did not see any signs they viewed that Soviet leadership in many respects in the same way as we did in terms of sporadic, you know, out of touch with reality, etc. So they were not inclined to listen to any messages that the Soviets might have wanted to send them, would have been received with great skepticism.

Q: What about on the economic side? If they were going to take over, did they have plans to turn everything into a Soviet model?

RACKMALES: They were realists who saw the failure of the Soviet model clearly. They pressed for greater emphasis on promoting technology, but showed no hostility to the private sector at all. They would point to the fact that in the areas of Italy where they ran regional and local governments, that the private sector was doing very well indeed, thank you. They weren't going to change that at the national level.

Q: How did you find Richard Gardner who was a political appointee, that had a wife with Italian background, and was a professor of economics and law at...

RACKMALES: ...Columbia.

Q: How did you find him as an ambassador?

RACKMALES: I worked with him well, I think. He called me in my first day or two to say how happy he was I was there and that I was working in an extremely important area. I mentioned that he gave me broad flexibility to take initiatives, which I appreciated. An extremely intelligent man, had an acute sense of the Italian political scene. He was complimentary and used my

reporting well. Bear in mind that he left only six months after I arrived. I guess the one major complaint I would have was that he was reluctant to share very much of what he got from his own meetings which he told me that he had, but was always very, very careful to keep any of the content of it pretty much to himself. So I had no more of a good feel as to what was coming out of these meetings, than anyone else in the embassy.

Q: How about with Maxwell Rabb who was a completely different type of person. Could you give a little bit of his background, and how he dealt with the situation?

RACKMALES: Yes. He was an attorney who had been in high government positions. He had been secretary to the cabinet in the Eisenhower administration, and obviously was a senior person in Republican party circles. When he picked up the phone it was usually to call the White House, not to call the State Department. And it was, of course, very useful to have an ambassador who had very good White House ties. He made no pretense of having the kind of feel for the Italian political scene that Gardner had. And he made a couple of early missteps that even he recognized almost immediately were missteps. For example, he agreed to meet by himself without anyone else from the embassy present with Bettino Craxi, the leader of the Socialist party. Almost immediately after the meeting the Socialists started circulating accounts of what was said by both sides at the meeting that caused consternation. The ambassador was saying, "I never said that," and his staff, the political counselor, and the DCM said, "But when you go to meetings and there's no one from the Embassy taking notes, there's nothing for the record to indicate that what they're saying isn't true." So I think he got that point very quickly. Like a lot of people with his kind of background, they want to try it on their own. They're a little suspicious of the career people. They think they're too cautious, that the other side won't be as open and frank if there's an embassy person there, and they have great confidence in their own negotiating skills and think that maybe it will work better if I don't take someone from the embassy. I think he learned a lesson from that episode, and, at least to my knowledge, that didn't occur again.

I'll mention an episode that at the time caused me some moments of slight discomfort, and looking back now I have a slightly different view. We went to pay an initial call on the Soviet ambassador. The Soviet ambassador was just handling it as a courtesy call, and Rabb started what sounded to me like baiting him a bit about Soviet policy, and how stupid it was for the Soviet government to do the things that it was doing because they couldn't afford guns and butter, while the U.S. could. The poor Soviet ambassador obviously didn't know what to say because he didn't want to respond in a confrontational way, or perhaps he privately agreed with Rabb. The points Rabb was making, of course, sounded quite on the mark in light of what subsequently happened through the '80s.

Q: What did you feel about the political reporting on the political scene there? I was not an Italian hand, and I had only a little time in Italy but I was always rather dubious about the exquisite reporting on the permutations within the chamber over who was on top. It was pretty much the same people for the last 40 years almost, and we seemed to get down and report this with great delight and I felt that maybe a young attaché could have taken care of it as there was no real change or something like that. What was your impression?

RACKMALES: Well, I think your point about our having perhaps more resources devoted to the day-to-day tactical situation than was necessary is probably right. We were the only embassy to have one person doing the communist, one person doing the Socialists and another person doing the Christian Democrats. That's not counting people who were doing political-military affairs and a lot of other things. Almost every other embassy would have usually one mid-level political counselor and a junior person under him. The Germans, French and the others, weren't quite as well informed of all of the details, and they would often check with us. We were kind of a resource for all of the NATO embassies because we were following things in more detail. But they kept adequately informed. Today finally I think there is serious attention being given in the State Department to cutting back on the number of reporting positions in western Europe given the fact that there is so much information out there from the press and other sources, and if they're democratic countries why do we need to follow every twist and turn of their internal politics. I'm certainly sympathetic to that.

Q: One last question on your time there. You'd been through the northern earthquake and you came down to the southern earthquake. This was the earthquake of November '80 in Ayellino and that area that killed about 2,000 people. This is your first real look at the south in action.

RACKMALES: In the South I was not working directly very much with the local officials. In Friuli I knew the regional officials, they were people I had worked with already for two and a half years prior to the earthquake so there were no big surprises there. I guess I just didn't have enough of the kind of contact with Southern mayors and that sort of thing to make valid comparisons. Zamberletti, of course, I knew from my previous assignment. He was a northerner, and not a southerner. So because I was dealing mainly with federal officials and not so much with local officials I probably didn't get a sense of that.

Q: You left Italy when?

RACKMALES: 1983.

Q: Did you have any feel whither Italy when you left?

RACKMALES: I felt that at least for the time being the situation would not change dramatically. I mentioned the fact that I didn't see the communist party as in any position to make any kind of move to take over. I probably didn't appreciate fully the potential strength of extra party movements based on primarily regional concerns like the Northern League. Interestingly enough in my old area, the Trieste area, where there had been a small movement that was outside the traditional parties, and that did well. We were not tracking that closely at the time. Maybe that was a mistake, maybe we should have been looking at it because in the '90s it has certainly become a focal point. But that's post-dated, I mean the important elements of that, post-dated my tour in Italy.

CARL A. BASTIANI
Political Officer

Rome (1974-1976)

Mr. Bastiani was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Seminaries in Iowa and Illinois and at the University of Chicago and Georgetown University. A specialist in Italian and Romanian affairs, Mr. Bastiani served at four posts in Italy (Naples, Genoa, Rome and Turin) and in Romania and Poland. He also had several tours of duty at the State Department in Washington, DC. Mr. Bastiani was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: Excuse me, let me just stop here. Today is the 4th of April, 2008. Carl, how'd you get to Rome?

BASTIANI: My transfer is a story in itself. During my last year in Genoa I asked for a direct transfer to the political section in Rome. As an Italy specialist, Rome was like a Mecca for me. When I raised this possibility – I'm not sure if the reply came from the Embassy or the Department, I think the Embassy – they told me in effect, “Who do you think you are? Don't you know that Rome is an R&R, Rest and Recreation, post for people coming out of Africa and other hardship posts? So I dropped any thought of a direct transfer.

I was eventually told that I would soon be paneled, officially assigned, as Counselor of Political Affairs in Jamaica; and I was quite happy with that. It came down to about a week before departure in early July, when – out of the blue – I got a call from a personnel officer in the Department: “Carl, how about Rome?” is how he opened the conversation. An officer, who had gone through Italian language and area training for the political position in Rome to follow the Socialist, Republican, and Social Democratic parties, seized an opportunity to switch to the economic specialty; so they were suddenly left high and dry for somebody for Rome who wouldn't need training. And so that's how I got a direct transfer to Rome. Again, I was thrown into a breach, so to speak, but I liked it.

Q: Okay. You were in Rome from when to when?

BASTIANI: I was in Rome from mid '74 to mid '76, two years.

Q: Who was the ambassador and DCM, and how did you find the Embassy?

BASTIANI: The Ambassador at that time was John Volpe, who had made a fortune in construction in Boston, been governor of Massachusetts twice, and Secretary of Transportation under Nixon. He was a prominent Republican in a State where Democrats normally dominated. The DCM was Bob Beaudry; he had been an office director in EUR before going to Italy. Bob Beaudry was one of the best supervisors I ever had in the Foreign Service.

The Embassy itself I found to be compartmentalized, like the Department. It had so many sections, including other agency offices like, Treasury, the FBI, INS – the Immigration and Naturalization Service – even the Coast Guard; you name one. And my experience was that they hardly talked to each other, you know, just as in the Department. They dealt primarily with their Italian counterparts and their agencies. Turf protection was a paramount priority, especially on

the part of the Economic Section. I was in the Political section of about six officers headed by a Political Counselor. Four of us had different parties to follow and maintain contacts in them. It was pretty hard to avoid mention of some economic development in a political reporting cable, and you soon heard about it, if you had failed to clear it in advance with the Economic Counselor. So I found the work environment in the Embassy kind of stuffy and formal, more like in the Department than in any other post in which I served. In fact, in some ways I thought the Department wasn't quite as bad.

But my family and I really enjoyed living in Rome. I mentioned before that in the Foreign Service, you have the best of both worlds abroad. And in Italy you really have a great other world.

Q: You had the Socialist, Republican...?

BASTIANI: ...I dealt with the Socialist Party, PSI; the Republicans, PRI; and the Social Democrats, the PSDI who had broken off long ago from the PSI over the latter's alliance with the Communists. I personally didn't consider the PSDI really relevant after the Socialists broke with the Communists, the PCI, but it is amazing how they continued to survive.

Q: Well, before we get to that, what was your impression during the time you were there of Ambassador Volpe and how he operated?

BASTIANI: Volpe was very dependent on his DCM, Beaudry, in political matters, and I believe he followed his advice quite closely. He had good relations with the many Ministers of the Italian coalition Governments. By rank, only the Ambassador, or in his absence, the DCM met with government Ministers; Ministries correspond to Departments in our government. We in the Political Section dealt directly with lower ranking officials on the government side, but even with Party Secretaries on the political side. Having served both in embassies and consulates, I came to realize that embassies primarily deal with governments and bureaucrats, while consulates deal primarily with the local people and power elites. So, from the point of view of promoting understanding between our peoples and influencing local power elites – economic and cultural – I think consulates are far more important than the embassies.

This is a bit of a digression, but trying to centralize all our work in the Embassy in a large country is just nonsense. You can't carry out the Foreign Service mandate legislated by Congress without consulates in the major metropolitan centers of a democracy; and now they're trying to do it with one person and a computer for budgetary and security reasons – as Third World countries do – in many cities of Europe where we've closed consulates.

Q: Well, how did you find the people within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who dealt with the U.S.?

BASTIANI: They couldn't have been nicer. The powers that be, the powers that were in running Italy at the time I was there maintained this tradition of extremely friendly relations with the United States and its representatives. These people still remembered their debt to us through the Marshall Plan and other support the U.S. had provided when the Italian lira was under pressure.

Also, our military bases provided much employment to local populations.

But the Italian electorate was pretty much split between pro-Western people, still a clear majority, and leftists who saw NATO and the United States as adversaries. And on the labor union level the idea that the Soviet Union was still a paradise and what have you was very strong. At the same time Euro-Communism was on the rise a re-thinking by many Communist leaders in Italy and other West European countries, that democracy was not so bad, and that NATO could be tolerated as a necessity in the Cold War, until agreement could be reached to dissolve both the blocs. The French Communists were probably still closer to the Soviet Union than the Italian Communists, but the Italian Communists had that hard core within their labor unions for whom Marxism-Leninism was a religion, and the Soviet Union its Mecca. They still revered the Soviet Union as having defeated Hitler and, through its agents in the Communist guerillas in the latter years of the war, of even helping liberate Italy from Fascism. The role of the U.K. and U.S. was ignored or downplayed. MY SHINS

Q: What was CGTOL?

BASTIANI: CGIL. I don't recall exactly the Italian words of the acronym, but an Association or Congress of Communist Labor Unions. They were the strongest of the unions. Each of the other major parties had their own affiliated unions; the CISL was the association of Christian Democratic unions. There were also unions affiliated with the Socialist Party, but I think dominated by the Communists – even unions affiliated with the Social Democrats, the PSDI. As I said before, I considered them no longer relevant, because they had split from the Socialists over the latter's ties with the Communists, but the Socialists had since split with the Communists in the early '60s. Logically, one would have expected them to reunite with the Socialists, but that is not how politics in Italy was played.

Q: Well, let's talk a little bit about the Socialists about this period of time. In the first place, what was the common reckoning of why the Socialists in Italy were not the power that they were in the rest of Europe?

BASTIANI: Simply because the Communists dominated the Left from the outset; that was pretty much it. The Socialists split off in the early '60s when the first Center-Left government was formed. Amintore Fanfani of the Christian Democrats was the Prime Minister when it happened.

It was a dramatic move, but the Socialists didn't take that much of the left with them. There were even splintered leftist groups, extremist groups to the left of the Communists. And all of this arises from the last months of the war and the immediate post-war period when the Communist guerillas not only attacked Italian Fascists and the Germans, but even non-Communist guerilla fighters. I am convinced that the true history of what went on in Italy during the war after it was obvious that Italy and Germany would be defeated has still to be told to most Italians. I'm not sure even Western historians are aware of all that went on. Anti-fascism and eradicating it became the religion of the day. Any moderate who had associated with it in any way was tarred with its brush. Those who envisaged a restoration of the Monarchy had no say at all. I don't know whether it would have been good or not for the Italians to retain a monarchy like England's, but in the referendum the Monarchy was rejected. I don't think that was any real loss.

Q: Well, the House of Savoy was not exactly...

BASTIANI: It wasn't esteemed...

Q: It was actually, you know, less than 100 years old, and as monarchies go, it was relatively young. Did you know that Naples voted for the Monarchy?

BASTIANI: No, I didn't.

Q: This is, you know – I won't use the Italian term – but it was “ screw you.” The country had no desire for the return of the House of Savoy.

BASTIANI: On the other hand – I may have mentioned this earlier – when I was in Naples from '62 to '65 I sensed a certain nostalgia for Mussolini. You know that famous quote about him that he made the trains run on time. I think Mussolini's big mistake was allying himself with Hitler. If he'd done what Franco did he would be in the Valhalla of Italian leaders. But, of course, that would have been psychologically impossible for him to do. He thought he was a modern Caesar. Success in Ethiopia and Hitler's early imitation of him had gone to his head.

Getting back to Rome, to the political situation in Italy while I was there, these were years of deep pessimism for us and our interests. Enrico Berlinguer, First Secretary of the Communist party, was a euro-communist who explicitly accepted NATO, and he was a popular personality as well. His aim was to bring about the historic compromise, the *compromesso storico* by which the Communists would be admitted into a coalition government and share power. For most observers, it was not a question of whether, but when. U.S. policy was still very much against seeing the Communists admitted into the Italian government, to which we were so closely allied.

I remember once, just before a political staff meeting with the Ambassador, we got word that Andreotti who was given the mandate to form a government had secretly met with Berlinguer on the subject. The Ambassador was upset that Andreotti was apparently betraying us. When no one else said anything in defense of Andreotti for whom I had an admiration, I spoke up in his defense saying it doesn't necessarily mean that he is working to have this happen. In fact, actual inclusion of the Communists in a coalition government never came about.

In a way, we have the Red Brigades to thank for that. After they kidnapped Aldo Moro, the First Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, who was actively promoting the historic compromise, a deal was struck whereby the Communists refrained from voting against a government made up of DC ministers only in return for collaboration in the Parliament on some major bills, and for some influential positions in the organization of the Parliament. The other parties went along with this sort of non-Government of solidarity.

I had always admired Andreotti whom I only met once at a reception. First, he was not corrupt in the sense of using public or party funds to enrich himself. And he had always shown himself a loyal ally of the United States. He was very much a clever manipulator in managing Christian Democratic relations with the other parties. I defended him on that basis – who could be sure

what he was up to? Even we for some time already had recognized the need to have some kind of relationship with the Communist Party, the PCI, given recent gains at the ballot box when it threatened to outpoll the DC, and, because of the social democratic and euro-communist tendencies of some of its leaders. So about the time of my arrival, we assigned a Foreign Service officer in the section, Marty Wenick, to meet with leaders of the PCI as we others did with leaders of the parties for which we were responsible. The so-called other agency had been doing this for some time.

Q: Well, I would hope so.

BASTIANI: Exactly. But this didn't increase the optimism of our loyal friends in the other parties so as to what the U.S. was up to. They, of course were aware that we were doing this – there were really no secrets in Italian politics. We seemed to be pursuing contradictory policies in our relations with the parties.

Q: Well, while you were there, was there any reference at all to what had happened in Portugal? Because the Portuguese revolution was in '74, and at that point the young officers looked like they were heading right down the path into the Communist arms, and we were thinking of getting Portugal out of NATO, when actually the work of Frank Carlucci and others there at our Embassy, was quite magnificent. Was that at all on your radar?

BASTIANI: I don't have any explicit recall, but I'm sure it was in the context of Euro Communism. There was considerable optimism on the part of many analysts and observers that Communism in Western Europe was becoming democratic. And so that kind of mitigated the pessimism of some. Skeptics wondered, however, what they would do once they achieved power through the democratic system. In this regard the Italian Communists were popular within academia in the U.S. I can't recall the name of this professor at Harvard or Yale who each year attended the PCI's National Congress as a special guest.

He was telling us that they were the true democrats, the uncorrupt politicians in Italy, and urging the State Department to embrace them. Personally I saw a contradiction within the PCI itself, between an ably led still emotionally loyal to the Soviet Union base, and other leaders who wanted their party to become a full member of the of the ruling government coalitions. Italy was a democracy, but not as direct a democracy as ours. There you voted primarily for parties, rather than individual candidates to whom you could only give rank order preference within the party. So the real power resided in the parties. Some called it *partitocrazia*, a "partyocracy" to coin a term, the group of center-right to center-left parties from which governing coalitions were formed, but continuously dominated by the Christian Democrats since the war. This system was so important to each of the parties that they cooperated with each other to maintain it, despite their differences over policies. Or, as I liked to put it: as a group they were not about to let power to slip on one side to the people or to the government or the other; the party First Secretaries remained the most powerful leaders within the system.

Q: Who were the party secretaries in the Socialist and the Social Democratic Parties?

BASTIANI: On the Socialist side Bettino Craxi had emerged. He was the Benjamin of Pietro

Nenni, the patriarch Socialist, who finally broke off with the Communists back in the early '60s. He was then in retirement. I once acted as escort and interpreter for Hubert Humphrey who visited him in his apartment. I'll never forget Humphrey's comment as he looked out the window of our car, stuck in traffic in the affluent commercial area near the Embassy. "This is the most affluent damn country I have ever seen in economic difficulty."

Q: This is Nenni...

BASTIANI: Pietro Nenni, yes. But Craxi was always seen as his favored son to replace him. At the time I was there Craxi was a Deputy Secretary of the party, and De Martino – I keep forgetting first names – First Secretary. And I met several times one-on-one over lunch with Craxi.

My way of handling my work was first to read four or five newspapers, starting with Corriere della Sera, which had a journalist who was absolutely outstanding. I wish I could remember his name. His column was usually on the front page. When something was going on, he would talk to leaders of the parties involved, summarize their views, and come up with his own analysis. He had access to them because he represented Italy's most prestigious newspaper. Then I would look at the party organs, the PCI's Unità, the PSI's Avanti, and so on. And then I would pick out somebody from my three parties – more often a socialist, because they held the balance of power. They had a relative small percentage of the vote, but it was enough for them to swing the balance from center-right to center-left. Using my "representational allowance," as it was called, to host Italian politicians in fine restaurants so you can learn something from them to report was about the most pleasurable aspect of my work.

There's a restaurant in Rome, it still exists I'm sure, run by nuns, missionary French nuns, called *Joie de Vivre*. It's down in the heart of old Rome, near the Senate, and was a meeting place for politicians. In fact, the Christian Democrats used to hold leadership sessions in a private room on the second floor. The menu was fantastic. And so more often than not that's where I took my guest. I'd always ask him to choose the wine, because there's no Italian who doesn't consider himself an expert on wine. I was an amateur in this area, and it kind of flattered the guest.

I came to like Craxi, even though I had no admiration for the Socialists as a party. It became obvious to me that Craxi was very anti-communist, because the Communists were the major threat to his party's autonomy. The Communists had so many members of the Socialist party, including representatives in parliament, in their hip pocket, so-to-speak. They supported these fellow-travelers; even helped them get elected as Socialists.

Q: You're making a gesture, showing a payoff.

BASTIANI: Yes. And I remember my counterpart on the other agency side several times approaching me and suggesting I establish contact with this Socialist representative from Umbria; but from other sources I had within the Socialist Party I knew that this guy was in the pocket of the Communist Party, so I refused ever to meet with him. The Christian Democrats were notorious for having corrupt politicians, those who used party funds for personal ends. But the Socialists seemed to have an even bigger reputation for personal corruption. Craxi was anti-

communist and I favored him. I recall writing a cable in which I promoted him as a man we should support. That pretty much was the situation when I left in 1976.

From a career point of view, I made the big mistake of refusing the offer of a third year in Rome – my assignment was for only two – which Bob Beaudry had gotten for me without a by-your-leave from me. I turned it down because at that time my children had already been out of the United for five years. I've always been a kind of chauvinistic American in the sense that I wanted my children to be culturally American, feel like Americans, and not just be American citizens unfamiliar with their own country. I'd seen children of colleagues who had spent so much time abroad that they were more at home in Europe than in the U.S. And so, with the motivation of getting my children back into an American environment, I turned down the opportunity to stay on in Rome. I opted for an out-of-cone assignment in OES, the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, because of my love of science and technology. Career wise, that was an even bigger mistake.

Q: Before we leave Rome, one of the things that always struck me – again, I'm not a political officer and I followed you there by about a year – I came in '79 down in Naples as Consul General. I had never served in Italy, never served as a political officer; I'm a consular officer. And I kept getting these things from Rome on political developments asking how does this or that play here in Naples. Well, the point was it didn't play at all. And I came away with a very distinct impression that our Embassy, obviously the political section, was part of a minuet that didn't amount to a damn thing as far as Italian politics were concerned. I think things have changed now but in those days it was all the Christian Democrats. Ministers may have changed, but they were all part of the same thing; and when the chips were down the Italians were with us; all this political maneuvering, particularly the reporting on it, which included Carl Bastiani's reporting, what the hell difference did it make? I'd like you to comment on that.

BASTIANI: Okay. Yes, we very closely monitored developments within each of these parties. In a less open way, we also tried to influence. That was our job. Remember, I said we were worried about the *Compromesso Storico*, about the Communists coming into government. It wasn't a completely stable system. In the Italian system a gain of one and a half percent for one party in an election was a lot. Had the PCI's percentage of the vote ever exceeded that of the DC – they were both around the mid-30s at the time – they would have become the party of relative majority, and, under the system, been given the first opportunity to form a government by the President of Italy. That was one of his few responsibilities. Fortunately, none of this happened. After cresting just below the DC's total in, I think, 1976, the PCI's share receded until about 1980 when they gave up making deals in Parliament and returned to active opposition. Many of their faithful followers had been unhappy with the compromises they had made.

With regard to reporting, despite all the resources we devoted to it, I had a very interesting experience, which illustrates how hard it is to know what was going on. The government of the day was Center-Left, a coalition which included the center parties and the Socialists with the balance of power. Then one day in this particular period the Socialists threatened to withdraw from the coalition, and bring down the government. To learn what the socialists were really up to, the Ambassador invited the First secretary, De Martino, to lunch at the residence. And I, of course, did the briefing paper in advance. We always had to do a briefing paper for the

ambassador for such meetings. I was invited to the dinner as the note taker and to do some interpreting. De Martino said the Socialists created the threat of crisis to negotiate for more power within the coalition, another Ministry or two, I guess, but had no intention of bringing down the government.

I don't recall the specifics but he assured the ambassador that they would not bring down the government. So I rushed back to the embassy, and drafted a cable reporting what De Martino had said, got it approved, ran it to the communications section, and handed it in for transmission. I no sooner got back to my office than I learned that the government had just fallen; the Socialists had just withdrawn. So I zipped back down the corridor to the communications section to retrieve the draft if I could. Fortunately, they had not yet finished coding it for transmission. I and the Political Counselor hastily edited it to say what had actually happened, despite the First Secretary's assurances. I'm sure De Martino didn't deliberately mislead us; not even he knew what his party was up to in Parliament while we were together. That just shows you how uncertain politics were there.

Q: You know, beyond the Compromesso Storico, was there any particular issue – this is before the SS-20 missile crisis and all that which came later – were any particular issues that we were concerned about with Italy?

BASTIANI: Well, one was the stability of the Italian lira, a convertible currency. Chronically, it became very weak because Italian governments were perennially in deficit because of social spending, particularly on health care, which from the beginning was a single government payer system. At this time, all the Western European countries fended financially on their own. The U.S. bailed them out more than once.

I remember vividly the crisis which occurred during my first Italian tour in Naples. The people were in a panic that their lira savings would become worthless. That included my numerous relatives. One of them, a first cousin, made a special trip to Naples with a bag full of lira notes of large denomination to ask me to convert them to dollars. It was the first and only time they asked a favor of me. Well, of course I couldn't; there was no way I could do it properly, even if I had the money. For most of my career, I practiced my own brand of deficit spending, rolling over loans with the State Department Federal Credit Union, to which I remain eternally grateful. Fortunately, news reports had just appeared that the United States was extending a two billion dollar line of credit to Italy. That stabilized the lira, and I was able to assure my relatives that their money would not become worthless.

Of course, everybody knew about the black economy which didn't pay taxes and which didn't get into the statistics. I think I first came to realize this during my tour in Genoa. You never really knew how badly the economy was globally. I came to realize that, in spite of all this talk about how bad things were, more people were living better every day. Not to deny that some people obviously were suffering more, but statistically more people were living better every day. And I considered that part of the continuing Italian economic miracle. The first one, of course, occurred shortly after the war.

Q: What about two things? What about the problem of the Red Brigades, you know, these

homegrown terrorist groups. What was happening while you were there? How did we react about them and how did we see their influence.

BASTIANI: The Red Brigades, I guess, were the most well-known and the most successful in carrying out their operations. While I was in Rome I didn't feel personally threatened, because they were not targeting diplomats and practicing indiscriminate terrorism like planting bombs in restaurants. They were targeting businessmen and politicians. They were shooting them in the knees, kneecapping. We can revisit this years later when I go back to Italy to reopen the Consulate in Torino. Then terrorism against Americans was very much in vogue.

Q: In general, the criminal sort of situation, did it spill up to where you were? Or were we finding out that their money going to political parties or anything like that?

BASTIANI: I think this was pretty common in the South, the *Mezzogiorno*, and of course these deputies were in Parliament. But, in the mid '70s, I don't know that it was all that common in the North, as it later became. But to my knowledge and recollection, this was not a major public issue at the time. I'm talking '74 to '76. And I don't think at that time that the Mafia in its various forms had penetrated Northern Italy to the extent that it had by the time I got back there in the '80s.

Q: Alright. You're a good Catholic; how about the Church?

BASTIANI: Okay. The Church. We had at that time a Vatican office. I guess it was not until the Reagan Administration that we raised our relations with the Vatican to formal Embassy status. The Vatican office was almost like another office of the Embassy, even though it had its own site. However, even after it became an Embassy, it relied entirely on the Embassy for communications and administrative resources.

Q: You're talking about the Embassy to the Holy See?

BASTIANI: Yes. You had one American Foreign Service Officer there permanently handling day-to-day business. The Special Representative and later Ambassador appointed by the President weren't even there much of the time. It was a job I coveted, to tell you the truth, because I was so familiar with the Church. But from my earliest days as an analyst in foreign affairs, let's say from the beginning of my career as a Foreign Service officer, I never thought very highly of Vatican diplomacy. I didn't think they were very good.

Q: Well you know, it has this reputation of being so wonderful but I'm not quite sure what it's based on.

BASTIANI: They hung on to old positions far too long. The major one in my mind was Israel. They wouldn't recognize Israel and have relations with it far beyond the point of diminishing returns, and advocated making Jerusalem a free city. Realistically, this was never in the cards. Not recognizing Israel only supported the impression – which wasn't true – that the Vatican was anti-Semitic. I thought their policy toward Latin American countries, was until John Paul II changed it, much too stuck on tradition and so identified with the wealthy. Toward East Europe,

they had their own *Ost-Politik* which I thought gave too much priority to establishing or maintaining relations with Communist regimes even in countries like Czechoslovakia after 1968, while the regime it was actively persecuting the underground Church.

Q: You know there are certain elements in Liberation Theology that make great sense, getting down more to the people and all that.

BASTIANI: Indeed it did. But the Church was quite right in opposing the use of violence to help the poor. It's kind of funny, both in Latin America and even more so, I think in Africa, that the leaders, the people who emerged as maximum leaders had been educated in Catholic schools. They weren't loyal to Catholic teaching when they got into politics. Church missionary activity always emphasizes education, and so, I surmise, these people were the best equipped to become political leaders.

Q: Well, in the Socialist, Social Democratic field, did the ideology of these two parties reject the Church, or did the Church play much of a role there?

BASTIANI: Socialists and Social Democrats?

Q: I mean the two parties, the main parties, and the Republicans that you were dealing with; did their ideology sort of reject the Church?

BASTIANI: I don't recall any explicit anti-Vatican pronouncements by the Socialists after their split off from the Communists; but they certainly weren't friendly with the Church. They did think their main adversary, the Christian Democrats, were allies of the Church. Overall, the Church had great political influence, and I doubt that the Socialists would have considered it politically wise to make it an issue.

The Church was mainly concerned with general morality and crusaded on issues like divorce and abortion. The thing about the Church in Italy was that you had individual Cardinals in the conservative-liberal spectrum. The Cardinal of Genoa at the time I was there was an extreme conservative. The Cardinal of Milan was quite liberal. And then you had the liberal Pope John the XXIII who actually called the Vatican council. But no, the only party that had really good relations with the Vatican was the Christian Democratic Party.

Q: Well then, you left Italy in '78 to go back to Washington. By the way, how did your wife and kids find living in Rome?

BASTIANI: I left in '76, not '78; I was there from '74 to '76. My wife and children enjoyed Rome as much as I did. When we were in Rome only a few of the top officers received government-furnished quarters. They were not in a USG ghetto, but individual homes in the city. The rest of us received housing allowances which were always below current rentals due to inflation, so I was a bit out of pocket, which led me, with three kids, to finding affordable housing in half of a brand new duplex villa with a walled acre of yard north of Rome, in La Storta, on a dead end side road off the highway which went past the Vatican's international radio antenna farm. The children went to Marymount International School, about half the distance

down the Via Cassia toward the Embassy in the center. We received a full educational allowance for that. I am eternally grateful to the Department for the educational allowances we received while abroad. I had found that overseas I always had enough money to pay down on my loans with the Credit Union. In Washington I always had to add to make new loans.

An advantage to having your children with you abroad is that they're much more dependent on you, and much less exposed to the distractions of television and peer influence, as they are here in the States. For children what's normal is what they've experienced as small children. I remember daughter number two asking after two or three years in Washington, when are we going overseas again. And it's not because she was unhappy with her situation in Rockville where she had good friends and was doing well in school. Every one of my five daughters speaks Italian to some degree, and they were all open to friendships with peers of other ethnic origin. My youngest daughter, in fact, seemed to *attract* these people Rockville High School. Most of her friends were of Latino, Asian or Black origin.

ROBERT HOPPER
Political/Military Officer
Rome (1974-1976)

Mr. Hopper was born and raised in California and educated at the University of Southern California and New York University. Entering the Foreign Service in 1969 he was first assigned to Monterrey, Mexico. He subsequently served in Rome and London as Political/Military Officer and in Washington, D.C., where his assignments concerned primarily West European political and military matters. Mr. Hopper was also a Legislative Fellow on Capitol Hill and held a senior position at the Department's Foreign Service Institute. Mr. Hopper was interviewed by Raymond Ewing in 2002.

Q: And you went to Rome in the summer of '74 to the political military section after having some Italian here in Washington.

HOPPER: It was wonderful. I had a great time there. I was the deputy chief of POL/MIL (Political Military) section in Rome. We had a lot of bases; we had a lot of military things.

Q: You were number two, of two?

HOPPER: Yes. *(laughs)* It was clever titles. The price I paid for that was the way the duty system worked. Each section was expected to have somebody in on Saturday and either the chief or the deputy was supposed to go in, plus somebody else. Since essentially there were just two of us, I ended up going into the embassy every other weekend for a year. It was a little bit of a burden on my family. There were things that they would've liked to have done in Italy that we could never do. And the POL/MIL section was in the middle of every tough sort of European issue. When I arrived, the section turned over. Obviously, I replaced one of the people – a very

wonderful guy who had been very close to Kissinger in the Vietnam talks.

Q: David Engle.

HOPPER: David Engle. And then Jim Devine was the section chief and he went on home leave two weeks after I got there, so it was just me by the middle of July of '74. You will recall that the constitutional protection forces of Turkey went into Cypress that summer. All of a sudden, you've got the six fleet movements. The Mediterranean became a hubbub of military activity and I was right in the middle of it. I was meeting with senior Italian officials and meeting with our people and doing reports on the southern flank and trying to figure out how long does it take an aircraft carrier to go from Naples to Cyprus – and longer than you would imagine.

Q: But your main involvement was really keeping the Italians informed of these movements, or getting their concurrence or dealing with their objections?

HOPPER: Mostly it was keeping the U.S. military and the U.S. Embassy together, and making sure that the command in Naples and in Gaeta didn't go stripping everything they were doing that the Italians felt was partly defending them. So it was making sure that they thought about things before they did them.

I've found over time that if you're doing something that you've actually thought about, and you've thought about how to consult on it, you can explain almost anything. It's when you wait and you've done it, and maybe it doesn't make a lot of sense, that you have to explain it later, but it's hard.

Also the Department, at that point, needed to hear from us to know what the U.S. military was doing. So we would pick up things that the Department didn't know. The Department, in making its recommendations, sometimes would be glibly thinking, "Well, we can have forces off the coast." Then, I'd talk to them and say, "What do you mean? The crew has been out on liberty, the ship doesn't have any food, they won't be leaving here for a day and a half, and it will take two and a half days to get..." So you're time horizons change. It was interesting playing that role and before pagers and beepers. Just being around and doing some quick reporting. It was hard, but I did okay. I was a trusted member of a pretty senior embassy team very quickly.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

HOPPER: The ambassador was Governor John Volpe; a political appointee. He felt he was very close to President Nixon.

Q: He had been secretary of transportation, governor of Massachusetts.

HOPPER: And a successful industrial construction company executive. The DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) was Bob Beaudry, who was a long standing career officer. Generally, I found that the political appointees I've worked with have been wonderful. When I hear career people complain about the lack of talent in political people, I think they tend to focus on the exception. However, Ambassador Volpe was one who did not have the right mix of talents and

temperament to do the job. That's the time when your career people have to help out even more to make it work. We weren't very good at that. The embassy was a pretty sour place. I think if there were a way to go back and do personnel checks of records, one would see that at that point in time, people assigned to Rome did not extend. Even though it was a beautiful spot and seemingly great, people got there, did their time, and left. They weren't ...

Q: Trying to stay as long as they could?

HOPPER: Yes.

Q: Jim Devine eventually came back or did he...because he had been there quite a while.

HOPPER: He had been there a long time. Basically it turned out he went on home leave, there was some kind of family illness, he came back, but only to check out again. So then it was breaking in a new boss, who actually was wonderful. We had one of the most highly skilled career Foreign Service secretaries and that made so much of a difference for me as a young person trying to run a section and make it work. Just having somebody who really knew how to do was a godsend.

Q: Now the political military section was separate from the political section, but in terms of the office layout was quite sort of...

HOPPER: We were in the political section.

Q: Part of it.

HOPPER: When I ended up at the end of my career, training political officers at FSI, I told them that there were two magic words for doing political work: serendipity and propinquity. Propinquity means a location. I said if you go around embassies all over the world you'll see that political sections – I'm not aware of one exception – where they aren't just right next to the ambassador and the DCM and they're somehow situated in such a way that when anything is going on, they're going to be in the middle of it. And that's how the section was in Rome. We opened up right onto this huge, grand reception room. That was where you went into the DCM, and the POL and POL/MIL sections were literally extensions of the DCM's office. We were, in fact, too close; the DCM wasn't far enough away. He managed us and didn't manage the rest of the embassy. But, after the first year, they sort of reorganized the sections. After a year of doing POL/MIL work, I then moved into the political section.

Euro-communism had started to become an issue. The Church Committee revelation to the U.S. had led to changes in how the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was able to work overseas and in Italy they had been very directly involved in U.S. inputs into election campaigns. With the changes brought about by the intelligence research and leaks of that period, there were laws and regulations that took place that really changed what the CIA could do. So we had a major election coming up and we were going to have to do it in a new way. It was a new era for the embassy in working with the Italians and the political section explicitly got the lead. We formed a country team committee dealing with the elections and I was made the executive secretary of

that committee. I basically ran to save Italian democracy.

Q: You were dealing with the Italian Communist Party, PCI - or were you dealing with everybody else?

HOPPER: We were dealing with everybody. Our goal was to make sure that the Communists did not win the election.

Q: When was that election?

HOPPER: The election was in...

Q: Early '76?

HOPPER: Yes, I think it was in early '76. It was before I left in the summer of '76. For all of us it was so frustrating, especially for the younger officers who had been through Vietnam. It was after the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., and we wanted to make sure that the U.S. and western democracies lived up a little bit to the rhetoric in their theories, and wanted there to be a more participatory, inclusive politics. We felt that if that was good enough for us, it should include Italy as well. And the more one was in Italy and watched things, one realized that for a political activist and an idealist in Italy, because both the Christian Democrats and the Socialists had been burned with corruption and just silliness, and were so despotic and removed from the people, that there weren't very good places to do politics. And then you would watch and see that at a local level, in terms of political organization and open political processes, it was very frustrating that the Italian Communists were actually the Democrats. That was at the local level and no matter how idealistic one might be, you could see there was no guarantee in the world that they would actually be foreign policy Democrats if they won, and no guarantee they'd be able to continue with the local patterns if they had power. So, for a lot of us it was, despite what we could see of our partners, allies and opponents, how we wondered you kept trying to help the Christian Democrats and the Socialists and not let the Communists win, even though in some ways they were very appealing. As an embassy, we did that.

There were some people, of course, who felt the Italian Communists, as Communists, were this evil incarnate - and so it was easy. The real tension within the embassy was that both the ambassador and some of the senior people in the political section thought the Italian Socialists were the real evil people in the piece. People sometimes now wonder why religion plays such a role in politics, and what this new feature of religion is. It's not new; religion always was a major factor in Italian politics; and the Socialists and the Social Democrats were validly Catholics. In some ways the break between the Socialists and the Communists was over the Vatican, the role of Catholicism, and divorce, and a whole range of issues.

I actually heard Ambassador Volpe and one of our political officers say - they never said it publicly, but said it privately many times - that they could not understand how the Socialists could be against market forces, and could be willing to consider some cooperation with the Communists when the Communists were Godless and were virtually against God and were anti-religion. And that was the key dividing point: the role of God in politics. That never stimulated

me very much as an analytical point, but one had to be careful even doing reporting for the embassy in how you described people. There were black hats, and white hats.

The other thing that made it all very complicated was that the ambassador went on all of the really important calls and he liked to do them by himself. This was complicated by the fact that the version of Italian that he spoke was essentially an Abruzzi dialect that he learned at his mother's knee in Boston at the beginning parts of this century and that dialect in Boston and the one from the same region in Italy had evolved differently. So with his hometown Boston-Abruzzi dialect, he had trouble being understood and understanding what was being said.

Q: Back to his home village?

HOPPER: Yes. But when he went to the foreign ministry, speaking to people who had grown up in Florence and Milan and who felt that the Abruzzi of Naples did not speak Italian, they didn't understand; they would choose not to understand him. So he would understand them, more or less, and they wouldn't understand him.

We had this reporting process involving the ambassador's calls at this time. It is something that I think political scientists who try to do content analysis and other assessments of our reporting should bear in mind. The ambassador would come back and dictate to the DCM, the chief of the political section, and generally to one of the internal political officers who was responsible for the Christian Democrats and was a good drafter, and he did his reporting. Ambassador Volpe would dictate what had happened and this fellow would write up the report. Over time, we developed a procedure where the guy in the political section who was doing the report would call the senior staff level of wherever the meeting took place, would figure out which senior Italian official had been there and who you could talk to, and would sort of replay the conversation on the phone with him and would find out from them what they felt had taken place. You know what they got. At that point, the political officer would steer them back towards any things that had been sort of miscommunicated by the ambassador. Said, "Well, you know, really, that's important, but we're also getting at this and this and this," so we would try to correct the record. But we had to find out what they had said. So we'd write up these cables, through this third-hand correction mechanism and it'd be signed, it'd go in like that with the meeting, and it was a complicated process. And oftentimes, more often than not, one of the Italians would call right away as they knew how the process was. You know, "He said this. Is that really what we're supposed to be getting out of this?" So we had a record collecting reporting process.

The other thing that was so important at the time was that the Italian officials within the key ministry were so good. A lot of them had a lot of continuity and knew what they were doing. I would, from time to time, be asked to go in and deliver demarches on the MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) negotiations, and the Italian foreign ministry official I would meet with was actually the chairman of the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) working group on MBFR. He would go to Brussels all the time and he really knew it all. We would get an instruction maybe every two or three months at a level where we really had to go in and do something and much of it was very arcane. The first time I did it, I was a very good boy and sort of memorized and mastered the brief and went in to talk about it, and he said, "That's really interesting." He said, "I'll tell you what; I think I know where you're going, but I don't think you

quite have it right. If you don't mind, let me see your instructions." I had done it in a way where there was a little comment part that I had, and I knew this guy really seemed very trusting, so I showed him and he said, "This is what you're trying to get across. Thank-you, and here's where the NATO group is going. Here's where the Italian..." and it was incredible. Afterwards, I just studied a little bit and when I would get the instructions, I would go up and we worked it out together. It's the kind of thing that when I was training people later, though I wouldn't recommend always doing that, there were times when it was clearly the best thing to do and it worked out very well.

Q: To be accurate and in dealing with an arcane, technical, complicated subject, and with a real expert, you have to.

HOPPER: I had a chance to get a lot that otherwise I couldn't have. There was another thing that was atypical of the period. That I know has changed in Italy and changed in many places, but it's an interesting sidebar. In the mid-'70s - and this was sort of the tail end of the period - the foreign ministry in Rome started work officially at eight, though nobody was there until about eight-thirty or nine in the morning. Their official hours were from eight to two. All of their official business was done from eight to two. In the morning there were dozens of Communists who worked in the foreign ministry: the secretaries, the staff, some of the mid-level officers, and some of the senior civil servants were known or suspected to be Communists. So it was explained to me by the head of the NATO desk and a couple of other people that to cope with this and given the fact that Socialists were in the government and there were lots of compromises made, that the way the foreign ministry worked was that from eight to two unclassified work was done and at two everybody went home and then at four-thirty or five all the career people came back. All of the secretarial work was done in the afternoon by the *cada mineri* and there were these Italian military who were trained typists and everything and they would do some reporting.

But basically, the Italians have what they believed were encrypted, secure phone lines and they were doing all of their important work in the late afternoon and evening on the phone. I was doing NATO and we could never get an appointment before six at the foreign ministry, because that's when they did our kind of work; after a while you figured that out. The foreign ministry in Rome was up on the outskirts of town, actually near where most of the working level U.S. Embassy people lived. It was like in most posts; it was much easier to get a car going to meetings than coming back. So, we'd get an embassy car to take us to the foreign ministry at six or six-thirty, do our meeting and then just walk or take a taxi home and go in and report on it the next morning, or write up a little bit at home. When you think now about all the concerns about security - there were concerns and there weren't. I mean, if you were dropping off a paper, you'd take it home and bring it in, in the morning. And I'm sure nobody does such things anymore because there would be too many security risks.

Q: Well, as you suggested, the work schedule in the foreign ministry has probably also changed from those days. I remember from my days in Rome, I was the action officer for some delegation that was traveling around Europe on a very tight schedule and they asked to call on a ministry immediately after lunch and they were arriving at twelve o'clock or something and when they got there, I said, "Well, we've got the appointment at..." (I think it was at the Foreign Ministry) "and it's at five o'clock, but I'm not sure anybody will be there yet, but they've agreed to that."

And they said, "Five o'clock - that's a waste of our time. We don't have that much time to spare. Why can't it be earlier?" and I said, "Well there's nobody there."

HOPPER: That was immediately after lunch.

Q: And you're lucky if it can be that early. It's more likely it'd be at six or six-thirty.

You mentioned the MBFR dialogue that you had occasionally, and this was presumably when you were in the political military section.

HOPPER: Somehow that was considered more an arms control issue. It would depend upon staffing and what people were interested in, but the POL/MIL section essentially was looking at the U.S.-Italy bilateral military relationship.

Q: The bases.

HOPPER: The biggest issue while I was there was that we had a nuclear submarine based on La Maddalena.

Q: On Sardinia?

HOPPER: That was on Sardinia. Very isolated. Lovely, lovely spot. Some early environmentalists and nuclear disarmament types really made a big push to get us out of there. In doing so, focused on wanting to look at the bilateral agreements and finding out what the Italians had conceded; what the legal basis was for our being there. That was one of my jobs. In working on that, we made the painful discovery that there wasn't much of a written record. We had to basically renegotiate an understanding of what the rules were, and this led to our deciding that we needed an inventory of just what facilities there were in Italy; what their standing was, and what the agreements guiding them were. So I was tasked to do an inventory of all U.S. military facilities in Italy. I spent six months working on that and it was really amazing. We found out that there were hundreds of facilities, from little radar bases and radio transmitters to pretty significant things. In trying to find the record for them, they discovered that the establishment of most of the facilities reflected that pattern of how the ministries worked in Italy. They had almost all been done after five in the afternoon with phone calls and meetings that were not memorialized - and that was fine when there was no question, but it became a problem. We looked at the bilateral SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) Balance of Forces Agreement again. We shared some of this project with the Italians and we an agreement on what was regular and what wasn't. It came in very handy to have this project. That became an almost full-time job for one of the POL/MIL officers, just to keep track and make sure that everything was more or less regular. The era of doing things informally had evolved into a more formal one while I was there.

Q: Some of these facilities, I think, were unmanned. In particular, beacons. In other cases there were people involved as well. I assume you worked very closely with the U.S. military trying to sort this out.

HOPPER: There were two military wings of the embassy; there was a Military Assistance Group (MAG) and the Defense Attachés Office (DAO). The attachés were in the embassy, and the MAG was across the street in an office building. Many times, I was the link between them. Here was this recently-long-haired, semi-hippy, intellectual civilian who had not served in Vietnam, serving as the link between an army brigadier general and a senior navy captain, and getting them all to work together. That was an interesting challenge to my diplomatic skills. Once again, it was very good for me. I came away not only with a respect and understanding for how the U.S. military works, but also a realization that they are very different cultures. The navy is very different from the army and getting them to work together was a challenge.

Q: In terms of your dealing in the embassy, and dealing with the demands in Italy: NATO command, Naples, and the Air Force in the north, and so on, how did you do that? Did you do it through either the MAG or the defense attaché or were you doing it directly?

HOPPER: There was a POLAD (political adviser) at one of them; I think there was a POLAD at the embassy. Ironically, there was a POLAD in London who had some role. Though I had more later, I had less then. We mostly dealt with the defense attaché's office on navy and shipping things because he was a navy captain and the senior navy person. The MAG was more army and air force. We mostly just used the phone and dealt directly with the big bases. I had learned who to talk to there. Keeping the MAG and the DAO working together was this constant challenge. Another was knowing what we were doing. Someone would write these cryptic messages and it took me a while to understand what UNODIR meant; U-N-O-D-I-R, which was the abbreviation for "Unless Otherwise Directed." It basically said, "You're free. You can do this." And after a while I'd see that the attaché was getting UNODIR messages, so I'd have to jump in really quickly to make sure that it was actually what the embassy and the State Department wanted to have done.

Q: You started out talking about events in Cyprus shortly after you arrived in 1974. I guess the other thing that probably is worth saying is that U.S. forces in Italy were very much involved in things way beyond Italy, as well, on occasion, whether it was with Cyprus or other things in the Mediterranean.

HOPPER: Especially the navy at that point. The Air Force and army units in the north, sort of around Vicenza, were more geared toward Germany and at that point they really were part of the position, and practicing to deal with Soviet East-Bloc attacks. They were starting to get sort of a Middle Eastern mission, but there wasn't anything to do with Africa. I mean it was easier then. There was much more of a focus on the real risk; the risk is from the Soviet Union and from China and keeping that together. We did some things in trying to help with relations with Yugoslavia. There was some competition with the embassy in Belgrade, who saw that as part of their mission, but it was a side show.

The real issue in Italy though, was dealing with the Communists. And that's where things have gotten incredibly complicated.

Q: Talk some more about that. Was the Italian Communist Party in government at that point?

HOPPER: No. They were out of government, and were flirting with the idea of some kind of a compromise; the *compromeso historico*.

Q: Opening to the Left.

HOPPER: Well, the opening to the Left had been in like 1962 with the Socialists, and the Kennedy administration had helped facilitate that, and had brought the Socialists into government. For me, the lesson from looking at history and watching both the Socialists and the Social Democrats, was how skillful the Christian Democrats were at sharing the pie and compromising; at bringing people in, but keeping control. Their view of compromise is an interesting one. It's sort of you share the spoils and you literally compromise people by letting them get pieces of the corruption and then they couldn't go back, and they couldn't really be as oppositional because they were dependent upon the largesse of the state.

A friend of mine who was in language training with me – a great fellow, Marty Wenick, went out at the same time I did. He was the first person in the political section to be responsible for embassy relations and to overtly have a relationship with the Communists. Got there and found that the deal that had been worked out was that he could only meet with the one person who was the head of the international section of the Communist Party. He was a very able and interesting counterpart, but it's hard to do good political work if you can only have one contact. There were real tight rules on who could see or say anything, and at one point the embassy information officer from USIA was fired because he was at one of the big hotels at the bar and there was a major event taking place and a lot of press around and he made some relatively innocuous comment. It was just nothing. And he was fired because nobody was supposed to say anything about that.

Q: And he was quoted?

HOPPER: Yes. It was really an eye-opener to see. This happened over and over again. We think people don't get fired, but press officers get fired and consistently it's the one position in an embassy that is the most vulnerable and where there is a lot of pressure and direct accountability if you could measure the results. I've seen them come and go more than anybody else. Some former USIA people would talk about what they wanted as part of policy. That was all of them except the press officer who was the ambassador's close associate in all this.

Q: And could easily make policy or interpret it.

HOPPER: And also had the sort of twin jobs of making U.S. policy explainable and looking good, but with the ambassadors with the wrong sets of ego, had to also make the ambassador constantly be a shining star and look good. That was something that wasn't confined to just the political ambassadors. When I was in Mexico when Bob McBride was the ambassador, if there wasn't a good story in the Mexican papers every other day, the press section was in trouble. Wasn't doing its job.

Q: Let's go back to this committee that before the 1976 election you were the executive secretary of, and was the embassy sort of outreach, if you will, toward the period leading up to the

election. I guess I'd like you to describe it a little bit more. You mentioned brass bands and villages. What sort of things did the committee do? What was its purpose, and did the embassy feel that it had any particular impact on the election as a result, even marginally?

HOPPER: Well, there's the embassy and there's me.

Q: Well we're talking about you.

HOPPER: What we did was to have two meetings a week to review and revise our plan and to make sure everybody was doing everything they could do from the different sections of USIA, and having AMPART (American Participant) visitors and cultural exchanges and to see that the right U.S. media things played in Italy, and to be sure that the internal political officers were arranging for people to meet with their contacts and kept encouraging and pressing the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, and the Social Democrats to work with one another; and to not give up; that they could win if they just had the right spirit and worked hard, and that even though it was easy to be discouraged, they could win.

We had these plans and were just constantly doing things and making sure that no stone was left unturned. We reported a lot. In the end, my sense was that the Italians are very skillful at running Italy and that they had probably taken most of the money out of the black bags and done whatever they wanted to do anyway in the past. I doubt if the results were changed very much, though I do appreciate that in the late '40s and early '50s the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations), and the urban ground, had done some really important work, that continued to keep the trade unions and some of the base of the working class institutionally supporting the Christian Democrats. In those first rounds of elections in the late '40s, things could've gone in different directions. Even then I would be inclined to trust Italian instincts, but at that point there, a lot had gone wrong. By that time, in the early '70s, there was a lot of inertia and we were playing on the margins. We did good things and in the end it worked out, though it was that period of slipping into really frightening terrorism. When I think back, it was before the no double standard policy and we used to get threats from Black September and different PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) groups against the embassy quite frequently.

I can remember at least three or four times when we had threats we would bring sharp-shooters and people down from EUCOM (United States European Command) and we might close the embassy on Thursday and Friday and heavily guard it and watch what was going on, and not tell anybody. It happened once maybe that the RSO (Regional Security Officer) and the Gunny and the marines and the EUCOM team was there and everybody else was working from home. There were a couple of times that we were even encouraged to go out of town on a long weekend, and just be gone. But we didn't tell the public. What were these Americans wandering in to get their passports supposed to do? What if there had been something and there were people standing in line? But, the good side was that you could really keep an eye on things without tipping everybody off and publicly it didn't look like you were in some ways caving in to, in some general way, terrorism. So then when you later got to the no double standard policy where if you knew something to protect yourself, you very understandably had to tell everyone. It meant you had fewer options for how to deal with it. So now we see embassies closing all time.

Q: Everybody knows. Was this a period in Italy where there were acts of terrorism directed at Italian officials or was that a little bit later?

HOPPER: Yes it was starting. When I was there, it was more like they were gearing up. There were more kidnappings and it was aimed at businesspeople and the prominent. At one stage, it was kidnapping for money and then it changed. The big change, of course, was right after I left, when they grabbed Aldo Moro.

There had been these outrages where Fascists had bombed train stations and they felt that only the fascists who would kill other Italians and then the left started doing it.

Q: With your committee and this coordinated effort before the '76 election, were you doing anything vis a vis the NSI, the Fascist Party?

HOPPER: No. It was interesting, but no one wanted to go there. One of the strange realities was that in terms of political correctness, the Fascists had so burned their credibility that at that point it was still just an outhouse term; they were in the wilderness. Even though there may have been some who were smart, decent, skillful people, they were Fascists, and there was a fear that if there was just any sign that we were willing to countenance some compromise with Fascists, that that could tip things the other way.

Q: Why don't you talk to us a little bit about the role, if any, in terms of this political activity, of the consulates in Italy outside of Rome. I guess I'm a little curious as to whether you ever got outside of Rome yourself. It sounds like the two years you were there you were very tied down.

HOPPER: I was a lot. Basically, the consulate in Milan was a very strong place, run much of the time by Tom Fina, who was a very strong career officer. He tried to deal with Embassy Rome as little as possible, but we'd have meetings and he'd come down and he'd talk to everyone. He was sort of co-consul for northern Italy. He did a very, very good job and had very good contacts and I think played an important role and had a lot of leeway to do much of the work on his own.

The other significant post was the one in Naples; they were still operational in the sense of doing visas and dealing with the navy. They didn't have much of a say in politics. The shocking thing about life in Italy was that politically the Italian establishment despised the south and didn't pay any attention to it. Bought it and rented it and didn't worry about it. So that politics was all going north. And most of what we did was run north. I now realize that you could do a lot with people outside of their bases or outside of a center, by working with them within their homes. We did most things in Rome; probably too much.

There was also little background noise. There were always worries that there would be military rumblings and we worried about coups.

Q: The Italian forces?

HOPPER: Yes, Yes. It was sort of nonsense, but we worried a lot about it. There were days when

somebody saw tanks rolling in front of one of their downtown bases. We would pay a little attention to that. We started doing counter-narcotics and international crime things in Rome while I was there and we had a fairly big legal FBI section and we had a drug section. As I became the secretary and I started looking at what everybody did, it was sort of naively shocking to me that our international crime activities also focused on Rome and the north. I'd love to know this, but I've heard several times that we'd actually reached a deal that BNDD (I think they were drug enforcement by '74) didn't go to Palermo; it was too dangerous so we did it through liaison in Rome. If we were doing very much down where the drugs and crime were, we kept it secret. The other thing that made it hard was that Ambassador Volpe absolutely believed there was no such thing as the mafia and no such thing as Italian organized crime, so we couldn't report on the mafia because there wasn't any.

Q: It didn't exist.

HOPPER: It didn't exist. I once did a big report on the Lockheed scandal, and in it I committed two crimes. I actually got the cable out when the ambassador was away and I both compared what the leader of the Social Democrats had done and problems we had to Watergate, and I talked about the mafia. And when the ambassador got back about a week later he called me and the DCM into his office. And really, I was really afraid for the DCM. He said, "You know, it's your job. You're supposed to make sure that this kind of thing doesn't happen." "Watergate is," I forget how he put it, "it's a tragedy that poor President Nixon is being harassed and for embassy reporting to give it credence by using it as an example of how somehow it may harm Italy is just wrong. I don't ever want to see that again." It was really a wonderful piece that I had done, but the only person who didn't like it was the ambassador.

Q: It probably didn't have his name on it if he was out of the country.

HOPPER: Yes. The other thing that got him upset was that it actually got leaked and ran verbatim in the Chicago newspaper and got carried and then they copied it in the media and Time magazine and everywhere.

Q: Bob, you're still on the Via Veneto in Rome; you were in the political military section. This is the period from 1974 to '76.

HOPPER: I was the deputy of a two person Pol/Mil section, as we mentioned earlier, and in fact it sat in the larger suite that held the political section. From the get-go, I went to all of the political section staff meetings and we might as well have been just a subdivision and an integrated part as well. We had the benefits of sort of being independent and apart.

I wanted to mention that in a big post like Rome another issue that was very important and became more so as time went on, was taking care of high-level visitors. In the fall of 1974 - I can't even remember the policy impetus for it, but there was pressure to hold an international food summit, and since the Food and Agriculture Organization is headquartered in Rome, it was decided, in a fit of good sense, to hold the food summit in Rome. President Nixon had been

interested; he couldn't come, but still there was very high level U.S. representation and in one week, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the big U.S. delegation were coming; I believe the Secretary of the Treasury was coming because of the large financial implications. And there were some scattered congressional involvement.

Then the embassy got a cable one morning that a wonderful man, Clem Zablocki from Wisconsin, the Chairman, at that time, of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was going to lead a large delegation. I'm not exaggerating when I say there were at least nine members plus staffers who came on the delegation. All senior embassy people were already tied up as control officers for everyone else, so the DCM called me into his office that morning and he said, "Bob, I'd like you to be the control officer for CODEL (Congressional Delegation) Zablocki." I barely knew what a CODEL was and I'd never been a control officer for anything bigger than the Nebraska State Popcorn Trade Commission visiting Monterrey, Mexico, but I said, "Great. Sounds like fun. I'd love to do it." So I got in touch with Zablocki's staff and started organizing things, and I had an instinct that while I should do what they wanted me to do, that I should also take advantage of their visit to try and do things that I had wanted to do that weren't readily available to me as a pretty junior officer. I recall I took them to see the Italian Minister of Defense because I couldn't get in to see the Minister of Defense and they were important enough that they could. We went and visited a number of places. I had gone to Orvieto, which is a lovely mountain town and where very few tourists went. So, I got a bus one day and I took them up to Orvieto and these skilled world travelers just thought I had taken them to heaven. I learned they really appreciated little trips to heaven every now and then. We also did a day where we went down to the Sixth Fleet command and then went to Monte Cassino. where it turned out both Chairman Zablocki and his vice chairman, Dante Fascell, had been foot soldiers during World War II, and as Catholic Americans, one a Pole and one an Ital-American, cared deeply about the fate of the abbey and its rebuilding.

The prior bishop or whoever was in charge of the abbey agreed to give them a guided tour and meet with the group. We had a wonderful meeting and got a historical accounting of the tragedy and the crisis and the problems of the area during and after World War II. And at the end – I think it was Fascell – asked, "Why did it take so long to rebuild this place given all the money we provided?" The rebuilding had just been finished and blessed a couple of months before. The priest in charge, in an endearing feat of honesty, said, "Well, I'm going to tell you why. We knew that you Americans felt guilty and had a sense of responsibility, but we decided that the best way to get money from you was to say that it was for rebuilding the bomb damage to the abbey and so we did a big campaign. But what we really needed the money for was taking care of all the orphans, and a lot of social work in the area. So we spent most of the money on that and we drug out the building. We could've built this thing in a year, but we used almost all of the money for other things and just kept dragging it along so we probably got ten times more than we would've needed just to build." He did it in such a nice way that they actually agreed with him that it would've been harder to sustain funding for orphans; and so everybody had a good laugh. But for me, it was interesting to think that money can be used for many different things and can be raised in many different ways.

But it was a good visit. The guys went off and the number two, Dante Fascell, seemed to really like me. I got to know his wife and I saw a report that wives were on such trips, and he said,

“Look, if you ever need anything, just be in touch.” I know people say that a lot, but I decided that I would try to put that away in a little bank and keep using it. Sadly, within a couple of years Zablocki died and Fascell moved up and became the chairman of the committee. Later on I did have occasions to help other people go to him and to go to him myself. For the rest of my career, I was in touch with people on his staff who I had met through that visit. So I found that you should take seriously those offers of being in touch and staying in touch, and that high-level visits are great occasions for meeting people.

Q: And would you go a step further and say that at least based on this first CODEL experience in Rome, that CODEL visits can be very useful not only to the members of Congress in terms of what they learn and the experiences that they have, but to the embassy in terms of opening doors that wouldn't otherwise be open and so on?

HOPPER: Well, absolutely. They will often ask the intelligently naïve big question of people when they're sitting on the ground. You sometimes get so enamored of knowing what's the latest twist in something that you fair to ask these questions. I found visits invaluable.

The other thing I learned very early was that for a political section officer, it was a somewhat unusual opportunity to be a manager, if management is using resources and other people's time, doing a high-level visit was an occasion where you got to call upon a lot of different sections and assets of the embassy. I found it was really good experience, that I enjoyed it and that, evidently, I was fairly good at getting other people to do things.

Q: You didn't feel that this particular visit was simply a boondoggle; a junket shopping expedition?

HOPPER: That kind of thing never bothered me very much. I felt that for most of us our whole careers were boondoggles and shopping expeditions; that one of the reasons we joined the Foreign Service was to be able to go to these wonderful places and experience them at depth. So what's the problem if a Secretary of State or a congressman wants to visit them for three days and because they don't have so much time to sample, they sometimes overdose and seem to lack good sense. But no, that didn't bother me.

Also, the timing of the World Food Summit, and the timing of the congressional elections were such that they acted as a stimulus for a rule change in the Congress on when members could travel because there was a senior committee chairman who had lost a primary because of some problem and had been allowed to travel. Interestingly, he used the military to facilitate his logistical details. He stayed in a hotel across the street and away from everyone else. It turned out he was actually using the trip to have a liaison with one of his senior staff members of the opposite sex. It was infamous that he never went to any meetings, they just sort of camped out and went shopping. Somebody leaked it to the equivalent of an in-the-loop news service at the time. It got a lot of press and as a result Congress changed the rules to if you were leaving the Congress you had to jump through some real hoops to travel. My group was so serious and had such legitimate business, that compared to somebody who was actually using it for not the best purposes, it seemed wonderful. What happened as a result of my having done a fairly decent job on CODEL Zablocki and taking care of them, was that maybe about five or six months later,

after the resignation of President Nixon, and President Ford was in office and he did a tour to wrap up the Helsinki process - I guess the concluding document was all signed in Helsinki...

Q: In 1975.

HOPPER: In '75, and he did a tour through eastern European capitals and because the Romanians had played a major role in being a little bit independent of the Soviet Union and helping it happen, he decided to honor their role by including a stop in Bucharest. Embassy Bucharest was a little bit small to take care of a presidential visit on its own, so the European Bureau bolstered the staffing of Embassy Bucharest by sending people TDY (Temporary Duty) from all over Europe and from the Department. And because I had done the CODEL Zablocki well, I was asked if I would go to Bucharest on TDY to assist with the presidential visit and I said, "Sure, sounds great." So I went there ten days before the visit and I was the Henry Kissinger control officer and scheduling person and I assisted a wonderful senior USIA person as the site officer at the presidential palace residential section of Bucharest. Working on the schedule was very interesting and working on a presidential visit, for me - I guess it was the second one; we'd had one in Rome that I'd worked on a little bit, too - was just fascinating. When the Secret Service people came in and were doing all of the practice for the motorcades and the arrival at the airport in Bucharest, there were a couple of anti-aircraft short-range missile sites and somehow they bragged that they had actually dismantled or found some way to take them out of commission.

Q: "They" being?

HOPPER: The Secret Service for the arrival and departure. It seemed pretty clear to me that they had not done that through overt negotiations with Romanian officials. So that was part of it. As they practiced the motorcades, and building on the masses of experience that U.S. officials had had with high-level visits, we had little cards to use to talk to the contract drivers for every situation. I'll never forget there was a card that said, "Hurry up. We're late." One day, in fact it was the day of President Ford's arrival, one of the people who had to get out to the airport was saying, "Hurry up. We're late. Hurry up. We're late," and their Romanian driver started driving a hundred miles an hour and there were people lined up near the motorcades and the person realized, "Oh my god, I didn't mean to go that fast," and they had no card saying "Slow down. Be careful," and the driver hit a pedestrian and killed them. So from that day forward I understand that people always had a card saying "Slow down. Be careful."

We took care of working on the visit of the arrival of the team. We'd been at this lovely big guesthouse complex where President Nicolae Ceausescu lived and he'd invited the senior U.S. delegation to stay there. It was summer time and it was hot and it wasn't very comfortable. I kept pushing and saying, "When is the air-conditioning coming on?" and they'd say, "Don't worry. President Nicolae Ceausescu is also up in one of the rooms. We haven't had it on, but it'll be fine. Don't worry, it'll be fine." And about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning when they were going to arrive, it's still real hot. And the embassy people didn't want to upset the Romanians - they were very nice. Finally, I pushed and I said, "When is this air-conditioning going to kick in?" and the management team from the residence comes down and I started pushing them rather directly and they said, "Well, you know air-conditioning systems in Romania aren't the same as

in the United States. Our system here is that we run lots of water on the roof and then turn the fans on and it's just been too hot for that to work. This is about as cool as it's going to get." The administrative officer came out and we thought, "Oh, what are we going to do? They're not going to be able to sleep."

Secretary Kissinger was pretty infamous for not liking to be too uncomfortable, so the embassy called around and sent a truck from the administrative section to people's homes in the embassy community and they collected about twenty fans and they brought fans in and put them in the senior U.S. visitors' rooms. It actually made it tolerable. The day goes on and it comes to be evening and Secretary Kissinger gets to his room and tries to get some rest and his fan is very noisy. His staff on the trip was Jerry Bremer and David Passage and they come out and they had heard about me; one of them knew me, and said, "Bob, we're counting on you. The Secretary can't sleep. You have to get another fan. This is just no good." I said, "We have all the fans from the entire American community. We're kind of stuck." Then a light went on in my head and I said, "Oh, but you know, Ron Nessen and one of the president's aides, they're still downtown and having a late night. Let me go check around." I went and checked the fan was on in Nessen's room. It was bigger and real quiet, so I took the fan out of Nessen's room, brought it to the Secretary's and we switched. That was considered such a coup that I went up in a steam and went on the secretariat's list of the best and brightest and even got an accolade as an honorary administrative officer. But it all went really well.

In substance it was a great visit. I was able to watch the sometimes kind of petty competition between a White House staff and the Secretary's staff. I think no one will doubt that Secretary Kissinger is a great man with a huge role, a brilliance and an ego to match. It turned out that President Ford's staff had just about had enough of it and felt that they needed to bring Secretary Kissinger down a peg. So, on the afternoon of one of the key meetings, they'd had one after-lunch session with Ceausescu and another one was scheduled in the late afternoon, and as the group came back to the guesthouse, I watched them – I was out there to move them along, they were sort of loitering outside the motorcade and President Ford told Kissinger directly, "Well you know, that was okay, but I think we don't need that meeting in the afternoon, so we've worked out we're just going to skip it and we can all relax. We're tired. And we'll just go back for the dinner." So the State Department people who were staying in a different wing of the guest house; go in one direction. The presidential people go in another. Then about ten minutes later, I see the presidential people coming back; they're chuckling and they get in the motorcade. They actually had not canceled the second set of meetings with Ceausescu; they just wanted to fool Kissinger and go do it on their own. So I ran back to the Secretary of State part of the visit and told them, and not amazingly, they were very upset: they ran and they got Secretary Kissinger, got in their cars, and sped off. God knows what excuse they thought of, but they did arrive at the meetings ten minutes later. It's just of such things that are superpowers made.

I also found out that all of the visitors from Washington, especially the Secret Service and the WHCA (White House Communications Agency) communications people who work very hard on these visits, actually got a lot of money. They got overtime, they billed for overtime for every minute, from when they got on the car plane. They knew how to bill for their expenses. And one of the reasons they were willing to spend so much time traveling is that they did alright financially. The State Department people, we were under a much tighter resource control and we

were encouraged not to ask for anything; just to see it as a great opportunity. Then I discovered that the State administrative people who came out and did the trips also knew how to bill for things. One of them told me, as an FSO-6 or 5 or whatever I was, I was under that federally established limit where you could get overtime. So, I kept track of my records and when I did my voucher, I did a supplemental request for overtime. It got signed and went in. The administrative people thought I was brilliant and smart to do that. I then got a call from the late Lemman Hunt who was a senior administrative person in the Department and who had worked with Joan Clark who was still the executive director for the European Bureau. They said they were really surprised I'd made a mistake and had submitted this request for overtime. I talked to him and I thought about it and I called him back and said, "No, I checked. It wasn't a mistake." I was entitled to it. Other people were getting it. I'd been away from my family for two weeks. I was out-of-pocket on my apartment. I said no it wasn't a mistake; I wanted my money. They then had somebody in EUR at a lower level call me and said they'd give me one last chance and that if I didn't retract my request for the overtime, I should know that I would never be asked to go TDY to do a presidential visit again. I said that wasn't much of a threat, and would they please send my money. And they sent my money; I got my overtime and I was never asked to go TDY by EUR to do a presidential visit again, but probably I learned what I could out of the first one.

Q: Well, you probably had another year to go in Rome so there may not have been all that many more chances in any event.

HOPPER: Yes.

Q: The food summit was probably right at the end of 1974, after the general election in November, before the new congress came in.

HOPPER: Yes.

Q: Anything else that you particularly want to talk about in connection with the assignment in Rome?

HOPPER: Just a couple of things about management issues. In Rome, it being a large embassy, we had a cadre of incredibly talented Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). It was because of World War II. We had people that the embassy was able to hire in the late '40s when there were precious few other opportunities. I can recall a couple of the senior FSNs; they should've been CEOs (Chief Executive Officers). I mean they were so good. And to our credit, we identified early on that they were good, gave them opportunities, and we really trusted them. They had a lot of autonomy in running different parts of the embassy. But here it was, 1974, twenty-five plus years after World War II, these talented people had been here for (most of them) well over twenty years, but they'd been hired when they were eighteen so they were still relatively young and they had seen us come and go so many times that the downside of the match of transient Foreign Service Officers and skillful somewhat underemployed locals had gotten a bit sour. And they had figured out how to run the embassy the way they wanted to and all of the younger officers found the situation with the FSNs to be intolerable. We had not been trained at all in how to deal with FSNs. We have the bizarre view that we were actually the employees and that we were the bosses and that even if we were twenty-eight that a fifty-year-old FSN who was the

head of some autonomous management section, in some strange way should work for us. And so, when we would have an idea, invariably the response, usually not stated but implied, was “You foolish jerk. We’ve heard that same dumb idea from fifteen other brand-new wet-behind-the-ear FSOs. Thanks. You’re going to be gone in two years. We’ll consider it. We’ll do it if it makes sense, but it doesn’t make sense and it never made sense.” So there was a lot of tension between the FSNs and the junior officers.

After a while, it became obvious that at a large post like Rome to make things work the FSNs had figured out that if they kept the ambassador and the ambassador’s wife happy, if they kept the DCM and the DCM’s wife happy, and they kept the admin counselor and his family happy, the rest didn’t matter. And it was really interesting to see that the political counselor and the economic counselor didn’t have much more luck in pressing their cases than a junior officer, and that there was this sort of pecking order on the management side. Years later, when I was lobbying with Congress for the Department and found that our support system, then called FAST, the Foreign Affairs Administrative System, a shared budgeting system with other agencies, had totally fallen apart because the other agencies universally felt that if the embassy got new refrigerators that they went to the ambassador, the DCM, and the administrative counselor and then maybe to the club or something and then there weren’t anymore, that that kind of reputation had spread so wide that we weren’t trusted to manage the system fairly for everybody. And I think it went back to the kind of system that had evolved in a place like Rome.

The one other administrative issue that was fascinating in Rome and clearly had an impact on many people in many places was housing. Once you got your assignment, you sent a letter to the admin counselor and you described your family situation and you were encouraged to tell them what kind of housing you wanted. This was in the period where there were mostly housing allowances. There were government-leased and owned places for the most senior people and a fairly nice big apartment building for “staff.” Everybody in between got a housing allowance and went out on the economy to find their own. The Italian economy had gotten strong enough in the mid-’70s that it meant we were competing in certain neighborhoods with the rest of the international community and with successful Italians.

If you had a family, it was really surprising; there were not that many places to live a family style life. We arrived in July. We had to move quickly or we would hit the August vacation period and not be able to do anything. The embassy was very nice. They gave us time to get out on the streets to look for places; my wife, who had a little Italian, spent the first week just going everywhere and tracking down every lead. We went to one very nice apartment in a neighborhood called Parioli that was near where the ambassador lived and relatively convenient to the embassy; a nice apartment; just the right size. It seemed just right. It had a park and a tennis court and we were asking the sort of caretaker doorman, “Well, where do our kids play? Can they play in this park?” “Kids? You have kids? No, you keep your kids in your apartment. We don’t want kids out bothering other people. The tennis courts are for adults.” It was interesting for all of the perceptions of the importance of children in Italian family life, that in some ways they were to be seen and not heard. The sort of comfortable outdoor rambunctious suburban life – it was fine, but you can’t take that with you and it was hard to find. We ended up finding, after a few tearful nights, a place that other Americans had lived at. It was in a complex that had eleven buildings and a really wonderful mix of people. The Italian landlord of the

condominium (he had two or three places there) offered us a pretty good deal, but then said that I would have to sign multiple contracts; one I could use with the embassy, and one he would use with Italian tax authorities. I knew we couldn't do that and I told him that "I can only sign one contract. I'd like to sign the low one, but I can really only sign one." He said, "Well then if you're going to sign it and I know you're government will give it to somebody, you have to sign the high one," and the rent was significantly more than the allowance, but I'd been told that it would catch up and everybody was having this problem.

Q: The allowance would go up?

HOPPER: The allowance would go up. So it was \$200 a month out-of-pocket, which in 1974 at entry-level was quite a bit of money; but, I took it on faith that it would catch up, signed the thing, turned it in, and the embassy housing committee sent me a snide note saying that I'd signed an unacceptable contract and that they recommended that I get out of it and start over again, adding that if I had signed it and had any problems, it would be on me. I looked around and it was clear (I'd been there long enough) that there wasn't going to be any better place; and my family would've gone nuts if we would've had to start the process over again. So I just signed it and agreed that I would accept whatever the costs were.

To pay the rent, my wife, or one of us - and at that point in time it was just assumed it would be your wife - (and bless my wife. She did it with great aplomb) would go down to a bank near the Ponte Milvia - a very crowded section fairly near our house - once a month, get in the nonexistent queue and pay the rent in cash into an account that this landlord had set up. She would do that and found that in an Italian bank you couldn't even find the queue and people would be knocking you down, and cutting in front. She had to find a way to get up and pay her money. There were multiple exchange rates in Italy at the time; there were official ones and ones that certain banks charged; the one that you could get at the embassy and the one that you could get at a couple of little shops two blocks away from the embassy; it was fascinating. Let's just say that the official rate was 600 lira to the dollar and the little shop around the corner gave you 800 lira to the dollar. If you're \$200 a month out-of-pocket, that spread between 800 and 600 is important. You were supposed to use the official rate, but after a while you find out that everybody is doing it. You sort of go over with four or five people in a group. I'm not really proud of it, but I'd go once or twice a month and get enough to pay the rent. One never knows how those things work. No one ever got caught for it. There were no problems. It was just a strange little system.

Q: Life in Rome. Your talk about housing and the difficulty of finding housing, as well as your experience with high-level visits reminds me of some of my experiences in Rome from 1970 to '73; just a few years before. But I'll resist telling my stories.

Let me ask you a couple things about going back to the political reporting - political section. I think the other day you mentioned that Ambassador Volpe, after the fact, had called you in and been unhappy that you had referred to the Italian mafia, and also, I think, to Watergate, therefore, you couldn't refer to those as long as he was there and was in charge of the embassy. Was that something that affected the reporting or would you not have been reporting very much about the mafia or Watergate and the Italian reaction? Did this have a larger effect as well?

HOPPER: I'm not sure. In some ways, the sort of clear bottom line was that we not use words like the mafia and Watergate as explicit metaphors for anything, and if you interpreted the rule to mean that, you could find many ways around it. Where I also found it hard, was the year when I was the secretary of the committee on Italian democracy, and we had a plan to write a series of cables on social issues that affected Italian life. I was going to do one on abortion and crime and a range of things; I actually did it without being able to very explicitly deal with mafia or religious issues in a way that called into question the powers that be and the traditional desired, but not always practiced, moral codes. It made it hard to do.

I found a lot of these big projects were really fun to write and to research, but it's where I faulted the leadership of the embassy in that there's only so much time even a fairly junior person has. I would get sent off doing interesting, and actually important, complex projects that we couldn't complete. I felt after a while that if you really followed the evidence and did it the way that most of us felt the evidence pointed, you couldn't get it out. So you had to do it in a convoluted fashion. I had a couple of cables I actually managed to clear with twenty people in the embassy and not ruin them. I found after a while that the clearance process was okay; that it would get rid of things - or maybe I'd only heard it from one place and it wasn't that solid - and people had good contacts and you'd get other things.

I had a knack for enveloping the material other people gave me and yet keeping what I thought was the big picture and the point of view. I did one of these on social issues, got it cleared by the entire leadership of the embassy - every major section, every section head - got it in to the DCM, and he sort of liked it. He then met with the ambassador and he called and said, "Bob, we can't say this. This embassy, at this point, just can't say all these things about abortion and divorce..." and so the cable never went out. It was a lot of work and I really could've been doing other things. This is consistent throughout my career - that even on tough cables where maybe at a certain point in time leadership wouldn't want to send them - and sometimes they were even right that the timing just wasn't right - I'd find that three weeks after the cable had been put in an in-box someplace and sat on, that you'd hear the DCM at a lunch with somebody actually make the comments that were in the cable that never went out. Or you'd see another section would start pursuing a policy line that was from the draft cable that never went out. So I learned that there are many purposes to doing the research and writing involved in a major cable, and not all of them are just sending it to Washington.

Q: There were probably also instances where the timing was wrong and it wasn't sent, and then two months went by, six weeks went by, and all of a sudden there was a great need for exactly that kind of research and work that had been done.

HOPPER: Also you could break them up. The other thing I learned was that if it didn't work as a big piece, you could send things as little pieces.

Q: Add it on to other conversations or whatever.

HOPPER: Right.

Q: Let me ask you, and this kind of relates to what you were just talking about, particularly in the area of religion. At that time there was no embassy for the Vatican. There was somebody in Embassy Rome who I think covered Vatican issues. Did you get involved with the Vatican at all, or was it the kind of reporting where the Catholic Church and the Vatican had a lot of influence in Italy, where religion was pertinent, as far as you were concerned?

HOPPER: When I arrived, the U.S. representative to the Vatican was Henry Cabot Lodge; and, having been a vice presidential candidate to President Nixon in 1960, he did have some connections, and was wonderful, smooth and sophisticated.

There was one person, an experienced then O-5 which I guess would be a 3 now, Bob Illing, who spoke wonderful Italian and was very experienced - or seemed so to me, being less experienced-who on a week, month, year-in basis did the Vatican. He had wonderful relations with the Vatican's equivalent of a foreign ministry. He had an office and a desk in the political section. He also had an office outside of the embassy that was closer to the Vatican. In this sometimes stifling bureaucratic palace in Rome, he could hide out a bit and do his own thing. Bob left a couple of months after I arrived, and was replaced by Peter Sarros, a wonderful fellow. Out of a year, either Bob or Peter would have maybe two months when the Vatican representative was present and they were a bag person and a gopher and an assistant. And ten months when they were there, and were in charge of an operation that had one senior Foreign Service secretary, and a couple of locals. I think they actually had a car that they could use. It was pretty wonderful. After a while you realized it was one of the most coveted jobs in the Foreign Service. That one person and a little staff did most of the work with the Vatican. Somehow they also had a protocol local employee, because part of the job was getting audiences and getting visitors in to different things. But on the substance of relations with the Vatican, we treated it as fairly straight-forward with their foreign ministry. At that point we pretty much stayed out of broader big church politics; very definitely did not try to track or get involved in important U.S. Catholic leaders coming. We just did the Vatican as a foreign ministry. Later on, when we upped our representation and created an ambassador, the whole thing changed quite a bit. But at that time, it was fairly simple, and if the rest of us in the political section had some ideas on structural church issues and how they affected Italy, we would ask; we would clear them with the day to day person and ask them for ideas. But we didn't go over to the Vatican. There was a pretty firm dividing line.

Q: Okay, anything else we should say about your assignment in Rome?

HOPPER: Maybe talk a little bit about how I got out of Rome and went back to the Department to my next assignment.

Q: This was in 1976?

HOPPER: I just spent two years. I came in the summer of '74 and I left in the summer of '76. It would've been possible to extend to get a third year - as a junior officer you're supposed to sort of do two two-year assignments, but it would've been easy to get a third year. I decided I found the bureaucracy and the atmosphere within the embassy kind of gut-wrenching, and I decided that I'd rather go learn something else and do something else. My family was very disappointed.

After we'd gotten established, they really loved Rome and would've been happy to stay for another year. So I took a lot of grief at meals for years because we pulled out and we didn't stay another year.

I had enjoyed the POL/MIL work and I had enjoyed those discussions of arms control and things like MBFR. I had this understanding that the Political Military Bureau was small enough that even on a third tour, having been the "deputy" of a POL/MIL section, knowing a lot of people, that maybe I could get a deputy office director job in PM (Bureau of Political Military-Affairs). So I worked through people and that's what I was bidding on - and I thought I was in the running for one of them - and then out of the blue, the embassy got a call from whoever was running SS/EX at the time, saying that the counselor of the Department, Hal Sonnenfeldt, had heard about me from various visitors and was interested in considering me to be the special assistant on his staff who did western Europe and related issues, and would I give the office a call. So I called and the person who I was going to be replacing was Jim Dobbins. I talked to Jim a little bit and I had a very, very brief conversation with Sonnenfeldt, and snap, I was assigned to that Seventh Floor special assistant job. I didn't know very much about what that really meant. I went on home leave - I had an awful long flight from Rome to Los Angeles in the middle of the summer with two little kids - but par for the course, get back to the Department and took the spot of special assistant for western Europe and Euro-communism, and some other issues, but mostly NATO and western Europe.

GEORGE F. WARD, Jr.
Consular Officer
Genoa (1974-1976)

Political Officer
Rome (1976-1979)

Ambassador George F. Ward, Jr. was born on April 9, 1945 in Jamaica, in the borough of Queens in New York City. He attended the University of Rochester and served in the US Marine Corps from 1965 to 1969. He entered the Foreign Service in 1969, wherein he served in countries including Italy, Germany, and Namibia. He was interviewed on April 23, 2001 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

WARD: From the summer of 1974 until the summer of 1976. It was a two-year assignment. That was the pattern at the time; junior officer assignments were two years. The cone system was just beginning. There was no such thing as a cone when I came in. I didn't know for a long time what my specialty was. It wasn't like it is today where everyone is focused on one specialty from the first day.

Q: Things sort of fell out before they had cones. You kind of ended up where you wanted to be. I was a consular officer. I just drifted into it.

WARD: Right. I think most people ended up where they wanted to be, but it was a very

mysterious process.

Q: It probably worked a little better. Who was your consul general in Genoa?

WARD: My consul general was Gori Bruno. Even the name is interesting because no Italian would believe that was really his name because “Gori” is not a given name in Italian. It’s a surname. So, they wanted to call him Bruno Gori. But the Gori was the family name of his father’s best friend. When his father came to the United States, he named his son Gori.

Q: So he was of Italian extraction.

WARD: He was of Italian descent. He was a consular officer, had come up, as many did, through the Foreign Service Staff ranks and had become a Foreign Service officer. Being consul general in Genoa was his last tour. He was a darned good consul general. He took it very seriously.

Q: Genoa, '74-'76. Where did it fall in the political spectrum of Italy and how did it fit in?

WARD: This was a fascinating time to be in Italy. Genoa had always been a city with a large union-dominated communist party. A socialist-communist majority ruled the city with a socialist mayor. Despite all that, Genoa was and is a very moderate city. The Genoese are commercial people. They are seafaring people. They are businesspeople. They are extremely serious. It’s also a very insular place. The key relationships among the important families of Genoa were established in the 12th through the 14th centuries, when Genoa was a great power. It was a very proud place. It was also a city that to my mind had been on a slightly declining since about the 14th century. But it was a great place to learn Italian politics because politicians were everywhere, and they were accessible. There was a lot going on. The Red Brigades were just getting started as a terrorist organization. They kidnapped one of the prosecuting judges in Genoa, Mario Sossi. Another judge made a deal with the Red Brigades to get Sossi out. Then when Sossi was released, the other judge went back on the deal and some of the Red Brigades were killed. The Red Brigades marked this judge for assassination. While I was there, he was assassinated, despite the fact that he had 24-hour security protection. Several of my close political contacts were “kneecapped.” One was assassinated while I was there.

Q: Kneecapped meaning...

WARD: Shot in the knee. It was a technique that the Red Brigade used. It was a time also when among the left and certainly among the extreme left, there was extreme anti-Americanism. Kissinger was a negative symbol of America for them, and when he traveled to Europe at one point, there was a generalized threat against American officials. We had Italian police living outside our apartment for several weeks, which impressed my daughter and my neighbors. My neighbors were very upset because Genoese are known to pinch the penny and they were concerned that the *carabinieri* were keeping the lights on in the apartment house. But it was a fascinating time. It was also the time when the Italian socialists were beginning to re-construct their party as a moderate force under the leadership of Bettino Craxi. In 1976, I was transferred from Genoa to the political section in Rome. After home leave, I began covering the non-communist left.

Q: Let's stick to Genoa first. What were you getting from the socialists? Somehow they were a party in the rest of Europe, but the socialists in Italy had lost out to the communists as a left-wing movement.

WARD: Yes. The reasons that they lost to the communists were many, some of which are shrouded in the history of the party in the 1920s. Basically, the socialists were at a disadvantage at the end of the war because the communists had been much more effective in the partisan battle against the Germans. The communists were able, in my view, to inflate their accomplishments and set themselves up as the people who saved Italy, which in the larger historical picture is nonsense. The socialists therefore were disadvantaged. The communists also were better organized than the socialists. The socialists seemed also to be more blatantly out for personal political gain than the communists, although there was a good bit of that going on in the Communist Party also. The joke at the time was that PSI did not stand for *Partito Socialisti Italiano* (Italian Socialist Party); it stood for *Partito Sindaci Italiani*, the Party of Italian Mayors. The socialists were content to be the balance of power party. In a center-left coalition, with the Christian Democrats, they would provide the mayor. In a center-left coalition with the communists, they would also provide the major. They had 11-12% of the electorate, but they held the balance of power in many key cities.

Q: At that time, when you were in Genoa, could you talk to the communists?

WARD: No. At the consulate level, we did not work with the communists, talk with the communists, or have meetings with them except to the extent that they were government officials. Later, in Rome, we had one person in the political section who opened relations with the Communist Party and began under Richard Gardner, the ambassador, to very carefully widen relations with people within the Communist Party. Initially, the relationship was limited to this particular officer, Marty Wenick. He was able to speak with literally one person within the PCI, the Italian Communist Party. That later was widened a little bit. The ambassador did not meet with communists, although the communists attempted to create the impression that the Carter administration was opening to them. The backdrop to everything was growing terrorism. It was a time when former PM Aldo Mora was kidnaped and eventually murdered.

Q: Which was not really connected to the Communist Party.

WARD: No.

Q: They weren't the good guys, but they weren't the bad guys.

WARD: The only connection was that both the Communist Party and the terrorists were getting assistance from the Warsaw Pact.

Q: In Genoa, what about the Christian Democrats? Were they much of a power there?

WARD: The Christian Democrats had a fairly large contingent on the city council. In the province of Genoa, which included the suburbs, I think the Christian Democrats had a majority.

They also were fairly strong in the Ligurian regional government until the elections of 1975, when the left did very well.

Q: Did you have any feel about the problem that later broke the whole political system down a couple of decades later, corruption?

WARD: The great enigma is the personality of Bettino Craxi. He emerged in the mid-seventies as a moderate, reform-minded socialist. He became prime minister, but was forced from office in disgrace. He lived out his last years in exile in Tunisia under threat of arrest for corruption if he ever set foot in Italy. In working with Craxi and his people, I had the sense that there was a great deal going on underneath the table. Craxi's senior aides always seemed to wear Rolex watches and snazzy suits that they should not have been able to afford. In the 1970s, the embassy assessed Craxi as a much more effective leader than the old guard among the socialists, and as someone who could help keep the communists out of power. Giulio Andreotti, the Christian Democratic prime minister, seemed, after all, intent upon creating an opening for the communists to enter the government. If Craxi were corrupt, as certainly seems to have been the case, he was no more corrupt than many other Italian politicians.

Q: Within Italian society, did you find that government employees seemed to have two jobs, one they went to in the morning and then all of a sudden they would disappear and they were doing something else, a private business?

WARD: There were a lot of people with two jobs. When I was in Rome, it turned out that one of the Italian employees in the embassy ran a watch repair business in the embassy on U.S. government time. One of our employees in Genoa had a real estate business as a sideline while he was working at the consulate. These things were difficult to control. I had the impression, however, that officials in the Italian foreign ministry, which was the only part of the Italian central government that I had any real contact with, were pretty hardworking. They would come in late in the morning, work until lunch, take a long break, and then start to work again at 4:00 or 5:00 pm and stay until late. It made dealing with the foreign ministry an interesting proposition. The focus of the embassy political section was on Italian internal politics. We had one officer assigned to the Christian Democratic Party, one assigned to the Communist Party, another officer (me) assigned to the rest of the non-communist left. Then we had one officer who did the foreign office and two who did political-military affairs.

Q: Let's move over to Rome. You were dealing with which party again?

WARD: I dealt with the Italian Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Liberal Party, and the Republican Party.

Q: You went there when?

WARD: It was a direct transfer from Genoa. I got there in the summer of 1976.

Q: You were there until when?

WARD: Until summer of 1979, but I spent less than a year in the political section. The new ambassador, Richard Gardner, asked me to be his executive assistant. I agreed to do the job as a temporary assignment, and he later asked me to stay for an extended tour.

Q: Who had been the ambassador prior?

WARD: John Volpe.

Q: What was your impression of how he operated?

WARD: Ambassador Volpe visited Genoa while I was there in 1976. I was political, economic, and commercial officer. We had put together a large economic conference in commemoration of the bicentennial, and the ambassador came up to open it. Ambassador Volpe was an intensely proud man. He was proud of the fact that he had come from extremely humble origins. He told a story of his father and mother. After his father had emigrated to the United States, he would write to his mother back in their village in Abruzzo. She, however, could not read. The local priest would read the father's letters to her. Volpe was very proud of having made a fortune in the construction industry and risen to become Governor of Massachusetts. He was also proud that he spoke Italian. However, his Italian was heavily accented and dialectical. It was an American-Abruzzese dialect that Italians sometimes had a difficult time understanding.

Bob Beaudry, who was the DCM, ran the embassy very capably. Ambassador Volpe had brought along an executive assistant, Tom Trimarco, who had been a business and political associate in Massachusetts. Tom also had an important role within the embassy, especially on some of the internal political questions. He was a fairly controversial figure within the embassy because it was an unusual situation to have both a DCM and a senior, substantive advisor to the ambassador.

Q: I would imagine that... Who did you go to?

WARD: Yes. I never had a problem dealing with Tom, but Bob Beaudry was the boss. Like Volpe, Bob was from New England. He had been the executive assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs U. Alexis Johnson during the time I was in the Ops Center. Johnson had had a stroke. Bob did a fantastic job filling in for the Under Secretary. After serving as DCM in Rome, he did not retire. He did not become an ambassador, but he came back director of the office of western European affairs.

Q: How did you find the core of the political-economic section in Rome? My impression was that you had an awful lot of people who were back for the third or fourth time and almost an insular approach.

WARD: At that time, most of us were on our first or second tours in Italy. A few, like Jim Creagan, Ted Russell, and Dan Serwer, subsequently spent a lot of time in Italy.

Q: Creagan was political officer in Naples.

WARD: Exactly. But at the time, the political section was made up of Ted Russell, who covered the Christian Democratic Party and later became ambassador in Slovakia; Roland Kuchel, who replaced Ted and became ambassador to Zambia; Marty Wenick who covered the Communist Party and became Deputy Assistant Secretary in INR and retired to a second career; Kathy Shirley, who covered the foreign office and became ambassador in Senegal; and a few others. Kathy's husband, Jock Shirley, was outstanding as the public affairs counselor. It was an extraordinary group of people, many of whom went on to some pretty important responsibilities elsewhere in the world.

Q: Let's talk about Dick Gardner. How did he operate?

WARD: Dick Gardner is a good friend who treated me very well when I worked for him. He was a very interesting man to work for, extremely cerebral and goal oriented. In a sense, he was the ideal political appointee because he was well versed in international affairs, he knew the issues, and he knew the people of Italy. He was intensely focused on making a difference. He understood that Italy was at a political crossroads, that the attitude the U.S. took toward the Communist Party would be key, and that there were some people within the Italian political system, including within the Christian Democratic party, such as PM Giulio Andreotti, who were ready to open to the communists. He also understood that while it was in the U.S. interest to have a better dialogue with the communists, it was not in our interest to promote communist participation in the government. In fact, on January 12, 1978, he had himself recalled to Washington over the issue of communist participation in the government and organized a series of meetings that resulted in a policy statement against such participation. The new policy said basically, "The Italians need to make their own political decisions. It's also up to us to choose our own friends. We prefer to choose friends who have governments led by parties that accept democratic pluralism." In other words, not the PCI. That was a landmark event in U.S.- Italian relations. Dick Gardner got that done. He was an extremely active ambassador. He made speeches in Italian throughout the country. His speeches were not the average ambassadorial speech. Each speech had a theme. Each speech made a point. He was a perfectionist. Speeches would go through many drafts. This got under the skin of some people, which I can understand that. No one wants to be the drafter of a speech that goes through 10 drafts. So, that did affect the attitude of some people within the embassy, although all of the key officers recognized that Dick Gardner was a very smart man and was dedicated to doing a good job. I always found him to be thoughtful of my family and me and interested in my career.

Q: He seemed to have rather enjoyed dealing with the university students.

WARD: He was a university professor. He loved substance. He is a man of ideas. He would have dinners that were unusual. After dinner he would lead a substantive discussion on a pre-determined theme. He'd ask everybody to sit down in a circle, and there would be a topic and a speaker and guests were expected to discuss the topic. This was not something that Italians were used to doing. So, you had to be careful whom you invited and had to manage the program carefully. We also had an open forum within the embassy that served as a form of internal dissent channel on substantive issues. It was the Ambassador's way of reaching out. He reached on the basis of ideas. He was a man of little small talk and not a glad-hander. In that sense, he was different from many non-career ambassadors. It was an interesting approach. I thought it

was in many respects quite a productive one.

Q: One of the things that struck me about Italian politics – I was consul general in Naples from '79- '81 – was the extensive reporting and detail that was spent on Italian politics, which seemed to be a minuet that was being played up in Rome. We would get questions about “What is the effect of the latest change in the Italian government up in Rome?” You’d go to Naples and get a shrug of the shoulders. Ah, they’re doing it again. It was a different world there. How many people were covering the internal affairs? I was an outsider. What was your impression? Did we get too involved in the ins and outs of this switching of jobs in Rome?

WARD: I think that we did spend an awful lot of time covering Italian internal politics. It was a pattern that we fell into at the end of World War II, when we poured tremendous resources into the country. We for decades opposed the Communist Party and supported the forces that were against the communists. So, internal political reporting became an industry that perpetuated itself. Looked at from today’s point of view, one wonders how we kept busy? But in the context of the time, with a communist revolution in Portugal, with Kissinger very concerned that there was a new wave of communism about to spread over Western Europe, internal politics in Italy seemed extremely important. The non-communist left was seen as a potential bulwark. If we could strengthen the non- communist left, then the communists might not continue to surge toward power. So, I think we were correct at the time in devoting most of our political effort to the internal political scene. Frankly, Italy was not playing an important role in terms of general foreign affairs within the NATO alliance. Italy’s geopolitical position is extremely important. But Italian diplomacy on the NATO stage or on the world stage was not very important.

Q: Kissinger said in his book that when he would fly to Rome, he would say landing at the airport was probably the most significant thing he would do. There was nobody to talk to in a way.

WARD: Over the years, I tried to stay in touch with our relations with Italy, especially during the time when I was involved in NATO affairs. I would get to sit in on the Secretary’s bilateral meetings with the foreign minister. They contrasted very sharply with many of the other bilateral meetings because they were focused basically on parochial questions, either Italian internal matters or Italian ethnic status in the U.S. The relationship was very different than our discourse with the other major European countries.

Q: How did we view Euro communism and Berlinguer? This was considered maybe the wave of the future.

WARD: There was a sense in 1975-1977 that the communists were the wave of the future. Berlinguer projected a moderate image, and he did bring several important moderates to places of power within the Party. Our analysis was that although there were moderates within the Party, there were also quite a few hardliners, and that the net balance was negative. Therefore, the Italian Communist Party was not one that we could have a normal dialogue with or support.

Q: How did you find the various parties, like the Republicans and the Socialists? Was this more a group of people looking at it as politicians or patriots or were there real ideological goals?

WARD: The Socialist Party at the time was being “reformed” by Bettino Craxi. Despite his later image, he did renew the Party. Bettino Craxi and the people around him at that time seemed to represent a vision similar to that projected today by leaders like Tony Blair and Gerhard Schroeder, a sort of “third way.” Craxi had a vision of the Socialists as a non-totalitarian alternative to a communist future for Italy. All of that later got lost in a wave of corruption that destroyed the Socialist Party.

The Social Democrats were probably most corrupt on the spectrum. They were a breakaway from the Socialist Party that never really found a role. They didn’t stand for much significant.

The other two small parties, the Liberals and the Republicans, the PLI and the PRI, actually did stand for something - the liberal and republican philosophies that were very important in the 19th century, in the Resorgimento. They harked back to that era and they were basically true to it. With some exceptions, their leaders were not corrupt. They were idealists. They also had almost no political clout. These were parties supported by less than five percent of voters.

Q: My impression of Italy, which granted was a Neopolitan view, was that the name of the game more than anything else was not ideology but jobs. I remember the mayor of Naples, who was a communist, wanting to keep the Sixth Fleet coming in, get more military in. It was jobs. This was the driving force behind so much, at least in that part of the world.

WARD: Yes. All over the world, all politics are local. In every part of Italy, business and politics were much too closely intertwined. I remember a friend of mine who was one of the young reformers in the Christian Democratic Party in the Ligurian region around Genoa. He was an attractive candidate who increased his party’s percentage of the vote at a time when the communists were picking up a lot of support. A couple of years later, without a university degree, without any real professional experience, he ended up in Rome as the chief of public relations for Alitalia, earning a very large salary, enough to keep his children in private school in New York City. He really had no professional qualifications. This was the kind of system that it was. It allowed people through their political connections to move over into the world of the state-controlled businesses. For me, the history of state-owned enterprises in Italy are a warning to leaders in developing countries who think that they can transition from socialism to a free market via a period of so-called “commercialization” of state-run enterprises in which the government continues to hold the stock but runs them on a business basis. It doesn’t work because it combines the worst features of socialism and capitalism. It didn’t work in Italy. It ruined the country.

Q: Did you get much of a feeling of the sectionalism in Italy?

WARD: Yes. Our transfer from Genoa to Rome itself was striking. There wasn’t much difference between Genoa and Germany in terms of the way people abided by the law, and lived their lives. (Although the Italian Riviera had a lot more jetsetters than did Hamburg.) In Rome, I was startled by the disregard for the traffic code. There were certain traffic lights that no one ever obeyed. Then when you got to Naples, of course, it was total chaos on the road.

Q: It was like getting on the bus in Rome. I found that nobody paid the fare.

WARD: There was a tremendous sense of regional identity. I think we forget that regional languages in Italy are still very important. People speak dialect every day. Of course, I haven't been back to Italy in many years. At the embassy, we realized that we were neglecting politics in the regions of the Rome consular district so we assigned a reporting officer to each region. I took Sardinia because I wanted to learn more about it. Talk about regional identity? Sardinia was one of the most insular places I've ever been in my life. The Sardinian people were intensely inbred, perhaps to their detriment.

Q: Berlinguer was from Sardinia.

WARD: Yes. He was from a very prominent and rich Sardinian family.

Q: Did you run into the hand of the CIA? It had this tradition going back to wartime and right after the war, the '48 election. Here was a government that was basically corruptible and we were in a Cold War situation. Did this trip you up?

WARD: I don't think it tripped me up. There was a strong CIA station in Rome with capable staff. There were a couple of incidents that ruffled feathers between the political section and the Station. I never had a problem. In those mid-1970s, Kissinger initiated a program of U.S. support for non-communist political reformers, including funding. Remember that this was at a time when the Communists had successfully engineered a revolution in Portugal. The program would have involved State and the Agency, but at least on the State side, it was canceled before it got off the ground. I think some of this has been in the press since then.

Q: Yes. There was also the concern, which went way back, that there were secret societies within the military.

WARD: Yes. Also, the Free Masons played a role that was hard to figure out. I don't know much about the Masons, but I did have one experience with them when I was in Genoa. One of the things I had to do was host a U.S. trade mission. I needed to recruit businesspeople to meet with the mission. I ran across this fellow who was a Mason. He was a very mysterious person. In the U.S., one thinks of the Masons as a social lodge. There, the organization was mysterious and ideological. This person offered to help me make the trade show a success. He invited me to his house one night. I remember driving along the Ligurian coast, along winding roads, in a heavy rainstorm. Visibility was terrible and it was not a particularly pleasant drive because the roads weren't very good. I got to his house, which seemed to be protected by large dogs, and we talked for hours. He spoke in semi-conspiratorial tones, and I did not grasp a lot of what he said. But the bottom line is that he said he wanted to help me with the trade mission. The next day, 100 businessmen called to ask for appointments with members of the Mission. The people running the mission thought that was fantastic. It happened through this Masonic connection. I never did a thing for that fellow, but I think he thought I was helping him.

Q: You probably made a commitment.

WARD: Of course, eventually, the behind-the-scenes role in Italian politics and business of the so-called P-2 Masonic lodge emerged. I later thought, was that fellow part of P-2? It was one of the stranger experiences that I had.

Q: Did Vatican or Church affairs impact on you?

WARD: At the time, we had a special envoy to the Vatican who had a separate office; it wasn't yet Embassy Vatican. We had a succession of representatives. Until the end of the Ford administration, it was Henry Cabot Lodge, and then former-mayor Wagner of New York took over. The career person at the Vatican was Peter Sarros. He worked fairly closely with the embassy. Under Carter, the envoy became an ambassador. There was some controversy about that. Because the ambassador to the Vatican wasn't regularly in Rome, Peter relied heavily on Ambassador Gardner to host distinguished visitors. In turn, Peter helped us with requests by VIPs for Papal audiences.

Q: Did you see the Church as a major political player?

WARD: No, although individual Christian Democratic Party leaders were devout Catholics. Aldo Moro was kidnaped at a church. He went to Mass every morning. Aldo Moro was the leader of the largest faction on the left in the Christian Democratic Party.

Q: I know down in Naples in the Mezzogiorno, I would go to church services, usually commemorations of this or that, and I would often find myself standing next to the representatives of the Communist Party. We all showed up and heard the Mass.

WARD: One of my memories of Italian churches on Sunday were the women going into the church and the men standing outside talking about soccer and smoking cigarettes. It's curious. The church played a significant social role, but a limited religious one.

MICHAEL G. ANDERSON
Consular Officer/Staff Assistant to Ambassador
Rome (1974-1976)

Political/Economic Officer
Genoa (1986-1987)

Political Officer
Rome (1987-1990)

Michael G. Anderson was born on December 14, 1943 in Berwyn, Illinois. He attended the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago and entered the Foreign Service in 1973. Throughout his career, he served in countries including Italy, Poland, and Pakistan. He was interviewed on April 22, 2005 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

ANDERSON: I was assigned to Rome.

Q: You were in Rome from when to when?

ANDERSON: I had to take Italian first. I got there in the summer of 1974 and I was there until the summer of 1976, late June, early July.

Q: What sort of job did you have when you went to Rome?

ANDERSON: My first year I was in the consular section. I started out in American Citizens Services so that was a real baptism by fire because I got there right in the summer tourist season and I didn't know anything about anything or what I was supposed to be doing but I had this staff of people who were, luckily I had some very good locals there who were able to handle most of the problems. They just sort of signed my name on a lot of things. It was pretty exhausting. I thought, Jesus this is not what I want to do. I was moved eventually. I think it was supposed to be a rotational thing, down to the visa section and that was no fun either. Then Russ LaMantia who was Ambassador John Volpe's staff aide, was leaving; must have been in the summer of 1975, he was due to leave so I applied for his job and lo and behold I got it. It was just luck so I ended up for my second year being the staff assistant to the ambassador.

Q: Let's talk about the consular side. What sort of problems when you came into American services were you getting?

ANDERSON: Well, mainly the *sciappatori* were grabbing ladies' purses. So there were just a whole lot of American tourists, women, who had their passports, money, all of their identity papers, everything gone. Their tickets you know. We had to try to reconstruct their lives. Some of them had been injured. Some had broken arms, dislocated shoulders when the bag was ripped off because they would come by on a motor scooter. There were others that were sick; came down with diseases or had heart attacks that needed to be evacuated. There were a lot of people without money and usually it came about as a result of being robbed. Of course we weren't allowed to give them any money so we had to get them into a low cost *pensione* in the neighbourhood, some of the local places, on the promise that when the money arrived from the U.S. they would pay. So it's constant trying to call the U.S. to find some relative or member of the family who is going to send the money and how to do that. It was just all that kind of baloney.

Q: Visas, what sort of things would happen there?

ANDERSON: As I recall, I guess Italians needed visas, I can't remember. Visas for the Italians were generally pretty routine. Except of course for those who were or had been Communist Party members. They required waivers, and this was a time-consuming process. But we had a lot of Nigerians; we had a lot of Africans in general who would come in there to try to get visas. 99.9% of them were non bona fide so they were not given a visa. They would enter Italy on the pretence of being students and would end up at the University for Foreigners in Perugia which was teaching them Italian. They supposedly were studying Italian so they would come from Nigeria to Perugia to study Italian supposedly and then since that was in our consular district they would

come down to Rome to apply for a visa to go to the U.S. and of course I remember them. They were really quite odoriferous. I mean, good Lord, that part of it sticks with me and also their stories were just totally bogus. Then sometimes they did try to bribe you or other things like that. I remember they used to come and sit in my office. It was not as though they were on the other side of a glass partition or something. Now that has all been changed of course. But that was a little bit too close to the applicant and then I had a lot of sob stories from various other people who had problems. A lot of Italians or they would be brought in by some American saying this is my sister she wants to come for a visit and you know darn well that the idea is that she is emigrating. She is never coming back. Not my sister but my cousin or something like that. So that's the kind of stuff I remember.

Q: Well then you were both these assistant, staff aide from 1975. Talk about John Volpe. What was your impression of him?

ANDERSON: Well, he had a Napoleon complex I think. He was small man with a big ego and kind of a rough exterior. I don't know what kind of education he had but his money was made in construction, the Volpe Construction Company. I'm not sure whether it was his creation or his father's, whichever. He was a multi-millionaire construction industry guy. As a diplomat, well, you know he was a good construction guy. He was not a diplomat. He was obsessed, I don't want to say obsessed, but he was very conscious of the fact that he was a lower class Italian as most American Italians are. They were people who came out of the bottom part of Italian society and he came back there to Italy speaking, evidently he learned a little bit of Italian at home, but it was the Abruzzese dialect and it was sort of what the sheep herders up in the mountains used. People would make fun of him when he spoke, behind his back. He was very determined to demonstrate that he was an equal to anybody there; on the Italian side. He was a very, very devout Catholic and he used to go to mass every morning. On his way from the residence to the embassy he would stop and maybe it would just be confession, I guess he couldn't do a whole mass. He would stop and talk to the priest. His focus, he should have been ambassador to the Holy See. At that time I don't think we had an embassy to the Vatican but he still had a liaison function of some sort I guess, but boy he was very much into that and so that's what I remember.

Q: Who was the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) at the time?

ANDERSON: Bob Beaudry.

Q: Was there an effort on the part of Beaudry or others to almost protect Volpe from himself or keep him from upsetting the Italians? I mean the Italian crowd in Rome is, I don't think would cotton very much to an American emigrant ambassador.

ANDERSON: Of course most of our ambassadors have had Italian backgrounds. I wouldn't say most of them but many of them. The second time I went to Rome we also had an Italian American ambassador. Beaudry's role, yeah I would say he was kind of there as a deflector and to try to put a little sense into the thing. There was another Italian American guy there named Tom Trimmarco and he was Volpe's right hand man. Evidently at that time -- I don't know if it is still true in that kind of a big embassy -- an ambassador, a political appointee, could bring along his special assistant and Tom had an office of his own with a secretary and so on. Beaudry's

problem was Tom Trimmarco because in effect Tom Trimmarco was sort of a parallel show, a parallel embassy in a lot of respects. He and Beaudry had to coordinate very closely in order to keep from crossing wires. I felt sorry for Beaudry because actually he was really the odd man out in this situation.

Q: What were you doing?

ANDERSON: As a staff aide?

Q: Yes.

ANDERSON: There were two secretaries. His social secretary and then, Dotty Bonavito. Dotty was the kind of business secretary and she and I would work to make sure that his appointments went smoothly. I would meet the people coming up, bring them to the office or sometimes sit in and take notes. Usually not though because there would be a substantive officer who would come from one of the sections to do that. If he was travelling, I would go with him. Usually sit in the back of the limo with him and he had infinite needs that seem to have come up on the spur of the moment and I had to run and try to satisfy them. It was a classic kind of aide's job, that's what it was. If something went wrong I was there to give a kick to because he liked to do that. That was his temper. He would blow his top quite often. It wasn't a lot of fun.

Q: Was there a Mrs. Volpe?

ANDERSON: Yes.

Q: How was she?

ANDERSON: She was a nice Italian Mama. She was a big fat lady, stayed at home, wasn't anybody who was on the social circuit and he also had a son, Jack who lived at the Villa Taverna. Jack had some kind of personality problems. In fact he had to be escorted out of the country at some point I think as a result of trying to protect his father. He thought his father was going to be a target of a terrorist so he was carrying a gun around and he wasn't supposed to so the FBI legal attaché arranged to have him taken out of the country.

Q: About the Red Brigade, I mean were you there during the Moro kidnapping?

ANDERSON: I don't recall actually being there at that time. I think it must have taken place after I left there. What I recall is not so much terrorism but the, maybe Moro was still alive because they were trying to do this compromise between the Christian Democrats and the Communists. It was called the *compromeso storico* and Berlinguer, who was the head of the Italian Communist Party and Moro, who led the DC, were trying to arrange such a coalition of some sort and of course that was anathema to us. So that was really what we were up against.

Q: This was when the Italians and others were trying to present the communist party as a democratic alternative and Berlinguer was the lead man. He was communism with a pleasant face.

ANDERSON: That was the idea.

Q: Were there any particular incidents or things that you recall while you were there dealing with Volpe and in the embassy?

ANDERSON: You mean like political in nature or personality?

Q: Personality in nature. I'm trying to get a little feel for what a young staff officer, special assistant has to do.

ANDERSON: Well, just one thing that seems to stick in my mind of course is that one day Doty, she was supposed to put all of his appointments in his book; his appointment book which was on his desk. He had this vast office. One of the appointments was somebody arrived and the appointment wasn't in his appointment book or he had made some other kind of arrangements for that time and he discovered that he had an appointment and she hadn't put it in the book and of course I was supposed to double check to make sure that everything was correct and so this incident, he called us, he's berating us quite vehemently and he takes the agenda book and he bangs it down on his desk and it makes the fluorescent tube pop out of his desk lamp and fall down on the desk and smash into a million pieces. I just remember the expression on his face. He thought he was dead or something. We're all stunned of course, but that really broke it up. It didn't happen often, in fact sometimes he could be a very sweet man and we had a lot of good times together travelling around. I had another tour in Rome. It was much pleasanter the second time.

Q: I was wondering, did you get a feel for our involvement reporting the politics of Rome or something? You had these governmental changes of personnel or something like this. We seem to spend an awful lot of time getting involved in the nitty gritty of the Italian political system.

ANDERSON: We were so afraid that the communists were going to get into the government there. When I got there in 1974 it was just about two weeks before Nixon resigned and then it was Ford as president and Kissinger was a major influence. Kissinger became Secretary of State at some point in there after being National Security Advisor and then you had what amounted to the Kissinger-Ford administration and this was until 1978. It was strictly Ford really, that was a Ford period I was there. The fear was that the communists and the Christian Democrats would work out some kind of arrangement and the communists would come into the government. I know that we worked both above and below the radar to achieve a satisfactory outcome. In other words to get the Christian Democrats in a position using maybe some of the smaller political parties, the Liberals, the Republicans. The Socialists, I guess, were not ready to come into anything at that point. To try and find a governing coalition that would be stable and could sustain a democratic government without any communists in it. That really dominated that period as I recall. So our focus was really on that from a political point of view. American influence had always been, since the war, had been very, very strong in Italian politics. Italy started out like a lot like Japan and Germany as well so it had compromised sovereignty, I guess you would say. We were pretty much still running the show from behind the scenes.

Q: Did you get any feel for Volpe's effectiveness or was he sort of a figurehead?

ANDERSON: Volpe was definitely, I don't know, concerned with certain areas of the relationship. His concerns were pretty narrow I think especially when it was the Catholic hierarchy. He was focused so much on it, coming out of the Boston Catholic background, he felt that actually I suppose that Cardinal Casaroli or somebody like that was the one that you needed to talk to to make things happen. I had a feeling that was kind of where he was focusing and I don't really know that that was correct so I can't believe that he was as effective as he thought he was because I think that he was pushing the wrong button. That's kind of where I come down on that.

WALTER J. SILVA
Political-Military Affairs
Rome (1974-1978)

Naples (1981-1985)

Walter J. Silva was born in Plymouth, Massachusetts on September 16, 1925. He received his AB from Harvard University in 1949 and served in the US Army from 1943 to 1945. His career has included positions in Dakar, Panama, Venezuela, Beirut, Greece, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 23, 1995.

Q: But in a way it sort of solved the problem. Well, anyway, you left there in the end of the summer of '74, and what happened then?

SILVA: Well, I got a couple of calls. A couple of people were going off to Embassies who wanted to know if I was interested in being a DCM to them. Both of these were old acquaintances from NEA who had been around the corner for a long time and they thought I might want to be a DCM. I think one of them was going to the Sudan, and that was not what I had in mind. Mary was just getting over an illness and that was not the right place for someone who needed access to medical care. So I turned him down. The other guy was going somewhere in the Middle East. He didn't want to see me. He said his wife wanted to interview my wife. And I said "No thank you." I didn't approve of that when it was legal, and it was no longer the way things were done in the Foreign Service. So I turned them both down. I forget who was the DG at that time...I think it was Harry Barnes. Anyway, he wanted to know if I would like to go to Rome.

I thought that would be a very nice idea! So I asked him what I would be doing in Rome. He said there was only one job, and that was to be Counselor for Political-Military Affairs. I said okay, that sounded great, so we went to Rome.

Q: Where you served from '74-'78.

SILVA: Yes, I did a full four years. It was very nice. We lived very well, it was a great job, there were a lot of exciting things going on. The DCM, Bob Beaudry was absolutely first rate. He ran the Embassy. Something of a martinet, his attitude was, you have your job, you do your job, Goddammit, and you don't come crying to me if you can't get it done. I thought he had a great attitude. Anyway, he thought that the Political section, which was geographically the neighbor to the Political-Military section, was not organized quite the way it ought to be. So he broke it up and we ended up with two Political sections, one was political-internal affairs and the other became political-multilateral affairs, everything outside the country that had to do with the Italians. I became Counselor for Political-Multilateral Affairs, which I thought was rather amusing since I didn't have to change the initials on my towels, you see. And the other one became Political-Intelligence As a result I got one more staff person, which gave me two assistants and a secretary. We did the UN and all that stuff, Council of Europe, CSCE. As it turned out it was a big job. It seemed most of the mail that came into that Embassy had to do with international organizations rather than Italian domestic affairs. Just the CSCE produced three or four messages a day. The mail we got every day was unbelievable. But anyway, it was fun. Kathy Shirley worked for me then.

Q: Her husband Jock was...

SILVA: He was then the PAO, Public Affairs Officer. Steve May was the other officer in the section (now dead, unfortunately). We realigned the work of the two sections. I thought it upset the Political Internal Affairs officer.

Q: Who was that?

SILVA: Ford, Alan Ford. I think it upset the hell out of him to lose some of his area of interest, and mostly because in this fallout the multilateral affairs section got the Foreign Ministry, since it had to do with the relations of Italy with other countries. In fact I handed it over to Kathy Shirley, who, by the way, did a first-rate job dealing with those people. But that upset the hell out of the Political Intelligence Officer because it took away access to the people that he had been cultivating for years. He was married to an Italian woman and had friends in the Italian Foreign Ministry. Her father had been an Italian embassy staff member in East Africa. So he had a proprietary interest in the Foreign Ministry. After I left they went back to the old organization. But at the time, in my half of the political work of it really was in NATO. At that time, the Italian Communist Party was still very powerful, especially in the north. And there were areas where we were having serious difficulties. Up in Livorno, for example, we had a depot for weapons of various kinds, ammunition, etc., Camp Darby. It was one of those places where we never confirmed nor denied the presence of nuclear weapons. It was one of those places where we had to resort to that tap dance. Camp Darby was basically where they stockpiled a lot of the heavy munitions for the Sixth Fleet and also for the forward units we had variously placed. It turned out they needed greater capacity and wanted to add more bunkers. The camp was very large, the depot of dispersed bunkers occupied only small spaces with the bunkers dispersed over great areas. Inside the fence was a reservation, that is ecologically probably the last pristine place in Italy. It's unbelievable. They've been there so long that it looks like a virgin, beautiful forest. Occasionally you see a little hump in the ground and know that underneath is a bunker full of

deadly stuff. But also it is the only place in Italy where the European roe deer thrives. They had, it seems to me, a herd of 350 or so. They roamed this camp unhindered, and of course you couldn't do any shooting in there. Occasionally poachers tried to come in over the fence but as a rule that little herd thrived and multiplied. Periodically the Italian equivalent of the Fish and Wildlife Service, whatever that is, would come and cull the herd, take out the excess animals and take them up to the Alps and let them free. There were probably people waiting there to shoot them down as they came off the trucks. Every year this happened and nobody ever heard of it. Nobody ever knew that the U.S. Army was the great protector of the wildlife of Italy. Anyway, they wanted to build more damn bunkers. In order to build the bunkers they were going to have to clear some acreage within the forest. They did not own the forest, of course. This was an Italian-owned reserve. The mayor of the town of Pisa at the time, was Communist. The mayor of Livorno was Communist. And when the army applied for license to cut down 3,000 trees the Communists went up the wall. "You Americans, you're destroying the ecology of our country" and all that sort of thing. And the military responded the way you would expect them to. They got mad. And the issue seethed. I went up there a few times to try to calm the boiling waters. Eventually we worked out a deal. it turns out that 3,000 trees is a very small number. I thought it was enormous when I first heard of it. But when I got up there the army's expert (down from Germany) pointed out that there are more than 3,000 trees in an acre of land. Moreover, policy at Camp Darby was to plant ten trees for each one that was cut down. That's why the forest was so lush, because they kept planting trees. These guys had nothing to do in their spare time, so they planted trees. At any rate, I don't think the Camp Darby authorities had ever mentioned that to the local Mayor--though it probably would have done no good. But eventually the problem was solved and the communist government agreed to the removal of the trees in light of the planting program and in gratitude for the US army's role in the protection and propagation of the natural wildlife of Italy. It was not coincidental that we brought TV into the process and the local boys saw themselves on national television.

With that problem out of the way, we got a frantic call for help from the U.S. military in Verona. It seemed the communist authorities in the north had banded together to close down the US Armed Forces radio. The southern European network from Germany had a repeater in northern Italy, in or near Vincenza from which they rebroadcast to the rest of the country. The system was especially important to them, I think primarily because the next step was television and they wanted to keep the current foot in the door, while they worked on ways to somehow insinuate television into the equation. Well it turned out that the Italian Constitution forbids anyone except an Italian citizen from using the broadcast bands. Some shrewd communist lawyer up there had discovered this and was demanding that they close down the southern European network. That went on and on and on. The Newspapers picked it up and there was embarrassment enough for all. The Italian military wanted to do any thing they could to help us. I had some good friends among the chiefs of staff, they were great people. Finally their chairman, General Pertini I think it was, suggested that I, together with General whatever his name was, the head of the Italian military radio service, try to figure out a solution to the problem. So we had some meetings and we finally came up with a solution which I think still holds today. We signed an agreement, between him and me as a matter of fact. And the solution was very, very Italian. It was that the Italian government, through the its military authorities, required that as one of the conditions of the U.S. remaining in its bases in Italy, it broadcast on the radio band such-and-such in order to prevent that band from being usurped by commercial users. That's what the agreement says, and

that's what happened. I don't know if we have moved on to the television issue yet. Then all the U.S. bases broadcast TV within the confines of their property. The U.S. military naturally wanted to be able to broadcast nationally. I hoped then and still hope that the Italians don't let us do it.

One problem I found in the Embassy, by no means rare in the Foreign Service was the contempt of its civilian staff for the US military. Conversely the military out in the Italian countryside did not greatly admire the Embassy. I proposed setting up a country-wide annual conference at the Embassy to which each US military in the country would be invited. The plan was for three days in which each participant would explain the purpose of his organization and bring up any problems for general discussion. Ambassador Gardner didn't like the idea until I suggested he would get to meet a lot of high ranking military officers and be able to establish his ascendancy over them. It was a remarkable success. The first conference was a meeting heavy with generals and admirals, the admiral from NATO AFSOUTH turned up (though he made it clear he was independent of the Embassy) and NATO Brussels sent representatives. The presentations were enlightening to everyone and the discussions were very lively. Even Gardner enjoyed it. The Conferences continued after I left.

The Italians are a marvelous people, marvelous. I remember one guy I went to visit in the south. I traveled a lot from Rome because we had bases and installations all over the country, and I went to a place which shall remain anonymous, but it was a major city and I paid all the protocol calls, Mayor, prefect, military commander, etc. I called on the prefect. When I entered his office he was standing at the window, sort of surveying his domain, a very austere looking gentleman. I greeted him in Italian and started talking to him in Italian. He responded in English. Not great English, but quite serviceable English. And I, naturally--the next thing in these break-the-ice conversations--said "Where did you learn to speak English so well?" And he explained, "I was in the United States. I was in the States a long time, I was a prisoner of war." And I said, "A prisoner of war?" And he said, "Yes, yes, I went to Georgia, then Alabama and finally I was in Texas. Wonderful country, wonderful time, the people were wonderful." Then I asked him how he came to be a prisoner of war? And he said, "Oh, well, in Africa. I was a commander of tanks." He was a colonel as a matter of fact, and commanded a fairly large number of tanks. And he went on, "it was nighttime and we were pulled up in a camp, a bivouac. We were almost out of petrol and almost out of ammunition, and we were just sitting around the fire, cooking the evening meal and relaxing. Suddenly we were attacked by 'una banda de Australiani'--a band of Australians." I asked, "Commandos?" "No, no, no," he said cheerfully, "la banda de musica." The Australian regimental band had captured a whole battalion of Italian tanks! He thought it was vaguely amusing, what the hell, the war was over. Why fight? To me that was really emblematic of the Italian attitude.

Q: Oh yeah, they are survivors. I have to say that having served in both Italy and Greece I found the Italian attitude much healthier.

SILVA: Oh yes, the Italians revere their past but don't live in it.

Q: And they don't blame other people and sulk and feel people are picking on them. Yeah. we've got problems and we'll... On the political-military side did you get involved in the great tax

problem that I think you ran across later on in Naples? This was due to members, Italian civilians who declare their income tax and all that?

SILVA: Oh yes. Nothing came of it. We were involved in it all the time I was there, but it never had any solution, at least while I was there. It just went on and on.

Q: You were there under two Ambassadors. John Volpe first, who was there from '73-'77, what was your impression...

SILVA: John Volpe was, well... I found him amusing, shrewd, intelligent within limits, mostly shrewd. You could see how he would make it in the political world. And how he made it as a builder of highways with special treatment from the state of Massachusetts. My old college roommate went head to head against Volpe some years after college and some years before I knew Volpe, bidding on highway construction contracts. Volpe's company won even though the other guy was the low bidder. But that's the way it was in Massachusetts. John Volpe was a character. A real politician, knew everybody. Had a relationship with local politicians which I must say most people in the Embassy did not appreciate. I thought it was great. It had sort of unfortunate overtones, in that when he met with people in the government, the prime minister for example, they were like two old cronies in the back room in Boston getting together. That's the way it seemed. You could almost smell the smoke. But still, he knew these people. They trusted him, they told him things, he told them things, etc. etc. It was an unusual kind of relationship to have with local politicians. But he was a figure of fun to many people in the Embassy. I got a kick out of him too, because he insisted on speaking Italian. His Italian was the dialect of Abruzzo back when his parents took him to the States in the 1920s. They never really spoke Italian, they spoke Abruzzese. John learned that at home and then he came back to Italy and he spoke a dialect that even the Abruzzesi don't use any more! But it was a kind of Italian and he could make himself understood, but upper class Italians made fun of him, the press took its shots, and so did some people in the Embassy. But he got by. The Italian people loved it. When he went up into these towns in the mountains in the Abruzzo and gave speeches in his terrible Italian it sounded to them like their own. He was fine. I never really had any problems with John Volpe.

After he left, he was replaced by Dick Gardner, who was one of the worst Ambassadors I've ever run into. I think he's now Ambassador to Spain. The story, began, I believe, when he was head of the international law department at Columbia. He knew Brzezinski there, who invented or was one of the inventors of the Trilateral Commission. He brought Gardner in. And as the thing grew they thought they ought to have a southern politician in the organization to broaden its scope I suppose. And the story goes, it was Gardner who picked Jimmy Carter, who was then Governor of Georgia. Carter never forgot this, it's what gave Carter his credentials, to the extent that he had any, in international affairs, that he was a member of the Trilateral Commission. So he never forgot Gardner. When he became President his first ambassadorial appointment was Rome and it was Dick Gardner as Ambassador. Of course, anyone who thinks an ambassador is a key figure in U.S. foreign relations is kidding himself. But I thought Dick Gardner was an unhappy choice. He had domestic problems, his wife was Italian.

Q: From Venice.

SILVA: That's what she said. She claimed to be from San Daniele near Venice, but Italians said that was a story to enhance her claim to some position in Italian society. I understand, at any rate, that her family really came from Genoa. Her father was a local employee of AID, then USOM in Italy, and presumably that's how she got to the States and met and married Dick Gardner. She was a handsome woman.

Q: Full-figured woman I think was the...

SILVA: Voluptuous is the word that comes to mind. But the common gossip was that she had appetites that I guess her husband could not satisfy and, she had a friend...

Q: It was well known. This was the thing in Italy. This doesn't help.

SILVA: The happy cuckold in Italy is not a figure of fun. It's a figure of disdain. But at any rate, that was the kind of situation. It was an interesting Embassy though. When he first arrived and had his first staff meeting, Gardner announced that he wanted to give speeches in Italy. While he was there he was going to give a lot of speeches, so he went around the table and he assigned speeches. He said, now you do one on NATO, you do one on Italian-American relations in World War I, and he went around the table and every one of the Counselors had an assignment or two or three. I think I did three speeches. The UN, NATO, CSCE, oh yes I did four, the law of the sea too. What do I know about the law of the sea? Anyway, we all labored mightily and produced I think 15 speeches. He did some rewriting here and there, but basically they were the speeches that were prepared for him by his staff. And these speeches were used by him for four years. I mean, over and over and over again. Every time he went somewhere he gave a speech and he would pick one of them. And of course he had them translated into Italian, his Italian was terrible, but there were some instances where he insisted on giving them in Italian. It was pretty bad.

The worst part of it was that after I left Rome I heard that he had pressured Rizzoli, the big publisher in Milano, into publishing a book for him. It turned out that Rizzoli, I think it's Rizzoli, is the European printer of Reader's Digest, a very, very lucrative operation. And the story goes that it was suggested to them that if they didn't publish his book there might be some difficulties there. That's the story that was going around at the time, one I tended to believe because quite frankly I didn't like the man so I was ready to believe anything. The final blow came in the mail, a copy of a book, I've still got it somewhere, a little paperback, and it was called: "An American Ambassador Speaks," or something like that, and it was the speeches! All these speeches reproduced in book form. Everybody that I've seen since then who was a member of that group of counselors got a copy of the book, and they all got the same dedication written by Dick...mine said "To my good friend Walt, who had something to do with those exciting days." Incredible, incredible person. But, well, we survived. He took my secretary, I had a secretary, a very nice girl, I think she's now retiring, she was very nice, bright, vibrant kind of person, who had never, got anywhere in ten years of service. She came to Rome and got assigned to me. I liked her and I thought she had great potential, so I kept giving her additional things to do. She did a lot of routine telegrams. In fact, she could do them very well. And then before you knew it she was, I thought, reaching the indispensable stage, absolutely great. And people kept telling me that they remembered her when she wasn't. But at any rate, it wasn't my success, it was hers. She proved

that she could do it. So I put her in for Secretary of the Year, and she didn't win. People in Rome never do. Somebody in Tel Aviv won. That's the way it is. But at any rate, she was a runner-up and got her name mentioned in the magazine. Now Dick, who is of all the ambassador's I've known, the least aware of what is going on in his own Embassy, found out about this from his staff aide. So he called me up and said "I want her to be my secretary. If she's that good she should work for an ambassador." What could I say? So we swapped secretaries. I ended up with an FS-3 secretary, which is as high as you get in the business, and he got this FS-7 or whatever it was. Nonetheless, she was great, I must say. But I ended up with a very unhappy secretary.

Q: Oh yes, it was a demotion for her...

SILVA: Yes, it was terrible, but he couldn't have cared less. If mine was the best in the Embassy, he had to have her. That was his attitude, I'm afraid. I hate to think of what he is doing to Spain these days.

Q: I didn't get along with him at all.

SILVA: He was an impossible guy. But his wife... Here's a great story. Remember the earthquake up in the north, up in Friuli? I was put in charge of the Embassy's part in the reconstruction effort, working with the AID representative. So I did a lot of traveling up there, I got together with AID and we helped put together a program for reconstruction, that sort of thing. The Friulani are nice people. They're sort of Austrian basically, more than anything else. They were very, very grateful. We built some schools for them, as we later did in the south. We're great school builders. The program went very quickly, even though there was some funny stuff going on, and before you knew it all the schools were built or rebuilt and the Friulani said they were so delighted with this they wanted to sort of pay us back. They wanted a ceremony, a final receipt of the schools, to express gratitude to America, that sort of thing. Gardner was pleased to accept the proposition, TV coverage was mothers milk to him. So the Friulani arranged for a large hall in a building owned by the Vatican to hold a large ceremony and banquet. The reception would be large. It was no fun putting it together. Anyway, we got this big hall and we arranged a table of notables at one side, raised on a dais. There sat the Ambassador and Madame, and the Friulani who had come up there--the prefects and the mayors from the towns where the schools had been built. They faced a sea of tables and in the middle a full-fledged TV coverage arrangement by RAI television (the National TV Network). Madame Gardner came in a sort of sea-green gown, I think silk, or some sort of very clingy thin material. It was cut down to about her navel in front. It became immediately obvious from the beginning -- I did not seat myself at their table, I sat facing them, right next to the camera people -- she was not wearing undergarments. Generously endowed, she tended toward the overripe. Not that I have any objection to over-ripeness, but she was a little overripe. So every time she moved, every little movement, the dress sort of replicated what was going on underneath. The cameraman caught this and he was clearly fascinated. I didn't learn how fascinated until the next day when the coverage (or uncoverage?) came on RAI television news. There were the speeches, the Ambassador, the Prefect, others....and the cameraman was zeroed in on Mrs. Gardner. It seemed any moment, she might turn around, make that one quick movement, when something would fall out of the cleavage. And that's the way it came out on TV. You'd hear in the background people making speeches, and here's the cameraman zeroed in on her chest. It was

marvelous, absolutely marvelous.

Q: What was your impression, although it wasn't your bailiwick, did you get involved in Italian politics and what was your impression of the political system there?

SILVA: I didn't get involved except very peripherally at times. You know, you talk to some of them about how they were going to vote in the UN and see if they could somehow convince the foreign minister or the prime minister to go in one direction or another. That was very infrequent, maybe twice in my four years, because generally the Italians voted either with us or abstained. It wasn't that much of a problem. We had discussions on the CSCE at times, but I like to think that I was happily unconcerned, because I was convinced then and I still am that Italian domestic politics don't matter.

Q: Well this was my impression very much. I used to watch the Political Section up in Rome and they would do a dance and send something, "what is the impact of the latest juggling of the government," and the answers in Naples was nobody cared, and rightly so.

SILVA: That's right, it never affected people's lives. You change your government in Moscow and 20,000 people die. In Italy, nobody notices. It didn't seem to make that much difference. The names would change in the newspapers and that was about it.

Q: And there weren't many names.

SILVA: It was the same ones over and over.

Q: The CDU was running everything. Well, tell me, what was your impression of Italy and its involvement in the various external organizations?

SILVA: Cautious. They were always very cautious. Either they went along as good team players in the European bloc, the NATO bloc, etc. or they abstained. I don't recall them ever taking a flyer, so to speak, on a matter of principle, going counter to what it's treaty partners wanted them to do. I was always very impressed with the quality of the people they had dealing with these things at the Foreign Ministry. They've got a first rate foreign service. Absolutely first rate. Of course it's an elitist foreign service, which was probably why it was first rate, as ours was when it was more elitist than it is now. These people I found very badly paid, the foreign service, even by our standards, but money is no object when you come from a wealthy and/or titled family that has all kinds of resources. They tended to be that kind of people. And as a result they could spend their intellectual energies on the job. You could go there at 8:00, 9:00 o'clock in the evening, there'd be people working. You went there in the early morning, there's not a soul in the place. They don't get up at an early hour. If you go between 12:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon there's not a soul there except the guy with the mop. But you could go in the late evening and they'd still be there working on things they understood as well as better than we did, certainly. Usually, I thought, better.

Q: Did the American foreign policy apparatus use your connection to these very well plugged in people as far as what is going on in Europe, were they able to, I mean were you able to get

things on what's happening in European politics from these acute observers and get it back to our people or not?

SILVA: Well, to the extent that our people were interested. Normally no. I would tell the DCM usually what these people were saying. Sometimes he reported it, sometimes he didn't.

Q: What was your impression of the role of Italy in NATO?

SILVA: Well, the most cooperative, I think, of all the NATO partners in many ways. One way was the use of Italian territory for exercises. They were always willing to help produce, in a country that doesn't have that much in terms of unoccupied land, areas where you can drop bombs. But they were always very, very helpful. I think that they brought to the dialogue in NATO enough of a restraint on the adventurists that they were very useful there too. There were many times when we were going to do something in the Middle East and the Italians would object and help bring back some sense of order to our thinking about interventions in the Middle East or outside the NATO area. They were very careful about that. But then at the same time if we needed to have landing rights for military air transport planes going into the Middle East, Saudi Arabia or Israel or Turkey, invariably we could use Sicily as a stopping point, a refueling point.

Q: Were we having any problems with them over Libya?

SILVA: I don't think we had much of a problem. The Italians had problems with Libya. There are those Italian islands, Pantelaria and the one where we have a Loran site that were at issue during one of the confrontations between Italy and Qadhafi. There was a moment, in fact, when the rumor was that Qadhafi was somehow going to invade Pantelaria, if not both islands, and take them over. But the Italians always had this take-it-easy approach to Qadhafi. And they were probably right. He never did invade. There were the dead Italian military buried in Libya that he threatened to ship back, remember? He was going to dig up the Italian dead from various wars in Libya and ship them back to Italy. Kick out the Italians in their final form! That never happened. And it would never happen because the Italians were so calm about it.

Even though the press were screaming, the government took a very calm, reasoned approach to these matters. Much more reasonable than we did. They were upset when we shot down some Libyan fighter planes in the Gulf of Sidra. They were upset by that. They would not have done that. They were upset by it officially and then congratulated us privately, which is another way of doing things in the Italian way. This is terrible but I'm glad you did it.

Q: What was the feeling, again, within the NATO military complex, about the fact that the Italian Communist Party was just about the largest in Europe. How did we feel about this?

SILVA: Well, it depends. Our military were worried about it. I don't think anybody else was. The Italian Communist Party was somewhere between 20-30% of the vote. I would assume that in the middle of the Italian military, 20-30% were Communists. Why not? It didn't seem to affect them in any way. The Italian high command of the military establishment was very sensitive to this, and there were efforts to place known communists out of the mainstream in the military.

They never had any problems, that I know of. The Italian military is much maligned, but there are two units in NATO that always get the kudos, in every exercise, every real, live landing exercise and neither of them is American. One is the Italian St. Marco Battalion, their equivalent of our Marines, and the other are the Dutch Marines, with the long hair, ear rings and all. I saw the San Marco battalion in operation at one exercise. I was on a boat off shore. They were good, really good troops. No accidents, no untoward episodes. I think the U.S. Marines lost a couple of men in that same exercise. It was a difficult landing. They were just good. The Italian army has another great group, the Alpini mountain troops--first rate, nobody better in Europe. Certainly nobody better here, we don't have mountain troops that amount to anything. It's extraordinary. They've got a good air force, outmoded airplanes but outstanding pilots. It's the people that count.

Q: One last question on this period when you were in Italy. You were there during sort of the Watergate period. How did this play?

SILVA: It probably played the way it did in most saloons and bars in the United States. It was not a thing you talked about, nobody worried about it. The Italians didn't get especially excited about it. I think they wondered why the American press got so excited because it was the kind of thing that happened all the time in civilized countries. They didn't find it unusual. In the Embassy you'd talk about it in the Snack Bar. How they were dumb enough to get caught, or why they were dumb enough to do it to begin with. But I don't think anybody then could possibly have foreseen the events that followed, including the eventual resignation. No one could have seen that. It was one of those funny little episodes, they got caught and that's it and it's going to go away and it didn't go away.

Q: Was there any effect as far as the Embassy was concerned on the slow demise of the Nixon presidency?

SILVA: No, I didn't notice any difference at all. Of course its back to the same thing-- how important are embassies at times? Certainly that was a period when it didn't seem to make a hell of a lot of difference. I mean we've got a Secretary of State who is falling on his knees and praying with the President or standing up in front of TV and saying "I'm in charge"--that sort of nonsense. It was embarrassing, I suppose, but it didn't affect anything. The Embassy kept doing its thing. Each section did its job. Whether anybody in Washington paid any attention is something else.

Q: One last thing, were you involved at all in the time when the Carter Administration came in and, Carter, one of his things in Europe was he got involved in something called the neutron bomb. First we're going to put it in and then there was some huffing and puffing about how it didn't kill...

SILVA: It killed people and not things.

Q: Yes, and that seemed to be a true capitalist bomb. And first we said we were going to put it in and then we said we were going to take it out and this got Schmidt in Germany absolutely livid. Did that have any...

SILVA: Yes. I remember that very well. It was a big thing with the Italians. They thought it was outrageous, I mean a bomb that would kill people and not destroy buildings ought to have had a kind of appeal in a country where most of the cities were antiquities in themselves and worthy of preservation more than the people. But it was still something they didn't like and we heard a lot about it. All the time. They were opposed, they were simply opposed. They went along with us, it was interesting. In the alliance they went along with the United States, even though they were violently opposed to the selective nature of destruction, nonetheless they voted with us in the alliance to actually bring it in. Although we never did. At least we said we never did.

Q: Looking at this, the Italians have been our strongest supporter on things like this, also when we were introducing the intermediate range missiles, which came a little bit later...

SILVA: AWACS was the big thing back then, remember, the Airborne Control System that got a lot of publicity during the Gulf War. But AWACS back then was just beginning to be introduced. It was being used by the U.S. Air Force, successfully. It was used in Vietnam successfully, etc. Everybody knew about it. It was a very expensive thing, this huge airplane full of electronic equipment. And we needed then to get other people to accept and use AWACS. It would bring down the unit cost if we could get other people to buy it, so a great push came out of the Department to all the Embassies in the NATO countries to convince them to buy AWACS. We would give them special prices, long term payments, all kinds of inducements to buy AWACS. It did not sell very well but the Italians bought it. They bought it because we said it was important to us that they buy it. And they bought it, and that changed the whole thing within the alliance. The fact that one of the allies bought this thing convinced the others that it was useful. The Brits had a similar system, I don't remember the name, but it was the fact that the Italians went ahead that sold the rest of the alliance.

Q: The Italians are a very sophisticated people and they have their own interests. They're not anybody's patsy or anything else, but for some reason they have proved to be the most loyal of allies, even at times when we might wonder at our own policy. Why have they been like this?

SILVA: I think it would take a very, very long time to look into why they are that way, historical reasons. I think they like having a muscular big brother, because in the past they got into trouble so often. I think they like that idea, having a big brother. And here's a big brother where there are, what, 35 million Italians living in the United States, so it's a big brother that has a blood connection with a good number of Italian/Americans in the Congress. They used to say that the United States did one great thing for Italy, and that is we welcomed the Mafia from Italy and took them out of Italy to New York! In Italy they know about Ernest and Julio Gallo. They don't have any great respect for the Gallo wines, but they're the boys, they're our people. And there's so and so who is a judge in the Supreme Court and so and so who is a governor, and on and on and on. They're very proud of that. I used to give a lot of speeches in Naples, and one of the speeches that the Italians loved, I would get ovations, standing ovations in towns, small towns, Kiwanis or whatever, was the history of U.S.-Italian relations. Going back to Christopher Columbus and bringing it up to date, that kind of thing. They were fascinated by the fact that I knew that Jefferson found much of the language for the Declaration of Independence in his correspondence with an Italian philosopher and that Palladio up there in Vincenza and his villas,

inspired Monticello. Who was Ringo, the famous Ringo? Ringo was an Italian whose name was Siringo, and he was a Pinkerton man working out of New Orleans. The Italian loved all this great stuff, they published it in their local newspapers as though it were new to them. What was really new of course was that the American Consul General in Naples knew about it. We're fortunate from the Italian point of view in having many faults, and we admit it as they admit it. No one else does. You never hear Frenchman admitting that France is guilty of anything. The Germans too have been reluctant to admit guilt. The Italians don't care. Here we are, take us the way we are. And they think, and I think to a great extent they are right, that Americans are the same. And I think there's a little bond there.

Q: That's very interesting. Because I noted when I came from Greece, where everything was somebody else's fault, and coming to Naples, to have people say "We have a problem here, but we'll take care of it." In other words, it's not your fault, it's our fault, and we're not going to blame you. You don't have to go through this irrational argument with somebody over that.

SILVA: Well, you know Rex Reed is a movie critic for the New York Post, and back in '81 or '82, he wrote something in the New York Post about a movie being made in Italy. It was being made in Naples, and he said the Neapolitans were the worst people in the world, that Naples was the sewer of Italy and Europe. Well, I read that in the local Neapolitan newspaper. The Neapolitans were insulted. I found it insulting too, because Goddammit, I lived there. So I wrote the SOB and his paper (The New York Post I think it was), and among the things I said was that if any one was an expert on sewers, he was. It was pretty nasty, the kind of thing you write but don't send, but I did. I also defended the Neapolitans saying pretty much that they are what they are, they do the best they can. What can anybody else do? Well, the New York Post ran my letter on the front page. They thought it was an amusing beginning to a battle between me and this jackass, this Reed fellow. And then it was picked up by the Italian newspaper in New York, and then back to several Naples papers. The next thing I know it was being printed on the front pages in Naples, and headlined, "American Consul Defends Naples." I got phone calls, telegrams, I never expected anything like it. I thought this was a little private battle going on and it was extraordinary, the outpouring from Italians. I suppose it came under the heading "We know he's an American but he understands us."

Q: You were in Naples from '81 to '85. What was the situation in Naples when you arrived?

SILVA: They had just had the earthquake, which you remember better than I.

Q: Yeah, I was Consul General there at the time. Earthquake in November 1980.

SILVA: When I got there the evidence of the earthquake was all over. There were still lots of temporary structures around. Along the Pozzuoli port area waterfront they had set up a great number of lift-van kinds of containers. People were living in these sort of railroad cars, and little businesses were set up in them as well. There were still rumbles. Aftershocks went on long after we got there, for a good six months after the earthquake we were still getting aftershocks. The U.S. decided to come to the aid of southern Italy with an AID program, mostly pushed by by the

Italian American members of congress, naturally...especially by Senator D'Amato. It started at around \$20 million, and with D'Amato's influence it grew to something like \$50 million. It was a substantial amount of money which was to be used to in some way to help the Italians get over the worst of the earthquake. The worst of the earthquake was in the mountains of southern Italy. Villages, some of them medieval villages, were completely destroyed and of course antiquities suffered the most. There were 200,000-300,000 people left with no place to go. The U.S. with the departments discretionary emergency funds first supplied a great number of tents, water purification units, that sort of thing. Most of Europe came to the Italians with the same kind of help, the Germans, the French, the Brits, Scandinavians, all contributed one way or another to provide shelter, food, water, etc. The earthquake hit during the winter which made it particularly hard on the villagers. AID then came in with this substantial amount of money, to do something. The AID Director, as is often the case, had never been a director before. For AID this was a very marginal operation, this was not the huge programs of Africa and Latin America that go on for entire careers. It was looked upon as a little quickie. But this "quickie" took six years to finish--almost a career. Anyway, they sent this director out, we had long talks and we had a good many disagreements. He finally agreed to talk to the Ambassador. He felt he was a very important person and independent of both the Embassy and the Consulate General. In the beginning we had a very difficult relationship, continuing battles over who was the boss in southern Italy. Unfortunately the Ambassador in Rome was Maxwell Rabb, who most of the time was not with it. He acted as though he was in an early stage of Alzheimer's or something like it. He certainly seemed quasi-senile. But at any rate, we had these battles and most of the time it came out all right. We finally agreed that the program for school building was okay but he usually, not always, cut me out of the process of selecting the beneficiaries. Finally something like 29 schools were built. There were several instances of poor judgment exercised by AID. I guess they have to think big. In one town we built a school with a capacity for 1,500 students, which just happened to be the population of the entire town. Some of that happened.

Q: My impression was that these towns were semi-deserted anyway, because many of the adults had gone to work in Milano and Torino and so on. So you didn't have that many children.

SILVA: Generally those who had left the villages to work in the north were the men..the women and children were left behind at the other end of the remittance chain. Anyway, the idea was that in most cases AID would build regional schools. And in most cases, like in San Angelo de Lombardia (home, by the way to the commanding General of the Italian Army), we built a very nice school, much nicer than any school my son had ever gone to, with a swimming pool and tennis courts and an internal this and internal that. It was a regional school, and it worked in San Angelo because San Angelo was the biggest town in the area and all the others had, by tradition, sent their kids to school in San Angelo anyway. But they built a couple of would-be regional schools in areas where the towns continued to have ancient antipathies one for the other, and each wanted its own building. At any rate we built schools and we built a few useful clinics (though in the latter case sometimes the towns had neither staff nor the money to hire staff. Few self-respecting Italian doctors are willing to work in a small village.) We built a couple of cow barns, and that was nice for the people who owned the cows.

The American press occasionally would recognize the US program in the south and we'd get a visit from the correspondent in Rome of the Washington Post or the Los Angeles Times. Usually

the result was a rather amusing article about the U.S. providing money to one of the richer countries in the world. So I thought that what we needed to do was build something that would have permanent, long-term implications in southern Italy. We developed a program to study the seismicity of the earthquake area, to study Vesuvius, to study Pozzuoli bay (itself part of an ancient volcanic crater), and to set up monitoring stations. Eventually AID agreed. They didn't like it, really, because it's not very sexy. You can't hang one of those hand-shake AID placards on an underwater sensor. But they did install underwater monitors in the Bay of Naples and little things up on the hills that nobody can see, and an electronic communication system. The US Geological Service was involved in setting it up and two or three professors from the University of Naples would periodically read the tapes. AID didn't much like it, but the Italians did. They have a kind of reverence for science, the Italians, as you remember. They thought this was a great thing to do, because it was something they were not then capable of doing alone. They had some very, very sophisticated seismologists and volcanologists and all of that, but they were a little bit behind the curve in terms of the acquisition of the latest electronic equipment. In Long Valley, California, the USG has a very, very old program of monitoring the seismic uplift in the ground. I think it's one of three or four places in the world where this happens, One other being Pozzuoli. There in Pozzuoli the pillars of the ruin of an ancient temple give graphic evidence of the rise and fall of the ground level. The US has long experience in monitoring the phenomenon of "Vradysism" and was able to provide the same kind of sophisticated equipment to the Italians. In a little apartment on top of Posillipo an office was established, which I hope is still there, where the data is received and stored. It's kept on tape and doesn't require the presence of an operator. You can drop by once in a while and pick up a tape. There is a connection too to Mt. Vesuvio. And the interesting thing is that Vesuvius is expected to blow any day now. The latest readings from there are that it could go today, tomorrow, or a year from now. But it's going to go, and it's going to go in a big way. And I hope that some of the equipment that AID installed there has helped to give greater precision to any prediction of an event. There are a couple of million people living in the shadow of that mountain and if it erupts the number of casualties could be incredibly high.

Q: When I was there just after the earthquake we had just had the Mt. St. Helen's explosion, and I looked in the National Geographic map and pictures showing trees knocked down and devastation for about 20 miles. So I took a compass and put it in the middle of Vesuvius and ran 20 miles, and boy oh boy, including the Consulate General, the whole city of Naples falls right within that 20 mile range. It's scary.

Well, how about reporting on local, southern Italian politics?

SILVA: I did a lot of that. By then the staff had been cut further. We had one officer who was supposed to be a Political/Economic Officer and we had the Commercial Officer, but that didn't give us real reporting assets. The Political Officer was an Economic Officer who had pretty much failed in his own cone. He didn't have any Italian, and couldn't hold a conversation with consulate contacts. As a result, I did all the reporting. Quite a bit, actually. Most of it was designed to show the Embassy that southern Italy, with one-third of the population, played an important role in national politics. The nationalist/fascist Party in Naples...

Q: Was that the MSI?

SILVA: Yes. It had its natural home in Naples and when it acted there were national repercussions. So we did a lot of educational reporting, educating the Embassy and the desk. We did a long series of telegrams on the parties in the south -- how they were organized, where they came from, who were the leaders, why they differed, when they did, from the national parties' platforms. You know, even the Christian Democrats worked quite differently from the way the same party operated in the North. We did a lot of that, we did a lot of election reporting. There always seemed to be elections in the offing in the South, municipal elections, etc. And I always felt, when I did reporting primarily for the Embassy, including municipal election reporting, that when you have an election in Bari or Brindisi or Taranto they tell you something about the whole area, and what's going on. The Embassy was not particularly thrilled with that sort of thing, but I did it anyway.

We had two major elections while we were there. It was rather hectic, because it takes a long time to get to Taranto and Brindisi and Reggio Calabria and the other major centers of the south. It's a long haul, and you spend a couple of days and see people from morning to night and then you rush back and try to write a telegram. It was a hectic time, but it was useful, and I think we were very close to the mark on the elections, closer than the Embassy. That, I found, was not hard to do in most cases. Embassies work too much by consensus. The reporting officer in an Embassy has much less leeway to express an opinion that might differ from others. There are going to be discussions, inside the section, between the sections themselves, between agencies, and then, between the section and the front office. Things get watered down.

Q: And they tend to reflect the conventional wisdom of the capital, when you get down to it.

SILVA: Yes, and I find even recently when I have visited consular posts as an inspector, that you get a lot more interesting reporting. It may not be accurate, but it's interesting because it's a different point of view.

Q: Having served in Rome and picked up sort of the Roman attitude, did you find, within our own establishment, the Embassy and all, a sort of the disdain for the Mezzogiorno? I mean, anything that happened there was sort of lower class, or something like that?

SILVA: Absolutely. I must say I didn't feel that way when I was in Rome. I felt that way towards the Consul General in Naples, who I thought was a complete utter ass.

Q: Who was this?

SILVA: This was Ernie.

Q: Ernie Colantonio. Well he was sort of the godfather who returned to his native soil. At least that was my impression.

SILVA: Well he was. Even his Italian relatives moved in with him from that town outside of Naples. He was still recalled by Neapolitans as a joke. Anyway, I didn't feel that way about the south. Of course I traveled in the south from the Embassy and hardly anyone else did. The

Military side took me to Naples, to NATO, and to the US military sites in Brindisi, etc. I found the people in the Political Section of the Embassy, the domestic political reporters, never went to the south. They went to Milano, they went to Venice, they went to Florence. They had acquired the northern Italian attitude. The Mezzogiorno is like a poor, rather disreputable relation, a burden to be fobbed off as quickly and quietly as possible....

Q: You got this from some of the prefects. Their wives would complain to my wife about having been sent down to this godforsaken place, why can't they go to...

SILVA: I tend to be an activist.. hell, I am an activist. I upset the Embassy constantly from Naples. By trying to do something. That at least kept their interest in Naples alive. I'm afraid I pretty much ignored the Embassy in many ways. I went to Rome maybe once a year, no more than that, all the time I was there at least to attend the annual conference. But I was constantly queried from Rome -- asking when I was coming up there, seldom about what I considered the main purpose of my post, reporting on the south. Though the Embassy seemed leery of what I was up to, I still am convinced that everything I did in Naples was in the US interest and redounded to the credit of the US. That was my job. The Embassy saw it as boat-rocking.

An example. I started a commercial organization called the United States-Southern Italy Trade Organization. In Naples there was no sign of the Chamber of Commerce, with its headquarters in Milano, no sign that they were active in or indeed had any interest in the Mezzo-Giorno. Many Italian businessmen in Naples, the big pasta makers for example, were members of the Chamber in Milano. They never visited the Chamber, never got any benefit from it. I had no intention of competing with the Chamber, and certainly didn't have the resources if that had been my intention. So I pushed for the organization of the United States-Southern Italy Trade Organization. It wasn't a Chamber of Commerce, it was what its title implied. It was intended to promote trade between the US and Southern Italy--two-way trade. The Italian Chamber of Naples provided a room and a secretary. One of the members, a newspaperman, provided printing facilities. The director, a retired Italian/American businessman, was unpaid. The only expense was the secretary. It was a very informal, old country-boy operation. But it showed signs of turning into something useful. Within the first six months we helped arrange two trips to the States for the members.

They thought it was great! They made excellent contacts both to sell their products and to represent American products in Italy. The major pasta manufacturer from Salerno, still talked about it four years later when I left Naples. He is now exporting pasta to the U.S. and has bought American packaging equipment. That was the intent of the organization. To cut mutually beneficial deals, to introduce southern Italian products to the U.S. and encourage the purchase of U.S. products in Southern Italy. The Embassy found out about it. On the next visit of the Ambassador (they were mercifully infrequent) he came as usual with his interpreter and his latest staff aid, a brand new FSO. Rabb, as usual, didn't know what he was talking about. He was repeating what the Commercial Counselor in Rome had told him. The staff aid tried to tell me what the Embassy was upset about. Finally Rabb said, "Before you go any further you better tell the Department what you are doing." I replied that though I may have been the initiator, the catalyst, I was not officially part of the organization. I was not a member (members paid dues). Our little one-man commercial office provided services to the organization but the same services

we provided to any Italian or American businessman. observer."

As it turned out the American Chamber of Commerce in Milano was the instigator. They believed that the little group in Naples would somehow undercut them. So, before I could notify the Department, I got a telegram from the Department asking what the hell was going on? The Chamber of Commerce in Milano complained that the Consulate had started a second chamber in Naples in competition with it, that it was trying to take away their membership. And it went on and on and on. We still kept working at it. And finally I agreed with the Embassy that there would be no direct relationship between the Consulate and this organization, but that I would still continue to have contacts with them and provide them with advice and counsel, etc. The Embassy didn't like even that but they accepted it. The Chamber in Milan did not.

They felt it was an illegal operation, that the Consulate in Naples was doing all these terrible things to destroy the Chamber. I replied to the Department that the establishment of the organization never gave the Chamber a thought, that perhaps if the Chamber in Milan had ever paid any attention to the south except to collect dues from their southern members a local initiative would not have been necessary. What was happening now was helping U.S. trade with southern Italy and helping with some Italian trade as well. As to undercutting the chamber, we offered to assist in converting the organization to a branch of the chamber. No interest. In fact the organization had a number of members from Milan and Torino, none of whom dropped their memberships in the Chamber. Alfa-Romeo for example was one of the most enthusiastic members of the group. Alfa-Romeo was putting up a plant in southern Italy, a huge thing in the area of Avellino or Benevento, and they thought the organization was useful to them. But that wasn't good enough. The American Chamber of Commerce didn't want any competition, whether it benefited U.S. trade or not. Eventually the director in Milan was under some sort of cloud because he had been spending money from the Chamber to provide an apartment to an Italian lover and all kinds of money had disappeared. But, that's irrelevant. The Chamber's objections kept the Embassy's interest alive. The Commercial Counselor at the Embassy (a former Commerce Department district director in the US, for whom the assignment in Rome was a sort of golden handshake) was very upset. I was told that it was almost the exclusive subject of his contributions to Embassy staff meetings. He was apparently getting flak from the American Chamber in the US through the Commerce Department.

When I left Naples the organization was still operating but some of the steam had gone out of it. By now it may be dead. That helped bring Max Rabb down to Naples. I urged him to meet the members of USSIT to see for himself that they were prominent and influential businessmen (I knew that would interest Rabb) and not subversives. Moreover, I had repeatedly suggested to come south on a protocol visit. The authorities in Naples, including the US Navy and the US Admiral heading NATO, as well as the Italians, wondered why he never visited them. I suggested that the timing should coincide with a big reception at the Castel del'Uovo to be given by the Italian Military where he could meet everybody and be seen by everybody. Max of course was invited but he didn't want to pay any official visits. Hard to imagine, an Ambassador, or a staff that will let an ambassador visit a regional capital without calling on local officials. But he said he wanted to come to Naples to talk to me, go to the reception, and then go off to Avellino to see one of the schools that had been built by AID. Not incidentally, RAI Television planned to cover the AID effort on a special program and wanted to get pictures of him at the school. So he

said "I don't want to see the mayor, I don't want to see the prefect, I don't want to see any of those people." I told him "You've got to do it. You don't want to, but you've got to." Well, he was very, very upset but he agreed and we went around and we had these very uncomfortable meetings, where he just sat slumped over lapsing occasionally into a semi-stupor during which they mentioned the huge reception they were holding, noted that I would be coming, and expressed the hope that he would come as well. And Max piped up, "Of course!" He immediately perked up a little bit. So we went to the reception. I tried to take good care of the Ambassador though I must say I had trouble with the role.

I was trying to do the right thing, and stayed with him. People were walking all over that huge inside courtyard of the castle where this thing was being held. Max had brought with him in his entourage his Political-Military Counselor, Peter Semler. During the evening Peter walked by and said "Hi!" I said "Hi" and the Ambassador said "Hello!" After Peter had passed, the Ambassador turned to me and asked "Who was that, he looked familiar?" By then Peter Semler had been with the Embassy over a year! He had been there over a year, been to morning staff meetings for a year, and the Ambassador didn't recognize him, which was some indication of the state of his disintegration. Anyway, it was amusing.

During this time too I had some good friends who were in the archeological business at the museum in Naples. I loved that museum and I got to know some of these people rather well. I had been to Pompeii and Herculaneum several times. It was a great place to take visitors. Then one morning I had a phone call from the director at Herculaneum, Giuseppi Magi, saying "we've just finished the excavation of the beach area and found some alcoves with a lot of skeletons. Come and see." They had gone farther towards the ocean and they had actually finally dug down to the original beach level. And there, in alcoves built into what had been the city wall, alcoves that had been used to shelter fishing boats, they found all these skeletons. He pointed out "This is very interesting because it was always believed that, unlike the population of Pompeii, the people of Herculaneum managed somehow to escape in that eruption of 79 AD and that's why we never found any skeletons. Suddenly, there we are on the beach and find all these skeletons. Somebody ought to be really interested in this and help pay for the continuation of this excavation. Because we've run out of money."

Q: They're right in the middle of a populated area and all that...

SILVA: Indeed. So, I told him okay, I would make some phone calls and see what I could find. I had met one guy from the National Geographic some time before in the company of Jim Creagan. Remember Jim Creagan?

Q: Yes, Jim Creagan was the Political Officer, he is DCM in Rome now. Very astute...

SILVA: He's very good. But anyway, at a party sometime in the past I had met this guy from the Geographic but forgotten his name. Jim Creagan had been there, so I called him and asked if he remembered this guy's name. He did. So I called the fellow, Lou Mazzatenta, told him what had happened and suggested it would be nice if the Geographic would take on the godfather role in helping to continue this thing. He said he would take it up with his superiors. Next thing I know I had a call from Gil Grosvenor who was then the No. 1 at the magazine and the organization and

the grandson of the original founder. He said he was going to send somebody over there to take a look, see if it was worthwhile. So they sent a guy over. Meanwhile I had talked to Rabb about these conversations. When I told him Grosvenor had called he told me he wanted to be involved if anything came of it. Naturally I assured him I would keep him informed. The magazine sent a photographer and writer and turned out an initial story on the find. Then they agreed to fund a substantial portion of the work and to send a paleoanthropologist to examine the skeletons, to rearticulate the skeletons, write up the condition and pathology of the remains. They sent a lady named Sarah Bisel, who had been trained under a man named Angel at the Smithsonian. She was good. Anyway, they agreed to send her, they gave her a grant for a year, and then they provided some funds for other things.

Rabb was not very happy about all this. It was getting a lot of coverage in the press and television and he would have rather had it happen in Rome. But I invited him down and he actually came to Naples, paid a visit to the site, and got his picture in the paper. But it was obvious Max would have preferred to be covered by the Geographic. At any rate, the Geographic was very pleased initially, they ran a second article on the subject of Herculaneum. They also did a TV thing of the dig, very well done by Joe Seamans of WQED in Pittsburgh (whose father was the Seamans of MIT). Small world that these people move in.

Anyway, it was a pretty good thing and they decided that a group would come over to look at the work that they had been paying for. They came, the Board of Trustees, and the editor of the magazine, the people who had done some of the writing, and Gil Grosvenor. They all came over. They intended to return by way of a brief stop in Rome. So I called Rabb and suggested that he ought to have a reception for them and invite the important people of the Government to it. This was a major thing for Italy! The National Geographic can make a tourist Mecca of a historical site. So he agreed, reluctantly strangely enough. There was a rather nice reception to which most of the ministers came. I think Max was surprised by the response. Gina Lollobrigida also came. I guess she was Max Rabb's dream girl. I was told she was a regular guest at Embassy receptions. Even 40 years after her career in the movies began she was a gorgeous, gorgeous woman. I seems she always accepted invitations from the Embassy and apparently Max invited her to improve the decor of his parties. She was a hit among the Geographic board members. All went well at any rate. It made Max relatively happy about the whole thing, although he never really accepted the notion that there should be anything going on in one of his consulates where he was not directly in the middle of the spotlight -- even though if he had been in the middle he would have slept through it all.

The Geographic thing lasted a long, long time. Finally, after two or three years, unfortunately, the Society walked away from it. In the meanwhile Sarah Bisel did a fantastic job in assembling, preserving and interpreting the bones. She had discovered how many children women had had, what they died from, the diseases they'd had. One of the skeletons on the beach was a Roman soldier who still had his sword with him, The ash had even preserved bits and pieces of leather from his sandals. He had his tool bag on his back. Most Roman soldiers were also specialized craftsmen and carried their tools with them. This guy had been some kind of carpenter and had his tools with him, as though he was trying to escape. Sara found out that the reason he had been in Herculaneum was that probably he had been furloughed for a serious wound he had received. She found he had had a broken leg with evidence of fistulas and pus. The leg had never healed

well and since he was not fit for regular service he had been sent to Herculaneum. They found jewelry on a woman that made it apparent she was wealthy. All this kind of stuff kept coming up. Then they found the boat. As they were digging beyond the beach they found a wooden boat in a remarkable state of preservation. It was intact but completely turned to charcoal; it had been enveloped by hot ash so it had completely carbonized and simultaneously preserved in the hardening ash. It was virtually intact, with a mast, evidence of shroud lines and sails, indications as to how the mast was stepped. It was absolutely remarkable, except it was very fragile. At a touch it could fall apart. So I called the Geographic and they were excited by it because they had also been involved in the Cyprus boat. So they got a guy out of the University of Texas which has a Nautical Archeology department. (Interesting, University of Texas, of all places.) So they gave this man a grant to come over to study the boat to try to do something about preserving it. I forget his name, he was a charming guy who had barely finished high school and had gone on to be an electrician for 20 or 30 years during which he developed a hobby of boats, building first model boats, then big boats, and then he got interested in boats generally and started studying them in museums. And he became, without an educational background, one of the world's great experts on ancient boats. He went to Cyprus for that boat, he went to Scandinavia for the Viking boat, all that sort of thing. He was thrilled with the boat, he said it would provide information for the first time on how these little boats were rigged in Roman times. Apparently no one knew how they rigged their sails. There were a lot of discussions, a little digging, they found a helmsman with an oar still in his hand underneath the boat. It had turned over in the waves, apparently, and he had been killed trying to escape. It was all very exciting stuff, but the question was how do you preserve the boat and get it out of the matrix of solidified ash that held it? Being the kind of person he was, our man came up with a brilliant solution. You got gallons and gallons of Elmer's glue and just painted this whole charcoal boat in Elmer's glue. You kept applying the glue until you got a solidified boat. Then he would take it apart, bring it to shore, and reassemble at the museum. In the process we would also learn how it was built. The Italians didn't like that idea. (By then it was seen in Italian Academia that there was a lot of mileage to be made in Herculaneum and foreigners ought to be pushed out of the game.) They thought the Elmer's Glue notion was too simple. All sorts of university professors, from Rome, from Pisa, from Genoa, came to look at the boat, especially from the traditional maritime states, from Venice, from Genoa, Pisa. It seems special units at the universities in the maritime states deal with boats. They thought the Elmer's glue idea was ridiculous and said the hell with it, we're going to do it ourselves. So when our friend from the university of Texas was away, they took a forklift, dug under the boat and lifted it up. Of course they destroyed the boat. Not much is left except a few nails and a couple of brass fittings. After that the Geographic left quietly.

Q: While you were there the Camorra, the local mafia, got more vicious, didn't it?

SILVA: Yes, because of the earthquake, I think, the vast profits that were being made as a result of the earthquake.

Q: I have to say that about a week after the earthquake I had a busload of Italian-American Congressman who came down. Most of them come from the Naples area, not directly from Naples but from that area. Somebody had experience with the Friuli earthquake and said that there was an organized force that was really very useful, which was the Alpini alumni, the former members of the Alpini regiments came there and were very helpful, and asked if there

was anything similar around here. And I said, rather facetiously, that the only force that you've got in southern Italy, particularly in this area, is the Camorra. It didn't sit very well with them.

SILVA: Because they all remember it well, I'm sure. But you're right, the influence of the Camorra did get worse after the earthquake. It was brought home to us in the consulate because of Rosanna Capasso, a secretary in the consulate, whose husband was a Camorrista from whatever little town it was on the slopes of Vesuvius.

Q: That was supposed to be a hotbed, a center of activity.

SILVA: Her husband was a member of the City Council or something, but he was a Camorrista, everybody knew that. He was a brute apparently and beat her and her daughter regularly. She came to work more than once with bruises showing. Her mother had moved away years before and was living in Venice. Rossana eventually quit the Consulate and moved to Venice because she was afraid for her life and the life of her daughter. After especially bitter disagreements with her husband his response was that he was going to take the daughter and dump her in the bay.

On the other hand we had a code clerk, I forget her name, she was there when you were there, a tall gangly woman. She lived in Naples, in an apartment in the area not far from Santa Lucia...

Q: This is where the contrabandists live...

SILVA: Right, it's a Camorra stronghold. There was a lot of crime in Naples. Much of it was what might be considered victimless crime, contraband cigarettes, Gucci knockoffs, and making counterfeit labels for clothing, but violent crime took place primarily within the Camorra family. Anyway, there were burglaries taking place in Naples, and she lived smack in the middle of this area controlled by the gangsters. She never had any problems. I learned why eventually. Although she spoke very little Italian, she was always affable and polite. She did all her shopping right there in the neighborhood. The little grocery store on the corner, the little fruit stand beyond. She lived as though she belonged there, she showed them respect, so they respected her and they protected her. They went out of their way to protect this woman. She told me she had never bothered to lock her door.

There were trials going on at this time. The head of the local Camorra, a young man, was sent to prison. The trial seemed to last forever, but surprisingly he was convicted. However, the press said he was still running the organization from prison. The police admitted it. He had never been guilty of crimes of extreme violence. He never killed anybody, they said. The police seemed to accept the Camorra as a fact of life as long as they didn't go too far. In fact the Camorra was once an arm of the local authorities. The Camorristi in late Renaissance times were a class of people, the bully boys, "Teddy boys," "Teppisti." Along with the huge folding knives worn in their sashes, they wore short jackets, bolero jackets, taken from the Spanish. The jacket was called a "camorra," so they came to be called camorristi. They were just local boys, organized mostly to protect people from the occupiers, the French or the Spanish, etc., whoever was occupying Naples at the time. The Mafia grew up in Sicily for the same reason, as a protection agency for their own people. In those days Naples still had customs gates. When you left or entered Naples you went through the gate and paid duties. It was difficult to get people to do this work in those

violent times because some of the people going through the gate didn't want to pay, and violence was sometimes necessary. So the government actually turned over the customs duties to the Camorra. That's what gave them their big start. They're still doing something like that. They take a cut out of everything.

Q: This was also a period where the terrorist groups were sort of...how did that...did that have any...?

SILVA: Well, that's when they started providing guards for me. From the Embassy's point of view there was a serious threat from the terrorists, the Red Brigades, as well as the Camorra. There was one disturbing incident, we were in a car as a part of a cortege going to church along the waterfront, a church near the Royal Palace. There were at least a 100 cars lined up, filled with "notabile", and a Naples kind of traffic jam ensued. We were going to a church service for a member of parliament who had been killed by terrorists. A couple of guys went by on a scooter two or three cars ahead of us, fired through the window and killed the man inside. It was another deputy. And they got away. It was hard to imagine how in that traffic jam. There were thousands of people, cars, police, everywhere. But I suppose the scooter made it easier. Not only did they make the getaway from the original crime, but they got out of Naples, according to the local press because they were smuggled out by the Camorra. There was never any doubt that that is what happened. They had made a deal. The Camorra helped them out in exchange for something, and the something was weapons. The Camorra thereafter turned up with Uzis and other exotic guns that theoretically they got from the terrorists. At least that's what the Agency and the FBI thought.

It was an uncomfortable period. The Agency turned up the hit list for the people in the South, and number one on the hit list was Admiral Bill Crowe, who was the NATO commander in Naples and number two was me. Obviously neither of us was hit, but as a result I got guards from the local police. It was alright, but kind of a pain. It was expensive. When I traveled and I had another car with three cops in it and got to a town or a city like Taranto and they provided protection, I would end up buying lunch for 10 people. It was very expensive, and I didn't get reimbursed. But on the weekends Mary and I would still sneak out. We'd either just walk out the back door and walk up town or take the funiculars up to the museums, or we'd go down to the garage, get in our car, and drive out and go where we wanted to go out of town.

Q: When I was there, before Dozier was captured, I walked every street in Naples by myself. I used to take the streetcar, and just go off.

SILVA: We never felt endangered, anywhere in Italy. Of course Mary had her purse snatched twice in Naples --"Scipped" we used to say, from "scippatori", purse snatchers. By the time we left there was a growing tide of violence against obvious tourists...robberies of rental cars at the toll booths on the highway...earrings, necklaces, bracelets snatched from women on the street.

But still, Naples was a very special place, controlled chaos in some ways. The local paper once wrote that there were more municipal employees per capita in Naples than in any other city in the world. It was probably true but no one really knew how many there were. One day it was announced that every city employee had to report to work, and if he didn't he wouldn't get his

check. Something like twice as many people turned up at City Hall as were expected. The surplus almost filled the square outside. They had no idea how many people worked for the city and were getting checks from the city treasury. It was that kind of place. They didn't collect the garbage for a long time, not just once, more than once, collection simply stopped. Things got pretty bad at one point. But Naples survives. That's the great Italian gift, the will to survive. Eventually the garbage was towed away. It never got as bad as some parts of New York City where the garbage accumulates in vast amounts over a long period of time. I like the city of Naples and I like Neapolitans.

Q: I found, almost how the system works, you begin to absorb the local things and if there's a prejudice against the locality, which there is obviously tremendous prejudice against the south on the part of Rome and even our Embassy, it puts you at odds with things.

STANTON H. BURNETT
Counselor for Public Affairs, USIA
Rome (1974-1978)

Public Affairs Officer, USIA
Rome (1980-1983)

Stanton H. Burnett entered the USIS in 1967 while on leave from his university teaching position. In addition to Kinshasa, Mr. Burnett served in Brussels and Rome. He was interviewed in 1990 by Pat Nieburg.

BURNETT: I finally ran out my string there. Remember, now, I had not spent, as I recall, a full working day in Washington in USIA, even getting oriented. So, of course, I had to come home at that point, according to all orders.

But, as I mentioned, I used to go down to Madrid regularly to speak. The PAO in Madrid at that time was Bob Amerson. One night I went down and was speaking -- we had a particularly hot session at his center at which I was the guest speaker, and we had all those generals lined up in the first three rows asking why aren't you guys letting us into NATO.

At that point I would have to explain the dynamics and talk about the fact that even if the US were to get behind it in some high level way, that there were a lot of Scandinavian countries that really couldn't hack it, having the Spaniards in. We'd tell them some home truths. Then, of course, the students were in the back of the room. It was a hot session but a real good one.

Bob was a very gracious host always. He and Nancy -- I brought my wife along, which was unusual -- I almost never did, but she had never been to Madrid and so I brought her along. So we all went out, hit some bars and listened to some music. At about 3:00 in the morning we wound up in the Plaza Mayor, or whatever it's called, the big central square in Madrid. This will recall the good old days when assignments were made in ways that would probably bring legal action now.

Bob said, "I got wonderful news today." I said, "What was it?" He said, "I've just been assigned PAO to Rome." I said, "You're the luckiest man in the world." I had worked in Rome as a professor -- I had worked there for NBC and I loved Rome. I spent a lot of time there.

I said, "You're the luckiest guy in the world. I can't imagine anything nicer." I said, "I'm doomed. They've made clear that I have to go back to Washington now. We're reaching the legal limit of my being out." He said, "Are you really interested in coming to Rome?" I said, "Yeah."

He said, "How is your Italian?" I said, "My Italian is beautiful," which was a lie. I had wonderful 16th century Italian because I had written a couple of books on Machiavelli. Modern Italian I couldn't handle at all, but I'm afraid I didn't make that distinction too carefully with Bob.

He said, "You know, we need a cultural attaché and you've got all the credentials." You know, a doctorate with a book on Machiavelli. What could be more perfect. He said, "Would you like to come to Rome as my CAO?" The other guy was ending his tour -- Bill -- I'm sorry, I don't remember his name. Bill Braun -- B-r-a-u-n.

I said, "Absolutely. If you can swing it, I'm your man." Gee, it must have been two days later that I got a call from the Agency that said, "How would you like to go to Rome as the CAO?" I said, "I'm practically packed." (Laughter.)

BURNETT: It was because of that early morning coffee in Plaza Mayor with Bob Amerson that we did that.

In the interim, then, they lost their Deputy PAO, Jim McDonald. Jim McDonald decided to retire and it was earlier than -- he surprised people by deciding to retire. So Bob said, "I know you have your heart set on being CAO. Would you like to move up a notch? Would you like to be the Deputy PAO?" I said, "What the heck. That sounds terrific."

Remember, I had served -- the only country post I had served at was Kinshasa during this semi-wartime and NATO, which is no kind of normal post. I still didn't know anything about post operations, I still didn't know what a going rate was and I had never been oriented.

So, I took the job and it was a direct transfer again so I had escaped Washington still. I went down and had four -- I just had the luckiest possible career. I had four years as Bob Amerson's and then Jock Shirley's Deputy PAO in Rome at a terrific time to be there because it was right at the time when the US was worried about the spread of the Italian Communist Party.

It was the time when the Compromesso Storico, the historic compromise, was on everybody's mind. The idea that the Communists and the Christian Democrats would cut a deal, not for a coalition of the left to rule Italy, but the two big parties. The model, of course, was the German Grand Coalition, which went and came left and right --

Q: Right.

BURNETT: -- would govern Italy. US policy, of course, was to oppose it, although we were so delicate about saying it that we almost faded into the woodwork.

So, it was an excellent time to be there because of the political struggle that was involved. Especially when Jock arrived -- but to some extent before -- we got well into the political parts of that job.

Now, an important part of Agency history. When I arrived, Italy was one of those places that had been giant after the war and had stripped down. We had, when I arrived, two branch posts, Milan and Naples.

To give you an example, the guy in Naples, who didn't have a car, had nine Italian employees, eight of whom had been with us since the '40s. He was expected to cover all the southern half of the boot, including driving over to the east coast, Puglia and so forth. I don't know, I guess he used his own car when he did it.

For example, he'd visit Bari -- now, Bari had, as little as seven or eight years before I arrived, four Americans and 14 Italians -- Bari! Now you had a guy driving his own car out of Naples to do it. Catania had had the same number, four Americans and 14 Italians. Now we didn't have anybody on the entire island of Sicily.

So, one of the things that I was particularly interested in doing, because Bob made the deputy in charge of the branch posts -- we were inadequately covering a lot of important things that had to be done in Italy. It was the first time there was something like a program. We had a country plan that made some sense. It was coherent.

I recall, after all the arguing about it with Washington, that we sent in -- it wasn't even a cable, it was a memorandum saying we need a massive expansion of branch posts, justification attached. The attachment was a single page which was a Xerox of Time Magazine -- a little before and after map in which they showed where the Italian Communist Party had been two years ago and then their expansion in terms of local government in two years. This ink blot was spreading across Italy.

The suggestion was, you take that up to the Congress, you take it to the White House. That's reason enough.

What we got was the reopening of four additional branch posts. We reopened Trieste, we reopened Genoa, we reopened Florence, and we reopened Palermo on the basis of those two maps showing the ink blot because that was the one thing that had some real political meaning.

Q: That was under the heading of fighting Communism.

BURNETT: Absolutely.

Q: Right.

BURNETT: I'm not sure we at USIS even saw that as necessarily the most important part of our mission, but it was our vehicle for getting the things we needed. The educational and cultural program was below bare bones. Our resources were too limited to do anything in a decentralized country like Italy, the kind of job we should be doing.

In some of those cities we still had what were called "sub-posts," in that an Italian employee was hanging on, keeping an office open, and that was all. We moved Americans into those places.

It was wonderful. It was so good. We've all spent so much of our lives cutting back that it was so nice to be in on an expansion like that.

Q: What year was that, Stan?

BURNETT: That must have been -- the watermark for the Compromesso Storico was '76, so this must have been '75, '76 -- in that period. We geared up and we started writing, I thought, healthier programs. We had ambassadors who simply gave us a lot of elbow room without being very understanding or effective themselves.

John Volpe, the former Governor of Massachusetts and Secretary of Transportation -- a wonderful man with whom I'm still in touch -- pretty much let us have our head.

He was succeeded by Dick Gardner who had more ideas and ambitions himself about that. But, for a lot of reasons that aren't of interest here, there was a rocky relationship between the post and Gardner even through his successive PAOs. I wound up being much later PAO under Gardner also and the relationship stayed rocky. Although, once again, there's a good personal relationship. He's on my board here at the Center now.

Q: What was the thrust of the program? What did it try to accomplish?

BURNETT: Well, the program was almost perfectly bifurcated in a way that I came not to like. That is, there was no particular relationship between the so-called information program and the so-called cultural program.

The cultural program was devoted to carrying out the usual activities; Dick Arndt was CAO. He had a bad first year and a bad fourth year, but the second and third years, when we really got it together, saw the best performance by a CAO I ever saw, by Dick Arndt.

Dick Arndt and Lois Roth were there. Lois was the Program Officer. I remember we were averaging more than a program event a day just in Rome. We had months under Lois where we had more than 100 program events in Italy in the month. It was a fireworks show.

There was a thrust and that really had to do with the campuses. In the secondary schools and in the universities the Communists had taken over the faculties. The Christian Democrats had decided after the war that they were going to take all the "important" jobs, which meant industry and finance. They'd leave stuff like education and so forth to those other folks.

The result was, as you might expect, a strong anti- American left. The Communists and that part of the Socialist Party which were called Maximalists, even more anti-American than the Communists, had taken over education. They had rewritten the history books. A generation of Italians was being formed with the hardest kind of party-line propaganda passing for teaching about the United States.

So, finding wedges into American studies programs, working on textbooks, that in many ways I think was the most important thing we were doing. Dick was brilliant at it. We were behind him. I think we made honest men and women out of a lot of teachers and faculty.

Q: Did you forge any bridges between US and Italian universities? I mean, the usual attempts of-

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BURNETT: Yes, there were some. It got started during my period. I remember the first one was between Northeastern University and the University of Reggio, Calabria. I still remember that because I poured champagne. It was a tough thing because it was a rather unpopular and difficult thing for Italian universities to do.

The fact is that the south is much more conservative than the north, for reasons that have to do with World War II and The Resistance. So it was easier to do it there initially. We did, and it was important, but progress was slow. It wasn't going to happen all at once. We worked at that, and that was important.

We worked to get the Fulbright, and failed during that period -- we succeeded later -- to get the Fulbright program and the International Visitor program improved. The Fulbright program needed some direction, some point. For example, it needed not to be dominated by the physical sciences so that it would have a stronger flow of social sciences and humanities.

In the IV program, we needed, and we did not succeed at that point, to recapture from the embassy log-rolling and pork barrel approach, where the agricultural attaché got his and 16th Street got theirs and there were a bunch of rewards. These were the goodies to be passed out to their main contacts -- all the wrong uses of the IV program. We did not succeed at that time in recapturing it. Later we found the key. When I returned as PAO, I managed to abolish the mission grants committee, and put the whole program on the PAO's desk for decisions, all according to country plan objectives. The labor attaché, for example, merely "advised" the PAO.

Anyway, four great years and very different years because Bob Amerson and Jock Shirley -- you had a cultural affairs oriented PAO replaced by a very political and information program oriented PAO. But we made it all work.

Pat, let me add one note that I think is important. Rome, I think, through that period and prior to it and afterwards, has been not a bad post, one that worked fairly well. It was relatively tranquil as officers did their job. As compared to some other posts in Europe, some of the big ones that have been characterized for 20 years by turmoil and difficulties and failure sometimes to get their act together.

You can go through Europe, which is the area I know best -- and when I was area director I looked hard at this -- and find the ones that are functioning well and functioning poorly. I do think that there is one general point to be made about them.

Where the PAO plays a strong information role -- and I'll come back to this -- where he is handling that whole range of top publishers, editors and columnists who really think they're a little bit above talking to an IO or press attaché, but whom the ambassador can't see all the time or isn't interested in or doesn't have the language for or isn't very good at, where he does that and lets a very senior CAO have his wings and take the spotlight -- and here you start with the phenomenon that Europeans, as do people mostly around the country, know what a cultural attaché is and they don't know what the hell a PAO is, that's a term nobody else uses -- let him have the spotlight and his wings, I think you have our most effective posts -- this is a very narrow statement, I'm talking large posts in very sophisticated countries and the CAO should have academic credentials and, as I say, he should be allowed the spotlight.

Where the PAO has a thirst to be the main cultural figure in town, with a lower grade CAO, he doesn't fill that information role that I just talked about, I think those posts have been beset by difficulties.

You said no holds barred. I think it is not coincidence that you had a struggle between -- speaking here of all very good friends or late lamented friends of mine -- the difficulty between PAO Jack Hedges and CAO Dick Arent in Paris is because Paris was organized in that latter way. In fact, they had lost the press attaché entirely. He didn't even sit at USIS. He was a complete captive of the ambassador over at the embassy, as you know.

It was repeated almost word for word then later, in struggles between -- sorry, now we're talking about serving officers -- Sam Courtney and Kenton Keith. They were in the same roles. We're talking across the board about very good officers. I think that -- and I'll come to it later because we got into some inspection trouble on it -- you hate to generalize too much but I think there's a fundamental lesson there. I'll come back to it.

Four years in Rome with Art and Roth and such terrific people working on the information side as Chuck Loveridge, some great branch PAOs that we moved in and who did terrific jobs, people like Miller Crouch -- those were wonderful years in which we were a part of important political action, we had an important cultural mission, and we had a lot of officers and a lot of talent.

Q: I need to interrupt you for one thing here because you made the point, which I think is very important, that you reopened branch posts. You also said -- and that was still referring to Italy -- that it was a decentralized country.

It raises the question that came up in the Agency, as you remember, the Japanese model -- you do everything from a central point, you fan out the programs, --

BURNETT: Right.

Q: -- you kind of put them into place in the central place and then send them out to the boonies

or the branch posts.

BURNETT: Yes.

Q: Forgive my saying that. Now, the whole philosophy of centralized versus decentralized administration of a major country plan, where do you stand? What has been your experience with that?

BURNETT: Well, my experience -- and it comes up later on things like, for example, the INF deployment incident -- this is not a good answer to your question -- is that we need to have enormous flexibility not only on individual programs but in the way we organize ourselves country by country.

Any rigid model is going to be wrong for a lot of countries. I think there is a difference between Italy and France. I don't know of a serious journalist, scholar or artist -- particularly performing artist -- who is French who does not want to get into Paris. The idea of being important in the French cultural or media and political scene and staying in a regional capital is unthinkable to a Frenchman.

In Italy or in Germany, the capital is not the center of everything. Milan is a more important business center and publications center than Rome is. Bonn comes first in government, and that's about it. Germany--

Q: Really?

BURNETT: That's right. The UK is probably more like France in that. I don't know enough about Japan to comment. But commenting on the European posts, the worst thing we could have is a rigid model. You could then talk about which rigid model is best, but they're all -- there you're talking about the best of bad situations.

I think we need that kind of flexibility. An across-the-board order to cut back on branch posts could be a wise and cost-effective thing in some countries and disaster in others. That's hard; it's hard for the Congress; it's hard for the Administration to deal with. But we need to have the same variety and style of operation as do the countries in which we operate.

Q: The reason that I brought this up, Stan, is that there was a tendency at one time in USIA to use the Japanese model where you had computerized programs, you had your audience research analysis all computerized -- these are the audiences that you try to reach. You use it and produce programs centrally.

You try to transpose this from a country where apparently it had been quite successful [in actual fact, although, because of the dominance of Tokyo as a media and governmental center, the Japan program has to be greatly centralized; the computerized audience centralization was not ultimately successful and has been largely abandoned] -- in Japan -- all of a sudden to the European countries. My experience has been, especially in Germany where I saw it happen, disastrous, where you had a decentralized country, just as you mentioned.

BURNETT: Now, I have to admit that certain things I did centralize later. I centralized, for example, our audience records system. Computers and telephones and modems reached the stage where we needed one full-time Italian employee and one half-time American running the thing because it was big.

I took it very seriously. It was a sensible way to operate. We had to know our audiences that well and it had to have good feedback, and it made perfect sense to do it centrally. I made sure our branch posts could ask a question of the system and get an answer back in 15 minutes.

It had to be as though it were on the ground with the branch PAO. If you could create a situation where it was as though it were on the ground with him, then I saw nothing wrong with doing that.

Packaging programs -- I wound up, when I went back to Rome as PAO, caring less and less about packaged programs, frankly. But if the primary job of the USIA officer -- and when I had a chance in Italy and then as area director and then as the counselor, I tried to make it in our work requirements the first item is personal advocacy. That you can't centralize.

If we are the on-the-ground civilized effective advocates of US policy, long and short -- and I also mean the long-range understanding of the US You can't centralize that. The guy has to be in Milan; he has to be in Trieste; he has to be in Palermo. Then, not only that, he has to do his homework assiduously.

I remember watching Miller Crouch in action in Sicily discussing Sicilian agriculture. It was clear that Miller had read several books and important recent articles on Sicilian agriculture. We had nothing in our country plan that had anything to do with agriculture. But by being on top of that and all other critical subjects about Sicily, having done his homework -- and I would imagine it was painful for him because I don't think he was interested in Sicilian agriculture -- he became a part of their world.

He became the kind of interlocutor who was as close to being an insider as an outsider could be. His knowledge of Sicilian agriculture made a difference when he talked to them about deploying missiles in Comiso because of the character of the relationship. We're outsiders, we stay outsiders. But you can be an outsider that they think of as so much a part of their world, so on top of things, and there doing your homework is crucial.

That is the most decentralized possible view of what our work is. So I agree with you, there are certain things that it's efficient to centralize and they tend to be the least important things.

Q: The mechanical aspects of our work.

BURNETT: That's right.

Q: The Deputy PAO in Rome.

BURNETT: Then I went back to Washington -- and this was an important part of Agency history. I had gotten to know Charlie Bray a little bit when he was State Department spokesman and I was doing my old NATO job because at times I was the interface with the State Department and White House press spokesmen because I was acting as spokesman for the mission for ministerials and things like that.

So, that way I got to know Bob McCloskey and Charlie Bray and later a lot of people who went through. I got to know Bray a little bit. It was mostly, I remember, the ministerial at Copenhagen.

BURNETT: Then Jock came back from being PAO in Rome to be Acting Director of the Agency during the -- between Administrations. They needed somebody to get to Rome fast who had the language and all the background and all. Because I'm a very loyal soldier and will do absolutely anything for the Agency and the good of the country, when Terry Catherman, who was the Area Director -- I remember he even decided he had to have a walk with me and we walked out, around and about the Agency.

Q: I'm glad he didn't jog you.

BURNETT: That's right. Oh, Terry and I have jogged together. You're right. He said, "Gee, I know this is your only tour and you've just got home, it would seem," and so forth, "but we really need for you to go out in the field. Would you consider?" You can imagine how long it took me to say yes.

I hated to leave the Research job because I firmly believe -- and I think it's been proven, frankly - - that you can reform something in Washington but unless you stay around then for several years, build expectations, build the right people in, the reforms aren't going to stick. I think that's the case. I think you --

Q: You have to institutionalize reforms --

BURNETT: That's right.

Q: -- before they stick.

BURNETT: And I didn't stay long enough. They tried other formulas after it.

So I headed back to Rome.

I am going to have to be briefer and, Pat, if we need a few extra minutes, we can.

Back out to Rome where I had just left. They say you can never go home again, and it's too quick and you shouldn't do it, but gee I had sat there in the deputy's job looking across the hall and thinking that the guy across the hall was having all the fun while I was doing the work. You know, I was right.

I had two terrific deputies during that time. One was Barry Fulton and the other was Robert Bemis, and they could run the things. So I had a glorious tour as PAO in which I was out almost all the time.

I did have that view of my role as -- well, we had an inspection that loved the post and the only thing they were critical of in what was a terrific inspection during that time was the PAO. They criticized me. They said I was behaving like a super-IO. I had to admit that's exactly what I was doing.

I was spending a heavy part of my time -- they gave us such wonderful representation digs, I thought I would use it. I would have a lunch every day -- not every other day -- every day. I mean, I'd get paid back -- sometimes I'd be the guest. But at least three times a week I was the host -- do to business. Got to know intimately all the editors, all the important news commentators, all the columnists, without exception.

It was wonderful for me because, God, this was glory. These guys whom I had read for years, who were heroes -- Alberto Ronchey and Indro Montanelli -- to be able to deal with them every day was wonderful.

During that time also we upgraded our contact with the Italian Communist Party. I was the only old Italian hand in the embassy. The Embassy had very weak economic and political sections in terms of background in Italy. So I became also the point man for the embassy for all the contacts with the top levels of the Italian Communist Party. So I was having lunch with the Secretary General and all the brass regularly too and doing the political reporting. You can imagine what fun that was.

It was a terrific time. I had a terrific information section, some of the best people in the world working there for me. We had a Super-CAO for the first year and then went to Agency officers, which meant that there was some rebuilding to do because Super-CAOs usually don't take care of the institutional business too well. But he did a lot of good for us because he (the Super) was the key to acquaintance with a lot of people. So, in the end we came out okay for it.

I was only there for three years, not a full four, but it was a sensational three years. I don't think I've ever had that much fun in my professional life -- at least, not until now.

We had a very hard-edged program. We saw ourselves as front-line advocates for the most important issues happening in Italy. I had 45 minutes alone with the ambassador every morning, a contact with him that even the DCM didn't have.

It was during the time of the missile deployment. But that was just one -- that was the only one that was Europe-wide, but that was one of the hard-edged efforts.

We got to the place where I was writing work requirements for the guy in Palermo saying one of his jobs was to turn the Giornale Di Sicilia around. They have this position on this issue, turn them around.

Now, to do that you have to have mutual confidence and trust because that guy has to know that he might come back to you and say, "I'm having trouble and the reason I'm having trouble is, he's a party hack and he takes his orders from the Socialist Party so you've got to do your job in Rome." It's got to be reasonable, and if I can't produce, then I can't expect him to produce and so forth.

Some of the officers were frightfully unhappy at having that kind of edge. The guy in Florence even grieved it. The officers that I thought were the best were the officers that loved it. You should talk especially to Dino Catarini.

Q: Oh, yes.

BURNETT: Dino was my guy in Milan and he was really ticked off initially. This is impossible, we can't work with this. He came -- he told me later -- I hope he was telling the truth -- that it wound up as the most satisfying period in his professional life because if you give proper support we can have that kind of hard edge. We don't have to report just activities, we can report accomplishments.

We went through a long period in which the cant that I remember was drilled into me -- you can't really change minds -- you know, you can deliver information and so forth, but let's not have the hubris to suggest that we can actually influence. If we don't have that hubris, if we don't seek to do it, I think the game is terrifically uninteresting and I can't imagine why the Congress would fund it.

I think we should accept that challenge. It means a very civilized idea of persuasion. We must take seriously the intelligence and the ability of your interlocutor to decide. The INF deployment, if we hit a guy who didn't believe the missiles worked, we fed him all the technical information he could swallow, we tried to get him to a test firing, we did what we could. If we felt we weren't negotiating seriously in Geneva and he was an important person, then we got him together with Paul Nitze or with Rostow, whether in Geneva or in Rome. We took it very seriously.

I think that perceived that way it's a noble trade, it's the most exciting game in town, and it's not hubris. It's exactly what we should charge ourselves with and it's damned hard.

One of the reasons why it's not a good idea to do that is that if Congress ever gets the idea that you can actually be that precise about what our work is, we might have difficulties sometime in showing our level of accomplishment for a particular period. But I think that's a small fear.

We do deal in soft things sometimes, you can't show a direct cause and effect. We could work hard during an election campaign in a foreign country and the election campaign comes out a particular way and we can't claim what we affected. But we can be a lot harder and have a lot more evidence of effectiveness than we usually use.

Q: To underline what you said, I honestly think that what happened in Eastern Europe very recently is the accumulated result of what I call radio and television sequence.

BURNETT: All right, I agree with you, but let me add to that.

Q: It's not only, but –

BURNETT: Pat, if you go back to the late '70s, that electrician and union leader knew one American and knew him well and got materials from him -- the one American that Lech Walesa knew was John Kordek.

Q: Oh, I would say that is the first line of the --

BURNETT: Absolutely.

Q: Absolutely. You know, but I'm saying --

BURNETT: John Kordek is a man who perfectly understood this advocacy role.

Q: Oh, absolutely. I would say this is number one.

BURNETT: Yeah.

Q: I have no quarrel with this and I agree with you one hundred percent. It's the cumulative effect of breaking out of isolation for more than one person. In the final analysis, it's a one-to-one relationship.

BURNETT: Your point is well-taken.

Q: Since you are in a rush, can we move to the counselor assignment?

BURNETT: Yes. There was a brief interregnum there. When Dave Abshire went to NATO he asked me to come in as his counselor. It meant leaving Rome a year early, and it meant going from a job that some people perceived as higher to one that some people perceived as not that high. I don't think of the NATO job that way. I think the NATO job is as important as any in Europe.

CHARLES HIGGINSON
Deputy US Representative to Food and Agricultural Organization
Rome (1975-1978)

Born in Massachusetts, Mr. Higginson graduated from Harvard University and entered law practice before joining the Foreign Service in 1961. During his career he served in Brussels, Algiers, Rome and Luxembourg, dealing primarily with international organizations such as the European Community (EC), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the OECD. In Washington Mr.

Higginson again dealt primarily with international organizations and issues.

Q: Your next assignment was to Rome. What did you do there? What was that like? I believe it was from 1975 to 1978.

HIGGINSON: Correct. I was the deputy U.S. representative to the Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome. This was just after the World Food Conference. There was a major worry about the ability of the world to supply enough grain to feed. Mr. Kissinger promised that we would set up a rural food program and an investment bank to assist agriculture throughout the world. I came after that. Primarily, the problem was to put the whole thing together. The investment bank turned out to be a very tricky thing to negotiate. We didn't have the funds that were originally promised to put into the bank. My role was primarily to service the AID officials who were coming over to negotiate it. This did get me into many of the meetings.

What is the role of a mission to an international organization? In my mind, you know the people on the spot, the personal contacts, which can help the negotiators in Washington who come. Most countries utilize their on-site officials for these meetings. Therefore, this is a big advantage. The other thing is that you should know most of the secretariat. This can be of great assistance. It gets down to international conference negotiations. At various times, you have a position that is not going to be accepted. The question is whether to go to loggerheads or delay until you can get some new instructions from Washington. If you know the conference staff well enough, you know how much time the interpreters can do overtime. You know how long to delay so that there will be a halt for the evening so you do have time to get further instructions. The other major help to me there was an Australian from their Department of Agriculture who was very helpful in negotiations. We would take turns in taking rather extreme positions well to the right of what our final instructions were. Then he or I would come in with an extremely moderate, sensible position. The rest of the room would be so relieved to be away from the extreme position that we could frequently get what we wanted. There were only two countries who really wanted that in the room. At this time, the Group of 77 was fairly unified and were having meetings before every meeting. They basically were going into each meeting as a very large underdog. I still remember with great fondness this Australian. I talked to him about what our best approach would be in each of these meetings.

Q: The Group of 77 that you're referring to was the loose organization of the developing countries, the Third World. You say the United States and Australia were often together as major agricultural producers and grain exporters. Were we also close to countries like Canada and some of the other exporters?

HIGGINSON: Yes, we were quite close. Frequently, a lot of these countries basically would agree with our position and they had instructions not to rock the boat and to let the United States carry the ball. They would come on along. The Canadian mission was larger than the Australian mission and frequently had people from Ottawa over there. Therefore, the members of the Canadian mission had less autonomy than the Australian individual, who I might say was going well beyond his instructions. His ambassador was not pleased with everything he did, but he rather relished that situation.

Q: You were the deputy U.S. representative. Of course, the United States was the leading member of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Council that ran the World Food Program. Who was the U.S. representative in those days? Did that person have the rank of ambassador? Was it Paul Burns?

HIGGINSON: I basically took Paul Burns' position. He was not the U.S. representative. At that time, FODAG was under the U.S. ambassador to Italy. Therefore, initially, the ambassador there was Mr. Volpe from Massachusetts, who was quite well-known in Massachusetts for the construction business.

Q: That's the governor.

HIGGINSON: I know him from the construction business because I was also a lawyer in Massachusetts and there was a certain issue about the road that Mr. Volpe constructed that we took him to court on. Needless to say, he wasn't very pleased to see me suddenly arrive in the embassy. We decided not to talk that awfully much. He left almost immediately. Dick Gardener became our ambassador. Dick had been a deputy in the Bureau of International Organizations, so I had dealt with him there and knew him reasonably well. I worked with him very closely as far as the Food and Agriculture Organization was concerned. He was basically an international organization expert and was very interested in the FAO. Unfortunately, I remember taking him over to his first meeting with Mr. Sowumo, who was the new head of the FAO with U.S. support over the budget of the FAO, which the U.S. was trying to reduce some. It was a total disaster of a meeting. Dick Gardener said to me on the way back to the embassy that he was never going to see that man again. Much to my knowledge, he never did. But he also did follow up quite closely what we were doing and he gave us his advice quite frequently.

Q: You mentioned that a lot of what you did was to support officials from USAID who were coming to negotiating meetings and so on. What about the U.S. Department of Agriculture?

HIGGINSON: Every two years, the FAO have their annual conference. The Secretary of Agriculture is the head of the U.S. delegation and they have 15-20 agricultural experts there. I was usually put on the delegation (inaudible). It occurred twice while I was there. I made sure that the various papers got to all the members of the delegation, they knew what was happening, transportation and everything. I enjoyed working with the Department of Agriculture and was especially appreciative that they got me a Superior Honor Award for my efforts on their behalf. I wasn't totally certain that I deserved it. I remember one horrible occasion when Ambassador Young decided he wanted to change his speech to the FAO at the last moment. So, we were writing most of the evening. Then we sent it to Washington for approval. We got it back the morning that he was going to speak. I by luck had the best secretary, so she had to type it. As she was typing, we were sending pages over one at a time to FAO. Needless to say, that went awry. I was carrying the pages to Ambassador Young on the podium as he was speaking. There was a repetition of two pages and he got half way through repeating himself and had to excuse himself. Then I got him the correct pages. He carried it off beautifully. I was mortified.

Q: This was Ambassador Andy Young, the U.S. representative to the United Nations.

HIGGINSON: Right. He had come for this meeting.

Q: FAO being a specialized agency of the United Nations and he being, in a sense, involved in all of the different arms of the UN.

HIGGINSON: Right.

I liked working with international organizations because, unlike an embassy, you're not just an outsider. At the FAO, we pay 25% of the budget. We have a major influence on what they're doing and are sort of a stockholder in the organization. So, you're within it as well as looking at it from the outside. This gets you quite involved in the personnel assignments of Americans to the FAO. I was on the Budget Committee for the FAO, which again gets you into the intricacies of international organizations' budgeting practices.

Again, it's the importance of a large mission. Since we had five people in the mission, I could spend a certain amount of time really going over those papers and discussing them.

Q: The point you've just made about being inside the organization and a leading member, a stockholder with 25% of the budget and so on, all of this was quite different than your experience at the European Communities, where we had a strong political commitment to European integration, but we were an outsider, not a member.

HIGGINSON: Yes.

Q: Is there anything else we should say about FODAG? Rome is a big city. FAO is an important part of Rome, but obviously is far from the only part. It's sort of on the other side of town through a lot of traffic past the Colosseum. I'm sure that just living in Rome is a challenge at times, working there.

HIGGINSON: Yes and no. I had the virtue of going from Algiers to Rome, so Rome was paradise and everything worked compared to Algeria. So, we were very happy. It's much better to go north, my next post being Luxembourg, than it is to go in the other direction in Europe. The problem was that this was the height of the Red Brigade. Aldo Moro had been kidnapped. There were all sorts of security checks. You really did accompany your children around Rome rather than just letting them go free. But Rome itself, my wife was an artist and just loved it. The American Academy there is a wonderful institution.

Q: It's interesting on the terrorist side how quickly things changed in Rome. I was assigned there, as you know, and left in 1973 just two years before you came. I just don't remember that as a significant issue. There were some demonstrations related to Vietnam and other things in the time that I was there, but not a personal direct threat. It didn't exist.

HIGGINSON: That's true. I felt, being accredited to the FAO, that probably I was reasonably safe, that maybe the embassy personnel might be targets, but that they wouldn't target an international aid giving organization. But it did affect you. My youngest son was at the high school in Rome. The project was to make a volcano. The problem was that he needed some

rather incendiary materials, which we couldn't get. So, we sent his mother off and we found just the store that had all sorts of chemicals. My wife went over there and got most of them, but one of them they wouldn't give her. She talked to them and said, "But I need this." Eventually, she showed her U.S. diplomatic passport and with some reluctance they gave her the final component. Then she left the store and walked right into the Italian police, who had been duly notified that somebody was buying the necessities for a bomb. They were even more nonplused than the storekeeper was of what to do with an American diplomat. They let her go, but it was an interesting experience.

Q: Did the volcano experiment go well?

HIGGINSON: He won his science fair with a very explosive volcano.

Q: The FODAG office was across the street from the main embassy building?

HIGGINSON: Yes, at that time it was across the street from the main office building.

Q: So, you were part of it, but you were a little separate.

HIGGINSON: Yes. You could have lunch over there if you wanted to. It was pretty close to the ideal arrangement. You had quite a lot of independence, but still the embassy was right there and you got to participate in a lot of these other embassy extras. Once a week, they took a classified pouch to Palermo, Sicily, and some FSO has to take a classified pouch down, so they divvied that up among the staff of the embassy. It was one of my wife's better vacations, seeing Sicily as the courier.

JONATHAN D. STODDART
Political Advisor
Naples (1975-1979)

Jonathan Dayton Stoddart was born in Maryland on February 2, 1922. He received his BA from Cornell University in 1946 and his MA from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1947. He served in the US Army from 1943 to 1946 and 1951 to 1952. His career has included positions in the United Kingdom and Italy. He was interviewed by Pat Nieberg on January 26, 1990.

Q: You left this job in politico-military in 1975. Where did you go?

STODDART: I went to Naples as the political advisor. The previous summer Al Haig was designated SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe). I had been recommended by a couple of people, including George Vest, to replace Ted Long who was scheduled for reassignment in mid-1974 as political advisor to Andy Goodpaster, who was then SACEUR. Then when Nixon resigned and Ford came in the big problem with the people around Ford was what to do with Alexander Haig, who had been Nixon's Chief of Staff. He obviously was not

going to be maintained in the White House by Ford. Jonathan Moore, who had been Eliot Richardson's right hand man for years and had worked for me in the Defense Department before he came over to the State Department with Bill Bundy when he became Assistant Secretary of East Asia Affairs, was a very, very good friend of mine. In fact I am the Moore's only son's godfather. He was amongst the coterie of behind the scene advisors trying to provide some reasonable policy options for the new president. Jonathan said there was a lot of discussion about what to do with Haig and the ultimate solution was to send Haig to Europe to replace Goodpaster. That was a very, very controversial decision. It antagonized the U.S. Army, particularly the higher ups, because Haig was jumped over 30 or 40 generals more senior to him. Andy Goodpaster was a very revered person not only in the Army but outside the military. He still is. He is a fit for all seasons man. So, a lot of people were outraged feeling Goodpaster was being done in. This is a long winded way of saying as soon as that happened my prospects of going to replace Ted Long went out the window because Al Haig had already picked his own political advisor and that was Bob Brown, a close friend of Haig.

Then late in 1974, the revolution took place in Portugal where Salazar was bounced and the young majors came in and effectively took over power in Portugal. There was a lot of paranoia in Washington that under these young majors Portugal was going from the extreme right under Salazar to the left under Communists, quasi Communists, whatever. We had a very good ambassador, Stuart Scott, and DCM, Dick St. Post, there, but Kissinger got rid of them, sending out Frank Carlucci as ambassador. Carlucci picked as his DCM Herb Okun, who was then political advisor (POLAD) in AFSOUTH, Naples, and who I knew well from my trips to AFSOUTH. Okun called me from Naples to tell me that he was going to Lisbon and he would be moving fast because everybody was very neurotic about what was going on in Portugal. So, he gave me a heads up on it. He said that Naples would be a good post. By that time I had been in PM for over five years and was looking for a change. The powers to be put my name forward and I was nominated to succeed Herb Okun. That was about mid December and I was in Naples by the 20th of January, 1975.

Q: Just to get at the beginning, you were in Naples from 1975 to when?

STODDART: From mid January, 1975 to Bastille Day, July 14, 1979, four and a half years.

Q: Who was the NATO commander when you arrived?

STODDART: A guy named Admiral Means Johnson. I had known him when he was a navy captain. He was a very congenial, social, Alabaman. He was very politically oriented and was a protégé of John Stennis, the senator from Alabama, which obviously did not hurt Means Johnson's career. He was very happy to see me, he had known me. We weren't close but he had certainly seen me around. Means had had an interesting career. He made rear admiral and as such was the Navy's legislative liaison on the Hill, a perfect job for him. Then he had a rather non-substantive job after that but got promoted to vice admiral. Having John Stennis as chairman of the Armed Forces Committee didn't hurt him. He replaced Dick Colbert and was in place when I arrived in January, 1975. He had been ready to retire from the Navy as a three star when the job opened up in Naples and a lot of people were astounded that he was nominated for the AFSOUTH job. But, he got his four stars and off he went to Naples.

He was somewhat of a controversial figure. He was a highly social animal and had an equally social wife, Hope. When I arrived we had a first-rate consul general in Naples, Dan Horowitz. Unfortunately, we didn't overlap for more than four months because he retired in the late spring of 1975. But, one of the immediate problems that Dan alerted me to, as did subsequently a few other people, including the British consul general, Keith Butler, with whom we became very friendly over the years, was that there was a clear perception that senior NATO American staff, beginning at the top with Means and Hope Johnson, had been basically seized hostage socially, or co-opted, by some very unsavory Neapolitans. In effect, the dark, seamy side of Neapolitan "nobility," the extreme right, if not fascist, were a gaggle of threadbare, dissolute counts, dukes, barons, and spouses. So, this was a very tricky situation. I had also been alerted to this before I left Washington, George Vest saying that he had heard there were some problems there. And, it was true. The Johnsons would have a party and a good proportion of their guests were overt members of the MSI.

Q: Which is a right-wing party.

STODDART: It was Mussolini's former party. His granddaughter is in Parliament now as a member of the MSI. The MSI is very strong in southern Italy, in the Naples area, Calabria and Sicily. So, it was an acute embarrassment and a very delicate situation to try to resolve. I talked off the record candidly to a couple of Means Johnson's aides who I thought were trustworthy and intelligent enough to absorb the message. I could not talk to the AFSOUTH chief-of-staff about it at that time, an Army lieutenant general named Jack Norton, because this guy was off the wall himself. So, redemption occurred when after much talk about retirement, Means Johnson decided to retire in August of 1975, as there was a bonus if you retired before the beginning of a new fiscal year (October 1, 1975). But this was a minefield of an issue that we had to cope with through the summer of 1975. But the end results were fortuitous, as there was a push from Washington to get somebody a little more energetic and broad-gauged to succeed Johnson.

This whole issue more or less became moot when Stansfield Turner was announced as his replacement. Stansfield Turner was arriving in September 1975. We were all ecstatic. Here was an officer who was a Rhodes scholar, and had been president of the Naval War College. In the meantime, one of the great albatrosses around headquarters, the chief-of-staff, Jack Norton, was replaced in June or July by a Lieutenant General Robert MacAlister, who was just absolutely a super officer. Bob MacAlister had been the commanding general of the Army Southern European Task Force at Vicenza. He was erudite with a great sense of humor, had taught English at West Point, and knew Italy and admired the people. We remain very close friends to this day.

When MacAlister arrived, I told him about the perception amongst the locals as well as a lot of people outside of Naples, including Embassy Rome, of the affinity between senior American officers in Naples and the extreme right, including the MSI. MacAlister took this aboard. In the meantime, I had written a long report about this to George Vest in the Department and suggested the importance of briefing Stansfield Turner on the problem. I gave a copy of my report to Bob MacAlister, who was very appreciative.

So, it was a breath of fresh air and a new awakening. We had MacAlister come aboard and this

highly energetic new CINC (commander-in-chief), Stansfield Turner, en route. However, things were not so good in terms of the consulate, where Ernie Colantonio arrived as consul general in June 1975. I can say in absolute candor that both I and my good wife, Carol, who I had the good fortune in November 1970, made every effort over the years to establish a close relationship with Ernie and his wife, Mildred, but it just didn't wash. I think he resented my position at AFSOUTH viewing me as a competitor, which was sort of foolish. He did try to undermine me in a rather crude way a few times. But that is enough on that. I had very good relations with virtually everybody else in the consulate. There were many top professional people there. People like Ruth Davis, who is now head of FSI (Foreign Service Institute) and a super gal. Jim Creagan and his wonderful wife. The SKOL's Ron Oppen, a USIS officer. And there were marvelous local employees who were very supportive. So, we had a great relationship with everybody in the consulate except the consul general.

Q: Well, one of the problems with Ernie Colantonio was that he was born in Naples or just outside and was affected by a syndrome that happens when the local boy goes away, and comes back. He knew some very peculiar people who were sort of the godfather types. I succeeded Ernie as consul general in Naples. I think I saw the threadbare nobility once at a dinner where I shook hands and that was the end of it. Ernie got too involved in almost local matters as a contact of not savory people.

Turner wasn't there very long, was he?

STODDART: No, he came in in September, 1975 and left around March 1, 1977 to take over CIA. So, he was there for about a year and a half. That was an interesting year and a half.

Q: How did he operate?

STODDART: He operated very close to the chest. He was a great communicator corresponded with people all over the world, academia, political. He considered himself an intellectual and he was to a certain extent. His political instincts obviously were acute and he was a tough squash player. He was well read and had a rich command of contemporary events. He had made some revolutionary changes at the Navy War College that generated the same sort of negative reaction that Bud Zumwalt got when he became CNO from the old barnacle-encrusted crowd in the Navy. Stan Turner revised the curriculum at Newport and made it much more muscular intellectually. He was an activist. Personally he was a very nice guy but very egocentric. He suffered from what I call four star syndrome and over my career I have known a lot of four stars. Most of them were very well balanced people; it hadn't gone to their heads. But for some, it was going back to Lord Acton, power corrupts. He had the capacity on occasion to make some mistakes if he thought in the final analysis that he had all the answers. That was not so damaging when he was CINCSOUTH, but it became more so when he became head of CIA. Bob MacAlister and I spent a lot of time with Turner after he came back from a quick trip to Washington in February, 1977. He had been called back to have a session with the President Carter because Ted Sorensen's nomination as director of CIA had been withdrawn at Sorensen's request because so much static was emerging from the Senate about his qualifications to run the agency. So, Turner hops a T39 to catch a Concorde flight in Paris and off to Washington. He comes back and calls MacAlister and myself in and told us he had been offered the CIA director job by the President, an admirer

of Turner's from their Naval Academy days. He said that he wanted us to give him unadorned advice about the job and also asked us about people he thought could help him. We spent many, many hours with him.

General MacAlister and I recommended to Turner very firmly not to let himself be isolated and insulated by building a blue wall of exclusive Navy advisors. We knew that he wanted to take three naval people, which was fine. He had a very bright commander, who also helped as a speech writer, and two other competent aides. That should suffice. The mistake Admiral Raborn made when he was named CIA director to replace John McCone was to bring in half the Navy to man his front office. And Turner seemed aware of this. I heard subsequently that one of his major problems in management of the Agency was that he had done precisely what we advised him not to do. He walled off and was not accessible to the old civilian hands in the agency. And, of course, he came in with this mantra that everything can be solved by technology, and that the so-call "humint" (human intelligence) was much less consequential given the great strides in technology.

Q: Your talking about satellite imagery, radio intercepts and that sort of thing?

STODDART: Yes. So, he fired a lot of station chiefs and shook things up and gave the tech people higher priority than the blue collar spy types. That is what I have read and heard from a lot of people I know from the agency. It is unfortunate. I enjoyed working for him because he was a splendid person in many respects.

Q: The command there is really not so much a military command as a political command. You have the French equation with the French elite. You have the Greeks and the Turks and then you have Israel hovering off on the edge. This was your job really to keep him apprized. Why don't we talk about the French first and then we will go to the Greek Turkish issue.

STODDART: Okay, when the French pulled out of the integrated military structure of NATO in 1966, they had been part of the command structure in the Med, not only at the headquarters in Naples, but there was an odd hybrid called CINCAFMED in Valletta, Malta. That was a major command at that time and one of the legacies of the British naval interest in the Mediterranean which basically was a gift to Lord Louis Mountbatten. He became the first CINCAFMED in Valletta. So you had a real mutation, the Naples command and this redundant headquarters sitting down in Malta. We went through Malta while I was at the National War College in 1962 and CINCAFMED was still around.

Between 1962 and my arrival in 1970, some sense of logic prevailed. The British were in the process of withdrawal, not only east of Suez but to some respect east of Gibraltar. The command in Malta was deactivated and a subordinate Navy command established in Naples was put directly under CINCSOUTH. You had three basic commands. The Air Force command was COMAIRSOUTH, Naples. The Army was bifurcated. COMLANDFORCESOUTH was commanded by an Italian four star general in Verona. COMLANDFORCESOUTHEAST, which was supposed to join Greece and Turkey in Izmir, Turkey, but lost clout when the Greeks withdrew their liaison officers following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Finally, we had this odd naval curiosity I told you about that was housed in Malta. In the Bay of Pozzuoli, north

of Naples, there is a lovely small peninsula called Nisida where the new naval headquarters were set up for COMNAVFOR SOUTH, which absorbed the remnants from Malta. The commander was an Italian four star admiral. The British, having lost the Valletta top job, were given the consolation prize of chief-of-staff at NISADA, rank vice admiral, Royal Navy, and senior British officer in the Mediterranean. So, we had a lot of brass floating around in Naples.

You asked me what my basic function was. Okay. I forgot to mention one of the other responsibilities I had back in the State Department as director of International Security Operations. That was the care and feeding, information, and administrative requirements of not only the POLAD program, but also the State-Defense Exchange Program. When I inherited the POLADs from Joe Wolf, we had political advisors in Ramstein, the Air Force headquarters in Germany; Heidelberg, the Army; the European Command Headquarters, Stuttgart; SHAPE, Mons, Belgium; and Naples. In the U.S., we had POLADs with the Military Airlift Command in Fort Sheridan, Illinois, one with SAC in Omaha, Nebraska, one with the Coast Guard in Washington, one with the commander-in-chief Pacific in Honolulu, one in Naha in Okinawa, one at the STRIKEFORCE Command at MacDill Air Force base in Tampa and one in Panama Southern Command. Then we always had 10-12 State Department officers assigned to the Pentagon in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the three services. We had not only a lot of billets but we had some very talented people in those billets.

I obviously was a strong fan of the POLAD program and knew all of the officers assigned, a good excuse to go out and see them in the field, which I did. One of my last acts before I left the State Department in 1975 was getting agreement to set up a POLAD to CINCUSNAVEUR in London. We had some very good luck with that position. Our first POLADs were Arnold Freshman, Herb Hagerty, and Don Gelber, top of the line officers.

Anyway, I knew there were two basic criteria to be a successful POLAD. First, you had to establish a good personal relationship with your CINC because if you didn't have that you were basically dead in the water. Secondly, you might have the best personal relationship with your CINC in the world but if you couldn't do anything for him you are more or less irrelevant. So, that translates into providing information and analysis on what the information means. That is really the essence of it. Where do you get the information? Well, that is an ongoing problem for any POLAD any place. You really have to battle like mad with the system to get it.

Well, there is a third part that to me was quite important. When you are POLAD to a multinational institution like NATO, it is very important that there is a perception that you are not an American dealing exclusively with an American commander. I think it is extremely important to develop a network based on trust and accessibility with the senior foreign elements of any command that you are attached too. To me that is essential and I told that to General Bernie Rogers when he first interviewed me in April 1979. I think that was one of the compelling arguments in his decision to take me on as POLAD to SHAPE, but we will get to that one later.

I immediately put this to Means Johnson when I arrived in Naples. I said, in effect, "With your permission, I want to not only make formal calls on every senior officer in this command, but I want them to know that my office is accessible to them. I would like to share as much information as I can without running into security problems in doing so." He agreed to that, they

all did, everyone I worked for - three four star admirals in Naples and Bernie Rogers for nearly four and a half years.

Now, you asked me about the French at AFSOUTH. The French had maintained a modest liaison office when they pulled out of the integrated command structure in 1966. When I arrived in Naples in January, 1975, my next door office neighbor was a Captain Beau of the French Navy. He was essentially sitting there doing not very much of anything but representing France with his nameplate. Then, in the fall of 1975 the French upgraded that office, something that Stan Turner had encouraged with Haig's permission. They assigned a rear admiral, who was absolutely super, François Crouzat, with his relatively new wife who had previously been his mistress for 20-odd years. He was a magnificent officer. He later became a four star admiral, head of the French Navy nuclear program and his last job was commander of the French Western Sea Frontier with headquarters in Cherbourg, where we visited him. A later story.

The French obviously had made, if not a 180 degree turn, certainly a 130 degree turn from no priority at all to some priority. Crouzat was a great politician and did very well for the French image in Naples, as did his lovely wife, Michele. As a result, during their tenure, which nearly kept pace with our own, the French became much more active in allied exercises in the Mediterranean. There was much more toing and froing of senior officers between Paris and Naples and the French fleet headquarters outside of Toulon. And, of course, Haig was very much interested. He and Turner were working very closely on this because a parallel thing was happening with the French at SHAPE outside of Mons, Belgium.

So, while the French revived interest was a plus, the opposite side of the coin throughout my career in Naples was a steady deterioration of relations between the Greeks and the Turks. What I used to refer to as the two adolescents in the sandbox in the eastern Mediterranean. And it was a very difficult time. There were intractable problems. I used to know more about what they call the FIR (Flight information Region) than any human would want. The FIR separated the Aegean into quadrants and sectors and all sorts of flight areas that kept the Turkish air force constricted. The island of Limnos, the largest island before you hit the Dardanelles in the northeast Aegean, had been supposedly neutralized, defortified according to the Montreux Convention. The Greeks kept muttering that they wanted to engage military activities on Limnos. This was only one irritation that we were seized with constantly.

Of course, the Turks would hear about it and be up in arms. The logistic officer at AFSOUTH was a U.S. Navy admiral; Plans and Policy was an American Army brigadier; Communications was a British commodore; Operations was run by an Italian; so that left Personnel to give to the Greeks or Turks. They each had a brigadier general on the staff. One ran Personnel and the other infrastructure or some damn thing. The two inconsequential jobs were held by the Greek and the Turk and they were both very pleasant. An officer by the name of Andreas Marathias was the Greek, who became the Greek national military representative with a promotion to major general at SHAPE when I arrived in 1979. The Turk was a very friendly, robust, gung-ho typical Turk. The two were a mixture of oil and water and I would say from the CINC on down through the various staff levels, probably sixty percent of our time was spent on Greek Turkish problems. It was a pain. And this was reflected up to SHAPE, where the military staff there were preoccupied with identical problems. So, those issues followed me from Naples to Mons. My presumed

background with the Greek-Turkish problems were one of the main reasons that George Vest recommended to General Rogers that I stay in a career rut and become his POLAD at SHAPE because it was a command preoccupation then, as it remains today.

Q: Did the Palestinian-Israeli problem affect you at all? Did we have only a watching brief? Did Turner visit Arab countries?

STODDART: No, he was proscribed from doing so. We didn't have any operational mandate except from our own national interests around the Mediterranean littoral. During that period we were also trying to establish closer relations with the Spaniards, Tunisians, and Moroccans. Our ambassadors from all these countries, plus Yugoslavia, visited and were given the red carpet treatment from Honor Guard on arrival, a command briefing, and a trip to Capri on the admiral's barge - euphemism for a 65 foot Chris Craft.

Back to the watching brief. It was essential to provide information to your CINC. I did so by drawing down, obviously, on the resources of the Department and primarily depended on PM to keep me fully informed. When Ron Spiers became the first Assistant Secretary of PM, very early on in the game he instituted something called the circular letter which was sent to all POLADS. We tried to get it out on a monthly basis. Each of the six directors under Ron would contribute. My office and Leon Sloss' office contributed most of the stuff. No, that's not fair. People dealing with SALT did their full share. Anyway, this was very useful and very candid. After Ron left it became pretty spotty so we POLADS would have to keep pressing for information. I would personally talk to INR about getting their intelligence briefs, and they were very responsive. I was on all the cable traffic. Then I also had my own contacts in our embassies around Europe. If you didn't want to put something in a cable you would put it in a letter. We had access to secure telephones.

Q: How did we view the Libyans during the 1975-79 period?

STODDART: Not very well. They were considered pariahs. They had few problems with the Italians because the Italians didn't think the Libyans were quite as bad as the Americans thought they were. So, we didn't have any visitors, obviously, from Libya. We did have a very interesting American ambassador in Algiers, Ulric Haynes, who came over, a Black American. Bob Anderson visited from Morocco. In my U.S. hat, I had pretty good communication with our non-NATO Mediterranean countries in Madrid, Lisbon, Belgrade, Tunis, and Malta.

Q: How about Egypt? At this time Sadat was there and made the move towards Israel. Did NATO South take this as changing the balance in any way?

STODDART: We obviously thought it was a constructive thing. It took some of the pressure off the eastern Mediterranean. But, honestly, I would say we were essentially bystanders. We didn't have any substantive input into those areas at all.

Q: How did we view the Soviet threat during the 1975-79 period?

STODDART: We considered we were a backwater in Naples compared to SHAPE and Allied

Forces Central Europe. The Northern and Southern flanks of NATO always considered that they were the orphans of NATO. That all the concentration of military forces, money and interest in terms of being newsworthy, were focused on Central Europe. I must say the NATO commands in both Oslo and Naples were a touch paranoid and parochial on this. I probably shared those introspective characterizations myself during my period in Naples. But, we basically took the position that while obviously Central Europe is the focal point of any Soviet threat, you can't eliminate the importance or the security and strategic equities of the Northern and Southern flanks. Our command briefing went on ad nauseam talking about how quickly the Soviets could pour through Slovenia, through the Ljubljana gap and into the Po River Valley and cut off northern Italy from southern Italy. We made much of the Soviet naval threat in the Mediterranean which could peak up to 40 or 50 ships during crisis situations. We probably overstated the threat, but no more so than the people who were giving similar briefings in Casteau to visiting firemen about the Soviet threat to Central Europe or you would hear at Kolsas, outside of Oslo, about the Soviet threat to Norway, etc. It was a legitimate threat. All of our intelligence services were manufacturing these assessments that made the Soviets' capabilities nine feet tall in effect. In hindsight, I think all of these threat assessments were overdone and it is a question of degree how much they were overdone. The Yugoslavs we considered a decided asset with Tito's defection. I would say there was a modest concern about what was going on in Albania even at that time with their growing Chinese connection.

Q: I'm told that the Albanians used to say between us and China we control a quarter of the world's population.

STODDART: Right. When I arrived in Naples in January, 1975, I felt in some respects like that Al Capp creature in Lil Abner, Joe Bfstlk, the guy that was always walking around with a cloud over his head. Two weeks after my arrival the Senate in its infinite wisdom imposed an arms embargo on the Turks. Our Congress has done some irresponsible things in its history, but this was one of the stupidest.

Q: But, the Greek vote is important in the United States and the Turkish vote is not. That's the be all and end all of that particular stance.

STODDART: Maybe I said this before, but George Vest's great line was that the Turks don't have enough restaurants in the U.S. The embargo immediately set our command at CINCSOUTH in a tizzy and properly so. Then we had the great danger of Italy going left which consumed everybody from Henry Kissinger on down in Washington at that time because they were having elections in June of 1975.

Q: They are always having elections.

STODDART: But this was the one where the PCI (the Communist Party) was going to make their big breakthrough.

Q: This was a time of Eurocommunism which was supposed to be a new face on the Communist...

STODDART: Yes, that is right. That was the impetus that sparked the great anxiety in Washington about events in Portugal. So, there was a lot of anxiety neurosis in Washington about Eurocommunism, the new trendy thing in West European politics. Therefore there was great focus on the Italian elections in June 1975. We were inundated by all levels of people coming through Naples. John Hawes came by. He was in RPM in EUR at the time and a splendid officer. He told me amusing stories about everybody climbing the wall at the prospect of losing Italy. There was intense pressure on the embassy in Rome. John Volpe was ambassador and his DCM was Bob Barbour, who was getting insufferable heat from Washington. But, in the end, we survived.

We had a very heavy load of visitors that came through Naples and that meant a lot of honor ceremonies in front of our headquarters in Bagnoli for these distinguished visitors as well as command briefings. The NATO Military Committee come down in June 1975 and at the end of June we had the permanent representatives come down. They were with us for over three days because that coincided with the annual war game that was held out in the alternative headquarters in a rock north of Naples called Proto. It was great fun because our U.S. permanent representative to NATO was David Bruce and it was a privilege to reunite with him after my three years with him in London. We had a smashing time. We took them all out to the rock at Proto, which is a hideous, dismal arrangement. It had been engineered like a rogue mining operation. Water dripping from the walls. We took antique coal mine cars about a mile under the mountain. It was a very rudimentary setup - the lighting was not very good, the ventilation worse. It was a one week war game. Out of deference to the age and seniority of the permanent representatives, we gave them an early lunch and a quick briefing and got them out within two to two and a half hours, which we felt was the most they could tolerate.

I escorted Bruce throughout the trip. Before the lunch, there was an open bar and the Italian waiter asked Bruce what he would like and Bruce said, "I would like a dry martini but I think I had better make it myself." He didn't want a dry vermouth martini. He poured himself a very generous shot of gin and a few drops of vermouth and a couple of ice cubes. He was wearing sandals, a white hat, and a Panama suit and looked like someone straight out of Graham Greene. There is a terrific book about Bruce which covers the essence of the man.

Q: The Last Gentleman.

STODDART: Yes, have you read it?

Q: Yes.

STODDART: I have it here. I thought it was very well done. So, it was an interesting time and Means Johnson was very good on things like that.

Q: Who took Turner's place?

STODDART: Turner left on March 1, 1977 and his replacement did not come until July 18. The problem was there was a bitter fight in the U.S. Navy on who was going to succeed Turner. Tom Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wanted his brother, Joe, who was

CINCUSNAVEUR, with three stars in London. The Moorer in London was sort of a congenial non-entity but obviously well plugged in with the Navy hierarchy.

This led to an ongoing fight that took four months to resolve. In the meantime, Admiral [Luigi] Tomasuolo, the Italian four star admiral who was at COMNAVSOUTH, was elevated to acting CINCSOUTH and he was a delightful fellow. Getting back to this contretemps, the navy finally sorted it out. Hal Shear, who was Vice Chief of Naval Operations had retired in June and already sent all of the family furniture up to his home in Groton Long Point, outside of New London, Connecticut. But the Navy decided finally as a compromise candidate they would halt Shear's retirement and send him to Naples as CINCSOUTH. So, he was named, he came and it was an absolutely fortuitous appointment. He turned out to be a super person and perfect for the job. He stayed on through 1980 having nearly three years in the job. I had known him slightly. He had been CINCUSNAVEUR in London for a couple of years. It turned out that he lived in a house in Groton Long Point next door to Carol's aunt.

Hal Shear was absolutely fixated on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and had bought a piece of property south of Cambridge, Maryland in Dorchester county, which he was planning to use as his retirement home after he fully retired from the navy. When he arrived it didn't take long to establish the fact that I was born and brought up until the age of ten in Dorchester country and a good symbiotic relationship was established on the basis of the Eastern Shore. He was very good because he was the sort of officer that needed a POLAD and accepted the fact. He had no illusions about it. He was a pure breed sailor, not a political animal. This was a very satisfactory relationship. I had nearly two years as POLAD with Hal Shear and we worked very well together.

Q: How did he treat the Greek-Turkish situation?

STODDART: Like everybody else, with acute frustration. Both Greeks and Turks could be very irritating, but the Greeks could be more so because they were cleverer than the Turks. The Turks were always very forthright and sort of tried to con you with their honesty and there was no duplicity from them like the Greeks. Hal Shear worked very well with them though. He was a very forthright guy. My image of Hal Shear was, even though he was a submariner, of a barnacle-encrusted Navy sailor type on the Murmansk run during World War II. He was a real sailor. He was born on Block Island and actually spent some time as a commercial fisherman. He had a delightful, straight arrow wife, Betty, who was from Yarmouth, Maine, north of Portland. He was gruff but basically kind and worked very well with the internationals.

LACY A. WRIGHT, JR.
Deputy Consul General
Milan (1976-1978)

Italy Desk Officer
Washington, DC (1978-1980)

Mr. Wright joined the Foreign Service in 1968 after earning degrees at Mendelian College and Loyola University. His foreign service took him to Vietnam both during and after the War. Other assignments took him to Milan, London and Bangkok as well as to the State Department in Washington, where he worked with International Organizations in matters concerning refugees, and UNESCO affairs. Mr. Wright was born and raised in Springfield, Illinois. Mr. Wright was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1998.

Q: *So you were '76 to when in Milan?*

WRIGHT: '76 to '78.

Q: *What were you doing in Milan?*

WRIGHT: I was the deputy to the consul general.

Q: *Who was the consul general?*

WRIGHT: His name was Tom Fina, whom I admired a great deal, and we had very good tour there. It was a time when we had to make a lot of adjustments. I was just married. Jackie was not only in a new marriage but also in a new country. Our children had been in the United States then for about a year, and they were again uprooted. So they had all that to contend with. I think, though, that we liked Italy and stayed there for about two and a half years and then came back to the United States.

Q: *Let's talk a bit about Italy in '76. How would you describe the situation as you saw it from the perspective of Milan.*

WRIGHT: These were dramatic days for the Italians because of the Red Brigades. There was a real reign of terror going on, which, thankfully, did not directly touch Americans—at least not until General Dozier was kidnapped a couple of years later—but which very much had Italians at their wit's end, I would say. People that we knew, a journalist, for example, from the Corriere della sera was eventually killed, a year or so after I left Milan. A couple of people that I knew had their kneecaps shot. People who were wealthy lived in especial terror, because they were worried about being kidnapped for ransom, as a number of them were. I remember once that Tom Fina went to a dinner at the apartment of someone wealthy in Milan and at one point there was a telephone call for the host, and he came back into the room and he informed everyone that someone whom they all knew had been kidnapped. And it became clear to Fina that this was a subject of constant preoccupation for these people. He said he turned to the lady on his left and he said, "How many people do you know personally who have been kidnapped?" And she ticked off four or five. And he did the same thing to the lady on his right. And I can remember going out to the home outside of Milan of Silvio Berlusconi, who later became the Italian prime minister—even then extremely wealthy. And he lived in a French Tudor villa outside of Milan totally surrounded by guards. In fact, either he said this or I thought it, he had practically a Sicilian village living in his courtyard, armed. He told me that he didn't send his children to school. He had tutors brought in to teach them.

So, anyway, that was the climate in Italy at that time from a political point of view. And then this was all capped by the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, who, as you remember, was killed by the Red Brigades, and his body was found in the trunk of a car in downtown Rome. And I remember vividly when that occurred because the American Ambassador at that time, Richard Gardiner, was visiting Milan, and we were in a restaurant having lunch with a politician named Spadolini. Spadolini later himself became prime minister of Italy. He was not at that point even a minister. And we were at Savini, which is a very nice restaurant, an old and classical restaurant in the *Galleria* near the *Duomo* in downtown Milan. And our group was on one side of the table and Spadolini's on the other. Our group were three people, I believe, Gardiner, Tom Fina and myself, and during the lunch, I was called out by a telephone call from the consulate. And I was told by my secretary that the radio had just announced that Moro's body had been found. No one, of course, up until that point, knew that he had been killed, until his body was found. And so I went back to the table, and I went over to Gardiner and stood next to him and whispered this to him, and he did not want to call this across the table to Spadolini, and he asked me to walk around the table and inform Spadolini, which I did. So these were dramatic times in Italy.

Q: What was our analysis and the Italian analysis of what were the Red Brigades? Who were they, and what did they want?

WRIGHT: They were a group of people who, by the way, had links with other revolutionary kinds of groups in other parts of the world, in the Middle East, in Germany. It's an interesting question partially because many Italians refuse to believe that this was a home-grown group of people. Many Italians seriously would tell you that no Italian would do something like this. At least, not unless he was totally influenced by somebody else, so it was hard for Italians themselves to believe that people could get so riled up over a kind of revolutionary cause to impel them to engage in this kind of violence. I might also say that the Italians eventually decimated the Red Brigades, and I think this is something we often fail to remember about the Italians. Sometimes we don't take the Italians as seriously as we ought to. Sometimes we forget that they have been tremendous allies of ours, both in the political military arena, when they were the people in the 1970's who installed the missiles that we wanted them to when no one else would, but also in this instance, where, you know, everybody preaches that "We're not going to deal with terrorists—we're not going to negotiate with them." But most of us break that rule when the crunch comes. It needs to be pointed out that when the crunch came for the Italians, when their own prime minister was in the hands of the Red Brigades, a man whose party was in power, was totally part of the political establishment, whose wife was calling out every day to implore the government to relax its policy and deal with these people, the Italian Government held absolutely firm, allowed, if I can be put that way—it's probably unfair to put it that way—we shouldn't say they "allowed" Moro to be killed—but stood firm in the policies that they did and then, later, by the way, went out and totally mopped up the Red Brigades. That calls for real backbone of a national nature, and they did it.

Q: Was there any feel that these Red Brigades had a viable agenda?

WRIGHT: No, I don't think so. I don't remember now what their manifestos said. Certainly there was plenty wrong with Italy as a society, just as there is with a lot of societies. Much of this

came out and was addressed subsequently, say, in the past seven or eight years, when the parties themselves were pretty much decimated in the wake of all kinds of scandals, in which many politicians had their careers ruined, and many of them actually went to jail and some of them actually committed suicide. So there was a good deal of corruption in the Italian system. There's no doubt about that. It was the way things were done. There was plenty of reason for criticism about favoritism, about money changing hands, and so on; and so, in that sense, there were lots of legitimate complaints that could have been made about Italy and its political and social system. But nothing justified the ruthlessness with which the Red Brigades attacked things, and certainly no reason to believe that had the Red Brigades prevailed things would have gotten better.

Q: On the local level, what was the form of government that you were dealing with, and how did you all find it?

WRIGHT: In Milan, there was a coalition of the Communists and the Socialists—I forget the term for it now—with the Socialists, who were the smaller party, on top. That is, the mayor was Socialist. I can't remember how many cabinet posts the Communists had and how many the Socialists had, but the Socialists would have had more and they would have had the mayor. Then the city was part of a province, and the province was part of a region. Certainly the regional government was Christian-Democratic, and the head of that was a Christian-Democrat. The provincial government, I'm not sure—but that was probably the least important of the three. The most important government in Milan was the city government. The mayor during most of the time that I was there was a man named Carlo Tognioli, a Socialist, and Tognioli was a man of short stature—a very short person, very self-effacing, nice man, a terrific reputation as a good guy—and, in fact, remained mayor of Milan for about 10 years, which is an unheard-of length of time for a politician to be in that kind of a post in Italy. When the kind of revolution came—and this by the way had the nickname *mani pulite*, 'clean hands'—almost the entire Socialist Party was swept up in this because it probably was the most corrupt of all the parties, and so was poor Carlo Tognioli, which I think was an injustice because I don't think that he was at all a corrupt person, and I think he did a very good job as mayor. But he was caught up in this as well.

Q: What was the prevailing impression that you were getting, from your own view, from Fina, and from the embassy, of the Italian Communist Party and what was its agenda and importance?

WRIGHT: Well, this was a very hot debate at that time, both in Italy and within the US Government, and there were different views on it. Our policy was, of course, keep the Communists out at any cost—well, I shouldn't say at any cost; that wouldn't be right. But our policy was that we did not want to see the Communists become a part of the Italian Government. People within our government, however, some of them, thought that this was too harsh; they thought that, first of all, the Communists were going to eventually get into the Italian Government. They called its policy and the reality was that they were going to get in via "salami tactics": a little bit at a time. And indeed, that is what happened, eventually. And that when they did get in it would be better for us to have been seen to have dealt with them than not to. We would retain our principles. We would not change the things that we thought were right, but we would not be kicking and screaming all of the way.

I think the cards history eventually dealt were these. As of, say, 1976-77, the people who were saying that they're going to get in and we'd better start dealing with them greatly underestimated the length of time that it would take them to get in. And so probably in retrospect one can say, no, there was no reason why we should have helped them at all to come into power in Italy. But eventually they did, and they are today still a force in Italy. How nefarious or not the Communists were is, I guess, probably still a matter for debate. I don't follow this very much any more. I don't know what the prevailing wisdom is on this subject, but I think that from the point of view of American interests it would have been very unlikely that the entry of the Communists into an Italian Government, say in the 1970's or the 1980's, would have been good for us. They could hardly have failed to oppose us, particularly on things like the installation of the missiles in Italy and on foreign policy matters. On the other hand, they were probably never as dangerous or as much against our interests as some people portrayed them.

Q: You were, I assume, acting sort of as an economic officer and political officer over there. Were you allowed to have contact with the Communists?

WRIGHT: That was another sensitive question. Yes and no. I believe that this changed a bit during the time that I was there, but I can remember at least at one point that we could call on the Communists if they were in a government position, not if they were only in a party position, although maybe even that changed while I was there.

Q: What was your impression of Richard Gardiner as Ambassador.

WRIGHT: Gardiner was, first of all, a very accomplished man. I don't think he was formally an economist, but he was a man who knew a lot about the economy, a lot about economic policy, and a man who worked very hard, took his job very seriously, performed in public a great deal, studied Italian very hard and very seriously, and got to be quite good in Italian, but was always very careful not to overextend himself so that he got into a situation where he might say something wrong or something foolish or not say something well. That is, he continued for some time to use an interpreter, but actually he was studying all this time, and when he did speak, he made sure that he could do the job well, and he did.

Even though before he arrived it was rumored, it was reported, that he would take a less tough line toward the Communists, he did not. And whether that was out of conviction or because he was faithfully carrying out the policy of the Jimmy Carter Government, I guess you'd have to ask him. But he turned out to support a very tough policy against the Communists.

Q: Other than the Red Brigades, were there any other issues that had the attention of the Consulate General?

WRIGHT: In those days, the all-consuming question, from a political point of view, about Italy, and especially if you were an American, was the Communist question. It really colored everything, and it was the focus, I would say, of most of our reporting. Tom Fina was an excellent political and economic reporter, and we did a lot of reporting from Milan, some of which got us into a little bit of trouble with the embassy, because the embassy was always

worried that we were overstepping our bounds, that is, reporting on Italy from a national point of view rather than from a consulate point of view. And so we were always up against that invisible boundary. This was made a worse dilemma, from the embassy's point of view, because Fina's reporting was superb. Fina had a knack with words which made his reports extremely readable and interesting, as well as solid. And we used to do reports on the provinces. Either he would go out or I would go out and spend the day in a province, by car usually, go around and see eight or ten people, the mayor, head of the local union, the local bishop, and so on, and then come back and make a report out of it. So we, I would say, knew that area, from a political point of view, pretty well, and we had a very good reputation for our reporting at the Department in those days.

Q: What about the economic side? What was the impression of Italy as far as what was being done in Milan and Italy's role in the economic world?

WRIGHT: Clearly, even in those days, Italy was an economic power which was often underestimated by people. I think in those days, Italy was something like the seventh biggest industrial economy in the world. It around that time had passed up the British and had passed up the French. One of the features of the Italian economy, however, always was the degree to which it was politicized. And again, this is something that came out during the Clean Hands campaign. You know the Italian parties in those days controlled everything. Much of the Italian economy had been nationalized. You had the national oil company, telecommunications, all this was nationalized, and the jobs in those companies, that is, the big managerial jobs, were doled out by the parties. And by the way, each part of this economic structure was known to be in the hands of one party or another. So for example, in Milan, La Scala was the preserve of the Socialists. Now that meant that if you wanted free tickets to La Scala, you got them from Socialist politicians. It also meant that if you wanted to be the superintendent of La Scala you had to be chosen by the Socialists. You could be the greatest musician in the world, and that was nice, but if you were not in with the Socialist Party, your chances were close to zero. And this pervaded the whole Italian economy. So if you wanted—I forget which is which now—but let us say that ENI, the national oil company, *Ente Nazionale d'Italia*, or something, I forget. The head of ENI was—I think that was Socialist—appointed by the Socialists. Now it's clear that that is not the best way to run an economy, and I suspect it's changed a good deal now. So in a way, you can look at it either way. You can say it's amazing they did so well with this kind of a system, or you could say that they might have done a lot better had they been choosing people on merit rather than the way that they did. But there was a great deal of prosperity in Italy at that time, particularly in the North—well, you've always had the North-South split, as far as that goes, and in those days, just as probably now, the national government was pouring huge amounts of money into the South, in an effort to raise living standards there, and the people in the North were doing extremely well.

Q: You remarked that you had this system which eventually was found out and everybody knew that there was considerable corruption within the system, being a political one, obviously there were payoffs, if not in cash, in jobs and that sort of thing. How did we feel about reporting on this?

WRIGHT: I don't remember this all that well. Certainly we reported on corruption. I think that just as in many countries where the Foreign Service is, the people at the top of the embassy got

nervous when they started thinking that people were going overboard.

Q: You mean our people going overboard in reporting on corruption.

WRIGHT: Yes. I'm trying to recall some instances of this and I'm not doing it right now. I think we had the same phenomenon in Vietnam, but certainly we reported on corruption in Italy, of which there was a great deal, but I think that the embassy was probably sensitive to the danger that zealous Foreign Service officers might go overboard and become investigative journalists. If they had, there was plenty of material.

Q: Well, you left there in '78; you went back to Washington, is that right? Where did you go in Washington?

Q: Well, you left there in '78; you went back to Washington, is that right? Where did you go in Washington?

WRIGHT: I became the Italian Desk officer, that is, the officer in charge of Italian affairs. There were two of us covering Italy at that time in the office of EUR-WE, Western Europe.

Q: And you were that from '78 to when?

WRIGHT: '78 to '80.

Q: You were still in the Carter years here.

WRIGHT: That's right.

Q: What was the major concern during the time you were on the Italian Desk?

WRIGHT: Communists in Italy. I wouldn't say that that changed. It evolved perhaps a little bit, but it didn't change during those years.

Q: Was the missile issue part of this, too? The Soviets had introduced the SS-20, which was a missile designed to hit Western Europe, and we felt we had to counter that with our Pershing missiles and Cruise missiles, and those became a very hot issue. Did you get involved in that?

WRIGHT: Yes, it was a very hot issue, and I alluded to it before by saying that the Italians were almost alone in Europe, certainly the first, in allowing us to place our missiles on their territory.

Q: Was there any sort of maneuvering that you'd noticed or quid pro quos or anything else like this?

WRIGHT: That's a good question, and I'm not sure I have a very good answer for it. We had, I would say, a unique relationship with Italy, a very close relationship in a lot of ways because

there were so many Italo-Americans in the United States and Italo-American groups. And that relationship went on and within that relationship, of course, there are all kinds of nice things that the United States can do for a country. It can say yes when their leader wants to see the President, for example. Or when lower level leaders come here, it can say yes when they ask for appointments with people. I don't think, though, that we did anything dramatic or even notable for the Italian Government in exchange for this. For example, I can remember at one point—I wouldn't call this the Italian Government—but people within the government were very anxious for more American investment, so they wanted us to send them American businessmen. This is a common misconception about the United States, which is that when the US Government wants to encourage private investment in another country, it just calls up some businessmen and tells them to invest. That's not the way it works, and so we simply told that to the Italians. "This isn't the way our system works. We'll be glad to help if you can attract businessmen, but you've got to do it." So that's one of the ways we were not able to do something that the Italians wanted us to do.

Much, I think, though, of what the Italians wanted from us was on the symbolic rather than the real level. The Italians—and I can't speak for them now, because I've been out of touch with Italian affairs, but certainly in those days—the Italians had a national inferiority complex, which often came to the fore. It was often operative. And often what they wanted was to be included in a meeting, included in a summit. Their constant fear was to be excluded from a meeting which included the big guys in Europe. Their constant obsession was to be left out of a summit of the British, the French, the Germans and the Americans.

Q: And the Canadians, who also have the same problem.

WRIGHT: And this bothered them a great deal. This sensitivity of the Italians about being left out of the big people, the big group in Europe has come back in the last year in the form of the Security Council reform in the United Nations, wherein we are supporting Security Council membership for the Japanese, the Germans and, I think, the representatives of three regions to be determined by the regions themselves, for a total of five or maybe six new members. The Italians are just aghast at this, and the Italian Perm-Rep, the permanent representative, in New York made a wonderfully facetious comment when referring to the Japanese and the Germans. He said, "Hey, wait a minute! We lost the war too."

Q: Tell me, I remember reading in Henry Kissinger's book, The White House Years, he referred to flying into Rome and saying that everything was symbolic, but there was no, sort of, "the Leader" to talk to in Italy, and that the governments are continually revolving—the same people—but it wasn't as though there were a figure, a man for our President to deal with, or the Secretary of State or what have you. Was this hard to deal with, to get across? I mean, there just wasn't "Mr. Italy."

WRIGHT: What year would that have been, do you remember?

Q: It would be during his White House years, which would have been in the early '70's, I suppose, but I'm thinking of this even later or even earlier. I mean, Andreotti would come in and out, but it wasn't as though you were going in and talking to de Gaulle or talking to Adenauer or

somebody. The Japanese have somewhat the same problem.

WRIGHT: I guess it's a problem, now that you bring it up, and I suppose it's manifested in the need for any Italian premier to vet any big decision with the other parties. I suppose the closest you've come away from this, paradoxically now, is with Craxi, who lasted about two years and was a very strong Socialist prime minister, but certainly, the Christian Democrats, who until recently, were the dominant party in the postwar period, very dominant, even they were constantly vetting things with Communists, constantly, to our great discomfiture. We wanted them to do this and wanted them to do that, and they claimed to want it, too. I guess one of the things it did was to make it unclear to us a lot of the time whether the Christian Democrats wanted something or were simply using the refusal of the Communists or the Socialists to say they couldn't do it. But, yes, that was a fairly constant feature of Italian foreign policy.

And again, another way of putting this is that Italian foreign policy is very much an adjunct to Italian domestic policy. How many Italian foreign ministers can you name? Probably not very many, because they never became really national figures, or they tended not to become really national figures. And Italian foreign policy would always have been, in those years, subordinated to domestic policy, and where the United States was concerned, even though the communists were out of power nominally, they would have had, because of this feature of Italian politics, a lot of say-so in what the Italian Government agreed to with us.

Q: During this period, from '79 to '81, I was in Naples as consul general, and I had never served in Italy before, and so was sort of looking at this as the new boy on the block. In the back of my mind I keep thinking, My God, we're reporting in exclusive detail on this parliamentary merry-go-round that keeps changing but hasn't changed since 1948 practically. And I thought, we had people on their fourth or fifth tours—or it seemed that way—in Italy, and they've gotten so involved in this, and really we were putting far greater detail and were getting more involved in the "Have the Communists moved up one percentage point?" or "What is this and that?" Really, as far as I was concerned, for the Mezzogiorno, southern Italy, the real problem was getting jobs. Even the mayor of Naples, Valenzi, who was a Communist, wanted to make sure the Sixth Fleet didn't leave the area. Did you ever get that feeling about this?

WRIGHT: Oh, yes. It was totally self-absorbing. I mean, you got caught up in this analysis of how far the Communists had gotten and what were the other parties doing, and it was a whole subject of human endeavor in itself. Well, you know, even to read the Italian newspapers, I was always struck by the fact that in order to read the typical upper-crust Italian newspaper about political matters, you had to be tremendously well-schooled in Italian politics because nobody ever explained anything. None of these papers would ever, for example, say, "Giulio Andreotti, three-time prime minister of Italy and four times minister of foreign affairs." No, if you were reading the paper, you were supposed to know that. And then even more esoteric things: when they referred to the events of June 6th, well, you either knew that they meant June 6, 1964, when 18 people gathered together in a town in southern Italy and said something, or you didn't. And so it was like reading a coded message, and if you didn't have the code, you couldn't read it. And that's just always the way that Italian politics were described. So a person coming in from the outside couldn't have read about Italian politics with any kind of understanding because you wouldn't know what they were talking about.

Q: What about the Italo-Americans in the United States. We had an earthquake when I was in southern Italy, and I'd never realized how many congressmen with Italian names were around. They all descended on me at one time, immediately. But these were people generally from southern areas, Sicily, the poor areas, who really weren't plugged into or knowledgeable about the real events that were occurring in the North, the major political events. Did you find that they played much of a role in our dealing with Italy?

WRIGHT: Well, a bit of a role, yes. For example, there's something called the Italian-American Foundation, which I think is still very much around, and which has a number of prominent Italo-Americans in it. I can't think of the man who was the head while I was there. We always regarded this organization as a bit retrograde in upholding views about Italy that were in large part nostalgic—very anti-Communist, as I remember, and not particularly relevant. However, I can tell you, when the Italian-American Foundation every year has its big dinner in Washington, it invites the President and the Vice-President, and they often come. But I don't think that when it comes to the really big ticket questions, like theater nuclear forces, for example, that they play much of a role. I think that they play a kind of on-the-ground role, if somebody who comes from Italy and the Italian-American Foundation really wants somebody in the White House to see them, I suppose that they can probably get that done. But I think that that is often the level that they operate at. Or if there is a disaster in Italy and collecting money, things like that. So I think that's largely the way it is. I think on the big ticket items they don't count for much.

Q: Well then you left the Italian desk in 1980, and then what?

JOSEPH R. MCGHEE
Aide to Ambassador
Rome (1976-1978)

Political Officer
Rome (1983-1987)

Political-Military Counselor
Rome (1995-1997)

Joseph R. McGhee was born in Reading, Pennsylvania in 1952. He attended Yale University and Columbia University and entered the Foreign Service in 1975. His career has included positions in countries including Italy, Czechoslovakia, Panama, and Germany. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 21, 1997.

McGHEE: I was ambassador's aide in Rome.

Q: You were in Rome from when to when?

McGHEE: From the beginning of July of '76 to July of '78.

Q: *Who was the ambassador at that time?*

McGHEE: John Volpe. He was former governor of Massachusetts and former Secretary of Transportation.

Q: *He was also big in construction wasn't he?*

McGHEE: Yes. He and his brother had the Volpe Construction Company. They were mainly road builders although I guess they did some government contracts. He had put his money into some sort of escrow when he became governor of Massachusetts. He hadn't been active in the construction business for at least ten years by the time I knew him. Two terms as governor of Massachusetts, four years as Secretary of Transportation, and he had been in Rome for over three years.

Q: *So he was well in there by then. What was your impression of the situation in Italy when you arrived in '76?*

McGHEE: Italy is always strange. The government has always been on the verge of falling apart and yet the country seems to function nevertheless. Rome was nice. I was happy to be there. It was a lot of fun. I spoke Italian at that time well enough that it was easily accepted by people. On the other hand, the government was laboring along with great difficulties. The Christian Democrats had gotten around 36 or 37 percent of the vote themselves at that time. They had managed over the previous decade or so to completely turn off all of their traditional allies so no one wanted to come into the government. They had been forced to turn to the communists to get this kind of confidence vote. When the confidence issue came up in parliament, the communists abstained. Andreotti managed to run this thing with the ups and downs with a certain amount of paralysis at the center. For the entire two years that I was there he was prime minister.

The big thing that was going on politically was the rise of terrorism. There were regular terrorist incidents involving the Red Brigades in particular but also a number of other less well known groups. There was one called the Armed Totalitarian Neuche that was not as numerous or as well financed as the Red Brigade but they were an issue. There were a lot of politicians, policemen, other prominent people who were shot in the kneecaps. That was a big Red Brigades thing. They occasionally gunned down an isolated policeman. There were bombings. There was also a restless right-wing movement that engaged in an increasingly amount of violence at this time. There were regular violent clashes in Rome between the police and various student and left-wing groups. It was quite turbulent. During this time also, Aldo Moro was kidnapped and murdered.

Q: *He was a former prime minister wasn't he?*

McGHEE: He was a six time former prime minister. Of course that was really traumatic for the Italians. It was edgy. There was quite a bit of violence but it wasn't particularly directed at Americans. You'd get a shot through the window once in a while, but it was no real difficulty being an American in Rome at the time. I really enjoyed it.

Q: What was your impression during this last year and a half of John Volpe as an ambassador?

McGHEE: Actually seven months.

Q: What was your impression of how he operated?

McGHEE: He knew how to run a big organization. He ran a big construction company, he was governor of a state, and he had run a big government department so he knew how to do things. When he said to you that he wanted something done, he expected not to have to say it again. If he got a decision document and he checked the little block that said do this, then he didn't want to have a whole bunch of subsidiary decisions. He wanted to get things done and keep things moving. He was plagued by high blood pressure during a big chunk of the period that I was there so frequently he didn't come to work. I would have to go out to the house lugging all of the days business out sometimes two or three times a day. He had a temper and he liked to yell, but he didn't like to yell at the staff in general. He saved his yelling for two or three people that worked for him directly in particular myself.

He had a political aide that he had brought with him, a Boston lawyer that had been with him at the Department of Transportation and came on out to Rome with him -- Tom Jamarko. He worked directly for the ambassador. They had little political jobs for him and there was a certain amount of tension there between Jamarko and the rest of the embassy. It didn't effect me very much. I had just arrived and it was my first job. All I had to do was to make sure the ambassador got where he wanted to be and when he needed to be there and had his papers when he wanted them and things like that. By and large I enjoyed working for Volpe in a sense that once you got used to the fact that there was nothing personal when he screamed at you, he was a perfectly OK guy to work for.

He had certain views on the situation in Italy that I think were in part the product of the fact that he was a first generation American. He had an image of Italy before he got there that came from his parents who were a peasant family in Abruzzo, and he was not entirely prepared for the ways in which Italy had changed especially since the Second World War. He wasn't very comfortable with a lot of it, but it didn't keep him from doing his job. He did it fairly well. There was no real problem. I personally did not like the sort of aide, personal staff role as a role but it didn't have anything to do with Volpe personally.

Q: Did you find yourself caught at all between a political ambassador and a professional DCM, political counselor, and all that? Did that cause any problems?

McGHEE: Not really. Most of them had been around for a while and knew what the score was. When the ambassador was not coming to the office and I had to go out there, they would occasionally slip papers into the pile that ought to have been explained better or the person who produced it should have come along with me and discussed it with the ambassador directly instead of using me as the messenger boy. It is just part of the territory I guess.

Q: Volpe left I guess after the Nixon, or by this time the Ford administration. He retired from

office in '77?

McGHEE: Actually it was a little nasty in that when Carter took office, immediately afterwards, or shortly thereafter in any event, they sent Walter Mondale on an around-the-world tour of various capitals. He went to London, Paris, Bonn and then he went on to Tokyo. Originally Italy had been left off the list and a bunch of Italian-American organizations complained about that and so Italy was added. The White House, or the transition team, called essentially a week before this trip and said that they didn't want Volpe to be in Rome when the Vice President got there. If he could go on vacation, go out of town, do anything but his face was not to appear on the same camera as the Vice President. Volpe didn't like this and said he'd resign and get out before he'd be subjected to that. He left rather abruptly at the beginning of February of '77.

Q: Who was the DCM at that time?

McGHEE: Bob Beaudry.

Q: What was your job after the ambassador left?

McGHEE: I spent a month or two collating and coordinating the implementation of the recommendations from the inspectors' report, the old inspectors' report. There was a new set of inspectors coming and of course no one had taken a look at the old inspectors' report until now. I spent about six weeks taking people around and getting them to implement various things that were recommended in the previous inspectors' report. Then the new ambassador came.

Q: That was Richard Gardner. He was one of your Columbia colleagues.

McGHEE: Exactly. He came from Columbia.

Q: Had you know him at that point?

McGHEE: No. He was really at the law school. He did international law.

Q: Did you continue as his aide?

McGHEE: For about a week or ten days then he chucked me out.

Q: Was that normal or was it incompatibility?

McGHEE: It was a degree of incompatibility. In a way it was normal and I think even now in these courses they give for starting ambassadors, they tell them that you should come in and clean house and show people who's boss. I think that was part of it. There was also a degree of personal incompatibility which mainly stemmed from his way of operating.

As I said, Volpe was my first experience here and Volpe operated like someone who is running a big organization. He didn't want to be bothered with minutia. He wanted things done. When he said he wanted things done it meant he wanted it done. I just did things the same things way for

Gardner but when Gardner said something should be done he meant he'd think about it. Probably or maybe he wanted it done and he'd let you know.

He kept a little schedule of his own with his personal stuff in it that was separate from his official schedule. Every time we tried to get him in to see a minister or get him out for consultations he'd open his little book and say "Well, I have to meet my daughter's teacher." I'm sure he changed as time went on but initially when he got there he had this idea in his head that you could keep these two things apart. That there was an ambassador's schedule and then there was a Dick Gardner schedule.

It was my misfortune that I happened to be there while he was getting these things ironed out and virtually everything that I did rubbed him the wrong way. There was an incident over his correspondence. I would get this big pile of mail every day and I would farm it out with a little buck slip on it that would either say for ambassador's signature or for director of "Y". He and Mrs. Gardner found out about this and said that he would answer every piece of correspondence. That lasted about two weeks. When he discovered how much correspondence there was, that just quietly went by the board. In the meantime I was there and I was the one that was doing it wrong. There were just a dozen little things like that.

Q: It is a difficult position to be in and it is probably just as well that you got out. Incidentally how did you find Mrs. Gardner because she has a certain reputation?

McGHEE: As you say, personally incompatible. I don't think they liked me and I didn't like them so what are you going to do.

Q: What did you do? We are talking about relatively early '77. When did he arrive?

McGHEE: I would say that he arrived maybe around April of '77.

Q: So where did they assign you?

McGHEE: I was swapped to the political section in a straight swap with a guy named George Ward. He came up and became Gardner's assistant and I took his job in the political section.

Q: What was your particular beat in the political section?

McGHEE: At the time that I was coming down to the political section people were really beginning to be alarmed about the terrorism. The Moro kidnappings hadn't taken place yet but people were being shot in the street three or four times a week. I spent a lot of time sort of chronicling that and the Italian response. I would say that, in effect, that is what I mostly did.

I also was following what used to be referred to as the socialist and the lade parties, the lade parties being the republicans, liberals, social democrats, the smaller parties all of which, for all intents and purposes, have disappeared now. At that time these parties still existed. They had anywhere from two to four-and-a-half percent of the vote. They all had seats in parliament and they all were frequent partners of the Christian Democrats in the coalition government. After the

so-called center left experiment in the early '60s the socialists also had been frequently in the government. They were a somewhat larger party. They had about ten to 12 percent of the vote.

Q: What were you getting from the rest of the embassy, including if you had any contact with the CIA, of what was motivating the terrorism and was there an agenda other than just being mean and nasty?

McGHEE: There was an agenda aimed at overthrowing the state and supplanting it with a communist or at least a far left government of some sort and that was a little hazy. At least the main point of it all was to carry out acts of violence against the Italian ruling class and that included mainstream politicians and people in the industrial sector. Those were the main targets and of course the police and the magistrates.

I think it had its origin, in particular, in disappointment with the Italian Communist Party which had become more and more like a conventional party. The Italian communists in the 1950s had to make a choice. They were competing with the socialists. At that time they were more or less about the same size, in fact the socialists were the larger party and the communists were smaller. The communists opted to go the electoral route rather than the revolutionary route towards government and they had a certain amount of success. They ran city and provincial governments in the so-called red belt in Romagna and Tuscany, and Lombardy to a certain extent. They had had some electoral success in Milan and in Torino. They had a new communist mayor, Carlo Argon, in Rome just while I was there. He took office in '77. Their share of the vote had gradually grown to around 25 percent. In doing all of this they also had to become more establishment to a certain extent. Where were they going to go from 25 percent?

The biggest of the labor unions was the Communist Labor Union but in order for them to function effectively on a day-to-day basis they had to deal with management. They dealt with management on a sophisticated level on wages and pensions but these are not the stuff of revolution; they are stuff of the AFL-CIO and everybody else. If they wanted to be in government they had to make clear what their choices would be in foreign affairs. The famous speech in about '73 of Enrico Berlinguer said that Italy supported NATO as a factor for stability in Europe.

The attitude of the communist party was greatly affected by events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. It was a big shock to them seeing the tanks roll into Czechoslovakia. Also the overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile affected them. Deep down many of the communists feared that if they took power without carefully preparing the way and reassuring people on all sides, and I am talking about the United States as well as the economic establishment in Italy, that they would end up going the same way that Allende went. Allende was a huge factor to them. You had this party that continued to have revolutionary rhetoric and carry red banners and pictures of Che Guevara but which was in fact becoming increasingly a middle-class party, a mainstream party and in effect was renouncing revolution.

In the schools, though, particularly in the universities, and in their kind of local organization rhetoric they still tended to hold out this idea of violent revolution. You had this group of university students that had been fed all of the rhetoric but on the other hand they saw the reality

of the PCI which was now a political party bargaining with Andreotti over votes, etc., etc., and trading off for positions in the bureaucracy. Frankly, these were violent people who wanted violence so they said that if we are not going to get it with your help we are going to go off and do it on our own. They got money from someplace. I am not sure where the money came from. The real reason that they were able to operate successfully and do all these things and shoot these people was because they didn't have to go out and earn a living. I think that the right wing tended to use public bombings because they weren't that well financed. A lot of them had to work for a living so they couldn't prepare their actions as meticulously as the Red Brigades and the NAP and some of the others.

Q: What was the common feeling about where the money was coming from?

McGHEE: There were lots of stories. The KGB or from the KGB through various other groups. Qadhafi from Libya was always a big suspicion and also other groups in the Middle East like the PLO. There were links from the Middle East. They did get arms from the Middle East. If it wasn't set up by the Libyans, the Libyans probably did facilitate some of this in some way. There was no question that there was a connection there. They did manage to finance themselves to some extent. They did some kidnappings for money and they carried out some robberies to finance themselves. The main point is that they didn't have to go out and work for a living. They were able to rent safe-houses and pretend to be lawyers or office workers or whatever, but they could go off and plan because they always had food on the table and they always had a roof over their heads.

Q: Did you find as you worked on this terrorism, were you at all working with the CIA? I was wondering what your impression was? Again, we are unclassified but how much of a handle did they have on it?

McGHEE: At that time not much of a handle at all. It changed somewhat later on but we are talking about 1977 to 1978 and I would say that anything they picked up, I think they tended to pick up by chance. I think the focus was they weren't looking at it very hard and occasionally they would come up with a nugget but I think most of the solid information they had they got through their liaison, their relationship with the Italians.

Q: You had the smaller parties as part of your portfolio. How did you operate with them? What could you as a junior political officer do to keep tabs on what these parties were doing?

McGHEE: They all had a party newspaper so I got huge wads of newspapers. The other thing I did was to call around and go downtown occasionally and talk to their parliamentarians or some of the party staffers. Frankly the embassy's interest in what these guys were doing and thinking dropped substantially when they decided to stay out of the Andreotti government. I mentioned before that they had this non no-confidence deal. Really the government was run on the basis of an informal agreement between Andreotti and Berlinguer as to what the government could and couldn't do.

The lade parties managed to side-line themselves by staying out of the government and they really lost all influence. It really marked the beginning of the steep decline for some of them.

What they had to say and what they were thinking was less and less important when they were out of the government because they were not a major factor when they weren't voting with the government.

Q: Looking at this, I came to Italy out of Korea with no experience in Italian politics as consul general in Naples in 1979. Something that struck me at that time was the intense coverage we seem to have of political events in Italy, with a large political section and all that, over something which in many ways as far as American interests were concerned were really very static and had been static almost since the '48 election. I am quite willing to be disabused. This was just an outsider coming in. I thought we spent too much time on the Roman connection and all that.

McGHEE: I will say this, there was in those days a readership for this kind of thing. You were right about it staying static after some instability in voting patterns in the late '40s and early '50s. They did settle down to a fairly stable pattern from about 1955 until the late '70s. The DC was usually in the high 30s, the PCI was in the mid 20s and the others were scattered off below. The tendency was still even very gradually upwards for the communists and downwards for the DC.

Here in Washington there was no degree of trust whatsoever for the communists, in spite of all their efforts to convince us that they were prepared to cooperate up to a point, if we felt that the Soviets had infiltrated the party and I think that was true. They were well aware of what was going on inside the PCI. I would stress that at the highest levels there was a tendency to say that we have to do Italy twice a year and to forget about it the rest of the time. At a somewhat lower level there was quite a bit of attention to it and the political reporting was being read. I think that is the main question you always have to ask yourself if you are a political officer: "Is anybody looking at this?"

I served in Italy in the '70s and in the '80s and then in the '90s again. In the early to mid-'80s when the DC had in fact fallen down to the low 30s and the communists were very close, there was a constant demand for updates on what was happening in Italian internal politics. After the collapse of the Soviet Union that went by the board. I don't think there is nearly as much interest now as there was then. We may be reporting more than needed nowadays.

Q: How did you in the political section look at the reporting from the consulates general: Naples, Sicily, Milan?

McGHEE: It depended I think on what was happening. There were certain times when more was better, such as during election campaigns. We wanted to see the consulates out there getting in local reports from the field. When I was there in the '70s, and again it happened again briefly in the '80s, the front office in the embassy went on a local government kick. We had to find out what they were doing. When I was in the political section in '77 I was ordered to form a youth program and have a youth committee. I also had to form an outreach program in which I had to round up all of the economic and political officers and parcel out assignments to them province by province within their own consular district. They were then to try to get out and travel to their areas every quarter to talk to local people and show the flag. When they came back, we still had air-grams in those days, we sent off loads of air-grams based on people's visits to these local

places. A lot of it was pointless.

Q: Of course there is the other side to these trips and that is that it gets the officers out of the Rome atmosphere and to see that there is another country that is quite different and it is easy to fall into the capital trap.

McGHEE: I should say that you are absolutely right about that. The reporting wasn't worth very much but I think that the getting out there part, both as you said getting people out of Rome, and also having someone from the embassy pop up in these provincial capitals from time to time did serve a purpose. The youth committee as I recall was a little less successful. We sort of established a contact with the youth movements from all these political parties. We developed a few contacts that later went on to political careers and to be of some use to the embassy. I always see these party youths as a lot of thugs.

Q: We go through this thing once in a while. I remember during the Kennedy years we had to have youth officers.

What about the issue of corruption? We are talking about the '77 to '78 period. How much were we aware of it because this later became the major issue with the collapse of the Christian Democrats particularly?

McGHEE: Corruption was obviously there. People complained about it all the time. I think that the biggest element in the corruption was actually not so much of people lining their own pockets, there were perfectly legal ways to do that, but it was the funding, how the parties financed themselves. For that purpose Italy as you know had large public ownership of various corporations which goes back to Mussolini. Mussolini bought up companies and kept people employed during the worst of the depression.

After the war the Italian government found itself with huge real estate and industrial assets on its hands which it continued to run through these big conglomerates like IRI and ANE but also through the IMI the property holding company. These were not terribly efficiently run even though they were supposedly independent from government tampering. They were set up with their own board of directors and presidents but the fact remained that the political parties used these big organizations with their huge payrolls as a source of political patronage, jobs to be handed out, but also for party finance in a big way.

By the time that I arrived there in the '70s it was to the point where if you asked people, the Christian Democrats, isn't this illegal, they would probably have chewed it over and said well yes I guess it is. It had been going on so long and it was so institutionalized that the next generation sort of took the system over. I think that really what happened was that things got out of hand. When the older generation was running it, the Fanfani-Andreotti post-World War II generation, they kept it within certain bounds and everyone was satisfied and it made a contribution to democracy by keeping the parties going. I think that successive generations went so far beyond the bounds, and especially with the socialists getting into it up north. I don't want to stereotype or characterize anyone but I think there is a higher degree of acceptance for corruption in southern Italy than there ever was in northern Italy. I think Craxi's team at the

socialist party brought a southern Italian style to their dealing with the Milan city government, etc., etc., etc. He built up a degree of resentment that came back to haunt him.

R. BARRY FULTON
Deputy Public Affairs Officer, USIA
Rome (1977-1982)

R. Barry Fulton was born and raised in Pennsylvania. He earned his B.A. and M.A. from Penn State and after graduating in 1962 served in the U.S. Air Force. In 1968 he entered the Foreign Service and during his career served in Pakistan, Japan, Italy and Belgium. Mr. Fulton was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: In '77, whither?

FULTON: As a consequence of one of the studies we had done for the European Area, I was one day invited by the European Area director Jacques Shirley to sit down with him. He said, "I'm going out to Rome as Public Affairs Officer, we have an opening in Florence as branch PAO, what would you think about going to Florence?" I said, "Well, I think that's everybody's dream. Going to Florence as branch PAO." But I said, "I think my talents would not be best used in Florence as a small operation. It's a one-man operation, you need somebody there, I think, who is a hands-on person doing full-time work with influentials in that community. I would love to do that but I think my talents are in organization and management and that's the kind of position I'm looking for." So he called me the next day and said, "How would you like to be my deputy?" I said, "Now you're talking." So that's what happened, I went to Rome as the deputy PAO in 1978 after several months of language training. There for four years.

Q: Now you were in Rome from when to when?

FULTON: '78 to '82.

Q: All right. You arrived in Rome in '78, what was the USIA operation like in Italy at that time?

FULTON: The first day of my arrival I had lunch with the PAO who I would be working for. I didn't know him very well, and I remember he said something to me that surprised me when he said it, although I have since found it a good rule to follow. He said, "As my deputy, I expect that you will look at all the incoming traffic and all the outgoing traffic and supervise the branch posts and the IO (Information Officer) and the CAO (Cultural Affairs Officer). My only rule is that you do all those things just the way I would do it if I were doing it." He said, "That means that in the first several weeks you'll want to consult me frequently. But I'll take it as a measure of how fast you learn how little you consult me after the first couple of weeks." Well that's good advice. We don't have two operations here, we have one operation. I learned quickly from him that in very sharp contrast with what I had seen in Japan where most of my work was about process, because we were developing structure and changing process. Most of the USIS work in

Italy assumed that the process had been perfected, and most of the work there was politics, as seen through the eyes of the then PAO. The PAO understood his job in Italy was to be not on the sidelines of policy, but to be at the center of policy. It turned out that one of the reasons he had chosen me as his deputy was to free himself from the management role which can take everybody's time and be an indispensable player in the policy process. He was a fluent speaker of Italian, and brought to Italy a very, very strong staff of people with Italian expertise. Therefore the role I saw and the role I played was a lot different than I had seen up 'till that time. In Italy as you know well the culture is politics.

Q: I'm not sure if I've mentioned it, but I just wish to put it in context. I am not an Italian expert, but I did serve as consulate general in Naples from '79 to '81, and that's where we met. One of the things that struck me in Italy when I first got there was how much time was spent on a political situation which was in constant movement but didn't change a bit. And you know the Italian scene of were the communists going to get thirty or twenty-seven percent rather than twenty-six percent of the vote, and who's going to be in the cabinet. I had a feeling it was a kind of a never-never land. The people were entranced with this, and it really didn't amount to a hill of beans. I'd like your impression.

FULTON: I agree with you that although there is reporting in the western press of the frequent changes of Italian government, the Italian government was in most ways more stable than most governments. The people shifted their seats, but from the end of the war through 1990, a period of forty-five years, you don't see much change at all. Bubbling beneath the surface, however, was a great deal of discontent with all the parties, and that discontent manifested itself after you and I had both left.

Q: Yes. Well, we're talking about '78 to '82. First place, let's look at the structure of American representation there, as represented in your particular thing by the cultural centers. I felt that we probably had too many consulates in Italy, I mean it's gone way down now but, how did you feel about staffing on USIA's side?

FULTON: One of the things that the PAO Jacques Shirley did when he arrived, and he arrived there a year before I did, so I had no role in this decision, the argument he made with headquarters was that unlike the example of Tokyo or France, Italian politics is very decentralized. He made the argument that in an era when branch posts, USIS branch posts, were being closed in other countries, this was the time to reopen branch posts in Italy, and maintain the ones we had. So we had libraries, reading rooms, centers in both Milan and Naples. But we opened a post in Trieste, or I should say reopened a post in Trieste. We downsized posts in Florence and Genoa so that at the end of the process we had public reading rooms and centers of both Milan and Naples as the two most important, and we had very small operations in the other four consulates in Trieste, Genoa, Palermo, and Florence. These were not public spaces, unlike the Japan experience, and the idea was that we would keep our infrastructure as inexpensive as possible, and our branch PAO's would be most effective if they got out of the office, out of the centers, out in the population and in fact out of the city in which they served. On the first day when I arrived in Italy I was told by the PAO that one of the roles he had developed for branch PAO's was that they would in fact physically get out of the branch city twenty-five percent of the time. They largely did that. There was one person who resisted that, but not for long. The

others all did that. That I think was an accurate reflection of Italian politics at that time, it was very confused, and the interest in American culture was very great. Now whether that one man or woman traveling across the breadth of a large part of the country made much difference, I don't know. But I do know that we tried our best to get involved in the culture of Italy as opposed to the model in Japan where we tried to get the Japanese involved in the culture of the United States.

Q: How would you describe the culture of Italy from our post's perspective?

FULTON: This will take the next three or four tapes if justice is to be done. In shorthand, at the time I served there, the culture of Italy was very much in transition, the educational system was very, very uneven. Opportunities came to young people through the political affiliation of their parents. One was a Christian Democrat or a Communist or a Socialist or a Republican or whatever because the party had jobs to offer, had positions to offer. As I said earlier, one can't separate the culture from politics in Italy as easily as you can elsewhere. There was a political officer who, in a reporting cable to the Department the year I arrived, 1978, describing the Italian communist party as a Marxist party, wrote (more of the Groucho variety, less of the Karl variety).

Q: Groucho Marx being a well-known comedian at the time.

FULTON: There was a great admiration for the United States on the one hand, on the other hand the Italian communist party could rally to the streets tens of thousands of people to protest U.S. nuclear policy, or to protest decisions that were about to be made in NATO concerning the placement of short-range nuclear weapons. The Italian communist party, we in terms of American policy, traditionally feared as their election clout increased. When Richard Gardner was Jimmy Carter's ambassador, he set out to try to open a dialogue with the communists and in some ways succeeded. The complexity of what was going on, on the one hand supporting the democratic parties against the Italian Communist party, on the other hand recognizing that the Italian Communist party, although it received strong support from Moscow, was not the monolithic party that other Italian Communist parties were, created a fascinating political client.

Q: You say other Italian, you mean other European.

FULTON: European communist parties. The former Prime Minister Moro had been found assassinated in the trunk of a car in early '78, just before I arrived. Just before I left, an American General was kidnapped. General Dozier was kidnapped and actually rescued by the Italians with American assistance. The Red brigades were in ascension in the early 70s. By 1980 they had lost their political appeal to the Italian electorate as they overextended the level of violence that the Italian political system was willing to tolerate. It was a time when shall we say, the chickens began to come home to roost, and it was a time when Italian politics became more realistic, the Socialist party came into power during that period, and by coming into power they made their accommodation with the Americans. They differentiated themselves strongly from the Communists. That set the stage in a whole variety of ways for what was to happen in the 90s, which was the dissolution of most of the Italian political parties as we knew them in the time I was there.

Q: How about the media? What, how did we see the Italian media?

FULTON: Well the Italian media are among the most interesting in the world, I think. In sharp contrast to the way I describe the Japanese media, there is no Italian newspaper without a political point of view. The readers of that newspaper know the political point of view and so you get the day's events through the eyes of this party or that party, or this faction of this party or this faction of that party. The Italians read per capita fewer newspapers than any country in Europe, and newspapers write for political elite. The average reader of an Italian newspaper reads a couple of newspapers, and most people don't read any. People get their news from television and radio, and television likewise has a strong political slant to it. If you read several papers, and you read them through the eyes of somebody on the left and somebody on the right and somebody in the center, you're an open-minded person who can probably come to what we call objectivity here, but you won't get it from any one newspaper there. Like the Japanese press, the Italian press was very open to our engagements, not necessarily open to our influence. They were generally sure going to make their own call, but they were accessible to us to talk to them when they would listen to us and there are times when we had a point of view that we wanted to get across where with enough time and energy we believe we succeeded in doing that. It was an exciting time to be in Italy simply because of all the politics that I described and because the Italian press was so vibrant.

Q: Well, you came to this job of basically managing this organization and had been dealing with modernization and new techniques and how to do this. Did you find you were having to go back, could you bring these talents to bear or were you supporting sort of a system that had proved its worth over the years?

FULTON: We changed. I should give credit to the PAO, Jacques Shirley, who essentially changed the philosophy of programming in Tokyo from that which I described in Tokyo to one in Italy, where as I said earlier we would take our program to host institutions. We would not support the infrastructure of programming that we have traditionally had that I described in Japan. Nonetheless, there are more and less efficient ways of doing even that, and we used, in terms of identifying audiences, in terms of mailing things to audience members, in terms of contacting people, we used the best technology we had. That was greeted without any reservation by the people who were involved because by that time it had proved itself. It was not a place where I was involved in any innovation. It was a point where we were using technologies that had been developed elsewhere, some of which I had a role in and using them to actively engage in very dynamic political processes. I guess in a way in terms of my own growth what I was then experiencing was a movement from having been almost all process oriented in my own career to one of managing an operation that was very politically directed. It was dealing with issues that we believed at the time would be of paramount importance. In a mission where USIS had a seat at the decision table, you know this is not true in all missions. It is true as I suggested earlier to the extent to which people have something to bring to the process. We had both a PAO who was very knowledgeable, his successor likewise, my last two years, Stan Burnett, an expert on Italian politics. In the last years, Stan has just published a book on Italian politics which won an international award for its insights, and he knows Italian politics better than most Italians. We had a CAO for a year at that time who had been head of the Political Science Department at Yale

and is described in Italy as the father of Italian social sciences. We had an IO who was absolutely fluent in Italian and knew his way around Italy very well. We had a group of people who were Italian specialists, I not among them, who made the USIS operation a key player in developing policy.

Q: How did you find the idea of Information Officers who were out in the field, getting out in the field. Did that work?

FULTON: It depended almost totally on how good the officer was. One can imagine an institution like an American center in Japan doing pretty good work even with a weak officer, because he or she is supported by other parts of the institution to do certain things. In Italy, it was all on that person's shoulders for the most part. You see a somewhat different operation in Naples, where we did have an institution surrounding that individual. But in most of the branch posts we did not, we had a person with a staff advisor and a secretary essentially. As I traveled around to the branches to observe the branch post operations -- we had six branches -- I visited each of them four times a year. So by the time I had left Italy after four years I had paid nearly a hundred visits to these branches, and I came to see some very sharp differences. I saw among our best officers operations that you would be very, very proud of, where our officers came to know their regions personally, where trust developed and where they sat down, and there was a mutual respect in discussing issues, political issues, economic issues, security issues. I saw, and I'm thinking of at least one operation in particular, and some hint of that in other places at other times where our officers weren't up to the challenge. If they weren't up to the challenge, you know, Italians don't have time for them. So there was a dependency on having somebody who understood and could talk the politics and culture of that country.

Q: Well did you find, I mean Italian's not that easy. I mean people can tell you, as you and I both know, trying to pick up Italian, particularly at middle age and all, is not an easy matter. So it really means somebody who's been there a number of times. I think the thing that struck me and I'm sure it struck you was how many people in our apparatus in Italy had been there the third or fourth time. But this can also bring localitis. I mean I used to get annoyed as hell about people who'd come down from Rome and look down their nose ...

FULTON: Yes.

Q: I had no particular grief, I was just assigned to Naples. But all of a sudden I became a very strong partisan of Naples. Those goddamn snobs up in northern Italy, what are they so snooty about? But did you find that you were, it's not just that but also Italo-centered and all that rather than U.S. centered in my understanding. Was this a problem from your perspective?

FULTON: Yes. It was a problem with a few people, and clearly a language skill was terribly important in Italy. Now I have examples of both ends of the extremes, I have one example of a person who had fluent Italian who in a way didn't have a clue about American policy or American interests. I had people who had learned Italian before they came but not served there before and grew in the time they were there, whose Italian got better and whose comprehension got better and they knew what they were about, and did just perfectly wonderful jobs. The Italians are quite forgiving of your language ability if they think you're genuinely interested and

engaged, and so they will cut some slack for a person who is not expert in the language. But finally I think that has to come. The language has to come and I think on all occasions you need a balance in that post between those who have served there before and some people who were relatively new, and we had that balance, and I think overall it worked out pretty well.

Q: Talk about the two Ambassadors you had there. How did you see Ambassador Dick Gardner and his relation to USIS but also as an Ambassador?

FULTON: Dick Gardner was, in terms of his preparation, both in government, international organizations, the UN, and his dissertation on economics and his professorship at Columbia and his interest in Italy, he had a CV (curriculum vitae) that richly qualified him for the job. He had a very keen appreciation of USIA and called on USIA frequently. He was a fast study, he cared about politics, he cared about culture. You know most things that I can say about Dick Gardner are positive, but not everything. He had a colossal ego, and that ego got in the way of his judgment on some occasions. He was a person who wanted credit for everything he did. In some ways we all do but in some ways, with wisdom, we have to share that with others. And he, when he thought he wasn't afforded sufficient recognitions or given sufficient credit, he lost that political judgment and objectivity that he otherwise had.

Q: How about Maxwell Rabb? He was sort of given a very difficult time by the American press, was considered a lightweight political diplomatic amateur, a rather crude person.

FULTON: I served my last year in Rome under Max Rabb. Max Rabb had none of those qualifications that Richard Gardner had to be the Ambassador. He didn't speak Italian, he didn't have any of them. He had one fundamental qualification that served him very well as Ambassador. He had a political instinct, by which I mean recognizing what issue matters when there are a thousand issues to look at, and recognizing that above all your timing is critically important in politics. He could see through the politics of, I should say, he could choose from all those opportunities those moments when it mattered for him to be a player. I remember he once said, at an early staff meeting, he said, "Ladies, gentlemen, I am an amateur at this. I've never been an Ambassador before, I don't know anything about Italy. And what I am telling you today is that I will take whatever advice you give me. So when you come to me and say, 'Ambassador, I think you should do so and so,' I want you to know that I will then do it. So don't recommend it unless you mean it." And he said, "I'll do whatever you say. If it goes wrong after you've recommended it, then maybe on a second occasion I'll still take your recommendation, but if I see a pattern of it going wrong you can be sure I will never take your recommendation." And he said, but up until that point he said, "I am your agent to do whatever you tell me, so think it through carefully." People took that as a real challenge and as a consequence I think it served him quite well. He, on the other hand, on an early occasion when the Prime Minister was giving a speech on an important issue, I remember Max Rabb saying, "Look, while he speaks, let's have an interpreter here for me so I can hear what he says, immediately when he says it." And the interpreter was there and the interpreter did this simultaneous interpreting for Max Rabb, and I remember Max Rabb wrote a little note to the Prime Minister even before he concluded, and he wrote this note in longhand, and he said to his assistant, "Have this delivered immediately." And I remember the assistant saying, "Should we have it translated first?" And he said, "No no no no no, no you don't understand. I want it in my hand, don't do anything with it." Well, the Prime

Minister had a note from the American Ambassador within thirty minutes. That's Max Rabb's political instinct. He was well regarded by the Italians, and they knew he didn't know anything about Italy, but they did know he understood politics.

Q: I'm just thinking of this '78 to '82 period, in a way, looking at that, and please correct me if I'm wrong, when the chips were down, when Italy really counted for us was during the SS-20 Pershing missile crisis.

FULTON: Yes indeed.

Q: And I wonder if you could describe what that was and how we performed, how we met the challenge, because it was really a major situation.

FULTON: Well it was, when NATO (North Atlantic treaty Organization) had to respond to the Soviet challenge on short-range missiles....

Q: Could you explain what this was?

FULTON: The Soviets decided to position in Eastern Europe short-range missiles that were able to hit western European soil.

Q: This was the SS-20.

FULTON: Right. NATO decided to respond in kind. But in order for that response in kind to have any political validity there had to be a willingness among the NATO allies to put those missiles on their soil. Once you put missiles on your soil you not only stand up, as it was thought at the time, to the Soviets, but you also become a target. So this is not an easy decision to make. Great Britain early on made the decision that they would host the NATO missiles, and as it turned out in the give and take of NATO politics, Italy became the key country after which the decision would go forward, or without which the decision would not go forward. Within Italy, the Christian democrats supported that decision. But the Christian democrats did not govern without a coalition, and the Communists' support was not required. But the Communists could have taken to the streets, as they did in opposition to the pending decision, and they could have made it impossible for the decision to go forward. It happened that the key decision was one that was to be made by the Socialist Party. Craxi was then head of the Socialist Party. Craxi was looking for the Socialist Party to become more respectable and to distinguish itself from the rhetoric of the far left, a basic decision that he made that the socialists could become respectable internationally and govern with the Christian Democrats perhaps as a Socialist Prime Minister, as Craxi eventually became, and so the decision paid off. The Socialists after some time decided to support the Christian Democrats in the NATO decision to place short range nuclear missiles on Italian soil. The U.S. role was critical in this. We had the leadership of NATO because of our size. We in USIS spent a disproportionate part of our time doing programming both with the public floor, and more often with one-on-one discussions with journalists, describing how we believed that would be a stabilizing, not a destabilizing influence in Europe, and that it was part of a path that would lead to a greater peace, not disruption. We in USIS were very close to some think-tanks that did analysis of security issues, and there were a good number of people

associated with those think-tanks who were advisers to Craxi and the Socialist Party. We knew that at a minimum they could convey the feelings of our government and the rationale to all the parties, particularly the Socialists. We know that that conveyance got through. Now what role we had, did we make a difference? I can't say, nobody can say that. I can say that we were players. Throughout the mission, from the Ambassador to the political section of the mission and USIS. And don't you know, the Italians did agree to the station of those missiles. The scenario that we played out at that time came to pass.

Q: Was it clear to all of you in the mission that this was really important?

FULTON: Yes. This was at the top of the agenda.

Q: Did the Achille Lauro incident happen while you were there, or was that later on?

FULTON: No, I'd have to refresh my memory, I don't remember. It was not a major issue in U.S.-Italian relations, but I don't remember when it happened.

Q: One of the things that broke up the political situation that had gone on for forty-five years or so in Italy, the one that you were dealing with in the Soviet '82 period, was the complete corruption of the system as far as it's leadership, jobs, you know all the things that you joined the party for were essentially corrupting elements, and the corruption came really sort of, eventually it destroyed the CDU (Christian Democratic Union). Were we aware of the extent of the corruption and do we have any way of dealing with this, or problems with this?

FULTON: Yeah, we were certainly aware of it. The corruption didn't stop with the Christian Democratic Party. It extended through most of the parties and even, but to a lesser degree, through the Italian Communist Party. Part of what in the American political system we describe as corruption in the Italian political system would be understood as just a way of doing business. Understood that if you have a government job that pays you wages you can't live on that there will be another means to supplement your wages. It's difficult in some ways for us to understand, given our culture, how that whole culture could have been perpetuated for so many years and generations. But it's not difficult to understand at a given point and time faced with the political reality that your party receives contributions to assist the leadership, that those contributions would continue to come in. It was finally the downfall of all of the parties. It began on one hand with magistrates in Milan, on the other hand it probably began many years before that with sort of seething discontent within the system that this is wrong, we have to do something about this. So the people were quite ready to do away with those excesses, even if the reformers themselves had motives that turned out to be suspect.

Q: Well, is there anything else we should cover on this long period?

FULTON: I think this is a good point to stop. I would just, in stopping, say that I feel, now with 20 years behind me that the U.S. Mission, including the part that I knew best, USIS, played a role in Italy during that time that we should be very proud of. It was a role that was not, for the most part, played behind the scenes. But it was a quite public role. We had one story and it was the same privately and publicly. It's one where a lot of very skilled people worked to the U.S.

national interest in a way that has subsequently paid off big time.

GILBERT R. CALLAWAY
SAIS
Bologna (1977-1978)

Press/Information Attaché
Rome (1978-1982)

Cultural Attaché
Rome (1988-1992)

Gilbert R. Callaway was born in Memphis, Tennessee in July 1938. He attended Rice University, American University, and the National University of Mexico. He served in the US Army and entered the Foreign Service in 1966. Throughout his career he has served in countries including Venezuela, Yugoslavia, the USSR, Italy, Nicaragua, and Spain. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on April 28, 1999.

CALLAWAY: I ended up going to Johns Hopkins Bologna Center in Italy. I did a year of studies at the advanced level there at the Center of European Studies of Johns Hopkins SAIS in Bologna.

Q: *From '77 to '78?*

CALLAWAY: Right.

Q: *What were you looking at?*

CALLAWAY: I did a study of the relationships between the United States and the Communist Party of Italy, as a reflection of U.S.-Soviet relationships. I drew the parallels and decided that there wasn't very much the PCI, the Communist Party of Italy, could do compared to how our relationships with the Soviet Union were going. We were either more lenient, or favorable, or accommodating towards our dealings with the Communist Party of Italy and thinking they were more Eurocommunist (Eurocommunist was the term of the day at that time) or less Stalinist, and more socialistic, depending on how our relations with the Soviet Union were going. I did some timelines and some relationships about what was happening with U.S.-Soviet relations at the time.

We were tougher on the PCI if relations were bad and if relationships were better then we were more lenient. That was sort of saying that we dealt in terms of our big power relationships, not only with the East European countries, but also with large communist parties in France and Italy. The Communist Party of Italy was a huge and influential organization which is now splintered in many ways. Bologna had been a communist-controlled city since right after the war. It was right in the middle of the red belt. I got to talk to the mayor and other people.

Q: *Did you talk to Berlinguer or not?*

CALLAWAY: I never got to talk to Berlinguer. I saw him at rallies.

Q: *Just yesterday I was interviewing Allan Holmes who was our DCM during this time that you are talking about in Rome and he was talking about how we were very concerned about Euro-communism, but it was not our policy to feel that this was a benign influence and we should be very concerned about it.*

CALLAWAY: Right.

Q: *Although the Italian communist party was not the Stalinist one of the French, still we didn't want to have this historic compromise. Did you find that dealing with our officials there, that you could see a very firm line drawn?*

CALLAWAY: My feeling is that our embassy and its officials were much more open to this than Washington and tried to say, we can go further, not all the way, not too far, but we can go further than the guidelines that were coming out of Washington were permitting us to do. I may be inaccurate in my assumptions, but that was the feeling I had. There was more of an effort if you are on the ground to deal with these people - we are here; we know them better; we know where to draw the line - than the people back in Washington who are setting a more general global policy.

Q: *Bologna fell under our consulate general in Florence?*

CALLAWAY: Right.

Q: *Was Bob Gordon there?*

CALLAWAY: I know Bob. I guess that is who was there, yes. He was a partially vision impaired consul general. He was a fascinating fellow.

Q: *According to Allan Holmes he was someone who really looked at this with a much more balanced view. His analyses were really taken very seriously.*

CALLAWAY: I think so.

Q: *Can you talk a little about the Bologna Center, the site? Who were the students there? What was the atmosphere?*

CALLAWAY: It was a tremendous atmosphere. There were only about 100 or so students, as I recall. They were all graduate students. They were all enrolled in the School of Advanced International Studies, SAIS. About half of them were Americans and about half of them were from everywhere else. They were mostly European, of course, Germans and French. Some were from the East. There were some Yugoslav students and professors there. There was one East

German professor who taught a course on Marxism which was absolutely fascinating to hear from that perspective. Then there were some from the Far East. It was a real mixed bag of people who were very interested in public policy, who were going to go into either their governments or their foreign services, or international aspects of businesses in their various countries.

It was a tremendous experience. Dealing with the students and professors there was as exciting as the academic part of the courses although with the kind of study that I was doing, and most of the other students were doing, it was not very book oriented. It was very practical. You are in Bologna. Take advantage of it. You can travel to Milan, Florence, Geneva, very easily. Of course, it was a wonderful part of the world to live in and eat in for a while so a lot of us did a lot of weekend traveling. The University of Bologna was very heavily influenced by leftists at the time, and SAIS had a close relationship. Many of the professors came over. As a matter of fact, I had Romano Prodi, the recently departed prime minister of Italy and now the head of the European Commission, as a professor of economics from the University of Bologna.

It was quite an interesting time. The fall before I arrived there, there had been student riots in Italy, in Bologna, similar to the '68 days. The atmosphere as the school year opened was very uneasy and tense in the city. There were some demonstrations in which I went out as a student and sort of mingled with the students. I talked to the students and asked, "Why are you here? What do you think about this?" Having the mantle of a student coming over from Johns Hopkins, it was very easy to do and gave me a lot of real insights. It was sort of like being in a consulate for a year, like in Zagreb, and you could see the relationships and how Bologna and Emilia-Romagna, the regional province there, viewed Italy, which is a very varied country, as you know.

They were in the northern and industrialized part. You get into the Florence area and it is a very central region. Rome is seen as a bunch of government bureaucrats, worthless. And then there is the south. The north, or certainly Bologna and Milan, views them as a bunch of freeloaders; "we are supporting this country." It was a very good lead-in to my subsequent assignment in the embassy in Rome because I had not only a provincial, but a non-diplomatic status. I had no diplomatic status in Bologna.

It was absolutely fascinating getting into the bureaucracy of the country. I think bureaucracy has to be an Italian word; they invented it. We had to go out and find a place to live, register a car, get a driver's license, all of that, the way Italians do it. Most of us when you go into a country never realize what the embassy is doing for you. It was a relief in some ways to go down to the embassy and say, "Get my drivers license." We knew what it was like to deal with the Italian bureaucracy, to deal with Italian politicians, to live in the red belt of the country.

Q: What was your impression, having come from the Soviet Union and being in Yugoslavia and all, of Italian communism at that time before you got to Rome?

CALLAWAY: I think that the thrust of my paper is that we were kind of short sighted to let our relationships with a very important Western European communist party be determined by our relationships with the Soviet Union. My thesis was, this is what determines our relationships with the PCI and I think it was a critical assessment, that we shouldn't do it. We should look more at what the PCI is, listen more to what they are saying, and try at least on a country to

country basis, maybe not in an overall scheme, to deal with that situation and deal with it as part of our relationships between the United States and Italy, rather than between the United States and the Soviet Union. The criteria that was flowing out to us from Washington was “Denounce this, denounce that.” Berlinguer was very careful in how far he would go in “breaking” with the Soviet Union.

Q: Did you feel at that time that maybe the Communist Party was one that people were converted to or did they almost inherit it with their family or with their job?

CALLAWAY: We weren't that far away from the Second World War. We forget what Italy went through in the Second World War. We tend to think of Italy as a wonderful place to visit, with good food, and so on. We also tend to think of them as allies, which they are, with NATO and the G-7. They are very strong allies. We remember Mussolini vaguely, certainly not in the same way as Adolph Hitler and the Nazis, and the Fascists in Italy. Italy is not as central to our relationships today as Germany is, certainly not since the combined Germany of East and West Germany. Therefore, I think the history of Italy, even the recent history of Italy, slips away from us.

The communists in Italy were an integral part of a partisan movement first against the Fascist regime but then more importantly after Italy declared armistice in '43. Italy was essentially divided between a German occupied north and an Allied occupied south. The partisans were a variety of groups, monarchists and others, but the Communist Party played a tremendous role and had a good shot at forming the government with Togliatti after the end of the war in Europe in '45. I think a lot of people consider them to be almost the saviors of Italy. They saw themselves in partisan terms. The incremental leanings that Italy made towards Marxism, and then there was a very important referendum about Italy going back to a monarchy again...

Q: In 1948 and we poured lots of money...

CALLAWAY: Put lots of money into that election, yes, we did. We forget, but the United States and Great Britain split right down the middle over this issue. The British wanted a monarchy back again. They had a monarchy. This was the empire. “We will try to restore the world much like it was.” Roosevelt and later Truman were very much opposed to this policy. There were breaks within the alliance. The Cold War was heating up. Turkey and Greece were a more immediate concern to us but certainly the Communist Party of Italy we saw as a subversive fifth column going to undermine right up to the British Isles again by another totalitarian regime. I think that the Communist Party of Italy had moved considerably since then.

Q: Fleurs, I think, which was very Stalinist. It jumped to the Kremlin's will, at least the leadership. In '78 you did what then?

CALLAWAY: In '78 they asked me what I wanted to do and I said, “How about another year in Bologna?” When they stopped laughing, I went to Rome in the same position that I had in Moscow. I was press attaché/information officer in Rome.

Q: You did this in Rome from when to when?

CALLAWAY: From '78 to '82, four years.

Q: In Rome, could you talk about your ambassador, relations with the press and also the embassy at that time?

CALLAWAY: I had come from being press attaché/information officer and you think you know what you are doing, but it was a totally different situation. Of course in Italy, here is one of our firmest allies. When I went the ambassador was a Carter appointee by the name of Richard Gardner who just a year or so ago ended up being Clinton's ambassador in Spain. I served with him in both countries. He was replaced by Maxwell Rabb who was a Reagan appointee. Those were the two political appointees. I had never dealt with a political appointee as an ambassador before, so that was different. Even though there had been political appointees in Moscow and Venezuela as well, I hit career ambassadors up until that point in my career.

The first thing I noticed was the difference in relationships with the resident American media in Rome. There were probably just as many accredited full-time correspondents, 25 or so, but there were many more stringers and freelancers. Italy was a great place to live. The attitude was, "I work for this magazine and I shovel shit at night; anything to live here in Rome, I will do it." The other difference was their attitude towards the embassy. At the embassy in Moscow, we were the defender, the provider of information, very close personal friends. In Rome, it was basically, "We don't need you; information is wide open; we can go to anybody; we can interview anybody any time we want to." It was a very different relationship. It was not hostile, but just "we live in our own worlds, we have our job to do, and we can do it."

Certainly during a presidential visit, of which there are always a multitude in a place like Italy, then you do credentials and access, when the press conference is going to be set up, who is going to get into the background briefings. That is when you become very important to them. I certainly formed some person friendships which have lasted as long out of Rome as they did out of Moscow, but on a day to day basis, we were dealing in a more cooperative relationship with the Italian media.

This was a time when television in Italy was going from a state-run entity of three television stations, RAI one, two, and three. They were controlled by RAI, which is Radio Italia when it was only radio, before it became television. Television by that time was very big. Television reflected, as did the state-run radio, the political situation in Italy. RAI-1 was Christian Democrat, RAI-2 was Socialist, and RAI-3 was Communist. It wasn't identified but everybody just understood that those parties had access not only to the kinds of programming in those three radio and television stations, but more importantly to the jobs. They named the director. A party faithful was head of the news division, and so on.

We obviously dealt with those three stations very differently. RAI-1, which for many years had been the only radio and television station, was the biggest, the most influential, and the most watched, so we dealt with them the most. Also, quite obviously, they were the easiest to deal with. They were the Christian Democrats, and there was a long relationship between the U.S. government and the Christian Democratic Party. We tried to deal with all of them, including RAI-3, to the extent that we could, placing programs, getting interviews, having as much access

to the Italian media as we could. In the Soviet Union it was a totally different ball game.

Sometime between '78 and '82, congress [Italian parliament] passed a law banning the state monopoly on the electronic media, radio and TV. Television stations, literally mom and pop operations, were springing up all over Italy. There were something like 900 television stations, some of them with a broadcasting radius of three inches. There was a whole other outlet for interviews. We tried very hard to figure out which stations are going to survive, which are going to coalesce into private networks of their own.

Berlusconi, a recent prime minister before Prodi in Italy, made a fortune setting up a series of private and radio networks based out of Milan. He also used them in his electoral campaigns to the frustration and irritation of some of the older political types who were used to dealing with the established media.

The newspapers also reflected party affiliation. L'Unita was the Communist Party newspaper; there was no question about that. They were the Pravda and said so on their front page. The other newspapers, like Corriera della Sera, tended to be more favorable towards the Christian Democrats. They were independent papers but still had very definitive political affiliations and leanings that you didn't expect in the States, but that you certainly knew was the case in Moscow. It was a "democratic" society where your media were pretty well identified by political affiliations.

As you tried to arrange for an interview with La Repubblica, you knew you were going to speak to the socialist and more leftist political elements of the population. There was that consideration as we tried to get newspapers to place our stories. This was the time when we were trying to place intermediate range missiles in Europe.

Q: The Pershing twos and the cruise missiles.

CALLAWAY: Right.

Q: This was in response to the SS-20s which the Soviets had ringed Europe with.

CALLAWAY: Right. This was a very touchy issue. Who was going to be first to allow us to place these? The British had, of course, said yes, but the British were not as close (to Russia) as we wanted to be. It was not going to be the French because they were not part of the military alliance of NATO. The Italians kept telling us, "Okay, the British are on board. You get one other then we will do it."

There were heavy efforts to place the U.S. point of view in the media on why we had to respond to the SS-20s; why Italy was so crucial in a geographic sense (We call it our land bound aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean.); and why we wanted them to do this. One of the most successful and satisfying media junkets, if you will, was taking an RAI-1 team, the major television, for something like two weeks on a tour around Europe. We went to look at the Iron Curtain. We flew over the Soviet anchorage off the shores of Libya in the Bay of Hammamet. We went to some of the air bases and saw the underground bunkers of NATO. We landed on an aircraft carrier. It was absolutely fantastic with this RAI team.

They made a television series, produced by RAI, and we think it had a tremendous amount to do with finally persuading the Italian parliament to vote in favor of placing the cruise missiles. Ten years later when I was back in Italy with another hat on, we were pulling the cruise missiles out of Italy and trying to persuade the Italians that we really didn't need them any more. They were looking at it by that time mainly from an economic point of view; "We are losing jobs; you've built up this infrastructure; please put something else there if you are not going to have this."

Q: Let's talk about your two ambassadors and how you found them working with the media, first Gardner.

CALLAWAY: Gardner was a professor of international law from Columbia University who had been a very active political advisor. He, Brzezinski and Vance had been among the top foreign policy advisors to Carter. He had very close relationships not only with the White House, but with the State Department and with the National Security Council. He was very well plugged in politically back in Washington, which is always a legitimate argument for a political appointee.

Gardner's other plus was that he knew Italy. He was married to an Italian lady whose family from Jewish background had escaped in 1939 from Venice. He had been a professor who had come and lectured on international law and economics in Italy as a Fulbright professor, or under one guise or another, for practically every year for the last 20 years. He knew Italy. He knew a lot of people. He spoke Italian.

He was immediately determined to make himself and the Carter administration's policy towards Italy well known throughout the country. He was active with the media and in public speaking to the point of exhaustion. He ate up speech writers and other people. He had a full-time speech writer/press attaché who was in USIS. I sort of ran the part that we've been talking about, the dealings with the media and working with the correspondents, and so on. Another person practically served Richard Gardner full-time writing speeches and setting up speaking engagements for him.

That changed when Rabb came in. He knew Italy less. He didn't speak Italian very well. He was a very accessible man but in a different way. Gardner was out giving speeches all the time traveling around the country. He was a difficult personality to deal with. He was very demanding, an "I don't suffer fools gladly," kind of a personality. But those who worked with him in trying to reach out to a lot of Italians, my hat is off to them. He really got out there and he did it.

Gardner was absolutely convinced in 1980 that Jimmy Carter was going to be president again. We set up one of these election night events in which you put up the boards and report, have tickers going, and everything. We tried to set it up like one of the television press centers. The ambassador insisted that we have it at the residence and we tried to talk him out of this. We had it at the residence and it was a very dismal crowd. They went out of there rather early in the evening, as you will recall.

Q: How about dealing with terrorism during this time? You had the Red Brigade doing its thing and Moro had been assassinated though probably not on your time.

CALLAWAY: It happened when I was in Bologna.

Q: Then General Dozier was kidnapped. Did this involve what you were doing at all?

CALLAWAY: We talked about the access of the media in Moscow on sensitive issues. In Italy, Dozier was a comparable issue. Here was a high-ranking American general being held by people who had shown with Moro that they would kill him. There was a great deal of sensitivity and concern not only about negotiating with the Red Brigades, not giving them the propaganda advantage that they were looking for by this kidnaping, but to save the man's life. There was a great deal of activity going on which I simply was not aware of. They were protecting the embassy spokesman and the press attaché. I could go and say, "There is a lot going on that I don't know about fellows." Of course the media had to write their stories, but they were pretty damn understanding of not trying to find and locate Dozier which could have placed his life in danger. "Okay, they know where we are, so we've got to kill him and get out of here."

I worked very closely with the political counselor at the time, Bob Frowick, who was later in Bosnia trying to settle things there. He was the embassy point man on this. There were teams from various U.S. government agencies in-country trying to achieve what they eventually ended up achieving. They got Dozier out alive, unlike Moro.

As you read Italian history today even, I am often reminded of Oliver Stone's movie about JFK and how that conspiracy won't go away. There are people who absolutely believe that because Aldo Moro was in favor of "compromiso storico" - in other words, a better relationship with the Communist Party - the United States was somehow implicated in his death. There are people who believe that Henry Kissinger said, "Kill him. We don't want him coming out of here." Also, as you will recall, Moro did a lot of talking about his colleagues in the government with the Brigade Rossi when they had him in captivity and there was a feeling that he was going to come out even more influential within the political establishment.

Dozier, to the best of our knowledge, did not give state secrets away. He was not an Italian politician. He was a high ranking NATO commander. Of course, the Brigade Rossi were thinking, "This man knows where all the nuclear weapons are and maybe we can steal a nuclear weapon." There was a tremendous amount of sensitivity and I felt both the Italian and foreign media were quite understanding that this is a very dicey situation and let's try to do as much reporting on it as we can, but let's not run rampant. [Let's do what the] Freedom of Information or Privacy Act dictate.

Q: What was the feeling when Maxwell Rabb came on board, because he was so different than Richard Gardner? He had initially been offered Switzerland and he said that's not a big enough country, so he was given Italy instead. He wasn't there as an Italian hand but it was more as kind of a reward. What was sort of his initial introduction to the embassy and how did that work out, particularly from your perspective?

CALLAWAY: I think there may have been, depending on your own political feelings, either great joy or great dismay about Ronald Reagan becoming president. Not only a Republican but a very conservative Republican. I think there was concern about how Maxwell Rabb was going to

reflect that in our relationships with Italy.

What Rabb did was come in and say, "I'm no expert in this country and I will depend very much on my staff." That is a good way to start off with any staff; that makes you popular. He said, "I don't know as much as my predecessor. I have tremendous relationships with Ronald Reagan and with his people at the National Security Council and other places." He had the access, but he didn't know the country as well and he turned to his team and said, "Educate me. Help me be a good representative." I think that won Rabb a lot of admiration and a lot of respect. I think his team at times had more influence than they did under Richard Gardner who said, "I know this country as well as you do and I can make up my own mind about some things."

So after Gardner I was with Maxwell Rabb for just a year. The main way it changed my relationship with the ambassador's office is that Gardner had almost a full-time person working with him. Ambassador Rabb said, "I don't need that. I don't speak Italian. I am not going to be going out doing as many public personal appearances as my predecessor. I am going to depend more on my staff." I suddenly became a full-time press attaché/ambassadorial spokesman.

Rabb depended more on his staff, including his press attaché, to issue reports, and so on, in his name. He was much less media-oriented than Gardner had been. Gardner liked to do the interviews himself, talk to the newspaper reporters, and go on television himself. So there was more work in that sense, which was more satisfying in some way, and less in some ways in having an ambassador who was not as much of an expert, in other words, you got to do more. I think Rabb had a pretty good track record in Italy and in running an embassy in that way, probably up until the kidnaping of the terrorists out of Egypt of the Achille Lauro ship.

Q: Were you there at the time?

CALLAWAY: I was not. I was not even in Italian affairs at the time, so I only know what I read. Here was a real crisis in Italian-U.S. relations and we wanted those people, but the main terrorist was released, as you will recall. There was a bit of a black mark on that.

Q: You were there, I guess, when there was that supposedly right wing explosion in, was it Milan?

CALLAWAY: In Bologna at the railroad station. A lot of people blamed the Brigade Rossi. One of the lines of the Brigade Rossi is, "Yes, we do carry out terrorist acts in order to call attention to the justness of our cause, but we don't do half of them; half of them are done by the right wing trying to make us look bad." It took the government a long time to go and look at the explosives, to interview people, to look at the way access was made to the stations, and so on. This was a case where in subsequent investigations, it does begin to look as though it was a right wing effort to paint the Brigade Rossi in a bad light by doing it in Bologna, which was the buckle of the red belt, right there in the train station, with a lot of innocent people killed. There we were trying to help out with the basic investigation of figuring out who was responsible for this thing. There was no direct involvement of U.S. strategic or human concerns as there was in the case of General Dozier's kidnaping.

Q: Did you get involved much with the media over the presence of American troops? We had some rather large bases such as in Naples, and then Ciganella and Aviano. We also had three man listening posts, the whole thing. Did they cause a relations problem?

CALLAWAY: Surely, in both directions. There was a problem coming in with a new base to place the cruise missiles, and then there was a problem removing that base because of the economic aspects. The Italian government was not always a Christian Democratic government. Spadolini was the prime minister. He was a Republican, not like our Republican Party, but a small party. It was a coalition compromise between the Christian Democrats, the communists, and the socialists, in order to put him there. Basically the entire time I was there, the government tended to be favorable to our bases because they were a loyal, faithful ally of the United States and it gave economic advantage to Italy. They tended to try to put them in the south whereas we wanted them in the north because of the proximity (to Russia). They wanted them in the south because of economic reasons.

They realized that demonstrations could spring up, there could be local resistance to various things, particularly things like we've seen recently in Aviano with this terrible ski gondola incident there. Or the common thing that happens throughout the world with sailors on leave, with the raping of a young girl, or a fight that breaks out in a bar.

The military always has public affairs officers assigned to commands. We tried to meet frequently outside of crises situations, when we were trying to work out what the embassy was going to say, and what the military command was going to say in response to an incident. We would gather together all the public affairs officers at least four times a year and work on what to do to improve relationships and perceptions of the base within a particular community on a regular basis: things like sports activities, humanitarian efforts, working with the local orphanages, inviting people not just when a ship visit comes in, when you always organize a visit, but bringing people onto the base. Show them that the bunkers are not glowing green and that there are not people stored away who are ready to run out and take control of Italy if the PCI wins the next election, that sort of stuff. We tried to establish as close a working relationship as we could with the military commands because it was a constant concern.

There was a civilian plane that was downed when I was there. I think it was flying between Naples and Sicily. It just fell out of the sky, sort of like the Trans World Airline. To this day, it is gospel among the conspiratorial cliques within the country that it was a NATO missile that brought this airplane down. Nothing was ever proved. It was like TWA, what happened? Our intelligence is a little better these days and we think the TWA wasn't a missile, but we don't really know what caused that plane to blow up. This one was the same way. But those kinds of mythologies persist. Ustica was a little island north of Sicily where it fell into the sea and you say that word today, Ustica, and they know exactly what you are talking about, that plane that NATO shot down.

Q: It sounds like this was a pretty active time for you. How about presidential visits? Ronald Reagan obviously must have come there, and you probably also had Carter visit.

CALLAWAY: Yes, we had both.

Q: *How did they go?*

CALLAWAY: A presidential visit, particularly to an ally like Italy which is a close ally, is always a big deal. I think any country, friend or foe, appreciates the U.S. president visiting. You are the biggest, most powerful, and we weren't the only "superpower" in the world at the time, but we were certainly their superpower. It is paying respect to your country so you always wanted the visit. And the ambassador, especially if he is a political type, he wants his good friend Ronald Reagan or his good friend Jimmy Carter to come and stay in the residence, and spend as much time as he possibly can. There is always pressure both from the host country and from your own embassy about getting as many presidential visits as you possibly can.

Q: *One presidential visit is equivalent to two earthquakes.*

CALLAWAY: Yes, and we had earthquakes, too. The things you tend to note are in spite of your own political inclinations. I happen to lean more toward the Democratic Party and so I tended to think that democratic administrations would have a more "enlightened" policy towards these countries. In spite of that, we had a hell of a time dealing with some of the press and media staff of Jimmy Carter's White House. When Ronald Reagan's crew came to town, it reflected Maxwell Rabb's feeling of "I depend more on my staff; you guys tell me what to do; you want to set up a press conference, we will see what we can do." It was not that totally, of course. The White House always is looking for one thing first. Mike Deaver wants to make Ronald Reagan look the best he can, Jody Powell wants to make Jimmy Carter look the best he can. That is their primary aim.

In presidential visits, they focus on how it is going to play back home. Therefore, they are looking more at the domestic media. No matter whether it was Republican or Democratic, conservative or liberal, we had trouble convincing them that the United States has a stake in having local media access to the President, too. Many times, one of the arguments I would use is, "Look, the New York Times and the Washington Post read Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica, and they are going to pick up from their stories; therefore, if you get a bad story in La Repubblica, you may get a bad story in the New York Times as a result of that. Think about it because it is to your benefit."

Our point of view was as much media access as we possibly could no matter who the President was. The Secret Service's attitude was to have minimal exposure to the President. There is a constant battle in embassies between the security officer who is trying to think how he can protect the embassy staff, and the USIS operation, which wants the doors as wide open and as much glass showing as possible. It is a natural conflict which will go through forever, and presidential visits were the same way. We tried to have as much exposure as we possibly could, get as much media coverage as we could, favorable, of course. You are constantly dealing with the U.S. press corps, which wants exclusivity, and the security guys who want protection.

In terms of Ronald Reagan being better accepted or received than Jimmy Carter? No. The Italians were very happy to have a presidential visit, to be recognized. They provided as much cooperation as they could. I never had a presidential visit in Moscow, but [I did have] a Secretary

of State visit, and it was a very controlled kind of situation.

Q: Just one last question, did the earthquake down in southern Italy play much of a role there? As we both know I was consul general down there so that was a big deal for me. We had Joe Bertot down there, who was excellent support. How did that play up in Rome?

CALLAWAY: As you know better than I, there are a lot of U.S. politicians with roots in Italy and in that sense, when you are going to have a Senator D'Amato, and you remember better than I do because you dealt more than I did with...

Q: I think Claiborne Pell was there practically before the earth stopped quivering.

CALLAWAY: Right. They wanted to go right out to the village and have their picture taken.

Q: With a helicopter.

CALLAWAY: That's right, I flew in with him. Not with Pell, with D'Amato. Of course the ambassador is going to be keenly interested when high ranking congressional and administration officials are coming in, so to that extent, and to the extent of helping people, the embassy gets very involved, though not as much as you are involved when you are on the scene. I had been through an earthquake when we were in Caracas and the embassy was damaged, we were right on top of it.

Q: D'amato was terribly unimpressive. He had not even been sworn in as a senator from New York. He came in with monsignor... I never quite figured out who he was. When you all came in, he was running all over the place.

CALLAWAY: All I can remember is that he wanted to be poised on top of rubble piles and have his picture taken again, and again, and again.

CALLAWAY: After that I was sent back to Italy. I went back as the cultural attaché to Rome.

Q: This would have been '88?

CALLAWAY: Yes.

Q: Did you get involved in the Iran-Contra thing? Did anybody come at you saying what were you doing, and why, and when?

CALLAWAY: Interestingly enough, I was approached by a few of the correspondents and journalists that I had been in touch with; Roy Gutman, for example, from *Newsday* was writing a book at the time. But I left in '85 and sort of moved out of direct involvement in the area.

As I mentioned, I was detailed over to the National Security Council on two occasions, but it

wasn't with Latin America, even though I would see old colleagues and friends that I had worked with. One time was for Reagan's first meeting with Gorbachev in Geneva to handle the press aspects of that, and the other time was because I had a background in Italy. It was for a G-7 conference in Venice. Even though I was back, and on a couple of occasions would see Ollie North, on those occasions it wasn't in a Latin American context.

Q: *You were in Italy from '88 to when?*

CALLAWAY: Until '92, another four years.

Q: *You were cultural counselor?*

CALLAWAY: Yes.

Q: *What does that mean?*

CALLAWAY: It means all of the bi-national, educational, cultural programs, and exchanges. Not only bi-national, but in some cases multinational. For example, Italy is extremely rich, both intellectually and culturally, and in many instances it gets along just fine without official government involvement. A lot of the programs that we had there were facilitated. We would help the Venice Biennale in which the U.S. has a pavilion, but we were not providing the bulk of the funding for it at all. We would help organize a symphony orchestra visit, or an exchange of artists between the two countries.

One of the areas where I was very heavily involved was the Fulbright exchange commission, and that is very big in Italy. There it is basically the two governments. One of the aspects though, particularly during that time, and I don't know if the word was in use then, but privatization was moving in, in which we were trying to move away from government support for educational and cultural programs, to get more private sector involvement. We worked very hard to get both U.S. companies, mainly based in Europe or Italy like American Express, IBM, and others, or Italian companies which were interested in helping people get a further education, and to persuade them that this would benefit their own company in the future. Grantees might come back and work for them; a broader international education was a good thing for both countries and a good thing for their companies.

We sent several hundred students and professors in each direction, each year on the Fulbright exchange program. The whole selection process and where they are going to be placed in each country, was something that involved the bi-national commission very much. We would be meeting at least several hours each week to discuss what programs we would sponsor in the future, what institutions we would deal with, and who would be selected.

Q: *Did you see a difference in American-Italian relations?*

CALLAWAY: I did indeed toward the end of that time because this was just when the old post-war regime in Italy, which we all knew and loved, or at least were familiar with, was beginning to crumble. There were investigations into corruption and how the political parties had all,

without exception, raked off funds from various deals with business to support their activities, and how judges mainly based in the Milan area were beginning to have a tremendous amount of power to investigate high ranking politicians and businessmen. There were a series of suicides and resignations that came out of this. This was all just beginning to happen.

We had dealt with Italy since 1945, and in some instances since 1943, on the basis of the Christian Democrats being natural allies and the Communist Party of Italy being natural enemies. All that began to fall apart. The Communist Party, whose headquarters was one block away from where I lived in the center of Rome, had re-designated itself as the party of the democratic left. They had taken the hammer and sickle from being a center part of their emblem, and put it down at the bottom of a tree as sort of a seed.

Q: A rose or something?

CALLAWAY: No, the rose was the Socialist Party symbol. This was of a spreading oak tree to show that they were growing beyond their roots. A lot of the officials that we dealt with (I earlier mentioned Radio-Television Italy) were political appointees. I noted that the three major radio and television networks were Christian Democratic, socialist, and communist. The same was true for cultural institutions that we dealt with - they were largely political appointees. Now these people were losing their jobs; they were very concerned about their futures.

A lot of the contacts that we had began to get either shaky or be gone. These were people that we worked with in setting up the art show in Venice, or at the Ministry of Culture in trying to arrange more exchange programs, or blocking the illicit sale of Italian art which had been exported out of the country, or at the Ministry of Education where we were trying to help the Italians establish a junior college system. From '88 to '92, it was moving in that direction. It was fascinating to watch, and it is still fascinating to watch it.

Q: Who was the ambassador in this '88 to '92 period?

CALLAWAY: When I first went back, believe it or not Maxwell Rabb was still there. I went out with Rabb, came back with Rabb, and for one year he was still there. I think that Max Rabb really thought that with George Bush being elected as president, he was going to stay on for yet another four years. I think he was a terribly disappointed man that it didn't work out that way. After a lot of rumors he was replaced by a fellow named Peter Secchia. Secchia was a Republican businessman from Michigan who had been very influential in George Bush's campaign in helping George Bush win the nomination. By the name, he had an Italian background, but he did not speak Italian. I think it was his grandfather who had come over and established himself well. He was mainly a political advisor and a political donor to the Bush campaign. He was more of a purely political appointee than I had dealt with before.

Q: He had been given a rather rough time by the American press before he came out.

CALLAWAY: Yes, and after he got there, too.

Q: As being very crude and just not up to diplomatic standards, whatever those might be. You

must have gotten involved in having to deal with this didn't you, on the whole USIS side?

CALLAWAY: Right. As I had mentioned, Richard Gardner during his time had been extremely involved on the intellectual, cultural, and educational side of Italian-American affairs and had been very active. Maxwell Rabb in his eight year tenure, was much less so, but still there were probably 50 American educational institutions which had either summer programs or four year programs in Italy, mostly based around Florence and Rome, but throughout the country.

Secchia didn't come from this kind of background at all. On the Fulbright exchange program he sort of said, "Let my wife do that." He was a businessman and a politician. In my opinion Peter Secchia did extremely well in those areas. He did well in dealing with politicians and in dealing with businessmen. He did less well when it came to the intellectual side, the cultural side of life. Those of us who have served there know that this is very important in Italy. He had a sort of "slap you on the back, and let's talk frankly" attitude. That went over with some elements of the population that he dealt with, and much less with others. Not speaking the language was a problem, though he tried very hard. But it is difficult if you come at it especially with a background where people expect you to speak. "Peter Secchia, you come from this little village up north and don't speak our language?"

Q: Did he understand what the problem was and try to work with you to say, okay, this is the way I'm used to dealing but how should I deal here, and that type of thing, or was it pretty much cleaning up after him?

CALLAWAY: I think that Secchia tended to realize his shortcomings and be almost brutally honest about them at times. He wouldn't dismiss things that he didn't know that well and feel that comfortable with. He wouldn't say that's not important enough and I'm not going to support it. He just wouldn't be involved in it. Often as you know, no matter what the program is, you want the ambassador, the representative of the president, to be there at the opening of this or that, and that is where it was difficult. It was difficult because he felt uneasy. He felt that maybe a very erudite presentation would be given by the Italian before him and the visiting American professor after him. It was difficult to persuade him that sometimes just his presence was what was needed, not necessarily his contributions. His wife was very active, a very dedicated lady. She did sit on the Fulbright commission and was very active. She stood in his place in many instances and did quite well.

Q: Any major issues that you had to deal with why you were there?

CALLAWAY: As I mentioned earlier when I was the press attaché about 10 years before when we were putting the cruise missiles in, and now we were taking them out. That was an issue which affected the entire mission. Even more important were the political changes taking place in Italy. I can remember talking to a very good friend of mine, the chief of the Los Angeles Times bureau, and him saying, "I don't have any contacts any more. Everybody I know is either in jail, dead, or out of the country." This was across the board and I think this was a difficult process not only at our embassy, but for all the people who had to deal with the Italians, and the Italians themselves.

I mentioned Joseph LaPalombara's book from Yale University, Democracy Italian Style, I think is the title of the book. It is a very good description of how, when you think Italy is going to fall apart any minute, it puts itself together. This time, it really was falling apart in terms of the political establishment.

Q: Was there concern about criminal elements, corruption, that type of thing? Was there a feeling that it was worse, better, drugs, the whole business?

CALLAWAY: We talked earlier about the influence of the Red Brigades and the danger that they posed and the fact that with a lot of cooperation Italy had been able to pretty well overcome and defeat that threat. What they didn't defeat and overcome was the Mafia. The Mafia continued to operate on various levels. They continued to attack them, but some very high-ranking officials who had dealt effectively with the Red Brigades were assassinated by the Mafia, blown up in Sicily. Some of the accusations that were beginning to be made by some of the judges against some of the old-line politicians were that they had worked hand in glove with the Mafia throughout all these years, and that this is the way that they had held it together; that it was a thoroughly corrupt system; that they never really went after the Mafia. For example, one of the accusations against Andreotti is that he had been responsible for the death of journalists who were probing too far, and had been paid off directly by Mafia bosses in Sicily.

Q: Were we concerned about reporting this back to Washington? Were we trying to sort of stay out of this whole thing?

CALLAWAY: No, I think we were quite concerned. I mean Italy is important to us in many aspects. It is one of the G-7, a charter member of the European Union, and very important militarily. We have a lot of bases in Italy. The Soviet Union had not collapsed yet so there was still concern. Libya, a constant concern to us, is to the south of Italy. Some attacks had been made on some Italians by Libyans, so there was a concern about terrorism. There was concern about drug flow. A lot of aspects of it were of considerable concern to us about whether Italy. I think we are still concerned. There is a book that I just started reading recently called The Italian Guillotine, by Stan Burnett. I don't know if you have his name or not.

Q: The name is familiar.

CALLAWAY: He is another one worth talking with. Stan was the public affairs counselor in Rome for part of my first tour there, and subsequently wrote this book when he was at the Center for Strategic and International Studies here in Washington, CSIS. He wrote it with an Italian co-author. It is a probing study of just who some of these Italian judges are. Stan's basic thesis is that there was a political motivation to what they were doing, too. They claimed to be investigating corruption and going after anybody who is corrupt. His thesis is that they didn't necessarily go after leftist corrupt officials. The former Italian Communist Party, in other words which became basically the party of the democratic left, was pretty well immune from these probings that went on, whereas they went hammer and tongs after the Christian Democrats, the republicans, the socialists, the liberals.

Q: By the time you left, how was the Italian body politic doing in those days?

CALLAWAY: Confusion, real confusion. There was real concern about where Italy was going. I think we became a little more confident when Romano Prodi became the prime minister. Berlusconi had become the prime minister at the time that I was there. That was a confusing situation because he himself had been accused by some of the magistrates of being involved with the Socialist Party. Craxi himself, who was a former prime minister and head of the Socialist Party, had been so pursued and accused by the judges that he had fled the country and still lives in Tunisia.

There was a lot of confusion whether Berlusconi was a new wave? He was a businessman but he also held a lot of the private television stations as I had mentioned. Had he used his television stations to unethically influence the campaign? Then there were a series of others. There was a lot of confusion which at times seemed to be cleared up but now we are seeing another period of uncertainty.

Q: You were dealing with the cultural field, were you feeling any change in the role of America in Europe, in Italy, and vice versa? Had this changed at all or were we less the center?

CALLAWAY: I think the move toward Europe as an entity was progressing right along. In '88 you had Gorbachev and you had moves towards perestroika and glasnost. I think there was a feeling that things were really happening in Europe; that there could be an entity in Europe to deal with a changing Soviet Union. I don't think anybody thought about the demise of the Soviet Union at the time. I think the United States was still terribly popular with jazz, music, blue jeans, and McDonalds, which a lot of people in Italy opposed strongly. You probably remember when the first one went in, "We'll never accept this!" It's probably one of the most popular restaurants in Rome now.

Q: American movies?

CALLAWAY: Yes. The Italian movie industry is terribly important. There is an area that we dealt a lot with. We tried very hard to have more cooperation between Italian movie companies and American movie companies. The MPAA sold an awful lot of movies in Italy but there was concern about piracy because some of the movies there would make their way into places like China and the Soviet Union where piracy laws and restrictions are much less followed. There was a lot of cooperation, a feeling that Europe itself was becoming more important in its own right.

Q: In '92 you took off from Italy again?

CALLAWAY: Again, yes, sadly, reluctantly. They dragged me out of there.

G. CLAY NETTLES
NATO Defense College
Rome (1978-1979)

G. Clay Nettles attended the University of Alabama and served in the US Army from 1954 to 1956 before joining the Foreign Service in 1957. Throughout his career he has served in countries including Japan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Lebanon, Pakistan, Zaire, Turkey, Italy, Suriname, and Switzerland. He was interviewed on July 8, 1997 by Raymond Ewing.

NETTLES: I went to Rome and attended the NATO Defense College for six months.

Q: I think that has been pretty well covered in various interviews. I know that there is one State Department officer, normally, that goes to that and the U.S. military and, of course, people from all the other NATO allies.

NETTLES: Correct. I would simply say that I found the course interesting, useful, and enjoyable and those three adjectives rarely go together.

Q: I'm impressed that you found it both interesting and useful. I don't have any question that you thought six months in Rome was enjoyable.

NETTLES: Not only in Rome, but we devoted about a month and a half to travel within Europe and a month in North America.

Q: It was a six months' course, is that correct?

NETTLES: Which made it slightly difficult to fill because those students who had school-age children found six months an awkward time. So that was when they invited single people and those without children to the course. As you surely know, most of the courses of that type are nine months.

Q: Yes, and as I recall, assignments to the NATO Defense College are usually linked or connected to onward assignments to one of the NATO capitals.

NETTLES: That's correct. Now that's a requirement. When I was there it was not a requirement, but I was fortunate that my next assignment was to a NATO country, Turkey and I found the course good preparation for it.

CHARLES STUART KENNEDY
Consul General
Naples (1979-1981)

Charles Stuart Kennedy was born in 1928 in Chicago, Illinois. He received a bachelor's degree in history from Williams College and a master's degree in history from Boston University. He served in the U.S. Air Force in Korea. He entered the Foreign Service in 1955. Mr. Kennedy's career included positions in

Frankfurt, Dhahran, Belgrade, Saigon, Athens, and Washington, DC. This interview was conducted by Brandon Grove on September 4, 1996.

Q: Your final assignment overseas was as consul general in Naples. How did you get assigned to Naples?

KENNEDY: I think it was really because I was a consular officer and within the Foreign Service most of the major consulates general had gone to people who were essentially political officers, or maybe knew somebody, or something of this nature. Assignments to some of the major consulates general more rewards, than not. If Joe could not get an embassy he would be offered a ConGen job as second prize. Consular officers had been excluded from the beginning from getting these posts. In the early 1970s it had been agreed upon, with Barbara Watson's strong support, to have certain posts named as posts reserved for consular officers to be in charge. So as a consular officer I was given Naples. It was really to keep the consular flag flying in some of these posts, to give some room for consular officers to feel they could move their way up to some of the better places.

Q: In your career, with the exception of your first post in Frankfurt, you have been in places of a good deal of tension, cultural stress, and sometimes danger. I refer, for instance, to your service in Dhahran, Belgrade, Saigon, Athens, Seoul. What was it like to be in Naples?

KENNEDY: In a way it was a little difficult for me. I was in my fifties at the time, I was trying to learn Italian, I'm not a great linguist, and there isn't much English there, so I would be hanging on by my fingernails sometimes in conversations, and once they felt I understood Italian, they'd often start speaking faster and I had only a tenuous hold on the thread of conversation. They would start moving into the Neapolitan dialect, which was a mixture of Arabic, and Spanish. So it would have been much better if I had really known Italian well. But that said and done, I'm not sure it made a hell of a lot of difference. In Italy, everything is centered in Rome. So from the political side, I reported what was going on. But the main thing that we were doing was supporting the Navy, which had several military bases there, and overseeing the immigration program, which in the old days had been huge but was now almost dormant.

And then, of course, I got involved in the mother of all consular problems. I had a major earthquake in my area in November, 1980. It was centered near Naples and killed about 1200 people, about a couple hundred in the Naples area and the rest in the villages in the mountains in Southern Italy. The U.S. military and AID came in to help. For this I was well suited, I knew what to do and how to do it. It's handy to have a consular problem as your main task when you are a trained consular officer.

Q: Was there a large loss of American life?

KENNEDY: No, no Americans were lost. We were concerned because there were a lot of Italian-Americans, particularly in the hills. When Italian Americans say, "we came from Naples" its not really correct. Hardly anyone ever immigrated from Naples, like Berlin, nobody leaves the city. But they went through Naples, and they were from the outlying villages. It was a lot easier to say, "I was from Naples," than some small place nobody ever heard of.

ANTHONY G. FREEMAN
Labor Counselor
Rome (1980-1983)

Anthony G. Freeman was born in Newark, New Jersey, attended Rutgers University and Princeton University, and served in the US Army before joining the Foreign Service. Throughout his career he has served in countries including Argentina, Spain, Bolivia, Brazil, and Italy. He was interviewed by Don R. Kienzle on February 7 and 13, 1995.

Q: Okay. Then we are up to about 1980 or 1981, I believe.

FREEMAN: 1980.

Q: And at that point you went to Italy as Labor Counselor?

FREEMAN: That's right. I had been back in the States on home leave at some stage and went to pay a call on a friend who happened to be the Executive Director of the European Bureau, Don Leidel. The issue of postings available in the European area naturally came up and he said, "By the way, we have a labor position opening up in Rome. We have a little problem there in Rome." He didn't go into the details at the time, but it seemed that the Labor Counselor and the rest of the Embassy there didn't get along very well, and the labor officer was being asked to curtail his assignment. So suddenly there was this position available, and I was asked if I would be interested. We said, "Yes, of course." My wife was with me, and she was an old friend of this guy, who had been personnel officer in Buenos Aires years ago, and she was even more enthusiastic than me. So we jumped at the chance, and I got the assignment to go to Rome.

Q: Did you have any Italian?

FREEMAN: No, I had no Italian language capability at that point, except for a few choice words in dialect which I had picked up as a kid from the old neighborhood in Newark, and so I had to undertake standard Italian language training at FSI. I met two very important people at that time. One was Ambassador Gardner, who is now Ambassador to Spain. He had been Professor of International Law at Columbia University and was prominent in Democratic Party politics. He was in Washington on consultations from his post in Rome, where he had been assigned as Ambassador some time shortly before. At that time, he was focused on the notion that the United States should take a different tack towards the Italian Communist Party. The Italians had a style all their own generally and he thought the Italian Communists were different from the rest of the Communist world. He believed we were selling ourselves short by not having a friendlier relationship with the Italian Communists.

He wanted a labor officer more in tune with that, one who might help bring the AFL-CIO on board. The previous senior labor counselor, Herb Baker, was vitriolically opposed and made no

bones about it. Gardner asked my opinion, and I said I would be happy to discuss it further with the AFL-CIO to see what their views might be on the issue. I had never before had a labor assignment in Europe, so I didn't know precisely what the AFL-CIO position was. Of course, the AFL-CIO was strongly anti-communist and refused to have any contact with communists on principle, but I didn't have a precise fix on how it assessed the Italian situation. So, it was in that context that I came to meet an unforgettable character named Irving Brown. Now Irving was a legendary figure of the AFL-CIO, a hero of the Cold War. His exploits were well-known to all labor officers world-wide, and I was particularly an avid fan of Irving's from a distance, having heard many stories about him. Very little has ever been printed about his exploits.

Q: He never wrote his memoirs.

FREEMAN: He never wrote his memoirs although there was a rather superficial book written about him later by a Washington labor reporter. He was quite secretive, and I can tell you more about that later. In any case, this was the man who had played a key role in so many Western European countries, in Italy for one thing, and particularly in France. He had played a key role in cleaning up the Marseilles docks [from Communist control] to get Marshall Plan supplies rolling into southern France. He had helped to create the Force Ouvriere (FO) trade union movement, splitting it from the CGT (the Communist trade union center) in France. He did similar things in Italy, and he was active in Germany. This was the legendary figure of the AFL-CIO who ran its international affairs department while being based in Paris. So for me it was a great honor to meet him. We had a breakfast meeting in a downtown hotel in Washington, which I thought went pretty well. I talked to him about Gardner, and also met with some other folks in the AFL-CIO. Afterwards, I was able to report back to Gardner some nuances that my predecessor at the post had not as to how the AFL-CIO felt about contacts with the Communists. For one thing, the AFL-CIO itself was not going to have any contact with the Communist trade unionists, at least not out in the open. That was and still is their policy. ...Well, I have to revise that, because that has now changed. But that was their declared policy at the time.

But it was another question as to whether the Embassy should have contact. The AFL-CIO didn't want the labor officer to have contact with the Communists, because the labor officer was to a certain degree associated with the AFL-CIO. Even though he was a Foreign Service Officer and worked for the State Department, by the very fact that he had the title "Labor Counselor," the AFL-CIO felt the Italian labor movement associated this person with the AFL-CIO and the AFL-CIO felt it should have something to say about what the Counselor should or should not be doing in Italy. So I was able to report back to the State Department that there was a certain degree of nuance in the AFL-CIO position which had not been evident before. Irving didn't care if the Embassy had contact with Italian communists so long as it wasn't the Labor Counselor doing it.

So off I went to Rome in late 1980. It was an exciting assignment. I took language training for four months before that in the summer time and arrived in Italy towards the end of the year - around November. At that time there was a united labor movement. Italy historically had a politicized trade union movement. I mentioned Serafino Romualdi before. Serafino had written a book called *Peons and Presidents*. Serafino had served in the OSS in the Second World War, and among his adventures, he was involved in helping set up a meeting between the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, and the Communists that took place shortly after the Allied forces

liberated Naples, to discuss the future configuration of Italian politics and the trade unions. At that meeting, it was agreed that each major political party would get one-third control of the trade union movement. The Christian Democrats would have one-third, the Communists one-third, and the Socialists one-third, if memory serves. So the Italian trade union movement had its origins in politics. No question about that.

When I got there in 1980, there was "a united front" or something like that of the three trade union federations (CGIL, CISL and UIL). At that stage the three federations had undergone some evolution. One was the CGIL, which was a predominantly Communist, but it also had a minority in it comprised of Socialists who were allies of the Communists. The CGIL was the major trade union federation in the country. The second largest federation was the CISL. This was the old Christian Democratic oriented trade union movement, which at that time was split into a number of factions and had a lot of philo-third world types in it. It had undergone some evolution also, and in fact by the time I got there, a faction which was anti-Christian Democratic Party was in control of the CISL. If not anti-, at least it was not aligned with the traditional moderate right wing leadership faction of the Christian Democratic party. The CISL was led by people who had come out of the left-wing Catholic workers' movement and included odd socialists who were further to the left than the original moderate wing of the Christian Democratic party. The third trade union federation was the UIL; this was a grab bag of Socialists and so-called "lay" parties. The UIL had a socialist majority, which is interesting because as I said before there was a socialist minority in the CGIL as well. Then the UIL had as minority factions several other so-called secular parties like the Social Democrats, the Republicans and others. So those were the three basic trade union federations, but by that time they were all nominally aligned in one united confederation or trade union central (although the three federations retained their separate structures).

Q: When did they merge?

FREEMAN: I think they had merged in the 1970s. I'm rusty on Italian history at the moment, but a heavy rash of labor strikes in Italy in 1969, known as the "Hot Autumn", produced a shift to the left in Italian politics and led to the center-right Christian Democrat Party (PDC), which had headed all the postwar governments of Italy, entering into a political understanding with the Communist Party (PCI) known as the "Historic Compromise". The PDC and the PCI were Italy's two largest parties and traditional rivals, and the PDC traditionally dominated the national government, with the support of the smaller "lay" parties and in more recent years with the support of the Socialist Party (PSI) as well. But in the 1970s the PDC and the PCI came to an agreement looking to the prospect of the two major parties' sharing the reins of government. At around the same time, following the Hot Autumn, the three labor federations had come closer together and formed the "United Federation CGIL-CISL-UIL". That was its formal name.

So it was a rather complicated political situation which is hard to reconstruct from memory now. The AFL was active in Italy shortly after the end of the second World War. Irving Brown represented the AFL in Europe before the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955. Irving came from the AFL side although I think he had some CIO connections, too. If I had understood him correctly, he had worked with an AFL Automobile Union which had started as a CIO union. The CIO was also active on the other side. In Italy, the AFL worked with the Christian Democrats

whereas the CIO tended to work with the Socialists. It was in the US interest to work with both the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, the two major non-communist parties. But on the labor front, the AFL ran the show, and their historic relationship had been with the CISL and the Christian Democrats.

By the time I got there, a deformation had taken place in the CISL, so that a faction was in control which was often aligned with the Communist CGIL leadership (and was anxious to serve as facilitators trying to bring the CGIL closer to the U.S. Embassy and the AFL-CIO) whereas it treated the leadership of the much smaller UIL with some contempt. After looking over the situation, I concluded it was going to be hard to work with the CISL, because its international affairs office was committed to getting us to make contact and normalize relations with the CGIL at home while at the same time it was supporting revolutionary “nonaligned” unions in the developing countries inimical to US interests. With Italian government funds, for example, it was supporting the FMLN unions in El Salvador. After an initially good beginning, I noticed the head of the CISL union federation was standoffish about further meeting me. The same for the head of the CISL international affairs department. So even though the CISL had historically been great friends of the American Embassy and the AFL, by the time I got there the political situation had evolved and my relations with the CISL leadership particularly seemed strained.

On the other hand, there was a rising, ambitious political figure named Bettino Craxi in the Italian Socialist Party, the leader of that party, who, although he had originally come out of the party’s left-wing, adopted a stridently anti-Communist posture as his long-range strategy to take over the reins of government himself as Prime Minister. For the smaller Socialist Party to gain the Prime Ministership, it would be necessary to win the support of the mainstream of the Christian Democrat Party, and that meant breaking the latent threat of a political alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Communist party, which had almost materialized in the 1970s and which was always lurking around the corner as a possibility. It actually did happen at the regional level, so that Communist governments came to power at the regional and local levels. There was a de facto understanding that Communists would run the city government of Rome and other municipalities while the Christian Democrats would control the National Assembly or whatever it was called, and lead the national government in alliance with the Socialists and lay parties. The Christian Democrats had fallen short of agreeing to alternate with the Communists to head the national government. But it was not out of the question that this still might happen.

In the meantime, Craxi came along and he was riding a different horse. He wanted to become prime minister himself on a Socialist, anti-Communist, pro-NATO ticket. In terms of political paradigms, this was the opposite of that of an erstwhile alliance between the Communists and the Christian Democrats. It meant getting the Christian Democrats to support him in the Parliament and turning them against the idea of a political alliance with the Communists. It also meant getting the Socialist party to look right rather than left, i.e. uniting the Socialists under Craxi and getting the Socialist Party to turn its back on its prior history of aligning with the Communists. On the labor front, this suggested to me the possibility that the Socialist minority might be split from the Communist-dominated CGIL. I thought that the best thing for me to do first was to work with the Socialists within the UIL. Now this was a small labor federation dominated by one individual, a Socialist named Giorgio Benvenuto. At one time, he had very clearly played with

the left-wing Socialists as well, but by this time he had hitched his wagon to the Craxi star and was playing the right-wing Socialist, pro-U.S. line.

So I decided to cultivate the UIL, and at the same time the Socialist minority in the CGIL, sending their leaders on exchange visits to the U.S. together with the aim of facilitating their coming more closely together. I don't mean to say that we really were going to affect the final outcome of what happened in Italy. The labor sphere wasn't strong enough to decide the overall national political game, but it could make a significant contribution. Without giving up on trying to cultivate the CISL as well, the policy I arrived at was to work with the UIL and the socialists in the CGIL, and to see whether it was possible to split the Socialists from the Communists in the CGIL. I assumed that Craxi would force the two Socialist factions in the Italian trade union movement to work more closely together anyway, and I thought we could help on the margins. So, I arranged for the head of the Socialist wing of the CGIL, Ottaviano del Turco, to meet with the AFL-CIO while on a visit to the U.S. This was the first time that this had happened and it took a little doing to arrange it.

Q: Did Irving Brown agree?

FREEMAN: Yes, Irving came around on this. In fact, I think he instinctively agreed, even though it was not his idea. Irving was an interesting character. He didn't tolerate others mucking around in what he regarded as his turf. This was the kind of thing he would have done on his own if he had thought of it, but he agreed the idea had merit and supported it. But that's not to say he trusted me in the beginning. And in fact certain things happened, which I later discovered he might have had something to do with. He played things close to the chest and did not instantly warm to people he didn't know, including for example younger staffers in the AFL-CIO, whom he immediately suspected of being members of the new Left anti-Vietnam War generation. For a long time, he held me off, even though I thought we had a great initial meeting in Washington, and I was looking forward to cooperating with him. But this was slow in coming on his part. And I have the suspicion that he may even have said something to the CISL early on which poisoned my relationship with them at the start.

But then something very interesting and drastic happened, which even today I still don't know the full meaning of. When I arrived in Rome around November, I was told that there had been an instruction to all European posts to report on this new phenomenon in Poland called *Solidarnosc* or Solidarity [in English]. Anything we could pick up anywhere around the world about Solidarity should be reported back to Washington. This made lots of sense. Anyway, shortly after I got to Rome, I discovered that Lech Walesa was coming to Rome in December to meet with the Pope. We immediately looked into this and soon I came in contact with the International Affairs Director of the UIL, a guy named Luigi Scricciolo. I can't recall now whether we looked him up or he looked us up - I believe it was the latter - but soon he and his wife were visiting us frequently in the Embassy. Both worked in the UIL. They had been to Poland and they had styled themselves as Polish experts. They had been in and out of Poland several times and they came to the Embassy to tell us about their meetings with Solidarity and plans to provide Solidarity with further support. And in the course of the meeting they told us that Walesa was coming to Rome in December or January at the invitation of the Pope and that he, Scricciolo, was the United Federation's control officer for Walesa's visit. So naturally I asked him if he

would set up a meeting for me with Walesa. He claimed that he was also making arrangements for Irving Brown to come to meet with Walesa while he was here. So I got on the phone and called Irving. He was angry when he learned that I had stumbled on to this, and refused to discuss it further.

In the end, Irving didn't come to Rome himself, but an international trade union leader of Polish origin who was close to the AFL-CIO came in his stead, and he presumably did meet with Walesa. Moreover, Scricciolo failed to arrange my meeting with Walesa, although he came to the Embassy frequently to report on what reputedly had happened during the Walesa visit. He came in to tell us everything, or at least he made it appear that he was telling us everything, and wanted us to know about it. Sometimes, he would come by the Embassy on his own, sometimes together with his wife, Paola Elia. And when they came in separately, we would sometimes get curious signals, like the wife would be in talking to us - she was an attractive woman incidentally - and all of a sudden there would be a phone call from Scricciolo, her husband, asking "Is my wife over there?" And five minutes later, he would come running in the Embassy. The UIL Headquarters was right behind the Embassy physically, so it didn't take long to come over. There may have been a pedestrian explanation for this but it appeared strange at the time.

So Walesa came to Rome, but I never got to meet with him. I was quite disappointed, although we collected information on the visit and sent that in to Washington. Walesa came to Rome to see the Pope, but the visit was hosted by the United Federation, CGIL-CISL-UIL. And as I said, Scricciolo, while he was from the UIL side, said he had been appointed control officer, or as he called it the United Federation's "security officer", for the Walesa visit. Shortly after Walesa left, Scricciolo came and said, "Look, I'm sorry. It was impossible to have Walesa meet with you, but one of his people is still here. Would you like to meet with him?" And I said, "Sure."

So shortly thereafter we had a meeting over in UIL headquarters with a guy who, I was told, was from Solidarity. I made the mistake of not bringing along my own translator for this meeting. Actually we had a secretary in our section who spoke Polish, and who had, in fact, been our political section secretary in Buenos Aires. It was a mistake not to have brought our own translator. So we allowed UIL to translate for us at this meeting, whose participants included myself, my local Italian assistant, Mario Gallotti, the Scricciolos, three or four other people, the translator provided by Scricciolo, and the Polish guest, who was a young kid in his twenties.

Q: Do you remember his name?

FREEMAN:I don't have it at hand. I would in fact like to reconstruct that name. A very serious thing happened. I got into the meeting and shortly after the pleasantries - this is his first meeting with an American official - he asked for arms for the anti-Communist underground movement in Poland. I became alarmed, of course, suspecting this was some sort of provocateur. I politely listened for a while, then told him we were not in the arms business, made some innocuous remarks, and terminated the meeting at an early opportunity.

And then about a year later we were shocked one day to learn that the Italian police had barged into the National Congress of the UIL being held in Florence, I believe, approached the podium, pulled Mr. Scricciolo down, and arrested him on the charge that he was a Bulgarian spy. This came as a tremendous shock. It was soon also alleged that he was involved in the attempt by that

Turk Agca to assassinate the Pope.

Of course this was a very serious thing for us, because Scricciolo had been in the Embassy several times. Interestingly enough, after Walesa left town and I had this meeting with the young Polish nationalist set up, we didn't see very much of Scricciolo after that. He just faded away. He didn't come around to the Embassy as much and by this time I was dealing directly with his boss Benvenuto on most matters that I had to take up with the UIL. Our conversations with the Scricciolos had been mostly debriefings of them as to what was going on in Poland and very little else. And then there was this event about a year later when he was arrested.

And so we began to reconstruct what our relationship with the Scricciolos had been. We had to answer to Washington for this of course. It wasn't clear who he was. It came out at that time that Scricciolo was from the so-called "third faction" of UIL. In its origins this was sort of a militant Trotskyite, new-left element which presumably had grown disillusioned with radicalism over time, and Benvenuto evidently had brought people like this into the UIL mainstream to provide them a home and at the same time build up the UIL's meager rolls. Benvenuto began back pedaling. He downplayed the fact that Scricciolo had been his international affairs representative by saying that the position wasn't terribly important anyway, and that he really didn't trust Scricciolo and so forth and so on. In Washington, my predecessor, Herb Baker, sent a message to the Embassy saying that he knew Scricciolo and didn't trust him. "He's from the Left." Herb said.

Of course, he was from the left, but the question was which left and how far left. Virtually all the trade union leaders of Italy were from the left. If I had refrained from meeting Italian trade unionists who called themselves "left", I would have had hardly anybody to talk to and I wouldn't be doing my job. To be sure, I should have done a better job of looking up this guy's credentials when I first met him, that's true. Having met Scricciolo shortly after my having arrived in Rome, I don't think I knew he had been a member of the so-called "Third Faction", or even what that was, until after he had been arrested. I asked the relevant Embassy section if they had any information on Scricciolo, but they claimed they did not.

Incidentally, Scricciolo looked physically like Karl Marx. We kidded around and had code names for these people. Among ourselves in the Embassy, I used to call him either Karl Marx, because of his beard, or Sad Sack, from the Joe Fitzblich character in the Little Abner cartoon, because he always seemed to have a cloud hanging over his head. Here was Karl Marx with a beard, and he had a fairly striking young (peroxide) blond for a wife. That was something we puzzled over.

Well, both were accused of being Bulgarian spies, and later there was speculation in the press that maybe she was a Russian spy instead, while he was the Bulgarian spy. In Italy the press is salacious and quick to blow stories out of all proportion on the basis of very little hard facts. But it became clear that Scricciolo had been in Bulgaria, where he may indeed have had contact with Bulgarian officials. So, it was very possible that he did have a Bulgarian connection at the same time he was International Affairs Director of UIL. And I began thinking, well, here's the guy who arranged a meeting between Irving Brown (or one of his people) and Lech Walesa. This is really bad!

Oh, incidentally, the worst part of this story for me was that the young Pole whom I had met with turned out not to be a police spy, at least not according to press or any other accounts I've seen. When these accusations about Scricciolo surfaced, it was reported in the press that this young kid had been arrested when he got back to Poland for allegedly being "a CIA agent." The meeting he had with members of the American Embassy while in Rome was cited in the press reports as the core reason for his arrest. This was entirely plausible, of course, and I felt personally responsible if that were the case. And that meant he was not the police provocateur, but very possibly it was Scricciolo or his wife who was the source from which the Polish government had learned about our meeting.

And the guy was not really from Solidarity either. He was from another political movement there, a radical Catholic nationalist Polish movement, that was particularly strong in southern Poland, but it was not Solidarity. I forget the name of that group. He was arrested, but I heard later that he had been released. When I traveled to Poland some years later, I went to the town where he came from, but couldn't find him. I heard he was alive, but I don't know what happened to him. He might even have been a police spy. Maybe the whole story was phoney. I still don't know to this day.

But with regard to Scricciolo, he was detained but never convicted. He is said to have become crazy and ended up in an insane asylum. And his wife, Paola Elia, reportedly turned evidence against him, which perhaps helped drive him insane. He had always been on the edge anyway. But who was she? The whole thing was a mystery which was never totally resolved. But it turned out that Scricciolo's cousin was connected to the Red Brigades and had been involved in the kidnaping in Italy of an American general named Dozier. It was alleged that Scricciolo had something to do with that; and it was also alleged that he had something to do with the assassination attempt on the Pope. So this was a major event that happened while I was there which of course didn't do me any good. I was in the middle of it and it colored my relationship with the Italian trade unions, at least to some degree.

Even worse, it undoubtedly colored my relationship with the Embassy, although I don't recall anyone in the Embassy actually ever acknowledging this openly to me. But my relationship to the Embassy wasn't so great to begin with. This was my first assignment as labor officer in a large American Embassy in Europe, and I discovered that the relationships were entirely different from what I had known as labor officer up to that time. As Labor Counselor I had an assistant labor attaché working for me; I also had several locals and more than one secretary; and we were on our own floor. I had been used to working in an integrated fashion as part of the political section and working both labor and politics at the same time. When I got to Rome, the Political Section tended to see the Labor Office as apart from the rest of the Political Section, even though in terms of rank I was the third counselor in the Political Section. I noticed some resistance to my serving as Acting when the Political Counselor and the Political-Defense Counselor were away. This may have been influenced by the Scricciolo fiasco, but I had the feeling that the problem was more structural and basic than that.

The Embassy saw Labor as different from Political. Defense was political but Labor was not. Or to put it another way, defense issues were an important part of US political concerns in Italy, but

labor wasn't. In Latin America we were more integrated. Once, I walked a cable up to the communications unit to get it out, and the clerk asked, "Oh, you're the Labor Counselor. You work for the Labor Department?," which was probably the worst insult you could throw at me at that time. I saw myself as a Foreign Service Officer integrated in the Political Section, but that's not how we were regarded.

Q: So the working atmosphere in the Embassy was pretty tense?

FREEMAN: Well, it was different, and I felt that I was not called in on a lot things that I should have been involved in. I was part of the larger country team, but not the smaller country team. Ambassador Gardner was full of praise for me when I first arrived, because he had his own agenda, which he thought I was going to help him advance. His agenda was to develop an accommodation to Eurocommunism, to get closer to the Italian Communists and convert them into NATO allies. This would politically legitimize them and probably even clear the way for their taking the reins of government. That was a game I didn't want to play, but I handled it in my own way. Do you want me to go into greater detail?

Q: Feel free, if you wish.

FREEMAN: Well, let's finish this picture of the Labor Counselor first. I did not have a close working relationship with the DCM. I had been used to working with the political counselor, the DCM, and the ambassador in every other post I had been to before that, because they all recognized the importance of labor. But this was Europe and here you had more layering in the embassy and an aura of super sophistication. It was an enormous American Embassy, and the DCM was not terribly interested in labor. This was the first time I had ever experienced this.

Q: Was he a career person?

FREEMAN: Yes, a career person. The Ambassador seemed more interested in labor than the DCM. This was true for Gardner's successor as well, Maxwell Raab. But the DCM didn't think labor was very interesting or important. I'm referring now to the second DCM I had at this post. This was also true of the second Political Counselor I had as immediate boss at this post. The latter thought the Labor Section was eating up too much of the resources at the disposal of the Political Section. I was asked to allow the Assistant Labor Attache to do straight out political reporting, which I permitted on an ad hoc basis, but I resisted having this position abolished and transferred outright to the main part of the Political section. Soon after I left, the Embassy moved to abolish the Assistant Labor Attaché position.

Throughout the time I was in Rome, I recognized that I was not a member of the inner circle of the Embassy and that hurt me. I tend to think the base of the problem I had was bureaucratic in nature rather than a reaction to the Scricciolo affair, but the latter undoubtedly helped to reinforce the tendency in the Embassy political section to downplay labor and the role of the Embassy's labor office. In retrospect, I recognize that I made a number of mistakes, including going to that meeting with the Pole without having taken due precautions. I particularly felt at fault if it was true that this Pole got himself punished back in Poland because of the meeting I had with him, even though if that were true, the most sensitive thing there - aside from the fact of

the meeting itself - was the line of conversation which he himself had initiated, that is the provocative request he put to me in a room full of people.

On top of that, there was the fact that I had been dealing with Scricciolo, who was accused of being a super spy and an assassin and all these other things, about which to this day I don't know the full truth. But if I had made a mistake, so had Irving Brown, because Irving had arranged the Walesa meeting with an AFL-CIO ally through Scricciolo and Irving also had some meetings of his own with Scricciolo's wife who was interested in reviewing his personal archives for a story she wanted to write.

Q: Was Irving Brown's meeting compromised as a result of Scricciolo's activities?

FREEMAN: The fact that Walesa had a meeting while he was in Rome with a representative of the international trade union movement close to the AFL-CIO, I think, did surface in the press, but nothing about the content, nor was much made about this in public, so far as I know or remember. So that's interesting.

Q: Did Scricciolo attend the meeting between the AFL-CIO representative and Walesa?

FREEMAN: I don't think so. Irving just had Scricciolo set up the meeting, but after that he would not let Scricciolo be part of it - or at least so I believe.

Q: How united was the United Federation? Did it actually coordinate policy?

FREEMAN: It strove to take common positions on issues. But my strategy was accurate in the sense that internal cleavages were beginning to take place. This division had nothing to do with us. It had to do with the fact that this rising Socialist political star named Craxi was surging to the top, drawing lots of people to him and, in so doing, shifting the tectonic plates of Italian politics. You were either for Craxi or against him, and the UIL Socialists were for him, and the CGIL Socialists were for him, and that was creating tensions to a certain degree inside the CGIL. The socialist faction within CGIL never formally split from the communist leadership but fissures were being created within the CGIL, which was exactly what I had hoped for and what I was working to take advantage of. Moreover, the United Front actually did begin formally to break up as an entity at this time. Now they're back together again; they just recently got back together again.

But for a period of years beginning at this time they did split, because the CGIL Communists were accused by the rest of the trade union movement of being too close to the political leadership of the Communist Party and not defending purely trade union interests. The division was over the *scala mobile* or wage indexation issue. There had been a wage indexation policy and the Christian Democrat dominated government went to the trade union movement and urged the unions to cooperate in structural adjustment in Italy [maintaining that there could not be one-for-one wage indexation for every percentage point increase in the cost of living; otherwise it would just contribute to another round of inflation that would ending up hurting the workers worse]. The entire trade union leadership understood that, including the Communists in the CGIL who were led by a very accomplished and popular labor leader named Luciano Lama.

But the Communist Party leadership for obvious political reasons could not accept it. Why should the Communist Party do a favor for the "quadripartite government" (PDC-PSI-PRI-PSD)? So the party wouldn't go along with it and that created tensions within the trade union movement. The Communists got blamed for holding up a social pact on the wage indexation issue, and that helped to spark divisions within CGIL and led for a while to a formal dissolution of the United Federation, CGIL-CISL-UIL, although the CGIL socialists did not split from the CGIL.

As for the Communist leadership of the CGIL, I told you earlier that the AFL-CIO did not have a problem with the Embassy's meeting with the Communists as long as it wasn't the Labor Counselor. And so I wanted my deputy, the Assistant Labor Attaché, to be the Embassy officer to undertake this, so that I could oversee this process even though I wasn't going to be the interlocutor myself. The Political Counselor or the DCM decided against it. They wanted another officer in the Political Section proper to do that.

But I insisted on being in the initial meeting with the (Communist) head of the CGIL international affairs department, when we informed him that the Embassy was prepared to open a direct dialogue with the communist faction of the CGIL. I wanted this so that the word would be spread in the CGIL and the larger Italian trade union movement that I was involved in this development, that is to avoid the impression that the Embassy Labor office was an irrelevant piece of furniture out of the picture. So we had a discreet luncheon meeting with the head of the International Department of the CGIL to announce that another officer in the Embassy was going to "handle the account" so to speak. Things have changed now, because the CGIL is in the ICFTU, and the AFL-CIO deals with them, but this was back in the early 1980s. Unfortunately, the Embassy officer talked with the CGIL representative only about national political or policy matters. The officer had too many other issues to take up besides labor, even though I fed him questions about the trade union scene before each meeting. Part of the deal was that we would get together beforehand and talk over the questions he was going to ask. But this didn't work out very well from my point of view, because we weren't getting back any useful trade union information. The Embassy political officer found the CGIL contact such a rich source of information on political and foreign policy questions that he never got around to labor issues. So I think those were the major things that happened in Italy when I was there. It was an exciting period. I enjoyed Italy very much, but I had some bureaucratic problems in the Embassy and in my second year I had the Scricciolo experience, which unfortunately cast a heavy shadow over a good part of my assignment. I had fairly good contacts, but I can't say I ever came anywhere near mastering the country as in my previous assignments. Incidentally, it was at this time that I began a reconciliation with CISL. When the Scricciolo affair broke publicly, the CISL international affairs chief named Emilio Gabaglio broke his longstanding standoffishness with me and invited me to lunch. He said that what bothered him most was that Irving had arranged a meeting with Walesa through Scricciolo at the UIL, rather than through the CISL, when it was CISL which had closer historic ties with the AFL-CIO and also CISL which had better contacts with Polish Solidarnosc than the UIL. Gabaglio, incidentally is now the Secretary General of the ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. CISL, as a Catholic trade union, particularly had good ties with the Polish Catholic intellectual, Modzelewski, who later became President of the country. Gabaglio said he felt that Irving's dealings with the UIL meant the AFL-CIO had lost confidence in CISL, but my relations with Gabaglio and with his boss, CISL secretary

general Pierre Carniti, seemed to improve after that.

Q: Wasn't there a time in the late 1940s when the US Government was helping fund CISL?

FREEMAN: Well, what you're talking about is what I implied earlier, and this is that there was a time from 1947 on until the AFL-CIO merger in 1955, and maybe beyond, when the CIO (Victor Reuther) helped a certain faction in the Italian trade union movement, the UIL, and the AFL helped another faction, the CISL. What you're asking me, I think, is whether this was done with the knowledge and support of the U.S. Government. And the answer to that has to be "yes". At one point, the lead man for carrying out AFL policy in Italy was the Embassy labor attache, ("Colonel") Tom Lane.

Q: I believe they were conduits.

FREEMAN: They were conduits, yes. That's in the record. You probably know as much about this as I. There have been quite a few Italian books about this history, although it's hard to tell how much of it is straight and how much of it exaggeration. To add to this, however, I can tell you that once I did find in my safe some old Embassy memos about rivalry between the AFL and the CIO and funding relationships which each separately maintained with their respective trade union allies in Italy, but my impression is that this was with Marshall Plan funds, i.e. European economic reconstruction funds, not something else.

Q: But on your watch, there was no direct funding?

FREEMAN: No, absolutely not. No, by that time, the Italians were on their own, and they were doing a great job of it. [laughter]. Moreover, by this time, the three Italian trade union federations had their own technical assistance cooperation programs abroad funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q: Any other highlights of your tour in Italy?

FREEMAN: None that I can think of at the moment. That's enough for now.

J. PHILLIP McLEAN
Deputy Principal Officer
Milan (1980-1983)

Mr. McLean was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and was educated at Seattle University and the University of Indiana. He entered the Foreign Service in 1962. A Latin American specialist, his service in the State Department in Washington and abroad, primarily concerned Latin American Affairs. His foreign posts were Brasilia, Edinburgh, Panama City, La Paz, Milan and Bogota, where he was Deputy Chief of Mission. In Washington Mr. McLean held positions dealing with Latin American Affairs, including that of Deputy Assistant Secretary

for South America. Mr. McLean was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

Q: You were in Milan from when to when?

McLEAN: I was in Milan from 1980 to 1983.

Q: What was the role of...? You talked about how you saw Italy in 1980 to 1983 and how Milan and our consul general fit in there.

McLEAN: I went there with very much of an economic orientation. It probably was one of the few times that I really couldn't say that I hit the ground running. The very important exception to that is my time was quite weakened at that point, but I certainly knew economic issues. But when I got there, I discovered that not even the personnel that were on the chart as being... weren't there. I had been told I was going to be a deputy principal officer, and when I got there, it was emphasized that I was really the economic political officer in charge in an economic political section and, in fact, there was no economic political section. There was one, maybe two, local employees, Italian employees. There was only one when I arrived. As it turned out, we had an inspection just as I arrived, and I sat down and did an agenda of what I thought that consulate could do with reporting time. In fact, it was rather convincing, because they then started the process to get that economic job back. Secondly, when I met with the consul general, it was quite clear that he...

Q: Who was the...

McLEAN: Chuck Johnson.

Q: Chuck Johnson.

McLEAN: He made it quite clear he considered me to be his deputy. The embassy had fixed up some system whereby the consul general was going to rate all the American officers, all the section chiefs, and they were to be reviewed by embassy personnel. It was a way that the embassy could get a hold of managing the consulate. It took me a while, but little by little I became the deputy principal officer, and I rated the people, and he, the consul general, did the reviews, and that made a big difference in terms of how people pay attention to whatever they were doing. I got that job back, and I began on this agenda of the economic and political reporting, but particularly economic reporting. The consul general was supposed to do the political reports. Both he and I really got into it an awful lot. For some reporting they would travel out to small towns, and I eventually did the same thing, go to some provincial towns and do reporting back. In political terms it was only a little more important than some of the other parts of Italy, but in economic terms, of course, it was giant. The reporting had fallen down in a series of changes that had taken place, like personnel, and it was a job to get it built back up again. One was working on just trying to get a concept of what was going on in northern Italy. Politically the country was very much in crisis, as you know. You were down in Naples. At that time it was just the year after Aldo Moro had been murdered, and there were brigades, but all that said, the economy was beginning to rebustle and things were beginning to happen, so much

of the earlier reporting I did was to try to analyze that and get out to know people, to try to describe some of small dynamic companies. One of the things I found was the degree to which these small companies, in fact, worked together. They almost worked as divisions of the same company in many ways. The associations of a company--for instance, like the metalworking area--the association of metalworking area would have a research side, they would have a marketing side, they would have a finance side which would help the small companies function as if they had a much larger scale than they did at their first site, so Italy was changing in a very positive way on the economic side. I also got to know some of the larger companies. Our consulate general overlapped with Genoa at that point. There was no consulate in Turin, and Genoa was supposed to cover consulate and political matters, and we were supposed to cover economic and commercial. As I say, that worked out very well, and I got to work with Fiat and to know them and Olivetti and some of the other firms in the region on a broader basis.

Q: What about the unions?

McLEAN: I did labor work, and in that respect I should have done more labor work throughout my time, because I think it would have helped my Italian. The problem was, of course, that when your Italian isn't up to a certain level, then you run into people who want to speak English, whereas in labor that was not a problem. But I did do some labor reporting at that time. The labor attaché, I think, came up twice during my period, and I would set up meetings with them. I had set up meetings with our attaché there and got to know some interesting folks, and it did turn out to be a useful set of contacts.

Q: Was there a problem with the communist unions and non-communist unions, and was there a problem at that time of contact with the extreme left?

McLEAN: That's right, there was, and not even the extreme left, even the moderate left. You had to dance around a little bit. I think as far left as I could go was I could meet the socialist unions within the Communist Federation, and I did that. One of them was a guy I met a number of times whose brother was a film director, but, as I say, those were good meetings, and it gave me a lot of stuff for my reporting. Some of the stuff that we were after: one is I wanted to get back from Rome the functions that had really been taken away. If there was a dumping case against Italy, the embassy would actually call the industry association in line and get the data that way. I tried to develop us that we did those things, because we had done trade cases before, and that was very useful in terms of getting to know people inside the community. I tried to get away from the reporting that had been done for 30/40 years, CERP (Comprehensive Economic Reporting Plan) reporting, which was the standard reports, very standard, boring reports that they'd been doing year after year on the textile industry and the calculator industry, using an old-fashioned name, trying to break loose of that and tried to do reporting that was more current, up to date, and to estimate the degree of change that was going on in the country. Little by little I got into things that were rather fascinating. One thing I remember, a person came up in the embassy one morning to have some first meetings with the ENI, the state energy conglomerate. The United States had always had bad relations with them going back to the '50s, and with that first opening it became just, you know... As soon as you walk in the door, you suddenly find everybody wants to talk to you. The benefits--of course, this was during the middle of the energy crisis--the benefits... I could talk about a number of common energy concerns in the United States. One of

them was the Soviet gas pipeline, and that was a big issue of the day, and it turned out that they became an enormously useful source, because they weren't just going to be a purchaser of this gas; they were also different divisions of ENI. It's hard to know in retrospect why it was true, but they felt they wanted to dump information on us. I think only Bonn which similarly was having contacts with the state, a private company, gave the type of detail that they were able to give on it. I was able to give two discussions of the types of cells, the pumps, the pressures, very technical stuff that were very much wanted to be known, not only just the strategic issues but they also wanted those other issues, and we were given them as almost a gesture of friendliness on their part. There were also issues on Libya. There was a Libyan gas pipeline that they were building, and I was regularly reporting on that. So it was an interesting area to get into. Milan is a big area of former trade with the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, so there were things like... I was trying to do some stuff--I don't know how successful I was doing it--but I was looking into switch trading, getting around some of the trade barriers and also the lack of foreign exchange in eastern Europe, talking with Fiat, doing reports on Fiat's activities in the Soviet Union. One time we got a report that there had been actual tram shipments, and I remember that, through a personal friend that I had known in a moving company, I got him to come in and sit down with a team from Washington, and we were able to actually show how there were trade diversions going on. People from the United States were shipping to companies in Italy, but the stuff had never been entered in Italy and was being put on planes immediately. In one case a plane came in for a box the size of this desk to pick up. The machine they were taking out was a machine to copy microchips, which was a very important technology at that particular time.

Q: We're talking about getting the bypassing of--what do we call that? It was based in Paris.

McLEAN: COCOM.

Q: COCOM, which was essentially to keep strategic materials and things just like that machine from going to the communist world.

McLEAN: These were the early Reagan years, the years of great confrontation and great determination on the part of the administration that they were going to toughen up on those things, and so we were able to play a role that I think was rather exceptional. There weren't others giving the type of information of any agency.

Q: Well, how could you find out information about this?

McLEAN: When you know people, you often can. You just start making telephone calls and you say, "Do you know someone who...? Take an example: I remember I read in the newspaper one morning that the Israelis had bombed a French plant in Iraq, a nuclear plant, and that was an interesting thing. In the article, if you read the article carefully, it said right next door there is a plant owned by an Italian chemical company. I was dealing with part of that chemical company on a dumping case, so they had some reason to listen to me when I picked up the phone. If I picked up the phone, they put me on to the man who was in fact the chairman of the board of the company, and I sat down with him, and I gave reams of material on not just their plant but whatever else was going on. It was one of those telegrams that was a big hit. It was right on target. But it was totally something where you talk to people. The best instrument for finding out

things was to pick up the telephone and call.

Q: One of the big issues during this 1980-1982 period was the introduction of SS20 medium-range missiles into East Germany and that area, and we were countering this with putting our Pershing and other type missiles in, and Italy, of course, was the strategic place for doing this in these early Reagan years. Did that come up in your area, or was that elsewhere?

McLEAN: No, it really did come up. It was some of the more exciting things that you do. First off, just to begin with, there was enormous change. Carter goes, Reagan comes in, a new ambassador comes in.

Q: Rabb.

McLEAN: Rabb, Max Rabb, a lovely person who used to give speeches which were just brisk and effusive affection and emotion for Italy. But here he was invited up to talk to the chamber of commerce, which I don't think was his basic style, so I sat down and I said to Rabb, "Could I give you a draft of the type of thing that I expect these people want to hear?" because the chamber of commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Milan, is a very strong institution, one of the largest in the world, and still is. So I sat down, and I took one of Reagan's speeches, probably his first speech to the Congress, and I tried to put in the Rabbisms, but I still had difficulty with Reagan and what he was saying. How am I going to write this just to copy what Reagan was saying and just rewrite it. That's what I did, and sent it down. Well, that was Rabb's speech. It was handed out and published as what he said, so that was what he said. But that was quite a different change of what the United States is all about. As you say, one of the big issues, by the way, is this issue of the SS...

Q: SS20, Soviet SS.

McLEAN: SS20s, and the debate they had all over Europe. One day, a Saturday, there was a great demonstration with everyone there, and I remember reporting on it as it went along. Saturday I was in the consulate, and the consulate was up on the seventh floor of the only skyscraper in the town. I remember the embassy calling me and saying, "Are they there? The radio is saying that they're parading in front of the consulate. Are they?" I said, "No, there's nobody up there." There was a big square, a long area which was basically a wide, super-wide, avenue from the train station down into the center of town, and we were along the side of that, and I said, "No, there's not a sign, not a sign anywhere," and then I said, "Oh, Jesus, there they are," and it was one of the most impressive things, 120,000 people marching in a very file by file. They came around the corner and started to march right past us. It was a very impressive thing, and later that day they had the major event. I did reporting in that period of other events that were taking place in some of the organizations and the PCIs (Italian Communist Party), the Communist Party's attempts to make much of that. So it was an interesting part of what was going on. Of course, all of this is against a background of a lot of tension in the country. When I first got there, I discovered that again, once again, our reporting in Milan had fallen to such a point that when a man was assassinated in a subway station just a few blocks away from where we were, the embassy called up and said, "We're going to report on this," and I said, "No, you shouldn't report on it. We should report on this, Milan should report on this." So we began then

to develop the capability to do this, and I made contacts with the anti-terrorism police, and along the way I got a concept that, trying to get something more on that, I knew I couldn't do the secret-type reporting or try to make contact with the terrorists themselves, but what I could do was go to the judges who were interviewing these people. So I developed sort of contacts in which I was getting information from the judges who were interviewing the terrorists. It came to be enormously useful in the Dozier kidnapping, because I was there talking with all...

Q: He was a brigadier general, an Army brigadier general?

McLEAN: He was a brigadier general, and he was kidnapped in Verona, which was in our consular district. It's the headquarters of the NATO land forces command in southern Europe, and we got some indication that there plans afoot to do something. In fact, one of the things I had done in this period was with the consul general. The consul general always had a meeting with the businessmen; he would select seven or eight businessmen for a meeting in his office. And we began to introduce me into these meetings and also into the chamber of commerce discussions about protection for Americans, security protection, and how we would do it and how they should be done. Well, Dozier was kidnapped, and I was able to get a flow of information going to them, such that somewhere in that period when he was still being held, the family communicated to me. Dealing with the police was sometimes difficult, because many were Sicilian and the accent was totally different, and I remember developing a technique of hearing what they say. If you took notes, they would clam up, but if you listen to what they say, and then what I would do is dictate back to them in my Italian, which was getting better, so that they would actually be able to correct if I got it wrong what they were saying, they would do this. But Dozier was very important, because it showed that in fact our security problems were real. The safe house was just three blocks down from my apartment. The notes were put in trash cans and others. Somewhere in that period--I can't remember whether it was before or after Dozier or during Dozier--there was a bomb left at the consulate itself but it didn't go off.

Q: What was your analysis of what were these kidnappings, assassinations, threats about?

McLEAN: Well, you know, Italy was going through an almost rapid change. In fact, as I was leaving Washington to go to Italy, the agricultural specialist at the Commission office had a going-away party for me and invited the UNSA, the Italian news agency. I remember very dramatically he talked to me about how 20 years before then Italians were basically in the mode of the Don Camille movies or books...

Q: It was a series of books about...

McLEAN: The priest who was a strong person in the community against the communist mayor, and it's a very closed little society. Italy was a very uptight society according to this journalist, and yet now they are out doing nude bathing. That's too big a change and caused a little confusion inside the country. That was the impression that I had too, that the left was really becoming very inarticulate, and they articulated themselves through terror rather than through problematic basis. What was interesting about the Dozier thing was the degree to which, once Dozier was released--and they found him, contrary to some of the popular things written, they found him by a series of plea bargains, probably some pretty heavy questioning, but I had no

evidence that torture was being used, but they did have plea bargaining in which they were bargaining with people until they got to the people who were pointing out where Dozier was. But in the subsequent months, year, the red brigades came apart. I remember Chief Adigos, telling me that one of the most awesome things was they were coming apart at the top. Each cell was breaking by its leader. The leader would break, and he would then accuse everyone else in that cell, and down and down it would go. It was a very impressive unrolling of what was going on. During this period, of course, one of the questions was what security would do for you. I, in fact, tried... I didn't have protection. The consul general went around with a body guard with a briefcase with a Uzi inside, but for substantial periods when I was in charge myself, they would try to put this man on me, and I just refused because I didn't want the attention of raising my profile and then they'd be gone and I'd be by myself, so I would go "Don't do that." And I would practice very much what I was teaching: vary your routes and your times, and change the way you looked to the world. I did do a lot of thinking about it at that time and putting a lot of it into practice with the consulate and the American community as a whole at that time. We became a source of information and counseling to the American community, a piece of the large American business community.

Q: From my experience, really you're talking almost about a different world than the one I saw. I was Consul General in Naples from 1979 to 1981. What about industry, because where I was, for example, in Naples there was not a single registered glove factory, and yet it was the glove factory capital of the world--the gray market, sort of unofficial, non-taxpaying economy was just tremendous. But Milano, I take it, was different.

McLEAN: Well, I think somewhat different, because they certainly were established and they were very visible and were forces in the society. They weren't all playing by the rules, by any means, and some of the industry structure was due to trying to structure a way around being subject to certain laws or taxes. I think there were various scales. If you were a certain size, you had to pay more taxes or you came under certain safety regulations or whatever it was, and so a firm would be broken in two, put in two different places but would be actually one firm. So that was going on. The Italy of the north, of course, had this great sense of disdain for the south. A man from your staff came up and talked me into to going over to Mediobanca, this great center of world finance, this very impressive place. We walked in and were treated with a type of respect I hadn't had in a long time, and a man, number two in the organization, came in and saw us. We discussed other matters, and I sprang this question, "What was the Italian banking community doing for the south?" "For the south charity, investment never." It was their very strong view of things.

Q: Did Turin play a role?

McLEAN: I'm sure it did play a role, but it's not one that we watched greatly. In that period one of my contacts was General Dalla Chiesa, who was the head of the Carabinieri (police), and I used to take people by to see him. One of the things he said to me one time when I brought Ambassador Rabb in to see him, he emphasized to me the need of still trying to be normal in the face of all these things, and he was talking specifically about the Red Brigade. He would get in his car on a Saturday and go with a miniature Fiat and drive the streets, and people would recognize him, and he felt that was very necessary to give a sense of normality. He was then

transferred to Sicily, to Palermo, to take on the criminal organizations. Of course, as you know, what happened was he was going down to the kiosk to read the newspaper one morning, he was assassinated. His wife, of course, died, his young wife died with him, and we had the task of consoling her father. Her father was always coming in and somehow trying to get meaning out of all this by learning what the rest of the world was reporting.

Q: I have to say that I found that one of... At a certain point I was brought up as Episcopalian, but I could have gone through the Catholic mass in Italian very well. I kept going to memorial masses of people who were killed. You know the train station bomb; was that in Milano or Bologna?

McLEAN: That was in Bologna.

Q: Bologna. And I mean we had all sorts of other ones, and there was always a solemn high mass when these happened, and there we were.

McLEAN: As I said, the orientation in the north was more political than Bologna. We still don't know for sure today, though some people are now saying that it was the Libyans, but it always had more of a political cast.

Q: That was supposedly a rightist bomb.

McLEAN: It was supposed to be a rightist, but the more recent reporting is that it was moved in this other direction, and they were saying Libya was part of it. But there was always the red against the black. But clearly there was corruption, and many of the people that I knew at that time, including the man who was the head of the Socialist Party and later became mayor, were right at the heart of the clean-up of what took place. And Berlusconi, I knew Berlusconi as a rising rich guy.

Q: Was there TV or media?

McLEAN: You're taking Canal Cinco, Channel Five, the first private television station, taking the money out of it and real estate. Of course, he's, one, a significant Italian political leader now, but he's still suffering from the problem that these very same judges have dug out. But it's not the visible Mafia, the feeling of the Mafia.

Q: You had been working on the European Union. How did you find the attraction towards the European Community, I mean where it really counted and that would be the business community, and Milano? Was this taking hold, or how would you sense the attitude?

McLEAN: I would say it very much was taking hold. Many of the northern Italians who despised the south, and the south then included Rome, would in many ways say our true capital was in Brussels, looking in that direction. You have to remember Milan is about the same distance from Paris as it is to Rome. Physically it's removed, but also the whole concept. I remember going to agricultural fairs in Verona, following up on my interest in agricultural and economics questions. It was the community that supported them and the community that kept things going. I remember

one Senator telling me that the only way to keep the *contadine*, poor peasants, down was to make sure that we gave them lots of money, but this was all European money. I thought it was a little strange, but maybe in fact when you think about what went on in Yugoslavia.

Q: You went to the Yugoslav border and all that, didn't you?

McLEAN: No, we went only to just short of Venice.

Q: Oh, yes.

McLEAN: So we didn't go all the way over there. In fact, I'd never been beyond Venice.

Q: I was wondering whether you were picking up any... Did you have the Brenner Pass and that sort of thing?

McLEAN: Did have the Brenner Pass, and when I finally got a junior officer, a relatively junior officer, to come and be my economic assistant, he was a German speaker, so he went on to there. I regret in some ways that I didn't go myself.

Q: I was just wondering whether that German separatism..., because whereas the northern Italians had gone to the south, I guess the German speakers looked down on the northern Italians.

McLEAN: That's correct, and I didn't do that reporting myself.

Q: How about Giovanni Agnelli? Because he was sort of both a jetsetter and a mover and dealer and almost bigger than life, and I was wondering whether you found dealing with him--you had a Fiat, I guess.

McLEAN: I in fact never dealt with Gianni Agnelli directly, but I dealt with one of his relatives who was in charge of the international side of Fiat. You had to dance around the General a little bit, but we didn't do the socializing so much with the Fiat crowd, but we did do a lot of contact with them on the economic side. And it came in indirectly when, for instance, Rabb, Ambassador Rabb, made a trip to Turin and we set it up. I never met Agnelli. I did meet the head of Olivetti at the time. I set up trips, and I did more the economic side of those trips. When we had a Congressional visit, the Agnellis would attract people to come in. I remember often they never could understand why they were there, but they somehow knew they should go there. It came to the point where I would wire briefing papers to them ahead of time so they would know why they were going

Q: Even when I was there, Turin was open but it was sort of Agnelli's.

McLEAN: Post office.

Q: ...post office or what have you.

McLEAN: It didn't really make any sense. I think when they saw that they opened a super-small consulate, they saw that that was not going to happen. Closing consulates was in the works. One of the other things I may mention to you is a fascinating aspect of work there was the fall of the Banco Ambrosiano.

Q: Could you explain what this was?

McLEAN: The Banco Ambrosiano was a traditional large bank centered in Milan, but over the years it had become very close to the Vatican, so its financial problems began to be a major problem, and it got also involved in this P2 congress, which was a Masonic lodge with ties through Italy and down to Argentina, and all the obscurities of that. It was a very hard story to get into and tell. In fact, one of my first political-type reports I did there was, in fact, to talk about Rome. A major Italian newspaper, had gotten involved in this and suffered deterioration because of this politicalization. Roberto Calvi eventually went to jail, and then he came out for a short moment and then he disappeared, and he shows up one morning and picked up a newspaper, and it says, Calvi was found dead hanging under Blackfriar's Bridge in London. It just turned out that day I was just finishing a report. So I began the telegram, I rewrote the introduction, and said, "This morning Roberto Calvi figuratively and in fact was found at the end of a rope." I think I changed that, and the report went out directly.

Q: But you write these things, and then you change them to make them a little more palatable.

McLEAN: Basically was the story of how this had played out, this Banco Ambrosiano, and I felt pretty proud of that reporting even though I'm not a great financial expert, but I developed a wide range of contacts. Fifteen U.S. banks had come into Milan in those previous years, and each one would always come and stop at the consulate general, and I'd get to know them at the U.S. Chamber. So I think we had a pretty good bead on it, and I stayed in close contact with our treasury attaché in Rome. They were in fact very pleased that this happened during the summer when they were a little short handed, so I did much of the major reporting on that event. Church was tarnished by it. Church had moved in and out of Italy without problems, and it was clear that we'd get a better rate of return if you're involved with something like Banco Ambrosiano. They probably were not aware that the reason they were getting the rates of return was because when you're legal, you usually just get a better rate. Part of this was this P2 connection, which was partly described in short words here, but again one of the interesting people I had met and gotten to know up there, had come in to see me and established himself as my contact, was a former Hungarian ambassador, Joseph Zoll. He had been the Hungarian ambassador to Rome at the time of the negotiation of Broconsenti, and somebody, C. L. Sulzberger, had recorded his many contacts with him. He was their correspondent. He was a very interesting man, he and his wife, but poor Joseph was always getting himself in trouble in one way or another. One, he was found to be a member of P2 and gave me a lot of information...

Q: It's interesting that a bank that's used by the Vatican and you have a Masonic group which is essentially kind of anti-Catholic, although I think that has gone back in the good old days of Napoleon and was considered pretty daring.

McLEAN: Trying to parse all of those things was a hard job. Zoll was always somebody I still

stay in contact with, a fascinating individual, likes Americans, didn't like living in the United States. So he ended up out there and he was very useful to me introducing me to people on the left in Panorama magazine and others, very useful. But I also, through him, made contact with people in Hungary who would come down to visit him. In fact, on one occasion I set up meetings for young dissidents coming out of Hungary at that point to meet with their consulate in Munich. So the consulate was a fascinating place as a reporting vehicle for the U.S. government.

Q: I was wondering whether you had any of the same reaction that I had. I was not an Italian speaker. I was Consul General in Athens. But I came there and started looking at the Italian political scene, especially the scene through the south, and we'd get these requests, you know, "How is the latest permutation within Rome in the political circles. .203 percent has moved over to here or there," and all. I found when I tried to ask around in Naples, they kind of said, "Well, we really didn't know it and we really don't care." But it seemed to me that our embassy got caught up in this minuet of Italian politics at the time. I think it's changed now, but in that time and for 40 years it had been essentially the same minuet.

McLEAN: I totally agree with you. You're right on. It's almost a point that I would make totally myself. One of the last big reports that I did, by the time of my ending, I started doing more political reporting. I had arrived in Italy with some knowledge of Italian politics. I for many years had subscribed to a magazine called The Reporter, which was a political magazine. It was edited by a man who was of Italian origin, and they had more and more, a lot, of Italian coverage. But it still was a terribly confusing place, and as you say, the consulates had this great history of going out and doing all this micro-political reporting, which I was encouraged to do but frankly didn't do because I had gone to some other broader economic themes that I wanted to play. But by the end we were coming up to national election, and I stayed one more day so I would be there just the day before the election and do one last report of what was going on. In fact, I made an estimate. The only thing wrong with my estimate was that the number estimate I gave was very much praised that I did that. The only trouble is my totals didn't add up to 100. I had done a report a month or six weeks before the election to one of the newsmakers, and I always have to remember Milan was really the center of so much publishing and information, and he had basically given me a line, which I added to and again got some good marks on what I basically started talking. The point you're making is that the parties were losing their ideological fervor and importance, and all of this measuring small changes of numbers didn't make the difference that it used to make. That was an important message to get across. What I didn't get and didn't identify at the time was the degree to which the loss of that ideology was causing the political systems coming apart to some degree, and eventually with the fall of the Soviet Union, it really gets totally restructured, which, of course, I didn't have a clue about.

Q: One of the things too, I noted that there really was an Italian corps in the Foreign Service. I had people down there who were married to Italians who were on their third or fourth tour, not terribly effective people frankly, but they liked Italy.

McLEAN: Actually in the notes that I made for this thing, my first words up here at the top, "Breaking into the Italian team."

Q: Oh, you really feel outside.

McLEAN: It was just exactly what you're saying, this sense that I was an outsider. The one thing, of course, I brought was a lot of in-depth knowledge about the economic issues, so nobody would argue with me about those issues, but I really felt like a rank amateur. Of course, it fits in with Italy itself. Your Italian corps is going to be like Italy naturally. The Italians love to put curlicues on everything to make things more complicated. That was the way the Italian team always was. "You couldn't possibly understand Italy, because this is your first tour," and I wasn't really encouraged to want to go back, though I thought this was a very successful tour and went very well. One thing that wasn't as successful was that I hadn't learned yet how to write my own evaluation, which would have helped me in later years in my career when no one would write it if I didn't write it. I discovered the glories of writing your own performance report, but at that time I don't think, I mean I think I did a very good job in this particular assignment.

DALE M. POVENMIRE
Counselor for Labor Affairs
Rome (1980-1983)

Dale M. Povenmire was born in Ohio on June 6, 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from Baldwin-Wallace College and a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Mr. Povenmire's Foreign Service career included positions in Santiago, Zanzibar, Asuncion, Oporto, Caracas, Lisbon, and Sao Paulo. This interview was conducted by Morris Weisz on January 29, 1994.

Q: What grade were you?

POVENMIRE: I made the Senior Foreign Service in 1982.

Q: You followed who?

POVENMIRE: I followed Tony Freeman. I also followed Tony into Sao Paulo.

Q: At that time what was the labor, political, and economic situation in Italy?

POVENMIRE: The issue upon my arrival was the "scala mobile," an automatic increase in the basic wages linked to the cost of living. It is very similar to what you have in Brazil even today because inflation is built into the system. The communist-led CGIL labor confederation supported the position that the automatic cost of living increases should be perpetuated. Italy's politically weak coalition government was prepared to go along with that position. It was only the Christian Democratic CISL and the predominantly Socialist UIL labor confederations which opposed the automatic increases. For trade union confederations to oppose automatic cost of living increases on principle is one, uncommon; two, requires courage; and three, is an uphill battle. Indeed, in a closely fought national referendum they were ultimately successful in defeating the position of the CGIL. It seemed an unlikely decision but one which showed a remarkable degree of political maturity in Italy.

Q: At this stage the CGIL was not as pro-communist as it was in earlier times.

POVENMIRE: The CGIL had moderated quite a bit although at times they would come out on issues like Vietnam and missiles for NATO. Between one thing and another the CGIL would still take politically unfriendly positions. It was always a question as to whether the CGIL's moderation was a tactical maneuver to garner wider support. I always believed, for example, that if the Portuguese Communist Party had been less militantly hard-line, it would have been more successful in its effort to subvert democracy there.

Q: Togliatti was still living?

POVENMIRE: I don't believe that he was. Luciano Lama was the leader of the CGIL.

Q: Was he oriented toward Euro-communism?

POVENMIRE: Yes, he was a Euro-communist. I attended a speech that he made to a group of foreign labor attachés. At certain points in the speech he would look at me and talk positively about Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt. He had his facts about them right, too. He was a very sophisticated person. I recall one of our Foreign Service officers, a woman, who commented on Lama's sex appeal.

Q: At that point the CGIL was trying to earn recognition in Europe.

POVENMIRE: Not only in Europe but they were also seeking some signs of recognition from the U.S. The CGIL had a majority of communists and a minority of socialist members. The secretary general was normally a Communist Party member, and the deputy secretary general, a Socialist.

Q: From the Nenni wing of the Socialist Party. Was there a split among the Socialists between the Nenni group and the UIL-type people?

POVENMIRE: The two groups were not labeled that way when I was there but I would accept that distinction. There was a definite split, but not a great deal of antagonism, between the two factions.

Q: You see Nenni was not trusted by any of the Social Democratic types that I knew because of this history.

POVENMIRE: You had the UIL, with the bulk of the socialist and some of the more centrist unions, under Secretary General Benvenuto. And the Christian Democratic CISL, which was the second most powerful of the three confederations. U.S. policy at that time was still to shun the CGIL and have contacts only with the two democratic confederations, even though the socialist elements within the CGIL were beginning to stake out positions at variance with those of the communists. We still felt somewhat constrained by all the of history of U.S.-Italian relations over the years.

We did take one new departure. For the first time we sent a leading member of the CGIL, we invited the leader of the socialist faction of the CGIL, to the U.S. on a leader grant. The AFL-CIO did not object although they did not arrange his program. Ottaviano del Turco was invited and had a good trip. He particularly wanted to visit Warren, Ohio, where many people from his Abruzzi village had emigrated to work in the steel mills.

Q: Did any of the individual unions in the United States host him in spite of the anti-hosting position of the AFL-CIO's international office?

POVENMIRE: I would need to check the record on that, Morrie. He had a good visit. It was difficult to arrange. On the other hand, I think we found people within the trade union movement to receive him.

Q: In the Amalgamated possibly but not the ILG. Were you criticized?

POVENMIRE: There was at that time another factor which possibly made it easier. There was a discernible tendency among some within the Socialist faction of the CGIL to pull out of that confederation. There was the potential for a split and that was a consideration.

Q: As between two alternatives, one, that we were not going to host anybody from that organization because of its connections with the Comintern -- which may or may not be deteriorating. Or another possibility, that if there is a smidgen of a chance of encouraging a breakaway group from the CGIL, we should do all that we can to encourage it. If we are nice to them maybe they will either quit or be thrown out.

POVENMIRE: Something like that. On the other hand, it was not without risk. It was all out in the open and every faction would try to spin the invitation to their own advantage.

Q: Do I gather you initiated this?

POVENMIRE: I did.

Q: O.K., good. It turned out well, I gather?

POVENMIRE: I think it turned out well on balance.

Q: How much of that new approach could be attributed politically to the Democratic Party approach, the liberal, academic views of Ambassador Gardner, the predecessor of Ambassador Rabb?

POVENMIRE: Gardner had left before I arrived and a new team was on board. I don't think his influence carried over. Max Rabb was receptive to proposals put to him. I don't think he came with any set ideological fix. He was very pragmatic.

Q: Was he a businessman?

POVENMIRE: Rabb was a political leader from New York. He was the first heavyweight to introduce Ronald Reagan to the New York establishment.

Q: Wall Street lawyer, wasn't he, and very active in the Jewish community?

POVENMIRE: That's right.

Q: His receptive nature is interesting in light of other things which happened all over the world with the Republican regime. Here, because of his good contacts with President Reagan he could go further in changing policy than others.

POVENMIRE: Another aspect of our time in Rome was the continuing terrorist threat. Marilyn was very much involved with helping the American victims, 15 wounded and six killed, of the Palestinian attack on TWA at Rome's Fiumicino Airport. There were also the Red Brigades. Of the six people wounded or killed by the Red Brigades during our stay in Rome, I had direct or passing contact with four.

Q: Did you have to take personal precautions?

POVENMIRE: No more than anyone else at the Embassy. One of the victims was the chairman of the Italian Senate committee on labor affairs, a regular contact, who was "kneecapped." One who was killed was a professor of labor relations, whose wife was a American citizen. A third who died was an American Foreign Service Officer on detail to an international organization. It certainly did not influence policy but it made life unnecessarily exciting.

Another aspect about my work in Rome is that I think I felt more constrained than at any other post. There was a lot of baggage from the past. Anyone having labor contacts with the American Embassy was certainly aware of this and sensitive to the connotations. We had visits from various American trade unionists, some of whom had contacts in the past with their Italian counterparts.

Q: A lot of history had gone before as I'm sure you know. To what degree did that impact on your work in the labor field? What comments were made by Italian labor or business people about earlier American labor efforts?

POVENMIRE: Not too many, really. The relationship was pretty good. I think that everybody recognized that Italy had been an ideological battleground in the Cold War. The Italians were politically sophisticated and recognized that they had been sought after by both sides.

Q: And even played one side against the other on occasion.

POVENMIRE: Well, you might say so. I couldn't possibly comment.

FREDERICK (TED) G. MASON, JR.
Deputy Cultural Affairs Officer
Rome (1981)

Frederick G. Mason, Jr. was born on May 25, 1926 on Connecticut. He received his AB from Yale University in 1948 and served in the US Army from 1944 to 1946. His career has included positions in Paris, Saigon, and Rome. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

MASON: By that time, I had known for six months that I would go to Rome as Deputy Cultural Affairs Officer. I had some trepidation about that. I had never been assigned as a Cultural Affairs Officer anywhere, nor had I ever had a Washington tour with USIA. I was still making mistakes about which part of the Agency did what, I had never had the basic orientation that I should have had. Nevertheless, foolishly I considered it a "stretch" assignment, thinking, "I must have done something right to be given a job where my talents can be put to the best use and help me to learn something." It was more than a disappointment. In Rome, I was expected to jump into the job and perform professionally without a day of on-the-job training. I was given no help, and because of disagreements, I left after nine months and returned to Washington and the television service. Thus began my first Washington tour as part of the television service, which was in the Patrick Henry Building on Seventh Street. This was good training, and being a lifelong writer and having been in the State Department in media services, it was a job I enjoyed. I was assigned to get coverage and VCRs for the desk officers of various countries in the Middle East and Africa. I was ready to retire and might even have retired if I had finished my tour in Rome. But this was better.

HERMAN REBHAN
General Secretary, International Metalworkers Federation
Washington, DC (1981)

Herman Rebham was born in Poland and raised in Germany. He came with his family to the United States in 1938 and settled in Cleveland, Ohio. After working in auto manufacturing plants in the Midwest, he became Administrative Assistant to United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, and dealt with domestic and international labor matters throughout his career. In 1972 he became the United Auto Workers Director of International Affairs in Washington, D.C. Mr. Rebham died in 2006. Mr. Rebham was interviewed by James F. Shea and Don R. Kienzle in 1995.

Shea: Herman, when did you take the Italians back?

REBHAN: Oh, the Italians! Let's talk about them. The Italians were a peculiar bunch of unionists to start with. First of all, they were for Benedict [during the election campaign for the IMF Secretary Generalship]. Then they wanted a special status in the IMF, because they were going

to unify the three [labor unions/federations including] the Communists, and since we didn't accept Communists, it was a big issue. So they withdrew from the IMF.

Kienzle: Now which federations were in the IMF?

REBHAN: The Socialists and the Christian Democrats. The Communists, the FIOM (Federazione Italiana Operai Metal-Meccanici), were not. Then there was this business of "unification" in Italy that went on for all these years with the three confederations, but the metal workers were really very close to unity with the initials F.L.M.

Shea: They were engaged in joint collective bargaining.

REBHAN: Joint collective bargaining. It was a typical Italian jerry-built operation. They were unified, and they weren't unified. They still are that way. So they withdrew from the IMF. Some people said that we ought to give them special status. I said, "No. No. We have rules in the IMF. If they want to come back, they will have to accept the rules." We had meetings with them from time to time about this. They went on, and they said, "We got to have a 'special arrangement' outside the rules." I said, "No. No. That doesn't go." The Swedes wanted to give them special status and so on, and I said, "No." Then we let them come to some of our meetings, like the Central Committee meetings, but they had no vote. One day a guy from the Christians came [to me]. His name was Bentivoli. He was one of the General Secretaries of the F.L.M.. The Christians were worse than the CP actually on a lot of questions. The Communists had more finesse. They knew when not to raise issues like the PLO, and other things dealing with the Soviet Union and so on.

So one day we had a Central Committee meeting in Vienna, and Bentivoli said that he wanted to talk. I said, "Sure. After everybody else talks, you can talk." The first thing I did when the Italians withdrew was to eliminate the Italian translation. We were not going to have Italian translation if we didn't have any Italian speaking members. They immediately didn't like that. So he said, "Well, there's no Italian [translation]. I said, "I'll tell you what. We have somebody in the Secretariat who is a Swiss-Italian. You give [your statement] to her in Italian, and she will translate it into French and the interpreters will do it in French." So he did this, and this woman came to me and said, "Do you know what he wants to say, Herman?" I said, "No." [She replied], "He's criticizing the IMF on Spain." I said, "No. That doesn't go. This is our hall. This is our meeting. We paid for this hall. If he's a member, he can criticize the IMF all he wants, but if he's not member, he can't criticize the IMF [here]." This Italian got furious. He went to Loderer. I said, "No. That doesn't go. No matter if you have three million members or thirty members. If you are a member of the IMF, you can say anything you want. But if you are a guest, you are not going to insult us." He was going to criticize our policy in Spain, because they were dealing with the Christian unions at that time. They were horsing around, which later didn't amount to anything. I said, "No. No."

Finally, when we had the [IMF] congress in the United States in 1981, they joined, and they immediately wanted to get on the Executive Committee. I said, "No. No. You have to wait a little bit to get on the Executive Committee." They got on the Executive Committee at the next congress. That was the Italians.

Kienzle: How did the AFL-CIO react to the Italians reentering the IMF?

REBHAN: I think it didn't amount to anything anymore, because the Italians came in under a unified thing. In the FLM, the Communist Party, Socialist were in.

Shea: How about the Italian communists after [the merger]?

REBHAN: They were mild. They were pussycats. You know what they did? Galli was their representative. He was head of the unified metalworkers (F.L.M.) for a while, and he came to Executive Committee meetings. Sometimes either on the question of Israel or on the question of some cooperation or something, he would make a speech for the record, but he wouldn't argue. We integrated them; we assimilated them. They couldn't do much in a big organization like the IMF. I know this happened in the UAW when we finally merged many years later with the FE (Farm Equipment Workers Union). These members from FE came into the UAW and that was wonderful for the rank and file especially. It was a democratic union. You could do things. When the FE was run by the Communist Party. [members] couldn't raise their heads unless [it was sanctioned]. I had very few problems with the Italians. Among the Italians I had more problems with the Christians than I did with [the Communists]. [They Christians] were always out in left field. They had to be more radical than the others.

Shea: Yes, they had a left wing group, especially from Turin. They were much further to the left than the Communists there.

REBHAN: In Fiat the Communists had more [members] than the Christians.

Shea: My understanding was they were pussycats there too in Fiat.

REBHAN: Yes, Fiat was really a closed corporation.

Kienzle: Are there any more items from your [prepared] outline that you would like to highlight?

REBHAN: No, I think that's about it.

JOHN HURD WILLETT
Political Officer
Rome (1981-1984)

John Hurd Willett was born in Northampton, Massachusetts. He attended Kenyon College and served in the Peace Corps in Turkey. He entered the Foreign Service in 1971, wherein he served in countries including Botswana, Tunisia, France, Italy, and Morocco. He was interviewed by Richard Jackson on December 21,

1998.

Q: Well, John, before we move you on to Rome, is there anything we haven't touched on in USUN, and if not, how did the assignment come about in Rome and how was the transition?

WILLETT: The assignment came about because an opening occurred unexpectedly. Kathy Shirley, the lady handling foreign affairs in the Rome Political Section □ □ was assigned somewhere else, I think as DCM, and her position opened up. I spoke Italian, first, because my mother was of Italian origin and, secondly, because I'd studied and worked in Italy. At the same time, my wife and I had to confront the problem of all Foreign Service couples in which both spouses work (and it gets even more complicated when one of them is not Foreign Service). Somebody has to give way. We were still young then and had not yet had our first child, so the idea of my leaving for Rome and Chantal's following me later was something we could envisage.

Q: She had already her career in banking.

WILLETT: Yes. She was starting out in banking, and to resign after less than three years in her bank would have been a bad move. So we agreed she would stay on for a fourth year and that she would complete her MBA at New York University, which the bank was paying for. I went off to Rome alone in January of 1981, I believe it was, filled with joy at returning to a city I loved, but sad to be leaving my wife back in New York. We got to see one another fairly regularly, which meant once every three months. That was the first of our numerous separations in the course of the next 15 years, nine of which we lived apart.

I arrived in Rome and Max Rabb, whose daughter had roomed with my younger sister at Smith and whom my father had known on Wall Street, was named ambassador. By sheer coincidence I could look forward to working for an old family friend. In Trastevere, one of the old quarters of Rome, I bought a sixth floor walk-up and a bicycle, and jumped into the job. I had the entire foreign affairs dossier, which meant that virtually every day I went to the *Farnesina*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lodged in the former headquarters of the Fascist Party. As you cross the bridge to approach the building, you'll see an enormous obelisk with the words *MUSSOLINI DUX* engraved on it. Every day, I traveled to the MFA, dutifully made the four or five demarches in my briefcase and returned to the Via Veneto to draft the reporting cables. This was in addition to regular staff meetings with my Embassy colleagues, encounters with other diplomats, going to Italian think tanks, etc. The ambiance in the Embassy was good; I loved the city and the Romans. In short, it turned out to be an enriching time.

Q: And of course, Italian politics is always turbulent. There must have been changes of government and changes of foreign policy positions that you were involved in.

WILLETT: I arrived in Italy in the wake of the Aldo Moro murder, and the national mood was grim. The Embassy was in a state of constant high alert, which in view of the General Dozier case proved to be worthwhile. Italian politics are still in permanent crisis. The word *crisi* doesn't mean the same thing in Italian as in English. Keep in mind that in an Italian airport -- where the French put *correspondance* to indicate passage from one airplane to another -- the Italians have *coincidenza*, "coincidence." That's what much of the country is about; politics is a rough-and-

tumble thing. Now we've learned that many of those people -- Bettino Craxi and then foreign minister, Andreotti, and others -- were up to their ears in high crime, if not assassinations, murder-for-hire things. While I was there, the Banco Ambrosiano scandal erupted. Roberto Calvi, the Vatican's banker, was found hanging under a bridge in London, and there was Monsignor Marcinkus, a sinister American who advised the Pope on financial affairs. The whole country seethed with corruption. There were a lot of murders. I mentioned the General Dozier case, the kidnaping of a U.S. NATO general.

Q: In the north of Italy, was he? Maybe Verona or someplace?

WILLETT: I think that was it. He did something he'd been warned against: opening the front door without first ascertaining who was there. The Red Brigades immediately trussed him up and trundled him away. The U.S. Government tried everything to find him, working closely with the Italians. Our Political Section was turned into a communications center, our offices taken over by special forces people who came in with all sorts of sophisticated equipment. At one point a clairvoyant arrived with a message something like, "He is in a farmhouse on a hill in Tuscany with three windows facing south. The third window is open." *Carabinieri* immediately fanned out across the hills of Tuscany looking for a site that matched this description. Of course they found nothing. Dozier was eventually rescued in a brilliant operation by Italian police forces masquerading as garbage collectors. Absolutely brilliant. They captured the whole gang without injuring anyone, in a very deft maneuver. Dozier returned to the United States, and that was the end of it.

Q: He had been somewhat mistreated, is that not so?

WILLETT: Yes, he was mistreated, but he was okay.

Q: These were the so-called "Brigate Rosse."

WILLETT: The *Brigate Rosse*, a nasty collection of people.

Q: And they were at that time linked perhaps to the Bader Meinhof in Germany and part of the continentwide radical fringe?

WILLETT: Yes, the *Röte Armee Faktion* and the *Brigades rouges* in France. I think they were all linked more or less loosely, but the center of power seemed to be in Italy, where some university professors were declared members of the Red Brigades. Their theory was, "We'll make things so bad they'll have to impose a police state. The people will resent this and bring down the government." What the French call "*la politique du pire*:" make things as bad as you can because then, from our point of view, they can only get better. The Italians are a resilient people and they weathered this storm, but it was a rough period. One American with an aid organization was killed, do you remember? They came up behind him in his so-called bulletproof car and fired machine guns at the rear window until it gave way under the impact.

Q: This was in Rome.

WILLETT: I believe so. I wrote a brief elegy for the man that Max Rabb delivered in that enormous, ornate Red Room in the Embassy.

Q: Max Rabb himself had some threats and was removed for a time from his post. They were threats of similar origin?

WILLETT: I was not privy to that. Claire Sterling wrote a book on terrorism. This was the time of Ali Agca's attempt on the Pope. There was a theory that the Bulgarians, working for the Russians, had put him up to it. Nothing was ever proven, but the debate was open: just some crazy Moslem fanatic off on his own, or was it a sophisticated East European plot, masterfully covered-up, to kill a Polish pope who could undermine Soviet authority in the Bloc? To this day I don't think it's public knowledge what Ali Agca was really about. I had talks with the Station on this; they had their own theories.

Q: It was on your watch, John, that an Italian liner was hijacked and the American Leon Klinghoffer in a wheelchair was assassinated by terrorists. Those responsible were brought to Italy and then released, and John Whitehead came out on a mission to convince the Italians to cooperate. It was a moment of some high tension you were involved in probably.

WILLETT: That was a rough patch between the U.S. and Italy. I wasn't particularly involved, but I know it was a source of deep concern, almost strife, between the Italians and the Americans. Italy doesn't have the same kind of complex towards the United States that, say, the French do. She's more inclined to roll with the punch and view big, browbeating Uncle Sam with a certain Latin patience and good humor: "After all, the Americans are only human, too. They're clumsy and they make stupid mistakes and, you know, we'll live with this." This makes them at once good and bad NATO partners. But on this question they were quite riled up. I can't talk about it in any detail, not because I'm reluctant to, but because it wasn't my brief.

Q: John Whitehead, in his oral history, describes coming just after that incident, when the Italians were refusing to participate in the G7 meeting at Williamsburg because of it, to convince them to take part and having to very forcibly squeeze Max Rabb's knee under the table to keep him quiet so that he would not rile up the discussion. He must have been a strong personality, somewhat of an ego thinking about his own oral history. Knowing him before, how did you find it working with him?

WILLETT: I didn't know Max Rabb personally before getting to Rome. My father did. I found him a good person to work for. We had one problem, because sometime in there I sent off a message advocating an open dialogue with the PLO.

Q: You had been advocating that before at USUN.

WILLETT: Right, but this was a formal Dissent Channel message, and the DCM had to go in to the Ambassador and explain to him that he couldn't stop the cable. I think Rabb was hurt that the son of an old friend and business partner could do such a thing. Perhaps he felt personally targeted. It took a while to get back in his good graces, but eventually things worked out.

Q: At that point in time, regular contacts were in progress in Tunis with the PLO. We had a designated channel there. Meetings were occurring all the time. Being in Rome, somewhat far from that particular action, what got into you, where were you coming from in wanting to send such a Dissent Channel message?

WILLETT: It was something I'd always felt strongly. I can't recall exactly what I was advocating, but of course to be a Dissent Channel message, it would have had to go beyond our policy at that time regarding the PLO. There again, as in the Kampuchea seat question, SS sent back a negative reply, but a better-crafted one. The one on Kampuchea was a tortured and ill-reasoned response, while the reply concerning the PLO was well thought out and convincing.

Q: It's not every FSO, John, that has repeated recourse to the Dissent Channel. Did you find as a result that your career advanced, slowed down? Were you regarded, à la Lannon Walker, as a young Turk and given a wide berth, or how did people view you because of your dissent?

WILLETT: There were only two dissent messages in my career: the Kampuchea seat question and the Palestinian cable. The first, as I mentioned yesterday, I could never regret. The Palestinian cable, involving an issue I didn't treat directly, was doubtless rather naïve. I don't believe I contributed anything towards a reformulation of U.S. policy. Did these two messages hurt my career? I don't believe so, although certainly Dick Holbrooke did not appreciate having to go upstairs to the Secretary's office and defend his policy twice because of some little twerp in New York. Once, I believe it was after Rome, when Jean Kirkpatrick was Perm Rep in New York, I was contemplating going back there. Chantal and I thought, well, I could return to USUN, this time as a political officer first secretary level, and Chantal could get back to her bank. I was later told that Rosenstock went to see Jean Kirkpatrick, when he learned I was bidding on the job, and said to her, in effect, "Do you want somebody in here who could write a message embarrassing you?" I never heard back from her, and to my knowledge was never even considered for the job. But did this hurt my career? I don't think so, because my advancements were fairly regular, and eventually I was promoted into the Senior Foreign Service. When I voluntarily retired, for family reasons, I had years to go before I would become susceptible to the selection-out process. I could have hung on and perhaps been promoted to MC, or whatever it's called now.

Q: Well, John, having been by then both in Rome and Paris, how did the level of attention to Italy and what you were reporting compare to that in Paris? Was Italy taken with the same level of seriousness, or were they somewhat peripheral?

WILLETT: No, Italy was not considered with the same level of seriousness. The U.S. often took Italy for granted. There was one occasion when the Secretary was on his way somewhere -- to London and Paris and Bonn -- but was not planning a Rome stop. The Italians went through the roof. If I remember correctly, the plane was rerouted at some point and made a stop in Ciampino. The Secretary came for a few hours and saw whoever the Foreign Minister was then, maybe Andreotti. The Italians felt sometimes that we slighted them, and they resented it. We often bent over backwards to make them feel good about themselves, but it didn't always work. I see why you'd pose the question. Within NATO, for example, the Italians were not considered on a level with Britain, France and the FRG.

Q: Were you conscious, being in Rome, of the particular inputs of the various Italian- American organizations and Italian-American public opinion?

WILLETT: No, not particularly. I don't remember being pressured by Italian NGOs, or whatever public organizations are called in the United States. PACs? We did have a steady stream of senators, staffers and congressmen coming through, and frequently they had Italian names. The Italians kind of liked this. I mean, after all, it's an "in" to the higher echelons of U.S. power, this kind of ethnic tie. And indeed in the Embassy, there were a lot of Italian-Americans who had applied to work there -- secretaries, officers --because of their Italian origins.

Q: Well, John, before we move on from Italy, is there anything further you want to put on the record?

WILLETT: No. I prolonged my tour there by one year, which while not a career enhancing move, was a soul enhancing one. I never had a dull day in Italy. I loved the work, as I mentioned, and I loved the country and the life there and the culture; I left it with regret. I remember the very moment, a winter day, with my friend Freck Vreeland leaning from an upper window of the Embassy to wave good-by. I drove my car out of the parking lot and away from Rome, never to live there again. I've been back once since, and I feel strong ties to the Rome Embassy, to Italy, and to what goes on in Italy. All these scandals involving people I had dealt with, as I mentioned earlier -- Craxi, Andreotti, etc. When I first arrived in Rome, I stayed at the Raphael on the Piazza Navona. Craxi had a permanent suite in the same hotel, and I'd see him there all the time. Now he's a fugitive in Hammamet, Tunisia! And Andreotti... I remember him making a speech in the Residence when he was foreign minister. Even then the Italian press, which is merciless towards its political figures, ferociously pilloried him. But now they're all in Dutch.

MAXWELL M. RABB
Ambassador
(1981-1989)

Ambassador Maxwell M. Rabb was born in 1910. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1932 and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1935. He served as a lieutenant in the amphibious portion of the U.S. Navy during the war, and then as legislative counsel to Secretary of the Navy Forrestal in 1946. He then spent a period as Assistant Secretary to Eisenhower's Cabinet from 1953-1958. Ambassador Rabb first dealt with foreign affairs, and Italian affairs specifically, by helping draft the Refugee Relief Act. He was appointed ambassador to Italy in 1981 and remained in the position for eight years, the longest tenure for any American ambassador to Italy. Ambassador Rabb was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

RABB: I think people would say I was a moderate Republican, but I think I was the first of the establishment figures. I was in New York, and I was the first to come out for Reagan. I won't go

into the campaign thing, but I had a feeling he would be much more flexible than what they thought. In early 1979, Reagan had asked me to bring together 40 of the top figures from the East, particularly from New York. I brought the very top people -- not political.

He said, "I am not interested in votes."

He didn't have my vote at that time, but he asked me to do it, and I did it at the 21 Club. I put together people. There were 40 of them. Punch Salzbunger was one of them -- the publisher of the Daily News -- the presidents of NYU and Columbia, Senator Heinz's father came in from Philadelphia, Cabot Lodge came. I brought him in from Boston. They were really top figures. At that time, the dean of Wall Street was John Loeb, Sr. I had him there. I had the head of Paine-Weber and a couple of others from Wall Street. It was a very, very interesting group that I put together.

He just said, "I want to talk to them and to let them know that he I haven't got horns."

He did very well. We had been friends for a long period of time, even though when I was a delegate to the Republican Convention of 1976, I had voted against him. I was for Ford in New York, but we were good friends. He finally talked to me and asked me to come out to see him in California. He didn't tell me what it was, but it wasn't difficult for me to guess. And so I went there and, sure enough, they wined and dined me, but that wasn't, of course, what it was I was prepared for it.

I could sense, then, he was the only one who could win on the Republican side; that there was a lot more to him than people had said, and that he would not be all cut and dried as people had figured it. So I came out for him. I was the very first one. In that sense, I do have political credentials.

I was in the campaign. I suspect that I had a lot to do with carrying New York and some of the other things. I was very active on that.

Then he called me on the telephone and offered me a very important post. I said "no" to him. It was a big domestic position, but even a foreign one was discussed. I think I was then the senior partner in a very large Wall Street law firm with close to 350 lawyers - Strook & Strook, & Lavin -- and I had my problems. I just thought, "Look, I am going to be a good citizen and not take it."

That ended it. Very shortly thereafter, he came back. He said, "Max," -- this is verbatim -- "Max, I am going to make you an offer that you can't turn me down on. I want you to be my ambassador to Italy."

I, who had always thought there might be moments that would be of consequence to me in my life, but those are moments that I would react to with pear-shaped words, words that would ring down through the ages for my children, and my children's children.

When he said this, I blurted out, "Wow, wow!"

He laughed on the other side of the telephone and said, "I take that as an assent."

I said, "Yes."

That was how I got that particular post. So I went to Italy. I had a long record which I haven't given you. For a non-career man, I had a record. I have told you about being the U.S. representative to the World Bank's International Investment Committee, a member of the Conciliation's Board of the World Bank. I was first a conciliator. Then they made me the American member. There was a whole secretariat at the World Bank on this. It is for investment disputes between the nations. That was a good one.

I also was on the presidential panel for India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. I was asked, unofficially, to bring in an American prisoner in East Germany. This came from President Lyndon Johnson, and I have got a great letter on this one. It is a great story in itself. There was a reason that they felt that I might be helpful. They failed on it completely -- getting this American prisoner who was in there for espionage. He was getting 15 years. So I thought that would be a nice, adventurous thing. My trips were never paid for by the government. I got him out in four trips. It was a period from 1965 to 1970, from the period of the 800th anniversary of the Leipzig Fair. I went over there, and it took me five years, but I got eleven out -- all American prisoners for espionage. They thought they were all dead and out of it, and I gave them nothing, gave them nothing. So, what I am trying to say is, of course, I have had other presidential commissions. Johnson had me on the income-maintenance team, but that is domestic.

All that the Department did was put me through the regular, little course that they give over here -- the Shirley Temple-Black course. It was a period when Senator Jesse Helms was blocking everybody. He wasn't aiming at me. He was aiming at a great many of them, but he blocked everybody. I was put up in the very beginning, because I have some good friends on both sides of the aisle, who urged that I go up. They got me through and they pulled two or three others with me after I appeared. I got through on that.

But how did they prepare me? It was what we had over there. We had a waiting period. We tried, of course, to read everything that we could read. Of course, preparation for the confirmation hearings was, in a sense, a little coarse. There is no question about it. There is an awful lot left to your individual good, common sense.

In 1981, I was dealing with a country that was very beautiful, insofar as landscape and its architectural treasures were concerned. It was a country with a great history, a country where there are 25 million Americans of Italian descent who were constantly looking at the place. But it did not get the regard and the respect of the big four. That was what I had to face when I went there. It was never put to me that way. But, when Presidents visited Europe -- Carter came through, and the same thing when Johnson went over to see the Pope and didn't go to see the Italians -- they passed it over. It was a very peculiar situation at that time. It was a nation very much respected, of some consequence, but in the circles of the diplomats -- part of the problem was with the diplomats themselves -- it was not a member of the club.

As you know, when the Berlin Accord was reached, there were four parties on the Allied side -- the United States, France, Great Britain, and West Germany as being the one most directly involved. That constituted the unofficial team that became a club. There was no question about it. The big four enjoyed the club. The foreign service officers, whether in our country or in theirs, would just keep this thing alive, even though many disagreements and all the rest of it. But it was a close alliance.

Italy knocked on the door time and time again, to be admitted to this informal group. That is one of the things that I faced, because France particularly said no. England wasn't so great about it. Germany wasn't so great about it, and we weren't. So it was a kind of grouping that was kept alive, on the inside by the foreign-office types, and on the outside by some organizations. The idea was that this was a natural, and we don't give them their due.

I think the great weakness that Italy has -- not in substance, but in image -- is that it presents the most disparate type of government that anyone could figure out. There is always a coalition, always a need to put these people together.

I will jump to a conclusion that I should give you at the end, but I will give it to you now. That is, in large measure Italy is responsible for this. First of all, they tried so desperately to make certain that there never would be a dictator. They weakened the government to the extent that they could not have a firm, solid, basic figure to give it an image, to give it strength. We faced that. That was one of the very difficult things that Italy had to realize was a problem.

But I can say that Italy is responsible for it, not only because of the form of government, but because they use the word "crisis." It is an Italian word that they use and that frightens the living daylight out of the people everywhere. In fact, all that has been in most of the 40-plus cases of change of government since World War II, has been a shifting of portfolios. In some cases, it was a little more difficult than that but, basically, they just rotated the prime ministers and the ministers.

And so it has gone all the way through on this thing. But would happen is that the world would get the message that Italy has a crisis, a prime minister has resigned. After they had resigned, they would come back. The world would say, "Look, oh my God, look. They are falling apart again." It would come together.

Well, I remember one case in July of 1982, Giovanni Spadolini lost a vote of confidence. He resigned from his position. With him went 27 members of the Cabinet. I think this was on a Wednesday or thereabouts of the week.

The following Tuesday, he went back in as the prime minister, followed by exactly the same 27 men that had left with him. But the world had been treated to the spectacle of Italy as a place that was unstable.

The real lesson is Italy will never -- and this is my feeling -- risk anything. They may look like they are on the brink, but they will not take that step. They know enough not to. But that is the way it works out in practice.

When I went there, this is what I had to face -- a big question of Italy clamoring and anxious to become a world power, for prestige purposes and for salving its soul. It needed the assurance that it was in the big leagues, but it didn't get it.

When I came in, I found that there were 14 -- at least by my count -- different problems, or issues, or questions of semi-major importance and major importance. They all were on the back burner; some had been there 17 years, some two years. In between, there were varying time limits, and no one could seem to do anything about it. That is what I think I dug into first.

I decided, and I think this is what an ambassador must do, that I had to try to resolve the problems that were before me, and not wait for Washington to give him intimate and detailed directions as to what and how to do it.

The big question I met it almost eight or ten days after I arrived. I came into Italy full of good will and the rest of it. I was met with a cable that, in a sense, made me swallow hard. It came from the Secretary of State. It said, not in gentle terms, but in very rough terms, that I had a task to perform. They didn't say that it is important that I consult with the leadership of Italy and try to get the 1979 understanding put into effect as it was to be in 1981 -- namely, the building of a base for the cruise missile of the INF.

But the cable said, "It is imperative that you persuade the leadership to do this."

Now, it so happens that I have now been in Italy eight full years which, as I indicated earlier, is the longest term any American ambassador has ever had in the history of Italy. Believe me, at that moment, I didn't think I was going to last out the month. My first assignment was to get a base for cruise missiles. Germany with the Green Party had turned their thumbs down on this thing. They said "no". So did Great Britain with the women throwing themselves across the Commons, not letting our personnel in military vehicles get through. They said "no". Denmark completely rejected this. So did Holland. Belgium was almost as bad. It was a complete mess. All that was left was Italy, which was certainly not the strongest one when it came to this type of thing, because it had not really ventured far from its own soil on any matters that were international.

The situation was desperate. Of course, it was the Italians in the end who did this. But the American influence and the diplomatic pressure, properly applied in a way that did not rub them the wrong way, was very, very good, I think. At least, the result was good.

Upon receiving this cable, I asked for an appointment. I saw the Prime Minister, who was Spadolini at the time. He had several members of his team around him -- ministers. I gave them my arguments. I had rehearsed them. Everything -- I had worked on it, and I thought I was doing pretty well because I was getting marvelous attention.

I said, "Gee, it can't be. They are really listening."

When I concluded, the Prime Minister said, "Mr. Ambassador, look at the other Allies. Look at

what they are doing. They are all moving away from this thing. Why don't you wait one year?"

And I remember his hands flurrying to the sky. "Better still, wait two years."

In other words, "n-o, no." He didn't say it that way, but that is the effect of it in gentle language. Then he added, probably to stroke me because I was the United States ambassador, "Let me say, of course, if you have another major argument to make, by all means, let's have it. We will give it some consideration."

But he knew I didn't have anything. I surprised him. I said, "Gentlemen, but I do have another argument."

They said, "What is it?"

And if you think they wanted to know, I wanted to know also. I had a complete blank. I didn't know what I was going to say, but I didn't like the idea of going back in 30 days.

So they said, "What is it?"

I said, "Well, the argument I am going to give you is not the argument that I expect you to accept. You can forget about that. I am just presenting it. That is that the United States of America and Italy have been good friends, but there is still plenty of room all the way up to the top with result and benefits in the field of commerce, of finance, of trade, of military activity, of culture. But, that is not the reason. You are not to accept it."

You bet it wasn't, because that was a bribe. So I passed that one by.

They said, "Well, what is the reason?"

I said, "The reason I am going to give you is not the reason you are to accept."

Of course, I was trying desperately to think of what I could present which would not put me in a rough position. I was stalling.

They said, "But what have you got in mind?"

I said, "Well, this reason you are not to accept also, but it is interesting. President Reagan, everybody knows, is a very good friend to his personal friends, and he is a very good friend to those nations that befriend his country. But that is not the reason."

That was another bribe, so I pushed that out.

They said, "What is the reason?"

I was licked. Anyway I said, "The reason is simply this. If you will do this, you will make me a big man in Washington."

Fine. Eight days later, we got it and everyone was surprised. Italy was the first. It wasn't I who did that. It was the Italians, and I want to make it very clear, of course. The Italians had to be the courageous ones, and they did it. It was a very unusual thing. But, of course, they don't want to give the feeling that it went that way. But I daresay -- and this is not really almost put in with the rest of it -- but I think they were kind of influenced by what I had said were the non-reasons.

I did want to say that I had used and advanced that as the reason. Anyway, we got it, and that began my approach, which was that Italy must be taken seriously and given great regard. I went back to Washington and I found out that Italy was very important, but it hadn't quite made it with the others. It was an attitude -- in large measure, an attitude.

I said to my Washington colleagues, "You want something like this, you have got to reward them. This is not a one-way street."

That has always been my approach, that friendship has got to beget friendship. And so it went. One of the very first things was trying to get President Pertini to the United States. Believe it or not, it was extremely difficult, extremely difficult. The Department couldn't do it. I got him in, and he appreciated it. He appreciated it very much. This is one of the most important things we have, because there has been a real march of Italians in here. It is all because of the give and take that now exists between the two.

On October 12, Columbus Day, I have arranged, or did just before I left, for Cosiga, the President of Italy, to come here. I know it sounds very boastful but, if you want to know the truth, that is the truth. Cosiga knows it.

How did I do it? They couldn't do it? They tried it all over here.

I said, "What we do is, we go in [the White House] and we tell them that the Italians should have this for Columbus Day."

They said, "We have got the Japanese coming," they told me.

I said, "You can't take the Japanese. What the devil are they doing around Columbus Day? What kind of political sense does that make? You get him there."

And they did. President Bush recently went to Italy. I was there in my last days. He announced it. He announced it. It was done. I am showing you there has been a great change.

In the meantime, DeMeter and Spadolini and Bettino Craxi and all the others have marched in and out. Before, it was very, very difficult to get it done. I did it.

Haig was the one who sent me this cable. I think he was reflecting a general attitude at the time on the part of everybody, past and present. But he listened to me. He really did. I didn't find any of them difficult once I would sit down and talk to them. I found that, if you have got something to say, they will listen. I didn't have any real problem with Haig and I didn't have any real

problem with Shultz. As a matter of fact, quite the contrary. They tried to help.

But at this point, we were changing Italy's image. This is what I think an ambassador can do. I mean, I sound terribly immodest as I tell you this, but forgive me. The funny thing is, it is the truth! There is nothing you can say about it. It was a personal crusade, every bit of the way. I would see them, and I would talk with them. They came through on this thing. I had to go through for them. And so it went.

I told you there were 14 items on the table. Every single one of them in this period has been eliminated, even though some are very old. One of them was the double taxation. I know I cleaned that one up completely, and we did it with little mirrors. I did it very quickly. I did that one. But the one I was going to tell you was the extradition treaty. That is a marvelous story in itself, because I discovered, you know -- I say "I." Now, please understand. You want a true story. Honest to goodness, this is it. It was a personal element on this thing. I had great help from a marvelous staff. I don't want to say that they weren't darn good, but they couldn't go in and do this type of thing.

Only an ambassador can do that if the ambassador wants to do it.

In the meantime, I am cultivating Congress. They are here. I think that is part of it. They are my friends. I would treat them all very, very well. It was a different policy. In a couple of other places, there were kicks made. I am not going to mention the name of an ambassador in another very important place. He talked about the junkets by boat by the members of Congress, and that trips shouldn't be made by people in the government, in the State Department -- only in real emergencies. He came out and got headlines. It was always good to talk against junkets. But I think it is up to an ambassador. They can change the climate.

In effect, what we did was that we were changing the climate. I got great help from my staff, and I'm not trying to run it down, but in each of these cases, it took my personal going over there. This isn't just my saying it. It's a great story. It is a wonderful story, because I never got a setback in the entire period. Every one of the things went.

The extradition treaty is the one I am talking about. You know that the Napoleonic Code, when put together with the Anglo-Saxon system, failed completely. You just couldn't put them together. Just couldn't do it. My people -- the ones that were involved in drugs control and crime -- were terribly upset. They kept saying to me, "We can't get a darn thing out of the Italian judges and out of the Italian prosecutors. They won't cooperate with us."

I went down to Palermo. I remember that I met with them, and I really wanted to give them the devil, to let them have it. I sat with them. We were put in a secret place. I didn't realize it. There were 14 or so judges at the time, and prosecutors. We had to meet secretly. They were the ones fighting the Mafia. There wasn't an ordinary place we could meet. We had to go someplace that was a hide-away.

I said, "Gentlemen, I have got to talk to you on all of this. Do you want to say something?"

They said, "Yes. We want to complain about the United States Government and the lack of

cooperation that we receive."

Well, it became very clear to me at that moment that this was a case of two ships passing in the night. They don't know what was going on in the other place. They claimed that the Americans, whenever they sent a request over, would refuse to honor it. Or if they did honor it, it would be many months later, when it was too late, or they would send it back with stringent requirements that had to be met. Or they never heard. Then I saw that both sides were wrong, or both sides were right.

So I said to them, "If I can get the Justice Department to back you up and to work with you -- and I will pledge that I will do it -- can I get cooperation out of you? I must get cooperation."

By the way, of that 14, two of the judges were killed by the Mafia in this interim period. So it was a real serious proposition. Many of them are still around, but they watch their step, and they are always guarded.

But sure enough, it worked out. Out of it came the model extradition treaty. If you are following New York's election, the reason that Giuliani is having a good day out of it is that he had this extradition treaty. The Pizza trial took place up in New York, and the Maxi trial, with 400-plus people convicted in Palermo, all grew out of this.

I could keep on going. The one that no one seemed to be able to do, I had to work on it myself. I saw minister after minister on it. It was a small thing, but, oh, boy, the Secretary of Defense was on my back, and the President was. "Why can't we get English-speaking T.V. for the troops?" And I did it. I got it. It was a personal thing.

I want to be careful how I get this here, because I don't want to look awful bad on it. But the minister, who is still very powerful and at that time in charge of this type of thing -- I saw several of them. I was building it up, and I went to see him. He had a pile of papers on his desk. I went into my story that I have got to do this for our people.

He said, "Do you see all these papers here? That represents the argument against doing this. It is absolutely illegal. It is absolutely illegal for us to do it. I will tell you what I will do. I will do it for you, but don't publicize the fact. Don't publicize it."

You see, this is one difference between Richard Gardner and myself. He always wants to publicize every single thing that went on. I never had a press conference. But this was a difference. That was an easy one. At least, he told me not to publicize it. But I never had a press conference in the whole time I was there, because I think that an ambassador's job is to do it for the embassy.

I know that what was done was quite extraordinary. I really mean it. Forgive me. Because I worked day and night. I took one vacation in the entire eight years -- one week in Egypt. I never took a vacation. I wanted to be there, never to let it go. I was there in August, I was there in July, I was there all the time. Yes, I might steal a weekend. But even the nights, you know, I was constantly moving around.

I think that is what an ambassador has got to do. I think he has to meet the people, he has to see them, he has to go to the events that the ministers have in their local communities, be present when the parties meet in every place -- just keep on going. And so it went. At any rate, that was done. I can keep on giving you more of them to equal the one with double taxation. I got rid of that one. It was there for a long time.

The last one on that list was prosciuto. That was on for years. They couldn't get prosciuto or ham into the United States because of health concerns. It has been checked out completely, no problems with it. It is now September 1st and it will be coming in. A whole year has passed since I got it through. Oh, they tested it 16 different ways. Anyway, I got it, and the Italians are tickled pink. There are a number of them. I got that.

So what I am trying to tell you is it was quite a period. It was quite a period. In this time, we tried to cultivate and keep it going. It was a give and take.

On the military side, that wasn't the only thing. Remember, we got them to do something they never would ordinarily do.

Of course, in the meantime, I had terrorism.

On these various issues, I would see the relevant man. Generally, I would go to the minister. I would research the situation. Who were the key people? There was a very nice man in the Department of Interior who constantly blocked the business of having an extradition treaty. I made it a point to invite him over, to have him come to events, to work with him. And we softened him up.

If you asked the Department of Justice, ask what their relationship is with Italy, and they will tell you that no other country touches it. The relationship is so terrific. I am really quite proud of some of these things. I kind of hate myself at this moment, because what I am really telling you is just take a look at me, how wonderful I am! But I don't mean it. But honest to goodness, I did not do a bad job, and no one has really been saying that. But I have kept it quiet. I know of no other place where they have done anything in this way -- you haven't got the rest of the story. There is a hell of a story that keeps on rolling out, every single bit of the time. And I will tell you, Georgetown will tell you what I did. That is the very last thing that I did. I will come to that later on. AT&T -- I turned that one absolutely around.

I think that, first of all, our staff has been very good at looking out for American commercial interests.. The Department of Commerce, the economic staff and others have been quite good. We have taken the big examples and broken through on so many of the cases. The landmark cases, of course, are something like the prosciuto ham case. I am now putting aside those things that were there. The relationship is very good on this, where trade goes on very well between them. There is an understanding on this. It is much better really, I think, than it was before. But I give a great deal of credit on that one to the departments because they hey are working all the time on them.

Specifically, on some of these cases -- I mentioned the most dramatic case and I want it to be wrapped up before we -- you said that it takes two or three or four months -- the one with AT&T. I don't know whether it was \$28 billion or \$38 billion, but it is an extraordinary amount. The history of it, in brief, is this. AT&T was one of four big, important bidders. Many came in, such as Erickson of Sweden and Siemens -- the most important and the one that had it right in the palm of their hands -- to revise the whole system of working with the Italian ITATEL. We had the best technical thing.

All that I will tell you is that the chairman of the board flew over to Italy just to see the Prime Minister, set up for him, and the Prime Minister refused to see him. That was how bad it was at that time. He had other reasons for it, but I said I would tell you the story. He and his team came in to see me. They were really crushed -- "What is this?"

Siemens had it done. The minister in charge was there -- this will answer some of your questions about who I see and what I see. I had gone always to Andreotti to see him. I had been to Emilio Columbo because he had finance. Most important of all is the Prime Minister and, particularly, the minister in charge of the issue. He had come out openly that he was for Sieman, and Sieman had it.

I saw him. It was a holiday, I remember. He was the only one working. I congratulated him on working on a holiday. I said, "This is so unusual. At any rate, I want you to do something about this. I know that you feel that Siemens is there. The world knows that the finest telephone system in the world is the American. And the world knows that one that is not so good and not worthy of the country is the one you have. All right, you are going to bring in the latest stuff from Germany, but I am not worried about that. All I want is for you to permit the selection be made on the basis of the technical side."

"Well," he said, "you know, as I have said to you a little while ago," he prefaced it, "Germany is right near us. They were the original ones that put in the system in the beginning. We are in the Common Market together."

I said, "That is exactly what is wrong."

And then I used my big argument. I said, "First of all, just let me tell you, do you know what this is?" I used it with the Prime Minister and the others. I said, "Do you understand what this is? This is the preview of how Italy is going to treat the United States when 1992 [the target year of the full implementation of the Common Market] comes over here. That is what they think in Washington. For heaven's sake, don't let them get that impression."

But the argument was that we consider this the forerunner, the complete indication of what will be, and you will be treated accordingly. Because, if you are going to start this thing, you are going to get the juices of protectionism beginning to move very quickly. You have wines, and you have other things where we have done deals -- shoes and textiles. We have been very good with you on all of that. If you want to keep that that way, then for heaven's sake, let us work it out."

Anyway, I went to see the Prime Minister -- and it is a great story -- and turned him around on other arguments completely. Yes, personal, personal, personal on that thing.

When I saw them, I said, "You don't understand. Politics does play a part in all of this. You have to take care of their pride. You have to take care of their politics, and you have to make certain that they are getting the best. Do you want the best?"

And what I said to several of them was, "Some day, your system will be considered inferior to the others, because you didn't take the best of the technical systems available -- the AT&T. It is going to be on your head."

I got it. So we did it. We turned it over. They are very quick to admit that it was a tremendous help.

Then I saw the President -- made two Presidents who, at that time, Vice President and then the President himself -- no, it was Vice President at the time we put it over -- Bush -- and then the President and they brought it up. We got everybody in the act. And so, trade was -- we were able to do that. We were able to get a lot of things rolling and many things going.

We were able to get another one on the list is almonds. I think it was a \$480 million a year business. They never could get it through. Year after year, the lobbyists from the United States -- it is a California and the West Coast industry -- blocked any progress. We finally got it through. These were things that were hanging fire for a long time, but new things have come up in the meantime.

What it takes over there is a great staff to do the work and to prepare the way with the people, to get the arguments. I am not running any part of that down, but you said when we started that you wanted my point of view. But what I did was a very potent factor. If it was a rotten job, I have to accept that verdict on this thing here. But all that I know is that, when you get the rest of it, you suddenly realize -- only on the military side. Do you want me to --

Just before we get to that -- we started with the INF, and it was in the world. Suddenly, well, we gave them that. They were willing to take the missiles, and they recognized that we were recognizing them. I think it is important that ambassadors and State Department people understand the feelings of other people and other nations represent a very vital item. You cannot be cavalier with them. You can't just say that we are the United States and this is -- you just do that. It may have been the way before, but not now. The net result, I say, is in what took place.

On the military side -- in the beginning, this is more staff than me -- the first question was participation in the Sinai Peacekeeping Force. They did it. We asked them to do it, and they did it. Then, one of the biggest things I had to do, and the most difficult, was to get Italy to send troops, ships, and all the rest of it to Beirut. Then we ran out on them. That was the kind of thing they kind of looked at it. We announced that our ships had pulled out early. You do it a little earlier. This is the kind of thing you have got to think twice about. At any rate, I got them to do that.

Then when it came to the mining operations, that was a successful thing that we worked together and pulled out together. It worked out well, but to get them to do it was another thing.

We have had very good ministers of interior and very good ministers of defense over there. They have been wonderful. The last one, from the smallest party, from the liberal party, which is really a tiny party, was absolutely wonderful. He did some of these things that I just told you about, but he did the F-16 transfer from Spain. We worked with him and with DeMeter on the F-16. Andreotti was very good. Some things he may have shown a bias or delayed in a way that was not right, but he was very good on that.

On the F-16s, they had no place to put them. They went looking everywhere. Then they came down. It was a southern thing. Remember, the significance of it was -- just as the significance of the INF was -- considerable. In the case of the cruise missile, the Gorbachev-Reagan agreement would never have seen the light of day -- the complete elimination of one whole category of nuclear weapons.

They were based. The bases were there, but we gave that up. Remember the old talk about the unilateral? This is one of the arguments on the unilateral disarmament. If we had done that, we would have never gotten anything, not even credit on it. It had been lost in the fog. This was the bargaining chip.

So it was over here. The significance of the F-16s, beside the need for conventional weapons and also nuclear -- a little bit on that -- is that the alliance was faltering. Spain is a member of NATO, and it said "no" on a very important element over here. How would that be explained away later when, really, if nothing were done?

Italy deserves the credit. I will say "I" or "the embassy," but I worked on that one for all I was worth, up and down the line. I got the Vice President, the President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense -- all of them constantly coming in and working. Italy did it, agreed to do it. It was not a popular thing. They were very clever about it, because anytime you bring in something like the F-16s, it is a war-like step and not an easy thing. They did it, and they deserve a lot of credit. That is one of the last things that took place.

So the military side is a magnificent performance. And where they were not important before, today the southern flank is considered extremely important.

I got Italy involved in the Persian Gulf. I did. The State Department and Defense asked me to do it. I went in, and we lobbied them. That was all. It was one of these personal things. But up and down the line we did it, but particularly with the minister of defense, and they agreed.

Let me turn for a minute to tourism. When I came in, Italy was number one on the list of terrorist countries, insofar as prevalence of that practice is concerned. I stepped into this moral situation, so many of them at that time, of the Italians, journalists, and businessmen were either shot in the back of the legs or killed or kidnaped and their children were kidnaped. It was a terrible mess. As far as I was concerned, from the very moment I went there, I always had seven bodyguards to watch me. They were always with me. If I ventured out, I had a police car in front and two men riding gun-shot in my car. Then, in the next car, an unmarked police car with Italian policemen

in plain clothes. I did whatever they asked me to do. I never once broke the rules. I never snuck off to jog or to take a walk without them. It was very difficult. I had had six attempts. Don't say that they all succeeded, but there were six different groups that they have identified, either grabbed or sent out of the country, that tried to kill me.

The first attempt was a very famous one. It was October 12, 1981. Qadhafi had failed in his attempt to knock out the skies two American planes. His two planes had the intention of blasting a carrier. They lost them. So the next best thing was to get the symbol. I was the symbol.

All that I know was that I made a speech on Columbus Day in, in this case, Milan. I left the place, went to my hotel. I had been in the vicinity, all around, traveling for about two or three days. I had nothing but dirty laundry.

At about 6:30 in the morning, the telephone call at the hotel came in from my number two man, my DCM, and he said, "Don't say anything to me, just listen and do as I tell you. Take the 11:00 plane -- I think there was an 11:00 plane at that time from Milan to the United States -- and don't say anything more. Just go there."

He hung up the receiver. Boy, if that wasn't a mystery. Anyway, I got on this thing. I didn't know what the devil I was doing. I had nothing but dirty clothes with me. I got on the plane and found out that I was to be assassinated the next day when I went to Rome. The police did pick up the six men. One of them, the hit man -- I have a picture of him. The Italian police were good enough to give me this in secret. He was a young man, about 36 years of age, an attractive young man, but he had the job of killing me. The others were captured in this hotel -- I forget which one it was -- on the floor. They were all kneeling on the floor when they were hit, with a map of the Embassy, with my picture there on the floor and with my biography there.

Anyway, I went to the States, to avoid the first attempt. There were several others like this. At that time, they were fairly soft on them. They sent them out of the country. But then, of course, came the General Dozier case. He was 42 days in captivity. That was a tremendous thing -- the first time an American general had been captured. It was a very dramatic story. The Italian police did a remarkable job on that. They did it, but I kept the many intelligence units in the United States away -- I promised that to the Italians. I said, "I will let you do this job without our people bothering you, and I will keep them away." I never knew that there were so many subdivisions and divisions and so many intelligence units as when this happened. This was such a unique case. It was in December of 1981 -- 42 days, and he was rescued.

So I kept them away. I just said, "On the condition that your three basic police arms share information with each other, work together."

And that is asking something, for the *carabinieri* to work with the other elements of the police force, all separate groups. It was just like asking our FBI to convey information to the New York State police or to the Los Angeles city police -- so, impossible. We were asked for advice occasionally, whatever they wanted, and we gave it to them. They were in constant touch with me and with my staff. This was the beginning of the revolution of the Italian police. They found themselves at this point. Then they began to want to find papers that led to other hideouts. I think

in Naples they found one. They found one in Rome. They found one in Padua and Florence. I was on several hit lists there, but they got them.

Today, the Red Brigade, unlike the condition in West Germany and Belgium with the domestic terrorists, is really a broken organization there. They still can make a little trouble, but they haven't got the control that they had before. This was all wiped out. And so it went. There have been many of these cases.

On the *Achille Lauro* case, some one should get Regardie's magazine on this subject because there is more detail, and I haven't got it on my fingertips, some of the dates that appeared there. That was a pretty good account.

What actually happened was that was a confrontation, and a very, very serious one, and the only one that I really had that was difficult and seemed headed for disaster. At that particular point, both Andreotti -- who was then the Foreign Minister -- and Craxi, the Prime Minister, seemed to have a bias in favor of the PLO at that point. They were not the only ones in Europe. Greece did, and Switzerland wasn't any darling on this. The one who did the worst job of them all was sentenced quietly, then put on a plane, and then they announced the verdict after he had left -- sent him back to Beirut. The French did a lot of it, a great deal. I can't, with any assurance, tell you that I know this to be a case, but I had heard this, of course, and the way it reacted was the softness on the whole thing. (An Italian cruise ship, the *Achille-Lauro*, was hijacked out of Alexandria. An American was killed rather brutally. He was an elderly, crippled American, in a wheelchair and he was shot and dumped overboard. The ship then went to Egypt, where the Egyptians were trying to get the terrorists out. They put them on a special plane. Through our own resources, we found out. Our Navy forced that airplane to land at Sigonella in Sicily).

What happened represented the only major problem that I had. It all ended well, by the way. It ended very well, but this is part of the story. The Egyptian plane was forced onto Italian soil by the American plane. It had four terrorists on board -- three that were on the boat and the mastermind, Bubas. He had not been on the ship, but the others were. They were on their way to Tunisia when their plane was intercepted and forced down on Italian soil.

The Italians then put a cordon of military around the plane. I knew things were happening, but I didn't know the details. I had known about previous things aboard the ship, and all the acts in there. But they had gotten this information. This came out of Egypt or someplace. I have no idea where. The American planes forced them down. When they landed on Sicily near Sigonella, the Italian military surrounded the plane, and put a cordon of military around it. They proceeded to guard it and, in effect, hold it there under the Italian control.

The next thing that happened was that a Delta Force -- this is a real story -- from where they came, I don't know, but surrounded the Italian military. They were not on Italian soil originally, so they were brought in. They surrounded the Italian units. All that I can say is, this is one of the most difficult international-political situations that you can imagine. On the land of a friendly ally, to surround their troops by Americans represented an infringement of sovereignty.

When I got word of this, I immediately called up. I was told that the man in charge was General

Steiner. He had the team. I said that I would like to talk to General Steiner, because I saw the storm clouds beginning to threaten.

The man said, "Just a moment."

He came back and said, "He is not available."

I said, "Please tell him that this is Ambassador Rabb calling from Rome, that I represent the President of the United States and Italy, that he is in Italy, and that I want him at the telephone."

He came back and said, "General Steiner refuses to talk to you."

I was absolutely stunned. I never had anything like this happen to me. That was it. He refused to come to the phone..

"He takes his order only from -- I hope the whole thing is over at this moment -- Colonel North." This story has never been told. Colonel North, and that was where he takes his orders from. I had never heard of Colonel North at that point. I didn't know anything about him, but I was absolutely stunned.

Then came the telephone calls when the President wanted to talk to Craxi. I was absolutely surprised to find that it was difficult to get him because it was, I think, a Friday night. I have forgotten. Whatever it was, no one was in town. They were on their way to Milan, and it was difficult to get him, but we finally got him. You couldn't get anybody at the ministry. We are talking about the Italians. So it was a little difficult to get them, but we got him. We got him ready for the President.

Then, on the line, there were two interpreters. One came on and said -- later found out that someone else was interpreting, that fellow on the Italian desk. And the other was Michael Odine . He was then, I think, a consultant at the Defense Department, but used by Bud McFarlane, the head of the NSC at the time.

Michael Odine said, "I want to talk to Craxi before we start on this thing."

Michael Odine has written a book in which he says that the President asked him to get Craxi, and that he finally got him -- we couldn't get Craxi. I will tell you that Michael Odine, I am afraid, misstated the case. He had sued the Italian government, because I think he wanted something high in six figures for writing a piece on terrorism. He wanted the money and they wouldn't give it to him. He got some of it, a lot of it earlier in the old days. This was done not recently, but was done long before I got there. The press was after him, and he was suing the newspapers. I got a call about a month before this all took place -- six weeks before it.

He was in town, I found out, because Craxi called me and said, "Michael Odine is in my hotel, sitting in the lobby, waiting for me. I don't want to see him."

Fine. So he went to another hotel. All this story has never been told before.

I think that what he wanted to do was to make his peace with him so that Craxi wouldn't be surprised when he got on the line.

Bud McFarlane had put him on. I am quite positive that Odine was not an intimate of the President. I am pretty certain about it.

At any rate, he went on. That didn't stop it. I think he told them he wanted to get the prisoners and wanted them turned over. They went ahead, and they put them on a plane, and rushed them from Sigonella, right onto a landing place where a Yugoslav plane took them away.

In the meantime, I went and confronted them all. If you get the article of Regardie's, I am on the front cover with a most horrible look on my face because I was on television. I said it was an outrage. It was a terrible thing. But our trouble was, we had them dead to rights. There was no question about it. They couldn't have done it but by infringing on their sovereignty, surrounding them. They gave the argument that they have constantly used thereafter.

At any rate, relations got so bad that the government fell. It didn't quite fall because Craxi put in his resignation. I suddenly said, "My God, I have caused the fall -- because there was my trip -- I have caused the fall of the government." The next day, very early, I got a call from number two in the department of foreign affairs. He wanted to come over to see me.

He said, "I am speaking for both Craxi and Andreotti. We would like to make peace, and if you could arrange it, I would like very much to go to the United States. Immediately, I would leave right now, take a plane in England, and get over there during the day. I would like to explain to them that we should have a peace. They want me to be sent over as the representative."

He came over for lunch. At that lunch I had one other person. I had my DCM.

He said, "I would really like to do it."

I agreed. I called up the State Department and got Mike Armacost, who was to be the new ambassador to Japan. He was number three in the State Department at the time.

He said to me, "Yes, what is it?"

I said, "No, because it is important and I want to talk -- "

I explained that Ruggiero , who was the number two in the Foreign Office, was prepared to go over to try to make peace.

He said, "You know, this is a red-hot issue here in the United States."

It is still like it was over here with this thing. It really was red hot at the time -- terrorism, you know. Americans -- Klinghoffer was the name of the fellow who was killed. It was awful.

He said, "And the White House was very upset about this whole thing."

I said, "Yes, I understand that. If we do it now -- we are going to do it six weeks from now, but in the meantime, enmities will develop. Let us do it right away. That is my feeling."

They said, "Are you prepared to present this alone?"

I really gulped, because that meant that I was going out all alone on the limb. I said, "Yes."

They said, "Good, because we will be right with you and we will present it to him."

I said, "What about sending him?"

"Hold him there."

Then they came back to me very quickly, and that was the first trip that John Whitehead, the Deputy Secretary, made. That was why it was such a good trip. That was the story. And this thing was averted. It was all friendly, and we patched it up.

My views are that it was important to bring the Egyptian plane down. I had to get consent for it, by the way. I left that out. That was one of the things -- I and John Holmes and our staff. We really worked on that one. I think that all of that was necessary, but not the surrounding -- this is the kind of high-handed approach that offends our Allies. This is the kind of thing. You have got to make them a party to this, and not tell them about it afterwards.

I think that the Italian feeling was that they could make up with the Americans later on. They would let the terrorists go to be friendly with the Arabs Italy has a special problem that all the Mediterranean countries have. They border North Africa and they are not too far from the Middle East. Nevertheless, I feel very strongly that it could have been avoided, not because they would not have tried to do this because I think to let them go, but they would have had no excuse. We gave them the excuse. In other words, what we did was to do a remarkably good thing to stop terrorism. They could not have said no to us, as a good ally. But to insult them, to involve their national honor, to be so out of hand --

I know our military have to have the local picture. I think their general idea is that "papa knows best". Ambassadors are over there, and what do they know? But the ambassadors are on the scene. They have the pulse of it.

All that I can tell you is -- forgive me one thing -- is that, if we hadn't done what we did in Italy this whole period, we wouldn't have had this relationship where, today, we have a relationship that is better than any that we have ever had.

The last thing that we did -- the universities. I saw it coming down the line. I jumped in. They were being taxed out of existence. There were 55 of them, big ones and important ones -- Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, Stanford. They had programs in Italy. Thirty-five of them are in Florence, and the rest are scattered around.

In Florence is where the trouble started. The tax people began to hit them, many of them for close up to \$1 million. That they can't afford to give. We are talking about Florida State, Wisconsin, Michigan, Stanford, as I indicated before, Johns Hopkins -- all of them -- Loyola, California State -- so many of them that are here. This would have caused a tremendous row, I saw, in the academic community. It would have made the intellectuals, who are great friends of Italy, madder than hell.

So the net result of it was that I went right to the association. They were being sued, they were being indicted. One of the biggest scandals was in the making on this thing. Finally, just as he was going to Stanford, Shultz said, "Please see what you can do to help on this thing."

I said, "Sure, I will be glad to do it for Stanford."

I mean, for all the universities, and I will let it go at that. The point was that I had already started. I said to the association at the universities, "No. Do not have your lawyers push these in the courts. If you get it into the courts, I can do nothing."

You know, the Italian courts are really separate. You never know what happens with the communist judge. You will never know what happens. I stopped it and, to the credit of the Italians, particularly in this case, Emilio Columbo, who was the head of that, some of the people, the councilmen in Florence, I think Andreotti, the others. They really helped them. We cleaned it up, but particularly Emilio Columbo. It is off the board and one of the -- now this could have been a raging issue. American colleges being taxed.

All I said was to them, "I want the same treatment. I don't want to hear about courts. I don't want anything else as I went there. I want the same treatment for the American schools as you were giving the Italian schools. You don't seem to realize -- (and they didn't) -- that the private schools of the United States are non-profit. They are not employers in the usual sense. It all gets mixed up in their minds.

Anyway, we got it straightened out, and that one was taken care of.

Now, what is the final thing and the point that I want to make with you. I left. But, before I left, when President Bush came -- it was around May 30 and I was there -- he met with President Cosiga and particularly with the Prime Minister. There never is a case where there are matters that are unresolved on the table. It was just as it was when I came in -- 14. They did not have one single, major or minor, issue, question or problem of a bilateral nature between Italy and the United States to discuss. They always have something. Everything was cleared up. I don't know how long it will last since I am now finished. The point is, the dike will break sooner or later, and you have always got to be in there, as with the university thing and with the others, but I left not a single one. Really, the reason that I say it was not a bad job and why I am pleased, I don't think you are going to find that with any other major country in the world. There is always something that is left. There is always something that is left.

I should mention an episode that involved Wilson, our Ambassador to the Holy See. I didn't have

anything to do with his alleged contacts with Qadhafi. . I was rather chic on this one. I never really bothered -- first of all, I didn't know about it. It is a great story. Wilson rushed in one day to my office -- or he called up -- and said, "I have got to see you."

I said, "Fine. Come on over."

He came into my office, waving the picture of a priest with me in a picture.

I said, "Yes. What is wrong with that?"

He said, "You shouldn't be in this picture with him."

I called in my people, and I said, "What is this picture about?"

Because I didn't even recognize the priest. They said, "He came in with a whole group of people from San Bernardino Valley in California, his parishioners, and they made a tour. You graciously agreed to see them.

I said, "Bill, what is wrong with that?"

He said, "But much worse than that."

He didn't answer my question.

"You put on a reception for cardinals, who had just been invested, and Cardinal Loren and Cardinal O'Connor of New York."

I said, "They are great, personal friends of mine."

He said, "You shouldn't do it. That is my jurisdiction."

You will see this in just a moment.

I said, "Bill, don't let anyone ever hear you say that. Did you ever look at the Constitution of the United States? Do you know what you are asking me? If they hear about this thing, you are going to be really criticized beyond belief. Separation of church and state, for heaven sakes, don't you know about that?"

He said, "They are mine. They are my territory."

I said, "Do you know what you are asking? What you are really saying is that the Protestants and the Jews are mine, and the Catholics are yours. Now, supposing they had gone to a place adjacent to Italy, to France on the Riviera, and O'Connor was there, and the American Ambassador to France put on a reception for them. Would that be all right? What about in Spain? I am independent from you, and this is on my soil. I can take care of any constituent I want. Don't you ever come in with that one again."

I am just trying to give you a feeling about him. In effect, I think I hit. Oh boy, I hit him! It is the only time I did get upset with him. You know, I had the Protestants and the Jews, and that is my set-up.

Later on, I knew that I had heard little stories. He had seen -- what was the famous name of the tax dodger from the United States, a businessman. Then he had business in Chili, and he had made money in Chili when he was in this post. He had sold something that he had gotten. He had been doing business on this. His wife's family has something to do with Penzoil. He never was a main member of the board. Finally, he insisted that he be made a member of the board. That was the first time that he was offered it, after he had become an ambassador. No ambassador ever takes a board membership. I gave up many New York Stock Exchange things. I don't know who in the White House, to get him off their backs -- he always threatened that Reagan would do all this, but it is not true, not true. I will tell you. This much I do know, and don't press me on it. But it is not true.

I know he had done all these things, and he had gotten this job. Penzoil is in Libya. I don't know what happened. I haven't got the story. I had no part of it. I have never gotten involved in it.

But one day, Qadhafi, I think talking to ABC on an interview, said, "I don't understand what the United States has against me. I have been talking to the American Ambassador to Italy." But then it came out quickly that it was clear, but I also had to check, that it was not I; it was Wilson. He had gone to Andreotti and said, "You know, I am a very good friend of President Reagan. There is a very important errand that I have. I want you to make an appointment for me with . . ."

Now, he was on my territory. I gave you the first part of the story so you will see. I mean, there is a Secretary of State for the Vatican. It is a separate picture. I am not kicking about it, but I am just giving you what happened.

He didn't say to him -- because Andreotti was very upset about it later. He said, "It is important that I see him, and I would like to go and see. Can you arrange it?"

It was just as if I am saying to the President, who wants me to go quietly. So he got him a plane, not an Italian government plane but I think a candy manufacturer's plane. They took him over there. He disappeared. His own staff didn't know what had happened, his own security. Then he came back. That was the end. They called us up to ask where he was. We didn't see him. That was fine. He came back and everything went along very smoothly. Then came this ABC interview. When he named him, boy, that was it. Shultz -- Wilson disliked Shultz terribly -- was madder than he could be. They evidently have a record. I haven't even seen what the record is on this thing. And that one, you are going to have to get others. But that was an interesting little plot. I think the New York Times was ready to really break him wide open on the following Monday, and he got out on a Thursday. He heard about it and he got out.

WILLIAM JEFRAS DIETERICH

**Public Affairs Officer
Rome (1982-1983)**

William Jefras Dietrich was born on December 11, 1936 in Boston, Massachusetts. He attended Wesleyan College and the School for Advanced International Studies in Bologna. He served in the US Navy from 1961 to 1968. Throughout his career, he has had positions in Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 19, 1999.

DIETERICH: The director general was an American, a retired State Department Senior Administrative officer named Leamon R. Hunt, known as Ray Hunt, who was later killed in Rome. Ray Hunt and Vic Dikeos, who was his deputy, asked me if I would consider going to Rome as the public affairs officer for the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO.) Rome was a big temptation, since I had studied in Italy as a graduate student and I liked Rome a lot - loved Italy. I talked to some people about it, including Sam Lewis, and we all came to the conclusion that it would be a great press job, because this thing would never work. It was going to be hell - they were going to be screwed up all over the place, and the Israelis and Egyptians were going to be all over each other. It was going to be a very exciting time. So I thought maybe I would go.

In the meantime, I wasn't getting much I was interested in from Washington anyway. I was a little bit out of touch with Latin America by then, and not well enough known in the Middle East, nor was I an Arabic speaker, so of nothing was coming up that really turned me on. Nor did I relish the idea of studying Arabic or trying to be a PAO in a country where I didn't speak the language.

So I decided Rome might be fun, plus it was a great deal financially because it was an international organization and you didn't have to pay any U.S. taxes, while you still collected your full foreign service salary. So I agreed to go to Rome, and that is when I left Israel and came back to the United States for about two months, since the MFO had not yet made its official move to Rome. I worked out of the MFO headquarters in the Washington suburb of Landmark, Virginia. It was really quite interesting helping to invent a brand new organization.

In the first place - why Rome? The agreement itself stipulated there had to be a headquarters and it had to be outside the treaty area, so we had to find a place to go. Washington seemed unsuitable because it was too far away. It came down to western Europe, and hopefully a place with good communications and good air connections. We talked to the British, French, and the Italians and the best deal came from the Italians. It was particularly attractive to us because the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN was already in Rome, and that provided a model for us to use with the Italians in order to establish what our status would be as a foreign organization. We basically said to the Italians, "Just give us the same deal and perks you gave to the FAO and we will be fine." They agreed.

Q: This was '82 to when?

DIETERICH: This was '82. I only served in the MFO from '82 to '83. So I worked at Landmark

for awhile, and then Keiko and I, with our son Robbie, flew off to Rome. Our daughter, who had managed to coincide with our Israel tour by graduating from high school in three years, had just started at Harvard.

In the meantime I had gotten a warning. They said “part of our negotiations with the Italians was that we had to employ some Italians, and one of those people is a lady named Marilena Andreotti, who is the daughter of Giulio Andreotti. We don’t know what else to do with her, we don’t know anything about her, but she is a woman, and probably knows about politics, so she should probably work for you.” I said, “Fine, delighted.”

She actually had gone to work before I got there, had become about the most valuable person on the staff. She was the only person who knew how to do anything in Rome. You had all these State Department admin officers, Australian colonels, New Zealand sergeants, and one Italian diplomat, but the only person who knew how to rent a room in Italy was Marilena Marri Caciotti. Not only was she the daughter of Julio Andreotti, she was also married to an Italian foreign service officer. She was very smart with a wicked Roman sense of humor, had all the right connections, and was a delight to work with.

I got to Rome and began to set up an office. I had Marilena as an assistant public affairs officer, and a Frenchman who had worked for the OECD office in Washington as my deputy, as well as an Italian secretary who was also married to a foreign ministry official.

There were some important relationships within the organization be sorted out. As part of the deal, the MFO headquarters had taken on an Italian political counselor, an ambassadorial-level Italian diplomat. I'm not sure he was used to the idea of a separate public affairs office reporting directly to the boss, nor that he liked the idea very much. He may have suspected that as an American with some kind of "political" credentials and experience in the region, I was going to become the *de facto* political adviser to the American Director General and his deputy. In addition, I think he was a bit uncomfortable with having Giulio Andreotti's daughter working in my office. He may have had a point. Andreotti, in one of his many political reincarnations, became foreign minister about halfway through my year in Rome. I tried to make him as comfortable as possible by assuring him of full coordination and explaining as clearly as possible what I thought we ought to do in public affairs terms. It was also clear that Ray Hunt and Vic Dikeos didn't need a whole lot of advice about the political dynamics of the MFO. We eventually sorted it out and had a good working relationship.

The military command in the Sinai, under General Bull-Hansen also had a public affairs officer, an Australian army officer, who clearly preferred that any dealings with the general be handled through him. I had no particular objection to that, although the general liked to talk public affairs and MFO matters in general with me and didn't much care whether his PAO was present or not. Reasonable observance of chain of command protocol does help big organizations functions, but should not be allowed to interfere with organizational information sharing. Again the principle of transparency is the best solution. I made sure that the Australian was aware of any conversations I had with his boss and that any statements or releases from the Rome headquarters were thoroughly coordinated with him. He reciprocated although I don't remember any press materials being released from the military command.

I did make a couple of trips back to the region, which meant visiting MFO offices and embassy officials on both Cairo and Tel Aviv as well as various installations and units in the Sinai. I made one trip on my own and accompanied Ray Hunt on another.

The trips were interesting. We would go into Cairo on a commercial airliner, and consult with the embassy and with the people in the little office that the MFO kept in Cairo. Then we would get on a French military puddle jumper airplane (they ran our fixed-wing "airline") and fly out to the main headquarters base. Then I would consult with my Australian counterpart, the public affairs officer for Bull-Hansen. We would spend some time together, and would also consult with other military folks and the U.S. foreign service officers assigned there as observers. They were the diplomats assigned to accompany patrols and sort out any apparent violations. When the Sinai portion was finished a jeep or truck would take us to the Israeli border checkpoint, where we would be met by a jeep from the Israel side and would drive to the hotel in either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

Due to various political sensitivities involved in that itinerary I carried four passports - two diplomatic and two civilian. For some reason we were supposed to use civilian passports when we were with the MFO, diplomatic passports otherwise, and we needed passports that did not have Israeli stamps in them in case we needed to go elsewhere in the region.

On the trip I made with Ray Hunt we went all through the Sinai. It was an interesting organization. The northern sector of the border area was patrolled by Fijian troops, the central section by Colombian troops, and the southern sector by U.S. troops out of the 101st or the 82nd Airborne. They would rotate on six-month deployments. The U.S. also furnished the fifty-person civilian observer unit. Those were the diplomatic-types I mentioned before. They were mainly U.S. foreign service people, although civilians could also be recruited. The Australian and New Zealand armies, combined into an ANZAC unit as they had been in World War II, provided helicopter transport. The Italian navy contributed three patrol vessels which operated out of Sharm el Sheikh at the southern tip of the Sinai. The Netherlands ran communications and a military police unit, while the British provided a headquarters company. Uruguayan soldiers drove the trucks and, as I mentioned before, France provided the fixed-wing aircraft.

The MFO maintained its main base at El Gorah in the North and South Base near Sharm el Sheikh, which housed the U.S. Battalion, as well as a series of observation posts and check points. The construction of the bases had been carried out under U.S. supervision on a fast-track basis in about seven months. As I remember, the cost of operation, exclusive of construction, was somewhat over 100 million dollars a year, which was shared evenly between the U.S. Israel and Egypt. I think the fact that the Egyptians and Israelis were paying a major part of the bills had a lot to do with their commitment to making the whole thing work.

The two trips to the field were fascinating. I remember traveling with the Director General in a helicopter and landing, apparently unexpectedly, at a mountain-top observation post manned by the Colombian battalion. The relief of the Colombian officer-in-charge when I greeted him in Spanish was palpable. I translated while we toured the facilities and met the lone Dutch communicator assigned to the site. While he spoke English well, there seemed to be no

Colombians who did. I sort of wondered how it all functioned, although the Dutchman was picking up Spanish. The main problem was boredom, I guess, since there had never been much to observe beyond an occasional, presumably civilian, camel.

On one of the visits I accompanied a patrol which consisted of military personnel and a civilian observer. It was all very routine, a long ride in the desert with some stops at Egyptian military outposts. Talking with some of the people on the patrol, and more of the observers later in the day, I got the impression of a certain affection for the Egyptians and annoyance with the Israelis. The Egyptians were sticklers for military courtesy and apparently respectful of the foreigners running around in their recently-recovered desert, while the Israelis, never much on formalities in the first place, gave the impression of constant game-playing, trying to see if they could fool these observers trying to function in a desert they, the Israeli army, knew very well. I can understand the attitude - its both fun and pragmatic - but it makes little sense to piss-off the umpire.

During the Cairo, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem portions of the trips I would talk to journalists, usually one on one, about the MFO and its mission. These meetings were pleasant and journalists were theoretically interested in the MFO, but my efforts did not result in much coverage. As long as things were going well - and they were - there was not going to be much press coverage. There were, of course, occasional feature stories in the media of the participating countries, but these were done by interviewing recent returnees or by visits to the Sinai handled by well by my counterpart on General Bull-Hansen's staff. Nobody was going to come to Rome to write a story about soldiers and diplomats in the desert.

We did work the predictable, fire-fighting-type stories that usually result from a foreign presence - minor confrontations with the police or border guards by MFO people on leave in either country, traffic accidents involving Bedouins in the Sinai, and so on. We also had a couple of tragic land mine incidents and a diving fatality among the U.S. troops in the South. The Sinai is a wonderful place, it is one of the few places in the world you can still be maimed by a World War I mine. We maintained contact with journalists in Rome who represented media in the contributing countries, as well, to the best of our ability, monitoring the press for any MFO stories. We also did some small presentations for academic people interested in the study of peacekeeping. Our major product was the first MFO Annual Report a sixty-page or so, fairly glossy English language pamphlet aimed at the Israel, Egypt and the contributing countries. We did the writing ourselves and brought it in on time for the first anniversary of the force. It was okay, I guess.

The worst thing about the job was that the crises I had thought would occur in the Sinai, the confrontations between Israel and Egypt, never materialized. The Egyptians and Israelis had decided it was going to work, and therefore it did.

There would, of course, would be screw ups. Often an Egyptian truck or military vehicle would be in the wrong zone at the wrong time. There were three zones with various rules for each one. The typical Egyptian mistake was not to know where the hell they were in the Sinai because those soldiers who grew up on the banks of the Nile were as lost in the Sinai as somebody from Kansas. Israeli aircraft coming out of the new Negev air bases on training missions would miss

their turn by a few seconds and be halfway into the Sinai. We ended up chasing down a lot of those, and movements of camels. But they were resolved almost immediately by both countries.

The MFO was working like a charm. So I ended up with a four-person office, and not a very interesting mission. I guess the moral of the story is: peacekeeping is only interesting when it doesn't work.

Q: They were used as a training exercise mainly, weren't they?

DIETERICH: Well, I'm not sure how good training it was for the troops on the ground. Their main job was to occupy high points and watch for movement. It is also kind of weird duty for the Foreign Service officers assigned as observers. I don't it really relates much to anything else they will do in their careers. But living on the bases offered time to pursue hobbies and the pay was very good.

I finally had decided that one of the jobs that was going to be important for the MFO in the future was keeping the nine countries in. Vagaries of Mideast politics, the relationship with the United States, and sheer boredom setting in, and whatever else would create pressures to leave the MFO. The Italian political counselor thought he was supposed to worry about that too, so we worried about it together.

After about a year in Rome I got a call from Ambassador Sam Hart, who had been a colleague as the Economic Counselor in Tel Aviv. He asked if I would like to be PAO (Public Affairs Officer, title of the chief of a country USIS post) in Ecuador. He had just fired his PAO. I called back to USIA in Washington and told them about the call and they knew he would be calling me. So I asked if it was all right with them, and they said it was fine. I had not been a PAO yet, so I decided if I stayed on in Rome too long I would end up retiring there. I had better get out and become a PAO. My wife, as much as she loved Rome, was very understanding. She had always heard, correctly, that Quito was a lovely city and a nice place for kids.

So that closed off my time in Rome and my on-the-job involvement with Israel.

It was an interesting and maybe an important transition. I had never served above the junior level in what you might call a typical embassy. I had been with the Voice of America, I had been in a very peculiar consulate general in Sao Paulo, and then an extremely peculiar embassy in Israel. I had never really come to terms with much of what USIS did. Even in Buenos Aires I had gotten very specialized into press stuff, in one particular aspect of the press. In Israel, everything was driven by the big imperatives of U.S. policy in the Middle East, and this whole mission was designed around that policy. We had a MIL group and an AID mission. The AID mission was two persons who handed out checks twice a month. That's all they did. What I was going to learn in Ecuador was what it is like at most American embassies. If you think about it, most foreign service officers either serve at one of the big almost regional, embassies, or they serve in places that are more like Ecuador than they are like Israel.

SUE PATTERSON
Consul General
Milan (1982-1986)

Sue Patterson joined the Foreign Service after completing the examinations in 1974. At the time of this interview, Ms. Patterson was assigned to the National War College for senior training. Her career in the Foreign Service included positions in Iran, Italy, Guatemala, and Washington, DC. Ms. Patterson was interviewed by William D. Morgan on January 28, 1989.

Q: It sounds like at the end of two years, you might have looked for the next assignment.

PATTERSON: Although I loved my work and believed in its importance, I was ready to leave that office at the end of my two years there, because working on these issues under the early Reagan years was terribly demoralizing. I was grateful to have the assignment to the consulate in Milan.

Q: So you got back to the real traditional consular assignment. You had four years there. What were your impressions of things new, that were different in the consular business, things that you hadn't experienced in Iran?

PATTERSON: The assignment in Milan was more pleasant in every way, shape, and form than my work in Tehran, but by the same token, it was less memorable. It was more routine and more sophisticated.

Q: Civilized?

PATTERSON: Civilized. That's the word I'm looking for. We didn't have many serious problems. We had some serious consular cases. I had a small number of very serious prisoner problems.

Q: Drugs?

PATTERSON: No. I had three female prisoners who had all committed murder, two of whom were in the criminal insane asylum, and the other was in a regular prison. I spent a lot of time on them, particularly on the one who was in the regular prison. She was a very high visibility case.

Q: In what sense?

PATTERSON: In the Italian press. She was a lovely, young American model, who had been abusing cocaine and whiskey, who allowed herself to be exploited by the lizards in the fashion community. She murdered a wealthy Italian playboy who had very prominent parents. It was a dynamite case for the press.

Q: So really, you're talking more about press relations than you are actually protecting her rights?

PATTERSON: No. She was exploited by the press, or allowed the press to exploit her, I would feel more comfortable in saying. She was very close to being a mental case, and even tried to commit suicide a couple of times. Following her arrest, I visited her at least once a week. My relations with her were much more on a protection basis than on a press-relations basis. The press never caught on to the fact that I was so involved with her. That was a real blessing, especially during her trial, which was held two years after her arrest, and much of which I attended.

Q: How were you protecting her?

PATTERSON: It was certainly not necessary to protect her from the Italian judicial system, because the Italian judicial system was perfectly above board, and the prison authorities were, in fact, doing everything that they could in their power to be helpful to her. One wonderful attribute of the Italians is that they take a personal approach to life, and are willing to bend rules when the situation calls for it.

I went to visit Terry often, especially initially during her confinement, because of her mental state. I tried to assist her personally, just as one human being to another. She had no one to talk with in the prison, because she spoke no Italian. She was in a terrible physical state because she had been using cocaine and whiskey heavily for at least two or three weeks prior to her committing this murder. So physically, she was a mess; emotionally, she was a mess; spiritually, she was in trouble.

I was able to arrange for an Anglican minister to come visit her, and he, too, became quite fond of Terry, and visits her regularly still.

Q: How old a person is she?

PATTERSON: At the time of the murder, she was 26 or 27. But she was not a sophisticated person. She was raised in South Carolina and had not really traveled much. She is one person that I feel truly has benefitted from her time in prison. I feel she's a rehabilitated person, a totally changed person, because prison provided her protection and a structure. In the prison where she's been confined for the last three years, she's also found very supportive and constructive personnel, and a good job training program.

Q: What was her sentence? I take it she was found guilty and sentenced.

PATTERSON: She was found guilty and sentenced to 17 years in prison, which has subsequently been reduced to 14. After seven years, when she will have served half of her time, it is likely her case will be reviewed upon request of the prison authorities in view of her good behavior and her changed mental attitude and health.

Q: Sue, this story and some others that you have told us, reminds me of that famous dilemma consular officers often find themselves in. While they are not social workers, they are human beings working with human beings. How do you work out that balance between not being a

social worker, not being a lawyer, not getting too involved, thereby performing consular functions, and at the same time satisfying all those normal human drives that one has to help a fellow man or woman?

PATTERSON: I think you cannot do a perfect job on that. The bottom line is if you're doing your job well, you do sometimes get emotionally involved. I certainly got emotionally involved with Terry, but I feel that in her case it was not counterproductive, because I didn't have to wage battle with the Italian judicial system. So there wasn't a conflict there.

Q: Where would there be a conflict?

PATTERSON: If I felt that she wasn't guilty and they had found her guilty, or if I had taken a position against the authorities and wanted her to be treated with favoritism, then that could have been going overboard depending on the circumstances.

Q: You don't think you were playing favorites to her by this extra special care?

PATTERSON: No, I don't feel that I was. Had I had a large prison population and my attention to her was depriving others, that would have been justified criticism. But I was in the enviable position of having only four or five prisoners, and she was at a prison right in Milan, so that going to visit her was not a two-day process as it is for some consular officers when they visit prisoners.

Q: Since this was, as you say, a civilized assignment, I take it the other parts of the consular responsibilities weren't too onerous or too heavy.

PATTERSON: No. We had quite a nice-size workload. We were happily busy, and a little over-busy many times of the year. Occasionally we had a slow day when we had a chance to catch up on paperwork. So it was a nicely staffed, appropriately staffed place.

Q: How about relationships with the rest of the consulate general?

PATTERSON: Those were good. we were advantaged by working in a small post, and were all in the same building, except for USIA and the commercial section. The consular section was in the same area with the principal officer, the deputy principal officer, and the administrative section, so there was good integration and communications. I felt a very good level of support. In fact, I have to say that with the exception of that very first supervisor I mentioned, my supervisors have been supportive of me, interested in my work, aware of what I was doing, what I was trying to do, and given me latitude to develop special projects that I wanted to pursue.

Q: And I could extend that, perhaps with the exception of the first tour, you felt as a consular officer doing consular work that you were an integral part of that mission.

PATTERSON: That's correct. I definitely felt an integral part of the mission and a very, very important part of that mission.

Q: *Any other observations before we move on to your most recent assignment?*

PATTERSON: Relations with the embassy, in terms of the consular work, were sometimes a little bit distant, but largely positive, too. I felt that if I had a particularly difficult case and wanted somebody else to bounce it off of, there were people at the embassy in Rome that I could call and say, "What do you think about this?"

Q: *You got support, but perhaps not guidance.*

PATTERSON: Not much guidance.

Q: *Because there are a number of consulates general in Italy, five or six.*

PATTERSON: At that time there were seven. After Mexico, we were the country with the largest number of consulates.

Q: *And consular work being one of the primary functions of those posts, did the embassy try to integrate the work of all the consulates?*

PATTERSON: We had two in-country consular conferences, which were very successful, very constructive. We also had an occasional visit from the counselor for consular affairs. Those were less helpful. By and large, I felt that we should go ahead and do the things that needed to be done. There was occasionally a thorny case (but less frequently as time went on) that I believed the embassy could help me with.

Q: *So maybe you learned by doing.*

PATTERSON: I think that happened.

CARL A. BASTIANI
Principal Officer
Torino (1983-1987)

Mr. Bastiani was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Seminaries in Iowa and Illinois and at the University of Chicago and Georgetown University. A specialist in Italian and Romanian affairs, Mr. Bastiani served at four posts in Italy (Naples, Genoa, Rome and Turin) and in Romania and Poland. He also had several tours of duty at the State Department in Washington, DC. Mr. Bastiani was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2008.

Q: *You left Poland, when?*

BASTIANI: I left in August of 1983.

Q: Did you have any idea of where you wanted to go; what you wanted to do?

BASTIANI: Yes, I felt – and this may have been arrogance on my part – but I thought I was ready for a good DCM job. I had long ago set the objective of becoming an ambassador, and I thought I was ready for the normal step to an ambassadorship by serving as a deputy chief of mission. At this time the job in Prague was open, and I volunteered for it. I wrote the Ambassador, but he had already picked his man. However, as I was about to leave on a trip it took six months to set up to visit Moscow and Leningrad to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary – I had never been to the Soviet Union – I received a phone call from Personnel in the Department, offering me the job of Political Counselor in Prague, which from a career standpoint I should have taken.

I had also received an offer directly from the DCM in Rome, Peter Bridges, to go to Torino and reopen the Consulate there which had been closed in 1980 over the vigorous protests of the entire Torinese power elite, from Agnelli on down. They hadn't persuaded the Department, but belatedly convinced the Congress which by a line item appropriation mandated the reopening of Turin and four other posts in Western Europe.

The Department in the late 70's and early 80's was really bent on closing posts, and there seem to be an unholy alliance between the Office of Management and Budget in the White House and the Department's Bureau of Administration. Congress therefore forced the Department to reopen these posts. I accepted this offer seeing it as an opportunity to establish a small post as it should be established.

Part of my rationalization for making this choice was to get my family out of that polluted environment. We had spent four years in Krakow which had one of the most polluted environments in the world, and what I had seen of Prague's on the two or three drives we took through it on our way to and from Vienna seemed just as bad.

Q: Carl, so now you're in Torino. You were there from '83 to?

BASTIANI: Eighty-seven.

Q: Eighty-seven. In the first place, overall, how did the one-officer post work out?

BASTIANI: I can best characterize my activity at this one-officer post as doing a little bit of everything a post normally does, and not enough of anything. Because it was a one-officer post I was the only one who could do anything classified above Limited Official Use – not really a classification – and had to rely very much on my number one Foreign Service National secretary for just about everything else. She was not just a secretary, but an executive assistant, often acting even as my deputy in dealing with the police and some other local authorities. At a one-officer post you're really on call 7/24, particularly for emergency protection and welfare cases, the one consular function you cannot avoid. You are a permanent duty officer.

When I went away to a conference or a vacation, the first call every morning from my hotel was to the office and Carla Maria Fumai – that was her name. She would tell me what happened the

day before, what requests had been made, and get my decisions on all items that couldn't wait. And I would sometimes call again in the evening, or be called, when there was a particularly urgent item, to make sure that it had gone well.

In my last year at Krakow as Principal Officer a Foreign Service inspector had come to Warsaw and told us that there would no longer be one-officer posts. At such posts, the officer is burdened by innumerable administrative reports that he must make, the classified pouch, and security functions which cannot be delegated to local employees. They figured that he spends over 50 percent of his time on nothing but these purely administrative tasks. Whatever happened to that decision I don't know, because when the State Department was forced by Congress to reopen five posts in 1983, including Torino, which they had closed in 1980, they limited the staffing to one officer and two FSNs at all of them.

The Department had long been trying to close small posts purely for budgetary reasons. They finally had success in the late 70's and early '80s, I think because of the great additional security costs to protect against terrorism, which had become a major concern.

So, I was busy all the time, at this one officer post. But I kind of welcomed the challenge of trying to get as much done as possible with practically no staff. I even put the uniformed security guard to work. He sat at a desk facing the metal entry door, and admitted and logged visitors. Though a consulate, the Department did not require us to issue visas. We arranged for a contract courier service to run sealed bags containing applications in sealed envelopes for visas to the Consulate General in Genoa, and bring back the processed cases the same way.

The system worked extremely well; but at one point we had to put out a notice that we were not charging the applicants a cent for this service. Some local travel agencies were charging clients for whom they handled the paperwork rather exorbitant fees, and alleging or giving them the perception that we were charging these fees. That was the only glitch that we had to deal with.

Q: How about protection and welfare? What kind did you get?

BASTIANI: Emergencies were about the only ones we ever dealt with. The ones that were not true emergencies we referred to Genoa. One particular case stands out in my mind. A young man with a knapsack and tattered clothing, unshaven and obviously exhausted showed up one day. He was so badly off that I had him take a shower in the private bathroom off my office. I think it was about the only time the shower in it was ever used. I sent one of the FSNs out to buy clothing for him. We processed an emergency loan from the Department, and got in touch with his parents in New York. The father was a prominent executive of an aerospace company, a manufacturer of helicopters. The parents had been absolutely desperate about the welfare of their son who had set out months earlier to travel the world.

They of course immediately came up with all the additional money needed for his travel home. The most rewarding thing about Protection and Welfare work is the feeling that you've helped somebody, and the appreciation the families often show in cases like this

I recall another interesting case which also illustrates how efficient my Carla Maria was. While

shaving on a Saturday evening to go to a dinner she relayed this frantic phone call from a little town in the mountains, pleading for assistance. A young man, a naturalized American citizen, who had come back to visit his mother, had just been thrown into jail because he hadn't done his military service before he left years earlier. All I needed to do was over to Carla Maria and authorize her to call the police on my behalf. In no time at all on a Saturday night she got in touch with the our friendly official with responsibility for foreigners in the *Questura*, the regional Police Department, who had this guy returned to his family that same evening, and the issue of his draft violation deferred until the following Monday. I don't recall ever learning what happened, since by Monday it was no longer an emergency, and we referred the case to our Consulate in Genoa.

Q: What was your impression of the trade unions there, Torino being a big manufacturing area? Well, in the first place, was it CSIL or UIL or was it...?

BASTIANI: The main one was CGIL, the Italian General Confederation of Labor, it was the largest and tied to the Communist Party. They were dominant among industrial workers in the north. They put on these tremendous, endless marches every May Day in Milan waving red banners. These workers were the loyal members of the Communist party, its base. I went to witness it once and was awed. CISL was a Christian Democratic Party federation of unions, and UIL was a smaller one tied to the Socialist Party.

Q: Did you have much contact with the labor leaders there?

BASTIANI: No, I did not, and I'm a little surprised that I didn't. When I was there from '83 to '87 there was not a lot of labor unrest. However, I do recall hearing constantly about what happened in 1980, the year the Department coincidentally had closed the Consulate. During a strike which had FIAT on the ropes, there was a march of about 40,000 technicians, employees of FIAT, *against* the strike. It effectively brought an end to the strike, and FIAT survived.

Q: I remember that very well. I mean, when you have union workers protesting basically on the side of...

BASTIANI: ...Of the owners.

Q: ...Of the owners. I remember that very well.

BASTIANI: And it was a watershed event. One of my first cousins I recently visited in Torino, a retired FIAT technician, participated in the march. In 1980 FIAT's automobile division, its largest, was just about ready to collapse. They had suffered major vandalism within the plants, vandalism perpetrated by extremists to the left of the Communists themselves, but the union leaders did nothing to stop it. It was a time when it was politically impossible for the Communists to admit that any extremist violence came from the left, even though it was a threat to their national policy to enter the government coalition.

1980 was also the year when Fiat retrenched. They quit making certain models and brought in new managers and really resurrected themselves. But more recently – this is a sidebar – in the

early 2000s they were on the ropes again, and seem to have survived.

Q: What about Fiat management, the Agnellis and all that? You know, they were the big lobbyists to keep the post open in 1980. Did they pay much attention to you?

BASTIANI: Yes. I had good relations with both the Agnelli brothers who ran the company at the time, Gianni and Umberto, but particularly with Umberto. Gianni was already in semi-retirement in his home on the *collina*, as the hill overlooking Turin was called – my residence was on the same hill with a magnificent view of the Alps. I only had contact with him directly when the Ambassador visited, I guess twice during my tour there.

Q: The Ambassador was who?

BASTIANI: Raab. R-A-A-B. I just can't drudge up his first name but he was a prominent Republican politician from New York, and was quite diligent in carrying out his ambassadorial duties.

Q: He had actually served as an official in Eisenhower's administration, I think, like a sub chief of staff or something like that.

BASTIANI: Yes, I guess he had clout within the party. But I thought he was an effective Ambassador.

Q: Maxwell Raab.

BASTIANI: That's it. You have an excellent memory, I see. And we had excellent relations. When the Consulate reopened under Congressional mandate, he came up for the official reopening. At the ceremony, both he and I tried to counter skepticism as to whether we would maintain it, given its small size in an office suite, and the fact that we had closed a larger one in 1980 despite their pleas to keep it there. In my remarks I said the U.S. makes mistakes, but unlike other countries, has the rare virtue of recognizing them. Therefore, in deference to the importance of Torino, we were reopening. Beginnings are usually small, but we're going to expand. The Ambassador emphasized that point too. That's what made the bitterness – and I use the word literally here – my own personal bitterness over the decision to close the Consulate again in 1987 is so strong.

Anyway, at the time, I saw the assignment as a challenge to develop the Consulate as one should be developed, to create a new concept of a small consulate. Closures of consulates elsewhere in Europe, including Italy, after our reopening continued. To the extent I could, I urged the Embassy to oppose any more closures in Italy, and as a contribution to the cause submitted an article to the Foreign Service Journal entitled, "Consulates: To Be or Not to Be," arguing that the Foreign Service cannot carry out its legislative mandate without posts in major cities of democracies, where local leaders have such an enormous influence on the policies of the national Government. Another point I made, among others, was that consulates deal directly with the public – the people – while embassies deal primarily with government bureaucracies. So in pluralistic democracies, it is absolutely essential to have consulates in major urban centers to

carry out our mandate.

I guess that partly explains why I was hyper-active. No federal agency could come to me without me giving a lot of attention to its request. I did a lot of commercial work though it was not in my mandate; and I gave very high priority to cultural work though it wasn't either. Consulate General Milan was supposed to cover commercial work in my District; but I never saw them except when I went myself there to pick up pouches. The USIS officer in Genoa was responsible for cultural in my District, but his or her attempt to do so was limited to two or three evening visits a month to use my office to interview candidates for grants. They did have an excellent USIS FSN who spent more time in Turin. Because I was there and his American supervisor was in Genoa, I found it necessary to get involved in his support on a regular basis.

I consider my greatest single achievement in Turin a self-initiated project which combined both commercial and cultural promotion. At lunch one day at the *Vittoria* family restaurant, the young proprietor hesitantly asked me whether it was really true that the U.S. had landed men on the moon. With some embarrassment, he said his communist friends had assured him that it had all been a publicity hoax. I was amazed – and he was relieved – because he was himself pro-American.

At this time, the director of Turin's prestigious International Auto Show – also very pro-American – was imploring me to persuade Washington to participate in some fashion in the Show's next occurrence later that year. As I recall, he offered centrally located space gratis. So I put it to USIS to mount a U.S. man on the moon exhibit. While sympathetic, USIS replied that the request was too late and there was no budget for it. I then persuaded four U.S. companies in the space industry each to contribute \$2,500 to the project. In the end, USIA in Washington supplied large translucent photos, those films we have all seen on television of U.S. astronauts gallivanting on the moon, and even a moon rock exhibit which had to be guarded while on display, and secured in a safe overnight. Commerce's staff in Milan mounted the exhibit for us. Shortly after the President of Italy, Sandro Pertini, cut the ribbon opening the Show, he was escorted by the Director and our own DCM up from Rome to tour our exhibit. Many thousands visited it.

I spoke to groups, mostly to Lion and Rotary clubs. Once I even spoke once to the Monarchist National Party in Milan on the Constitutional Powers of the U.S. Presidency, because USIS Milan couldn't find anyone else in answer to their request. I did my research for it with books from their library. Ironically, USIS finally decided to assign their Genoa FSN permanently to the Consulate, at about the same time the Department decided to close it again.

The Consulate also provided support to NASA. They had a man there full time with his dependent wife to work on a tethered satellite launch project with the Italian Space agency which was located in Turin. NASA provided funds to the Department for the administrative support we gave him, under an inter-agency agreement. With their funds we even bought a fax machine for his use and ours.

Political and economic reporting, and cultivating relations with the local political and economic power elites, were my primary mandate. FIAT was my major reporting subject.

Q: As for Fiat, how much was it about an economically viable entity, and how much of it an almost political entity?

BASTIANI: Well, it was political-economic. FIAT also to some extent created commercial and consular work for us, because we had a number of American businessmen residing in Torino with their families for work with various branches of FIAT or other local companies. So we had a little private international school to support under the Department's program for such schools. I managed to get donations from the Agnelli family for this school because Umberto Agnelli had two of his children enrolled in it. Quite a few Italians sent their children to this school so that they would learn English early on. They saw speaking English as a big asset for their children's future.

In fact, because there were so many Italians in the school, the playground language was Italian. I saw this as an advantage for the American children to pick up Italian from the Italian friends they made. I had one daughter, my fifth and last, Patricia, in that school. She had previously learned Polish extremely well in pre-school and kindergarten in Poland. In Torino we put her in this school and she was mum for about four or five months on Polish or Italian. But then, all of a sudden she started speaking Italian fluently, having picked it up from close friends that she made at the school. You know what happens with children, the parents of friends of your children invite them to birthday parties, or just to play together, and you reciprocate. Our best friends at all our posts were parents of friends of our children. So Patty learned Italian almost as fast as she had learned Polish.

Anyway, the school was also one of the means by which I came into contact with influential people, particularly Umberto Agnelli. But I guess your original question on FIAT was...?

Q: Well, my experience was in the South and there they had a suit against Alfa Romeo. The issue was almost more political than economic. Alfa Romeo was there because it provided employment, and that seemed to be its major purpose.

BASTIANI: And it was huge financial drain on the Government; so much so that in my time Alfa Romeo came up for sale and Ford very aggressively went after it with the full support of the Embassy. I mean, the Ambassador himself became a commercial officer, so to speak, to promote this sale. At the same time Fiat saw Ford taking over Alfa Romeo as a great threat to them because, in my time, Fiat still had about 60-70 percent of Italy's auto market. It was almost a monopoly. I learned through my contacts that Fiat was fighting any decision by the Government to sell to Ford. I became convinced that no way would Ford win because Fiat and Agnelli were just too influential. I remember writing a report or two expressing this view and that's exactly what happened. In the end Fiat took over Alfa Romeo and, as far as I know, they still own it.

Q: You were there during the time when I think the SS-20 situation had arisen?

BASTIANI: It had indeed.

Q: The Soviets had introduced the SS-20 that was aimed at Europe. The idea was to scare the

Europeans into giving less support to the U.S; we responded with a medium range missile.

BASTIANI: The Pershing.

Q: The Pershing missile and the cruise missile. And there was a lot of pressure put on members of NATO to accept these shorter range missiles, and Italy turned out to be cooperative. So often this was the case, Italy very strong in helping us. How did this play? This was really the final, you might say propaganda or popular battle of the Cold War in Europe. How did this play in Torino?

BASTIANI: It was a major topic of concern and conversation. And I tried to carry out the mandate we all had to present our side on this issue to our contacts. The approach I used was to point out that, we hadn't had a nuclear or major war in Europe thanks to the deterrence of our nuclear umbrella. The fundamental principle for deterrence to work is to have credible power for response that is equal or greater than the power of the other side. I was convinced – and could say with all sincerity – we were not about to use our nuclear power to attack or intimidate the Soviet Union, but only maintained it as a deterrent to prevent the Soviet Union from doing that against us or any NATO country. Deterrence was our basic policy.

And then the point I'd make was that the *possession* of missiles and bombs by both sides was not so much the problem, as an *imbalance* between the two sides. I remember making this gesture, exactly.

Q: You're showing a vertical distance between your two hands.

BASTIANI: Yes, between one side and the other. The Soviets by deploying these SS-20s, which brought all of Western Europe within their range had created an imbalance intended to intimidate West Europeans and increase their influence over the policies of the West Europeans. These missiles did not threaten the U.S. directly, but did threaten our bases in Europe. By doing this, the Soviets increased the threat of nuclear war, because under the NATO treaty, an attack on one member is considered an attack on all members. They were counting on the doubts of many Europeans that we would fulfill our commitment, and instead agree to compromises at the expense of the West Europeans because we ourselves were not directly threatened. So the only way we could bring the situation back into balance was by deploying our own medium range missiles which brought a similar area of the Warsaw Pact under their range. We could of course do this only with the consent of individual NATO countries in which the missiles would be deployed. So, as you mentioned, a great propaganda war was fought over the basing issue in which the Soviets, their sympathizers, and especially pacifists in Western Europe pulled out all the stops.

Q: Well, discuss what was happening there in Italy. In your area, did you find the Communist party, the Communist unions...were they sort of willing supporters of the Soviet side? Were there demonstrations or how did this play?

BASTIANI: I don't recall major demonstrations on this issue inspired by the Communists on deployment of our Pershing and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles in response to the SS-20.

Traditionally, the Communists opposed deployment of missiles in Western Europe, but, in the '70s, they were promoting the Historic Compromise, and had explicitly accepted the NATO alliance until both blocs could be eliminated by agreement.

Moreover, the basing of GLCMs (ground launch cruise missiles) at a huge base in Comiso, Sicily provided much needed employment, and was welcomed by many of the people there. I recall that the basing of Pershing IIs and GLCMs in other NATO countries received much more popular opposition in those countries.

Q: Yes. And in Germany...

BASTIANI: ... I think what overt opposition there was in Italy was much more in the South and Rome, than in the North. In fact, I found much understanding for our position in Turin, where the power elite, especially the *economic* power elite, were even more supportive of U.S. policy and actions than the Government in Rome. When Qadhafi attempted to hit our LORAN installation on the southern coast of Sicily in 1986 with two Scud missile which fell short into the sea, Rome's reaction was less than firm. At a reception some there told me they were embarrassed by it and apologized as Italians for their Government.

Q: What about terrorism? Where was this coming from? Had this moved over to being Palestinian or Middle Eastern terrorism, or was it still pretty much homegrown terrorism?

BASTIANI: I think it was primarily still homegrown terrorism during my time in Torino – the mid-80s – and still directed primarily against individual politicians and business leaders. The most prominent and still the most successful in their terroristic activity were the Red Brigades. They had kidnapped and killed Moro, the leader of the Christian Democrats who was about to consummate the *Compromesso Storico* as I described earlier. This has led to wild charges, still current today, that we, i.e., the CIA, were really behind it. What I may not have mentioned is that they later kidnapped a U.S. NATO general, General Dozier, in December 1981 while I was coping with the first days of martial law in Krakow. The Italian police rescued him in a brilliant operation in Padua in which one of my cousins took part. He was then a detective there.

But at the same time we were very conscious of Middle Eastern terrorist threats to ourselves as U.S. diplomats and consuls. In January 1982 there was the assassination in Paris of Charles Ray, one of our military attaches by the Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction. What really got my attention however was the assassination attempt on a colleague, Bob Homme, who had just reopened a Consulate in France under the same Congressional mandate under which I reopened Torino.

Q: Strasbourg?

BASTIANI: Yes. Bob in fact works with me now as a WAE declassifying documents requested under FOIA, the Freedom of Information Act. Fortunately for Bob, the single terrorist of Middle East origin was a lousy shot. Only one of five shots he fired at Bob while he was leaving for work from his driveway grazed him in the neck. I don't know whether they ever caught the would be assassin. I would have to ask Bob about that.

Until then I hadn't considered myself all that threatened, because I saw the terrorists as a sort of megalomaniacs, targeting ambassadors and higher profile diplomats. I then saw myself more open to threat, because Turin is on the road between Paris and Rome which I assumed they traveled. Given the location of the Consulate in the city, I was in a very vulnerable position.

When the officers from Consulate General Genoa prior to my arrival had picked out the office suite for the Consulate they chose a spacious, plush, newly renovated suite, ideal for our work; but, from a security standpoint, very much exposed. We were on the third floor of a four-sided building with an inner courtyard. There was only one entry to the courtyard in which we parked, through an archway from a busy narrow one-way street. Entry from the courtyard was through an open archway to a glassed in elevator around which wound the stairway. I seldom used the elevator, because I saw how easy it would be for an assassin to conceal himself on the dark stairway, and let me have it through the glass. I usually took the stairs two at a time – for the exercise as well.

Despite the threat, I refused to give up my habit of taking long walks over lunch hour through the city, so the *Questura* had a detective in mufti follow me with a newspaper folded around his Beretta pistol. I ran him ragged with my pace. The precautions I did take were to vary my times and routes. I wouldn't give up the walks I took in lieu of a regular lunch, because I was on one of my ambitious weight reduction programs at the time.

Sometime after my arrival, the Embassy had my official full size Ford Granada armored at the factory in Germany: bullet proof glass, armor plate, wheels with a metal rim inside so that you could continue driving even if the tires were shot out, backup battery, etc. All that extra weight took all the pleasure out of driving it; and, as my administrative assistant/driver found out later, made it hard to control at higher speeds. The security people at the Embassy had me take the car there so they could put dark plastic on the inside of the windshield. I ripped it off on the drive back, because it was almost impossible to see through it against the sun. I figured it was much more of a hazard to my driving than a protection against terrorists.

I only used the administrative assistant as a chauffeur when I was going on official visits where I'd be met at the entrance to the prefecture, for example, by the prefect or his subordinate. Otherwise, to and from my residence on the *collina*, I always drove it myself, both because the staff was small, and as a security precaution on the theory that would-be assassins wouldn't think the driver up front was actually the Consul.

Despite the precautions I took, I know I probably survived because that terrorists never targeted me. I never forgot what a security officer had said when he briefed me with other officers just prior to an assignment abroad. "If they target you, he said, they'll probably get you." And the way you deal with that, I told myself, is to accept the fact that exposure to terrorism had become part of the job. If you want to be perfectly secure abroad, you are not Foreign Service material. The same, of course, can be said in spades about a military career.

Back to my administrative/chauffeur FSN. Ford knew that their armored cars were hard to control at speed, so they offered a training course of several days at the factory in West Germany

for our chauffeurs. I tried to get my driver enrolled, but the Embassy's Administrative Office told me the budget wouldn't allow it. Well, sometime later, James Baker, then Secretary of the Treasury, made a lightning late afternoon/early evening visit to Turin with a small Air Force jet on a confidential round robin trip to talk urgently to his major European counterparts. I don't recall if I ever found out what the urgent issue was; I was excluded from the meeting. Italy's Treasury Minister was from my District and there at the time – it was, if I recall correctly, on a Saturday or Sunday. On very short notice I and Carla Maria arranged police escort from and to the airport with the very cooperative *Questura*.

They did it grand style, police cars, motorcycle police, sirens, all the many intersections blocked to other traffic, no stops from start to finish, a mad dash. Well, during the short reception following the secret meeting to which I was not admitted, the head Treasury Agent accompanying the Secretary took me aside and asked me to request the Italians not to race so fast back to the airport as they had done on the way in. Moreover, they needed a ride – maybe to avoid riding with the police – so I gave up my plan to go to the airport myself, gave them my armored car and driver, and arranged for him to join the procession. Well, the request to drive slower was ignored, my driver lost control of on a turn; and a minor accident ensued in which no one was hurt.

When the Embassy Administrative Office tried later to fire my driver, I reminded them of their refusal to give him the special training Ford thought was necessary, refused to comply, and then won my appeal to the DCM and Ambassador on the issue. He in fact has long since immigrated to the U.S. and lives in the Boston area where he has a family, and became a private pilot who has flown much more than I have. I only found out these last details recently.

For my wife and non-official driving, we bought a brand-new FIAT compact sedan, and registered it locally to keep it anonymous. I was glad we had sold our Chevy Malibu station wagon in Krakow instead of bringing it to Italy where it, literally, would have stood out like a white elephant. The FIAT served us well the four years we were there. The only thing my wife didn't like was its color which she, an artist, described as nauseous green, but it was the only color available for immediate delivery when we arrived. Incidentally, we found it was stable in cruise at 100 mph on the French super highway to Paris when we went there for a short vacation without the children. It handled much better at high speed than the classier British rental I drove on the same highway on a post-retirement private business trip to Europe. It also survived a mild collision she had with a slow moving street car when she turned across its tracks, which was easy to do in Turin. No one was hurt but the car; fortunately the street car had good brakes. I won't talk about the left rear door she tore off as she backed out of our garage.

Q: You were there until '87. Well, what happened when they closed the post? How did the decision come up, closing the post?

BASTIANI: The decision for me was a bolt from the blue in January of 1987. As I mentioned earlier I had been following the closure of consulates in Europe very closely, feeling threatened. Every time I went to the Embassy on consultation, I would bring up the subject, and every time I would be reassured by Ambassador Raab that Turin wasn't threatened. I got nothing but reassurances. Well, in January of 1987, which was my last year there – I served there four years

– I get this phone call from the Deputy Chief of Mission telling me that the Secretary had just signed off on the closure of 10 consulates, including most that had been reopened in 1980. And that was it. Well, I was bitter and I was furious. The stated justification was budgetary, given the outlays for security and federal budget cuts mandated under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act.

I no sooner hung up than I called Carla Maria into the office with her pad and dictated a six page cable arguing against the decision. I had it transmitted unclassified through the Dissent Channel, and asked that it be given the widest distribution, even to the White House and Congress, if possible. In it I emphasized Turin's national importance in both Italy's economy and politics, including the fact that many of Ministers of the national government were based in the District. Some I saw at receptions in Turin more often than the Ambassador did in Rome. Three of the First Secretaries of parties in the Government's coalition were also based in Turin's Consular District.

As I mentioned earlier, I had been following the continued closure of Consulates in Europe with foreboding, and had in May 1986 submitted an article to the Foreign Service Journal, "Consulates: To Be or Not To Be." In it I argued that the real reason for the closure of Consulates was not really budgetary constraints, but the low priority given to Consulates in the competition for funding. I pointed out that Department's budget for the following fiscal year was actually 19 percent higher than the previous year's, and that it was also 40 or 50 percent higher than the Department's actual expenditures two and three years before. It was rejected for publication by the editors with the incredible comment that there did not seem to be enough interest in the subject.

Q: Well, what happened? I mean, when did they shut it down and how did it happen?

BASTIANI: What happened was that I from that day on went on a quixotic crusade to try to get the decision on Turin reversed by the Secretary by refuting the budgetary argument through documentation of all our expenses, and proof that it would actually cost the Department much more to close the post than keep it open, given that it already had the physical resources it needed. Moreover, some of our small cost was offset by payments the Department received from USIA and Commerce for the support we provided them. I also showed how our fixed cost for the rental of post's office suite would be drastically reduced if we accepted the offer of a substantial villa in the city for almost no rent, because the owner – a wealthy widow – merely wanted it occupied and maintained. Its high fenced garden and gate would also have been a security asset. The reply to this was a reprimand from someone in the Administrative Bureau for opposing the decision to close.

I did all this well aware of the wisdom of that saying, "You can't fight city hall," and really didn't expect to win. But I couldn't help myself; so great was my realization of how stupid the decision was, and my personal feeling of betrayal at how it had been taken. As I later learned, the Department had earlier decided to close down the Consulate General in Genoa. The Embassy and Genoa had then persuaded it to allow Genoa to remain open until 1992, the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Closing Turin was offered as a tradeoff in return. This was done without any notice to me whatsoever. That as I argued in the Dissent was contrary to the Foreign Service Manual's requirement that one in my position be consulted

when such decisions are made.

I even submitted a draft Decision Memo with all the protocol formatting, for submission to the Secretary to reverse the decision. I never got a response to that or most of all the other documentation I submitted. It was simply ignored by both the Department and the Embassy.

Q: Well Carl, let's move on. So when did you have to shut down?

BASTIANI: Well, I actually didn't shut the post myself; that was done immediately after my departure by our people from Genoa. I kept waiting for a direct order to do so, which, of course, I would have obeyed. But it never came. They spared me that. As July approached, the Embassy even offered me supplemental representational funds for the traditional Fourth of July reception, to which we had invited hundreds of guests the previous years. Its only purpose would have been to provide an occasion of personal farewell for me – and that's maybe why the Embassy offered it, as some sort of consolation. I refused to hold any reception at all; I was not about to try to explain or defend the Department's decision as if there were some sort of need for it. It would have been very embarrassing as well in light of what the Ambassador and I had said at the reopening a few years earlier. Spending all that money on a reception when we said we couldn't afford to maintain the Consulate would have seemed a contradiction.

Q: So you left in '87 and then what?

DONALD A. KRUSE
Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces South
Naples (1984-1985)

Donald A. Kruse was born in Philadelphia in 1930. He attended Wheaton College and the University of Pennsylvania and he also served in the US Army. He entered the Foreign Service in 1957, wherein he served in Luxembourg, France, Belgium, Jerusalem, Italy, and England. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 17, 1997.

Q: I know, but it just plays to it. You left Personnel in '84. Whither?

KRUSE: Off to Naples to be the political advisor to the Commander in Chief of Allied Forces South.

Q: You were in Naples from '84 to '88. I left Naples in '81 as consulate general there, so I'm familiar with some of the things. Could you talk about, first, the job? Then we'll get into some of the details.

KRUSE: As you may recall, I had had a lot of NATO experience in my earlier career in Brussels, as well as many of the other Pol/Mil jobs I had. So, I felt very comfortable seeking a NATO assignment. I knew about this southern region command because I had worked in the NATO

structure both military and political. There was no doubt that things were heating up in the Mediterranean even though they were not specifically the concern of NATO. As you know, NATO and its members tended to want to stay out of what was termed "out of area" issues. That is, geographic areas that were not in Continental Europe--what was considered the original NATO area. What we had in Naples was a four star American admiral running NATO's southern region for NATO. But in his other hat, he was running all U.S. naval forces in and around Europe, including the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. So, you had day to day operational responsibilities on the U.S.-only side and the NATO planning functions. By and large, all that NATO forces in the south were doing was planning and exercising. Until much later when they got into Bosnia issues, NATO never fired a shot in anger in all the years of the Cold War. This four-star admiral actually had two POLADs, one of whom resided in Naples at his NATO headquarters, where he also lived, and one was up in London, where his headquarters for the U.S.-only side, U.S. Navy Forces Europe. So, I really was not officially an advisor to the admiral on U.S.-only things--i.e., when we decided to launch an attack on Libya, that was done by Sixth Fleet forces solely as an American operation. That was not my business to be involved in, although proximity to the boss always gives you an opportunity to put in your comments.

Q: I was going to say, after all, somebody up in London talking about what to do about Libya when you're sitting down in Naples. This seems to be one of the problems of the chain of command anyway. The military is continually faulted for this.

KRUSE: In actual practice it wasn't all that often that the Sixth Fleet or U.S. forces were conducting operations in anger. Whenever that happened, the admiral would simply go up to London and be at the headquarters to be seen and to be directing things in person. I suppose electronically, he could have done all this from Naples. He didn't really need to be on the spot. But the kind of communications equipment that was modern and state of the art was not in Naples, it was in London. That's where the U.S. had put it. Just optically, I think, Washington wanted the CINC up at his U.S. headquarters when American forces were involved in action.

Q: I'd like to do sort of a geographic tour before we get to events. Let's stop and talk about Spain and Portugal first. During this '84 to '88 period, what were the prime concerns and developments from your perspective? In the first place, who was your admiral or admirals?

KRUSE: I had quite a number in those four years because we started with Admiral Bill Small. He left within a year and he was replaced by Admiral Lee Boggett. Admiral Moreau replaced Boggett who went on to become SACLANT. The illness and death of Moreau changed everything. It's kind of a sick joke, but the Navy doesn't plan for one of its four stars to die. They don't have contingency plans for replacements. It had to kind of yank people out of their career path. We then had Admiral Busey. Then, finally, Admiral Howe replaced him after a couple of years. So, I had four admirals in the course of... What you had in Naples, and it is worthwhile to emphasize the NATO side because that really was my job (It was not the American side.), we had a command structure in Naples that had other nationality officers. The chief of staff at the command was an American Army three star, but his deputy was an Italian two star. We had, throughout the staff of that headquarters, officers from Greece, Turkey and Italy as well as U.S. and UK officers. France was still not a part of the integrated structure. It had a liaison mission which was very active and very helpful to us. One of the little secrets of the southern region of

NATO is that France was the second largest contributor of naval forces to all of our exercises, all without making any great public show of this. So, you had a very integrated and international command. The problem was that the Greeks and Turks barely spoke to each other because of their national concerns about territory and borders and areas of operation.

You've asked me about Spain and Portugal. They are considered part of the southern region. Spain was just getting into the military side of NATO at that point. It had joined the Alliance politically as the last and 16th member after we had only 15 members for all those earlier years. Spain has come along with an interest in participating militarily, but I think the interest is described less in a Cold War sense, even now that it's over and there isn't any Cold War. In those days, the Spanish saw it as needing to keep an eye on what is going on in the Mediterranean. They felt that the North African situation was very volatile, could turn out bad for them, particularly if something went wrong in Morocco. They were more concerned with the Western Mediterranean than anything out toward the east in the region of Greece and Turkey. Portugal, although part of the Southern Region, is so Atlantic that its participation in alliance military stuff was really more with SACLANT than Atlantic. So, we didn't really have a whole lot to do with both of those countries. Portugal did have a liaison office at our headquarters. Spain was just developing one when I left. I think we come to France.

Q: Yes, let's talk about France.

KRUSE: France was key because the French are a Mediterranean power as well as an Atlantic power and a world power. I love the French and I even love their "orgueil" because from the French you get a genuine "what you see is what you get." They'll give you an answer. If they have reasons they don't want to do it, you may not understand them, but you know they're going to hold on. Their interest in this command has been reflected these recent events in the last couple of years where they have wanted to have the four star admiral in Naples to be a French admiral. Of course, we're saying, "Over our dead bodies. We don't do that." Eventually, Chirac has kind of dropped off that demand. But it does demonstrate the feeling that the French see the Mediterranean as vital to their interests. This is not only because of oil, but because of Algeria and because of the Maghreb countries and the concerns for immigration, concerns for upheaval in their own country, and just generally, concerns for trying to get some kind of peaceful resolution of problems in the Arab world and the Muslim world. France feels that it has a role from its long history of dealing with North Africa and Lebanon and it should be recognized. So, politically, they're interested. Militarily, they have been very cooperative.

Q: Could you talk about this cooperation? What does this mean? We're talking about the time you were here.

KRUSE: We would have an annual schedule of NATO exercises involving naval forces. For example, there would always be an amphibious landing somewhere in Sicily or in Southern Italy, where we would practice what we might have to do in Turkey or Greece if there had been a Russian or Soviet attack. For those exercises, we got a lot of activity from American naval forces and Italian forces. The Brits would play sometimes, although less and less. They had few ships available. The Germans were beginning to send forces down to participate for military training purposes. The Greeks and the Turks would send over some forces. But more and more, and as I

said earlier, it came during my time, the French participated even with an aircraft carrier and were second only to the U.S. It made them completely familiar with the way NATO does things so that, if we ever did have a real life situation that France would agree to participate in, they would know how to do it.

Q: What about communications and all this? For the military, communications are key. If you have somebody who is out of NATO, how did that work?

KRUSE: They completely accepted our way of doing things. They learned NATO communications. There was no hangup for them to do things NATO's way, although I'm sure Paris and the political side of France would not advertise this. But they were complete team players.

Q: Was Mitterrand still the President?

KRUSE: This was Mitterrand.

Q: Which was a socialist regime which had for years sort of bad mouthed NATO and all that.

KRUSE: Possibly, although they always accepted NATO and its political configuration to an extent. What they objected to was any automatic French military response--they didn't want any American general or the NATO Council to tell them when they were going to go to war. That was a Gaullist principle which all succeeding French leaders have accepted, that France will decide when it goes to war.

Q: What was your impression of the Italian role in NATO?

KRUSE: The Italians were the ones that wanted to have peace. They hated to see the Greeks and the Turks squabbling. They were always ready to be mediators. They were providing more and more military forces. They were modernizing their navy and their air force and their army. They were good team players because they wanted to be a good, strong, solid member of NATO, even if sometimes the appearance went beyond the actual capabilities. This is not to downplay their good military capabilities. These have been superlative in recent peace-keeping operations. Italians were excellent hosts to our NATO headquarters. Naples was a beautiful location for NATO to have this headquarters, even though Naples was chaotic.

Q: Looking at Greece and Turkey, I remember, when I was in Naples, asking Admiral Crowe, who was at that point the NATO commander there, about the role of the Greeks and the Turks. I had served for four years in Athens at one point. He just sort of shrugged his shoulders and said, "They're always at each other." What was the feeling there?

KRUSE: There was great annoyance and sometimes great anger at the way particularly the Greeks would try to use NATO to advance their position vis-a-vis Turkey. They were very sensitive to any possible perceived slight. If the Turks overflew a Greek island that happened to be three miles off the Turkish mainland, this would be a virtual *causi belli*. They simply didn't let anything go that appeared to give Turkey some advantage. It's a rather vulnerable position that

the Greeks had because here were these Greek islands that were far closer to Turkey, sometimes within eyesight. I remember, when I visited Ephesus that I could look across the harbor and see a Greek island. Of course, Cyprus had been a live example of what the Greeks considered an invasion by Turkish forces. That was way back in '74.

Q: July '74. I know it well.

KRUSE: You were in Athens?

Q: I had just left Athens. I think it was the fourteenth of July. What was your impression of the caliber of the Greek officer assigned to NATO that you observed and the Turkish officer?

KRUSE: I think we have to go back just a little bit to talk about the political situation. We had Papandreou. Throughout the whole time I was there, he was the Prime Minister.

Q: This was Andreas Papandreou.

KRUSE: Andreas Papandreou. He and his Pasok Party, the socialist party in Greece, was having great fun with the U.S. I say "fun" because, to a certain extent, I really thought the Greek position was rhetorical in trying to pretend that the Cold War was a thing of the past and that we should learn to deal with the Soviets in a more natural manner. He would make overtures toward the Soviets and also toward the Bulgarians and other Balkan countries, in effect, pretending, as I say, that the Cold War was over and we were now back to a situation which we kind of have now in 1997. But we didn't have it back in 1984. He insisted on Greek terms for everything, Greek terms for the Common Market, Greek terms for its participation in NATO. I'm not going to get into details of the essential squabble with NATO, except to say it was a question of the areas that would be under the control of the NATO officer involved in the defense of Greece. The Greeks because they were unhappy with the NATO proposed solutions to these problems basically stayed out of NATO exercises. It made it very difficult for my admiral to go over and have a decent, normal conversation with Greeks. There were some things you could talk about, but the question of reestablishing a NATO command, a subordinate command in Greece and in the Aegean, was not solvable in our time.

Q: Were you, in effect, during this '84 to '88 period, almost writing Greece off?

KRUSE: We didn't want to write them off. We didn't have them with us to participate in the exercises. We did our best to convince them that they should. To some extent, we could get them to do some things. They were very hospitable when the admiral came. He would be taken and shown Greek military potential. He would go up to the north in the Macedonia area of Greece and see how the forces were set up to counter any possible attacks. They tried to be pro-forma cooperative and hospitable. But there were these underlying issues, all of which stemmed from their concern that Turkey was going to get some advantage over them. That issue was clearly more important to them than cooperation with NATO.

Q: But I would have thought that in this thing, in a way, we could play the Turkish card in NATO, say, "All right, fine. If you don't want to join our exercises, that's your prerogative. Of

course, we'll just have to pay a little more attention to Turkey."

KRUSE: We didn't want to do that. That's not the NATO way. It doesn't like to play one ally off against the other. We all hoped for the better day. The situation that holds today, I would presume, is somewhat different because of the end of the Cold War.

Q: Let's talk about the perceived Soviet threat to this southern flank at this '84 to '88 period.

KRUSE: That's a good question. It was, I think, a misconception. Often, I would talk to the admiral about it. Washington would continue to talk about the presence of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean. The issues involving the Soviet presence were how many ships were there, and the U.S. Navy, as you know probably, spent inordinate sums of money to track every Soviet ship everywhere in the world. I have no idea of the cost of that operation, but I know that every four star officer in the U.S., every day, is capable of learning where every Soviet ship was--its long range ballistic missile submarines, and every other kind of warship. We worried about the facilities that the Soviets were able to use, such as from time to time, they would go into Libya. There was a "Soviet base area" in Syria. To my mind, the Soviet naval presence in the Med was almost inconsequential in terms of a military threat. I think any honest U.S. naval officer would have to admit that if hostilities had started, before the end of the day, every Soviet ship in the Mediterranean would have been wiped out. Of course, the Syrians wanted to play up their close relationship with the Soviets so that this would make Israel think twice before it tried to do anything. You asked me about the Soviet threat. I never took the peacetime Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean as a great threat. The long-range ballistic missile submarines, presumably were as capable as ours, and could have threatened us. The whole idea of the Russians trying for the first time to develop a worldwide fleet the same way we did worried us a lot. But when you look back, you wonder how they even developed what they did, given the economic condition of the Soviet Union.

Q: Also, I would have assumed that, when you're talking about the Mediterranean, I think you're talking about the Straits of Gibraltar and the Bosphorus. I can't think of two more horrendous problems for a Soviet naval threat to the Mediterranean. They have to practically pay a toll to go through, in order to fight their war. They're both controlled by our NATO countries.

KRUSE: Particularly the Bosphorus, where the Soviets, to get any ship through, had to get Turkish permission because of the Montreaux Convention. That was another issue as to how the Soviets appeared often to be putting pressure on the Turks. When the Soviets finished the aircraft carrier that they were building, there was a question of whether the Montreaux Convention would allow them to take this ship through because of its size. We were always checking with the Turks to say, "What do you think you're going to do?" Fortunately, the Cold War ended before the ship was finished.

Q: I think they finally went through, but more or less to be junked up in Murmansk or something like that to kill off in Kiev.

KRUSE: Well, there was a Kiev class and then they named one after Brezhnev. I wonder where it is today?

Q: What about, as you were sitting in NATO headquarters, the land threat into the southern flank?

KRUSE: There was always the concern about Yugoslavia, whether, in fact, the Soviets would get upset enough with Yugoslavia that it might do something, or use Yugoslavia as a pathway to get into northern Italy. So, the Italians were always keeping a close eye on what was happening in Yugoslavia. The land threat was really not considered great. The Turks, of course, were concerned about their situation. They from time to time would call attention to the threat they thought they had from Syria, although, I think, most of it related to the Kurds. At this time, the Turks were not even admitting that they had a Kurdish problem.

Q: "Mountain Turks," I think they were called.

KRUSE: That's right. The land threat was not considered great. We did not expect that the Soviets would be coming. It was a Central Europe scenario that NATO was most concerned about.

Q: You mentioned Israel several times. Although this would not be under the NATO hat, Israel had been touted and continues to be touted in the United States as being our firm ally in the Middle East. From the vantage point of NATO South, how did you look upon this?

KRUSE: I think the one issue that came up regularly, in the NATO context, was whether we could have some of our ships visit Israel when they were under NATO command. We had an on-call force in the Mediterranean, which would bring together allied ships just for a period of time every year as an exercise. Whether they could call at one of the littoral ports in the southern Mediterranean... No one in NATO suggested Israel as a place for such a call, but we were thinking about going to Alexandria or to Tunis. So, to that extent, there was a recognition that it would be good to be familiarized with the southern Mediterranean and the eastern Mediterranean. Because NATO itself in Brussels, at headquarters, had no dealings directly with Israel, the only thing that I did get involved in, even if it wasn't really my duties, was the U.S.-Israeli cooperation that the admiral was engaged in under his U.S. hat. He went to Israel one time for a visit. This was a time when we were trying to find ways that our forces could do more collaboration with Israel militarily. It was during this period of the Reagan years when they signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Israel about military cooperation. Also a standing body on the political side which P/M (Bureau of Political/Military Affairs) staffs met regularly with the Israelis. I'll toss in my reaction. Israel was the most powerful, even though it's a small country, military force in the southern and eastern Mediterranean. From a U.S.-only standpoint, because of our political concerns about Israel, we were seeking ways to collaborate, cooperate with them more militarily. I think, depending on who was in charge at the time and depending on how much pressure came from the White House, you'd find different admirals giving you different answers as to whether Israel was a strategic asset, or whether it was basically something that would give us problems down the road. My own view is that unless and until, Israel comes to terms with the Palestinians and Syrians we should be very cautious in our military cooperation with Israel.

Q: In your dealings with this command, obviously, there was always the Soviet threat, but no matter how you sliced it, you were sitting in the Mediterranean. Essentially, I look at Algeria, I don't know what the situation was there, but then you move to Libya. Then you have Syria, Israel, and Egypt, who are sort of joined at the hip and don't like each other.

KRUSE: It really goes back to what does NATO think its role is in those out of area situations. There is nothing in NATO's history or the wording of the treaty that implies we should have anything to do with these areas outside the basic Cold War area. To be honest with you, I don't know what in the post Cold War era, in which we now find ourselves, what NATO has done in terms of its doctrine regarding "out-of-area" issues. Generally, our European partners recognize that instability down there in North Africa or in the Middle East is going to have an impact on not only their oil, but on their citizens who happen to be in those countries and just generally for regional stability. The individual members of NATO are concerned, but I still think NATO is only very reluctantly going to take on any duties in defending countries in the south of Europe against attacks that come from outside the area. The Bosnia example, which has shown NATO to be involved now, indicates that there is change. Back in my day, if there had been unrest in Yugoslavia, NATO would have been very slow, if at all, to do anything about it. But now, NATO, because there really isn't any Soviet bar to what we are doing, has been invited to become involved in Bosnia. So, I think this is all going to be new history to be written.

Q: There were several events. There was an attack on Libya. Did that happen during your tour?

KRUSE: Yes indeed, 1986.

Q: Could you talk a bit about the background of this and your perspective on that?

KRUSE: I may be wrong on what incident set it off, but think it was the bombing of the disco in Berlin.

Q: Where some American troops were killed.

KRUSE: Right, there were Americans killed. There was evidence that perhaps Libyans were behind that. I confess that I wouldn't swear to that being what raised our level of anger against Libya. They also kept threatening to extend their "zone of death," as they called it, into the Mediterranean.

Q: The Gulf of Sudra and all that.

KRUSE: Right. So, we had some aerial conflict where their planes had come out and challenged ours in an area that we considered to be international waters. We shot a couple down. I remember, that happened while I was in the War College. So, that happened earlier in the '80s. I think it was the disco thing that led us to decide to attack Libya. Frankly, I was not privy to the kind of attack planning, that was done in Washington and at U.S. Navy Headquarters in London. You remember, they brought the Air Force into this as well.

Q: From the United Kingdom.

KRUSE: Right. But most of the attack was carried by carrier planes from U.S. Sixth Fleet aircraft operating in the Mediterranean. From the military standpoint, we lost a U.S. Air Force plane. I forget the circumstances. But the Navy attack went off with no casualties.

Q: I think one American was killed and one captured or something like that. I may be wrong.

KRUSE: I think that was Lebanon. I don't think the Libyans ever got one of our people. But the attack then took place. I guess it really was after Qadhafi himself. From what I read in the papers, they attacked where he often spends time. Personally, if I had been asked about that, I would certainly have thought that would not be a wise thing to do. You'd make a martyr out of him. You'd inflame people who otherwise didn't like him. I'm sure the Egyptians would have had to be unhappy. You have to be careful when you're throwing bombs around at people. I suppose you could say, "So, what's the harm? The Libyans aren't going to hurt us. They're not going to shoot our planes down. The Arabs are not going to turn against us on behalf of Qadhafi, whom they consider to be crazy." So, he was a fairly easy target. One could argue that the attack has deterred the Libyans from doing it again. I hope maybe it did, but I still question the wisdom of going after another country's leader.

Q: Was your headquarters involved in this?

KRUSE: No, Naples headquarters was not involved at all. It was all out of London. The CINC went back to London to be there during the attack.

Q: The timing I'm not sure about, but was the Achillea Lauro hijacking during your time there, or was that later?

KRUSE: Yes, it was during my time.

Q: That at least impinged on Sicily and Sigonella and all that.

KRUSE: Very much so.

Q: I was wondering if you were involved on that.

KRUSE: Again, because it wasn't a NATO operation, I was not directly a participant in anything there. That was a tough issue because it was an outrageous hijacking of a ship and then the killing of the American, Klinghoffer. There was no doubt who did it. They were seen and heard. The Egyptians attempted to end the affair. You might remember that the ship came into Egyptian waters, I think, in Alexandria, and was still under the control of the hijackers at that time. The Egyptians felt that what you should do at this point was get the hijackers off the ship so there would be no more blood and then deal with them later on. We took a harder line. We wanted those hijackers so that when the Egyptians got the hijackers off the ship, ended the hijacking event, then they were going to attempt to fly the hijackers out of Egypt. I forget where they wanted to actually take them, but in effect, get them out of the area. We forced the plane down that was carrying the hijackers, forced it to land in Sicily. We had this very unhappy thing where

the Italian air controllers at that airport in Sicily were refusing to allow our forces to go into the plane and get the hijackers. Eventually, it led to the hijackers being taken by Italians to Rome and, soon thereafter, being allowed to go. We were very unhappy with the Italian response on this. We wanted these hijackers.

Q: What did that do in your perspective in NATO headquarters during this period?

KRUSE: People have personal opinions. I would say that there were some military who said, "These guys are bastards and so anything bad that happens to them is good." There were others who maybe were a little more sympathetic and would say, "Let's just end the thing as soon as we can. These are Palestinian terrorists. They have their reasons for conducting terrorist activities. Just end it." The more interesting place would have been up in Brussels out in the NATO Council. Frankly, I never heard that the issue was raised by anyone in the Alliance. We would probably have said, "This has nothing to do with NATO. This is a U.S. action." We had other things. There were some terrorists off Lebanon who somehow were taken out on a boat and wound up, all of a sudden, with the U.S. capturing them and actually flying them all the way back to the United States and the terrorist actually being tried here. So, that was all Sixth Fleet activity.

Q: So, the line between the Sixth Fleet and NATO was fairly firm.

KRUSE: That's right.

Q: And necessarily so. In a way, we had the NATO side, but then we had our own independent arm, which could get pretty nasty to people at times.

KRUSE: You have to understand that in NATO terms, U.S. forces anywhere, be they in Germany or the Sixth Fleet, are under U.S. command always until they are, as the military would say, chopped to NATO for either exercise purposes or for real time purposes. So, most of the time, the Sixth Fleet lived out there in a U.S.-only posture.

Q: Were we going through the insertion of Pershing and cruise missiles into Italy during the time you were there? This would have been NATO.

KRUSE: That indeed was, yes.

Q: I wonder if you could talk a bit about the background, why we were doing that and some of the politics about this and NATO and what you saw at the time.

KRUSE: The whole thing came about because of the Soviets in the late '70s-early '80s, developed and deployed intermediate range ballistic missiles whose range would cover all of Western Europe.

Q: I think these were the SS20s.

KRUSE: Right. As a result, in the United States, I think it really became a very hot issue with the Reagan administration. I remember talking to EUR people in those early 1980s, which

essentially said, "Look, this is what we're all doing. What we're trying to do is get the Alliance and its member countries in Europe exercised about this threat and counter it by means of the emplacement of equivalent missiles from our side on their territory." So, it became an issue from the top down. From the President on down, this was the EUR issue for that period. It was to get agreement for INF deployment of American missiles to be accepted by European allies. We got the Germans in early on. We got the Belgians to accept aircraft. I don't think that they accepted any of the actual ground missiles. We really put a lot of pressure on the Italians. It wasn't easy. The Italians have a neuralgia about nuclear weapons, but eventually, the Italians agreed to it. The base at Comiso in Sicily became one of Italy's great marks of fidelity to NATO and being a good ally of the United States. I went down and visited it once with the admiral before the missiles actually arrived. They put the whole structure of the base in there. It was like an American town. The Air Force had built everything. I don't think I saw the golf course, but I was told that would be coming. We had the community center, the chapel, the housing. Here it was out in the middle of nowhere in eastern Sicily, Comiso. Where did we in the Southern Command fit into it? Not very much. Control of all of these missiles and aircraft was out of SACEUR, the senior NATO military man back in Belgium.

Q: I assume the politics were carried on by the ambassador.

KRUSE: Absolutely.

Q: I mean, this was a political thing.

KRUSE: Completely. It turned out because, by the time we got them in, we were in the process then of negotiating an end to INF missiles. In effect, we did away with this whole class of missiles. So, eventually, we never kept the base. It would be interesting for you and I to go to Comiso and see what's there.

Q: I'd love to! Can you talk a bit about relations where you were in Naples, living, problems as you saw them?

KRUSE: Living in Naples is an adventure--"inconvenience rightly considered." Lovely physical location. We had a very charming villa that was up on the Posillipo, which looked out of our window directly at the rising sun every morning over Vesuvius. So, it couldn't have been more Lord Byronesque. But living in Naples had its problems. The corruption and crime and mob and traffic and lack of municipal services were all pretty evident. They tell the joke about two German officers, who had never been to Naples, coming down to visit our command for some reason and sitting at a seafront restaurant having their dinner. They were overheard to be commenting on the chaos. They were saying, "How could you possibly live in a place like this?" The other one said, "But what's even worse, they're so happy!" It was the favorite assignment of my wife partly because the kids were grown up and gone so she could have fun. My wife, it's her favorite assignment, partly because the kids were grown up and gone so she could have fun. But she did a lot of things with the allied officers' wives. For example, they were giving assistance to Mother Theresa's people. Because she learned her Italian pretty well, she had a ball. She'd go back to Naples in a flash. We made a lot of Neapolitan friends. But I have to tell you that, if I were in the government in Rome and responsible for economic and other activities in Naples, I'd

tear my hair out. When you go south of Rome, the northerners of Italy are exactly right saying, "You're entering the Middle East. It's a different world."

Q: I was told when I was in Naples (This was '79 to '81-ish.) that there is not a single registered glove factory in the Neopolitan area and Naples is the prime producer of gloves in the world.

KRUSE: That's right.

Q: Italian politics and the continual obsession of our embassy and all with the infinitesimal number of gains or losses of the Communist Party, which runs around 30% and goes up or down maybe one or two points and has been doing this since 1948, was this going to lead to disaster or not, did that impinge on you at all?

KRUSE: Fortunately not. The great game of Italy, no, it did not. I should mention though that you might have noticed a change in the job or at least the amount of time that your successors have to spend involved in U.S. military interests. One reason is that the U.S. Navy decided to change the whole configuration of its presence in Naples. In addition to the NATO headquarters, we had all these Americans assigned to the NATO staff, as well as U.S.-only staff because the Sixth Fleet was up in Gaeta. The U.S. Navy has modernized a great deal of its infrastructure in and around Naples--this has required careful dealings with local Italian authorities.

Q: They were also a very large Sixth Fleet responsible area just outside of (Inaudible).

KRUSE: These were all U.S.-only. The American Navy community in Naples that was devoted to U.S.-only activities was in the thousands. So, they were beginning to try to rationalize this because of all the crime and the problems that people were having. They first put people out in a place called Pintatamare, where a lot of them were living. But the real dream, which I understand is now being fulfilled, is to have a U.S. housing area sufficiently out of town that, when you go home, you're not going to be bothered by the problems of Naples. They changed a lot of the hospital and school, even the PX facilities, which, as you know, were somehow located either within a volcanic crater or on the rim.

Q: It's all in a crater, yes.

KRUSE: It was going to be moved out to the airport area and they were going to enlarge it. That involved a lot of dealings with Italians. Of course, the Consulate General was deputized by the embassy to follow that issue. Then the big thing was this space down in the south that NATO was going to put in when we had to move our aircraft out of Spain, a place called Crotone, which involved lots of dealings with Italians and local authorities. It really came into full fruition in Erickson's time after Lou Galtz. He was spending an awful lot of time on political/military issues. Those are chapters that, I think, are closing, except for the Naples presence.

MICHAEL A. BOORSTEIN
Temporary Duty
Rome (1985)

Mr. Boorstein was born in Washington, DC and was raised in that area. He was educated at Beloit College, the University of Colorado, Harvard University and the University of Turku in Finland. Entering the Foreign Service in 1970, Mr. Boorstein specialized in administration and personnel, serving in Palermo, Rome, Ottawa, Warsaw Curacao, Moscow and Beijing. In addition, Mr. Boorstein played a major role in the planning and construction of US embassies in Moscow and Beijing and in the renovation of consulates and embassies throughout the globe. He spoke six foreign languages. Mr. Boorstein was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Okay, today is the 23rd of November, 2005. Mike, 1985, you were saying a couple of TDYs, were these of any particular interest or not?

BOORSTEIN: I'm trying to recall whether I covered my two TDYs to Rome in April and July of 1985 before I started Polish language training.

Q: What were you doing in Rome?

BOORSTEIN: I finished my two year assignment that I've already mentioned as the post management officer for Mexico, Central America and Panama and in April of 1985 I heard about the need for our embassy to the Holy See was in need of some help because Nancy Reagan was going to take a side trip to Rome and the Vatican in connection with the at that time the G7 summit which was being hosted by Germany.

Q: I don't think she did. It doesn't ring a bell with me.

BOORSTEIN: Okay, well, I can tell you a couple of very interesting stories because again it was a wonderful experience. I went out under orders from the bureau of European affairs rather than the office of support for presidential and vice presidential travel so I was an asset for the European bureau and the reason was that our embassy to the Vatican was fairly small. It only opened I think a year or two beforehand and Ambassador, his name was William Wilson, a very close friend of Ronald Reagan, who was a very wealthy real estate developer from Southern California and a Catholic obviously was the ambassador to the Vatican. He was the first ambassador since we established relations in recent times. Apparently, the administrative officer was kind of burned out and so the European bureau wanted to send someone to help the little embassy with all the details related to the Vatican portion of Nancy Reagan's visit. As I spoke Italian from my earlier tour in Palermo, I was asked to go and so I went out the middle of April, roughly two, two and a half weeks before Nancy Reagan arrived to help the embassy with their planning. Nancy Reagan's visit was both to Italy and to the Holy See and while she was there she had an audience with the Pope. She visited a drug rehabilitation center south of Rome, but she gained access to it by taking the helicopter to Castel Gandolfo, the Pope's summer residence using the helicopter-landing pad there and then the motorcade was going to then take her into Italy, to the drug center and return.

I ended up working with the Secret Service and the White House advance people and the

political officer, Lou Nigro from the embassy to the Holy See, on just the overall planning. I spent a lot of time in the Vatican dealing with their protocol people, going back and forth to other meetings in Embassy Rome where there was coordination and I really was, the key almost the interpreter for the head of the Secret Service. It was a fascinating three weeks for the planning stages. The one particular thing that I will always remember is that we got the Italian helicopter and the crew that normally is used to transport the Pope. That was being offered to transport Nancy Reagan. We did a trial run of the route so we met up with the helicopter on the rooftop of the Quirinale, which is the president's office building in Rome and then we flew from there down to Castel Gandolfo and then back to Ciampino Airport. So, the day that we did this was just a spectacularly beautiful day, hardly a cloud in the sky and I had this aerial tour of ancient Rome that you couldn't, I probably could have chartered a private helicopter for a couple of thousand dollars to do, but I got it free of charge. I remember sitting in the Pope's seat on the helicopter and it was neat. On the day of the visit itself I was the event officer for, oh, the other thing that was kind of neat in the planning was that we got into the Sistine Chapel before it was open to the public.

Q: It had been renovated.

BOORSTEIN: Well, it was partially renovated, but still open to the public, but there was still scaffolding up and whatever. To get in there with nobody else, wander about without any disturbance from anybody else, plus Nancy Reagan was being taken to a chapel that was not normally open to the public. I don't recall the name of it any longer, but again it had artwork, frescoes and things on the ceiling. They were just gorgeous. Again it was not open to the public. On the day of the actual visit, I went down with the motorcade fairly early in the morning to get the motorcade all into position for Nancy Reagan's arrival by helicopter to Castel Gandolfo and going off to this drug rehabilitation center. We get to Castel Gandolfo and out of the blue these two or three Jeeps show up that are part of some SWAT team that was assigned in the case of any attack against Nancy Reagan or if she fell unexpectedly ill that they were there to form some sort of a defensive perimeter, or whatever. This had never been discussed with anybody in the embassy at the Vatican, certainly not with the Vatican protocol people. They just showed up. I had to sort of negotiate them being part of the motorcade.

Q: Who were they? Were they Italian?

BOORSTEIN: No, these were U.S. I don't know whether they were part of the Secret Service or they were military that were seconded to the Secret Service, but we just had no warning that these guys were coming and I think they had weapons. It came as a bit of a surprise certainly to us and of course to the Vatican officials, but they were allowed to stay. We had fundamentally such good relations with the Italians and with the people in the Vatican that it was not an issue. Nancy Reagan flies in and gets off the helicopter, goes immediately to the motorcade and the motorcade whisks off. I stayed with the helicopter crew just to be there while they were off on this event and waiting for them to come back. Well, out of the blue the young major I think that was his rank, the commander of the helicopter says that he was going to take the helicopter to fly to Ciampino to top off his tanks because after he returned Nancy Reagan to Ciampino Airport in Rome he had to ferry some Italian admiral down to Naples. I said, "you can't do that. It's part of the protection for the first lady that helicopter needs to stay here," and he basically looked at me

and said, "This is my helicopter. I'll take it wherever I want." I said, "Well, then, I'm going to go with you because I want to make sure that you come back on time." I had a little walkie talkie and I called the embassy rep that was with the group at the drug rehab center, you know, the old expression "Houston, we have a problem." I said "we have a problem here and this is what I'm going to do. I will be in touch."

With several of the protocol people from the Vatican and this Italian flight crew and me, we flew back to Ciampino near Rome and of course, this defensive group was with the motorcade and basically, nobody else was left in the landing pad at Castel Gandolfo. We land at the air base. Ciampino is adjacent to Leonardo Da Vinci Airport and it is used a lot for charter flights, but it basically has a military component. Because there were officials from the Vatican on this helicopter, the protocol officer from the airfield greets the helicopter, invites everybody in for a drink while the flight crew is doing its thing. I went with them and I didn't have any alcohol, I had a Coca-Cola and I'm looking at my watch. Pretty much on time the captain, the major come back and said that they were ready to fly back. We fly back. We land back in Castel Gandolfo and literally as the rotors are still going around, they're slowing, the motorcade arrives about five minutes early and I thought to myself, you know, there but for the grace of God, had we been a little bit later the motorcade could have literally have arrived with no helicopter. Those are the kind of things that people get fired from the Foreign Service. Fortunately the gods were with me. It didn't happen. Nancy Reagan and her chief of staff and the others in the entourage were totally oblivious to this. Got in the helicopter and off they went and I stayed on the ground because I was going back with the motorcade. As the helicopter is taking off I'm standing right in front of it within distance and the major gives me this big smile and sort of does like this and I almost wanted to give him an obscene gesture in Italian, one of these, but I refrained and sort of shook my fist back at him and I smiled, too because after all it all worked out.

The next day I was invited to a luncheon at the ambassador's residence that he was hosting for the first lady at the end of her trip. This was the ambassador to the Vatican. She was staying with our ambassador to Italy, but you could tell the level of friendship between the Reagans and this Ambassador Wilson and his wife because their house was just festooned with all these pictures of the four of them. So, with a small luncheon I was not sitting at the main table with others, but sort in the back with the staff, but at the end of the luncheon a few of us were then brought forward to meet some of the other luncheon guests and that was where I had one of the biggest thrills of my career as a Foreign Service Officer because I got to shake hands and talk with Audrey Hepburn. It was one of these things that you just.

Q: Audrey Hepburn being.

BOORSTEIN: Yes, being a major American actress. Well, I don't know that she was American. I think her.

Q: I think she was Belgian, wasn't she?

BOORSTEIN: Yes, her father was British and her mother was Belgian. She grew up in I think in Bruges, in Belgium. It was still such a thrill to talk to her. I probably said some of the things, like "I'm a really big fan" or some inane thing like that, you know, and shook her hand and whatever.

She looked pretty good. She died probably about six or seven years later.

Q: Yes, it was very sad.

BOORSTEIN: At a fairly young age. Anyway, so and that was pretty much it because I think after that lunch they went off to the airport and left.

Q: Well, did you get any impression about our Secret Service and the Vatican protocol? The Secret Service could be pretty difficult at times, but was this a solid, I mean a well experienced unit?

BOORSTEIN: Yes. I've experienced the Secret Service in a number of places. The fellow that was the head of their detail was a very smooth, Irish American, had a great way of dealing with people. He got what he wanted. He was not overbearing. I don't recall a lot of detail whether there were compromises to be made, but there were some discussions into which elevator going up to have the audience with the Pope. We had elevator manifests and things of this nature. I was disappointed that I wasn't part of the group. I never met the Pope. Nancy Reagan's hairdresser for example was on the list to meet the Pope.

Q: Listen, don't kid yourself. There's a matter of priority.

BOORSTEIN: I know, I certainly was not naïve, I knew it, but that didn't mean I couldn't feel disappointed. Again, the White House and the State Department and the embassy staff or whatever paid a great deal of attention to this. She flew down in the air force plane from Andrews and it was a good visit. Then I went back and finished my assignment in post management for Mexico, Central America and Panama and I had already been assigned to start language training, but then the European bureau asked me if I'd go back to the Vatican for about three weeks in basically late July and early August to again cover for this beleaguered admin officer who needed a break. I got permission to leave my assignment a few weeks early and I knew the date of my start of language training. No, I guess it was actually pretty much in July because I took a couple of weeks vacation and it was pretty much three weeks in July. Actually at that point I rented a little apartment and just because I knew I was going to be there for a while, I was able to prepare some meals on my own and that was not terribly memorable. I just recall doing a lot of things like any admin officer would do.

Q: Did you get a feel for the ambassador, how he operated?

BOORSTEIN: Well, at that particular point he was gone for a couple of weeks. He was very active. This is the ambassador that got into a little bit of trouble because he made the secret trip to Libya.

Q: To my mind this is the pits of American diplomacy, but anyway, you might explain what happened.

BOORSTEIN: Well, this happened before I went. I frankly don't recall the details other than he made an unauthorized trip to Libya and talked to Muammar Qadhafi over whatever it was that

was on his mind to talk about whether he had an inside communications with Ronald Reagan that you know that it was okay to do this, but the State Department sure slapped him on the wrist. Do you recall anything about what was behind it?

Q: No, I don't except just what you said, but this time we did not have relations.

BOORSTEIN: No.

Q: With Libya. Libya was a source of a great deal of difficulty for us and international terrorism being very high on the agenda.

BOORSTEIN: Well, this was 1985 when there were still hijackings going on and I remember being very wary traveling with a diplomatic passport. I was there it was either before or after that visit to Rome in April of '85 where a TWA plane was hijacked in I think it was in Beirut and they killed that Seabee. They dumped his body on the tarmac.

Q: I mean doing this, you think it would, I mean frankly the enormity of a man who was accredited to the Holy See running off on a mission of his own unless he may have asked Ronald Reagan who could have offhanded say sure, whatever you could do or something. I mean I wouldn't put it past him, but I never heard that. Yet because of this relationship to Reagan he was kept on, but I mean this is, well, anyway. I sort of sputter when I even think of it.

BOORSTEIN: Yes. I didn't have any particular problems with him. He was pretty much approachable, but it was clear that this was a very influential man. He brought over his own secretary who basically was in charge of his own non-State Department life correspondence or whatever. He demanded a lot. He had an American protective detail from the bureau of diplomatic security, three or four guys who were sent over from Washington who had lived in Rome at great expense to the taxpayer. I remember going over there for one of the planning meetings from the embassy to his residence crossing St. Peter's Square in this little motorcade with the ambassador with a Carabinieri, Italian police car in front and in back, horns blaring and guys leaning out the window basically telling people to get out of the way. I kept thinking to myself, you're bringing attention to this man rather than being discrete and letting him go about his business, but that was the way that security worked in those days. Maybe it still does work that way, I don't know, but it was something else. Part of the time that I was back in July he was on vacation. I do recall in the planning for Nancy Reagan's visit while I was there all of a sudden one day he wasn't there and I asked around and I was told he flew to New York to meet with Nancy Reagan's chief of staff and he basically took the TWA afternoon or early afternoon flight out of Rome, landed at Kennedy Airport in New York, met the chief of staff at the terminal and stayed and took the flight that night to fly back to Rome. He just wanted to, whatever it was he wanted to say to this guy he wanted to do it face to face. Again this is the year obviously before fax machines or certainly e-mails and maybe he didn't trust the phones and he just wanted to say whatever he wanted to say. I never really found out what it was all about. He was very much hands on and took his relationship with the Reagans very seriously.

ROBERT K. GEIS
USIS
Florence (1985-198?)

Robert K. Geis was born on October 28, 1939 in Havana, Cuba. He attended Rice University and American University and entered the Foreign Service in 1962, wherein he served in countries including Romania, Ecuador, the USSR, Trinidad, Tobago, and Italy. He was interviewed by Lewis Hoffacker on April 21, 1999.

GEIS: Fortunately for me at that time, a former colleague of mine from Bucharest departed early from our branch post in Florence, Italy. There was fierce competition for the assignment, but I emerged the winner, and Anneliese and I began language training in spring of 1985.

As was the case with Leningrad, Florence was a city one can't help becoming a devotee of. An ancient, moldy place, Florence is the opposite of Leningrad in being basically unplanned. But each byway, each nook and cranny speaks of the history, intrigue, and art of this great birthplace of the Renaissance. We lived in a 16th-century palazzo called *Marescialla* after a marshal of France who once owned it. It was a huge rambling apartment with 14-foot ceilings located a block off the Arno and a few blocks from the Ponte Vecchio and the famed Uffizi Gallery. USIS Florence faced the Arno. It had once been a stable which was attached to the great palace that houses the American consulate general. Our modest program emphasized educational-cultural affairs, although we had good relations with the local media. My small USIS staff was excellent, led by the stalwart Sergio Era. The consular district included Bologna, so the historic universities of Florence and Bologna were major audiences of ours. In addition, we had program activities in the wonderful cities of Siena and Pisa. The PAO in Florence spent a lot of time coordinating with USIS Rome in furthering program objectives. Program highlights included such events as our collaboration with a local institution in the Month of American Culture, during which we entertained among others the noted American folklorist Alan Lomax and the Harlem Dance Theater with Arthur Mitchell. Another major event was carried out in collaboration with the Universities of Bologna and Florence. It brought together notable American historians in celebration of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution in 1987. Later a similar series of events celebrated the creation of the Marshall Plan. We spent a lot of time programming speakers in our country plan themes such as the infamous Strategic Defense Initiative [SDI], Reagan's "Star Wars" program. I always felt that this was a marvelous propaganda vehicle against the Soviets, but when we took it so seriously as to pour billions down what was a technological rat hole, I had to wonder who was fooling whom. In June of 1987, all of USIS suddenly became involved in the U.S. participation in the Venice G-7 summit. One has to question the value of these staged set-pieces, given the resources devoted to them, but of course we dutifully did our part.

The real joy of this assignment was getting to know the people and traditions of Tuscany. Our first encounter was to represent the consulate at a gala lunch celebrating 800 years or so of Chianti wine, the wine of Tuscany. It was an elegant and effervescent evening, and we came away reeling!

I had mixed feelings about the Florentines. They are thought of as arrogant, sharp-tongued, and great complainers by other Italians. They are also viewed as contentious and virtually ungovernable. At the same time, on the positive side, they are extremely proud of their city and

are among the most talented craftsmen of Europe. I found them to be all of these things and more. The Bolognesi on the other hand, were much easier to work with, and had the same gusto for living that most Italians are famous for. One of our favorite Florentine families was the Latinis, who owned one of the city's most popular restaurants. We visited them at their Tuscan farm and vineyard on several occasions and were the beneficiaries of their marvelous hospitality. We also got to know the owners of the magnificent Verrazano castle and vineyard. This was the seat of the great explorer and we were invited to the castle to celebrate the anniversary of the explorer's historic voyage to America, at a sumptuous feast of historically accurate food. Another great Italian explorer was closer to home, however. Our apartment was directly across the street from the ancestral palace of Amerigo Vespucci. Another of our most happy encounters in Florence was with the noted Americanist and Pulitzer Prize winner, R. W. B. Lewis. Dick and Nancy Lewis, both devotees of the city of Florence, had become very good friends, and we were delighted to have them stay in our apartment one summer while we were on home leave. The result of this was a chapter on the Vespucci territory in Dick's excellent history called *The City of Florence*. Tuscany is the home of some of Italy's most historic and fascinating festivals, none more so than Palio in Siena, which we attended for several years. This drama of Sienese pageantry, history, rivalry occurred twice a year and culminated in the famous bareback horse race. Florence annually hosts the medieval costume procession of the Carro at Easter and the costumed football game which pitted rival teams from the four sectors of the city against each other. Viareggio in Tuscany is famed for its great Carnival, where the focus is on costumed revelers and huge floats, some of which are quite political. The year that we attended, in 1989, the Soviet consul from Milan also was invited, and the local newspapers noted how much we laughed at the caricatures of Reagan and Gorbachev in the floats.

1989 witnessed both my retirement, when leaving Florence in November, and somehow fittingly the first act of the demise of Communism in the USSR with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

HAROLD W. GEISEL
NATO Defense College
Rome (1985-1986)

Counselor for Administration
Rome (1986-1988)

Harold W. Geisel was born on May 11, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Johns Hopkins University and the University of Virginia, served in the US Army, and entered the Foreign Service in 1971. His career has included positions in Belgium, Norway, Switzerland, Mali, South Africa, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Mauritius. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 30, 2006.

GEISEL: I went for what was to be a half-year at the NATO Defense College in Rome followed by, this could only happen at the Department of State, half a year of Italian lessons back in Washington, not in Rome, followed by what was to be a three or four year assignment as admin counselor in Rome.

Q: Okay, we'll pick it up then.

GEISEL: Good.

Q: Okay. Today is the 19th of July, 2006. Harry, so what happened? We're talking about 1985, is that right?

GEISEL: That's right.

Q: And you're due to go to the NATO Defense College for six months. Did you go?

GEISEL: Actually I did. And it was very enjoyable. I note that the Department no longer sends people to the NATO Defense College in Rome; I think that was a wise decision because while it was very enjoyable for me and a useful break, I thought that the education I got out of it was minimal and the standards were low and the military did not have, by any means, too many of their best and brightest.

Q: Well, supposedly, what was it supposed to do?

GEISEL: You know, that's a good question. I think it was supposed to make you sensitive to NATO and its problems and there was some usefulness if that was the case. It was supposed to expose you to officers of a similar level in both the U.S. and the various NATO defense forces and a few diplomats from those NATO countries tossed in. The problem was, in my opinion, that nobody was sending their best and brightest, I and a few friends excepted, of course.

Q: Yes, but this is often the problem because it's off schedule, for one thing.

GEISEL: That's right.

Q: For everybody.

GEISEL: That's right, that's exactly right.

Q: Six months.

GEISEL: From really September until February, it's a nuisance. You're right. And I think, and I criticize the Department for the fact that there is a, certainly a culture in the Foreign Service that you don't want to stray too far off the reservation for training, however in this case I don't think one should have strayed off the reservation. I have other thoughts about the stupidity of the Department when it comes to giving up our slot at Capstone, at the National Defense University, but that's a much shorter program and that is with the best and brightest.

Q: Yes. Well then, what was your impression though, of your other- of the NATO officers there outside of the fact that you felt they weren't the cream of the crop?

GEISEL: That's the long and the short of it. The U.S. and the Brits were not bad. Even with the U.S students, you could see these were people who were not destined for greater glory because they were not going to a senior service school in the US. So these were by and large guys who hadn't made the cut and it was a nice, relaxed atmosphere. I've pretty well maintained contacts in every place I ever went to, at least every friendly place I ever went to, I have only one contact from the NATO Defense College, a very, very good fellow who ended up some years later being the British Naval attaché here in Washington, which is a flag rank, and we were attracted to each other right away because I think we felt we were maybe a bit of a cut above.

Q: I was wondering, did you notice, did the Greek-Turkish love for each other play itself out?

GEISEL: Oh did it ever. You know, I think the Greeks were boycotting the College for some "insult" that must have involved the Turks. The Turks were certainly there and the Turks really had this thing about Greece. They also, interestingly enough, had big problems when we visited Canada. Let me not make any false impressions; I had a wonderful time traveling and doing all the things one tends to do at these sorts of places. When the Greeks went to Canada-

Q: You mean when the Turks went to Canada.

GEISEL: When the Turks went to Canada they were terrified of the Armenians and they had the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) with them all the time because there was some sort of "intelligence" that there were credible threats to them.

I'll give you one example which I think is worth preserving for posterity, just the total silliness of it all. We took a trip to Brussels and were addressed by the NATO secretary general; it was Lord Carrington, who was really a pretty good fellow. Then he turned us over to his French deputy, or a French deputy, which astounded me to begin with because I didn't know there was a French deputy. It gets into the business that the French quit the military side of the alliance, not the political side. And this guy was talking about this and that and he said there were ways that perhaps we could bring NATO more together. And I promise you I'm not BSing, because I've never forgotten this, he said one of the things they could think about might be a NATO ballet corps. No shit. I said "ballet corps."

Q: No, I deflated when I heard that.

GEISEL: I'm not kidding. I mean, I'm supposed to take this seriously? We then went on to France where at a briefing at the Foreign Ministry, someone was really laying into the United States about constructive engagement and our support for racist apartheid South Africa, which as I had said earlier, was already over; we were into the sanctions business. And I raised my hand but he was smart enough to look at me and figure that I was the American diplomat so he didn't recognize me. I was just going to ask him about how he felt about France's continued great support for Mobutu Sese Seku, the great light of the world of Zaire. But he didn't call on me and I wasn't rude enough to interrupt his anti-American tirade. I looked at him as the fool that he was.

Q: Well did you then go on to take Italian? I mean, was this whole thing on course?

Actually, my onward assignment was supposed to be consul general in Düsseldorf. Now, in typical Department style, EUR had called me up and said look, we're closing Düsseldorf but it's useful to put you in there anyway because we know you're going to be promoted and then you'll be eligible to be admin consular in Rome and we're not going to let personnel fill that job until the promotion list is out. And as usual, EUR was right and after I got promoted I went back to the department and my career counselor said well, you know, there'll be a lot of competition for that admin job. And I said oh, but EUREX said they want me. He said oh, in that case, there's nothing to talk about. And that was that. And I went to Rome.

Q: Well you were in Rome from when to when?

GEISEL: Well, there again, the three years didn't work out. I was actually there from September of 1986 to March of 1988, when I was direct transferred to Bonn.

Q: Okay. Let's talk about Rome. Who was the ambassador?

GEISEL: Maxwell Rabb.

Q: Now he's one of these characters. He was there a long time. Talk about working with Maxwell Rabb.

GEISEL: It was an absolute delight for me. He and I got along very, very well and I'll tell you how it all started. You know, admin officers can get away with things that other people can't if they do it with a bit of a smile and some humor. About two days into my posting I was up to see him and his wife Ruth was there as well. And he started crying to me about how he was, I think, \$20- or \$30,000 out-of-pocket on his representation. And I looked at him and I said, look Mr. Ambassador. You live in Villa Taverna, one of the most glorious houses in Rome that was once the summer residence of the Holy Fathers. You go all over Rome in a Cadillac limousine with a motorcycle escort to beat the traffic, you have one of the best cooks in Rome and you get a salary of \$90,000 a year. I'll tell you what. If you're not happy with it, I'll pay the \$30,000 out-of-pocket and take your place. He looked at Ruth and the two of them just started laughing and laughing. And we were great friends ever since and we even became business partners in a partnership after Rome. You have to know the guy you're talking to. I mean, there are guys who would have thrown your rear end right out of there on the spot.

Q: Yes. Well tell me, what were let's say the challenges of being-

GEISEL: Admin counselor in Rome? Well, the biggest challenge is, to put it the way the Italians put it, well, it depends where you are. You know, if you're in Milan the Italians say that Africa begins south of the Po and if you're in Florence the Italians say that Africa begins south of the Arno. And if you're in Rome they say it begins south of the Tiber. So for an admin guy the problem really is that the Italians are the loveliest, nicest people in the world who can do a great job when they're motivated to do it but there are more important things in the world than minding the bureaucracy. We would have plumbers who would come out to residences without all their tools and then they would announce they would have to go back and get more tools. We

would have painters that wouldn't have the right shade of paint. So if the chips were down there's no one I'd rather count on as much as an Italian; they're wonderful. But on a day-to-day basis it was very frustrating because you really had to motivate people to do the job that you expected them to do. Morale at the embassy was not good because so much of our- well, I shouldn't say that. Morale among the staff was not good, which bothered me a great deal because they, the staff employees, were living in a big apartment building that was in a shameful condition, especially with respect to furniture and furnishings but also in terms of maintenance. I told the ambassador that he had to come out to this building; it was called Grazioli, to show the people that he cared. And he did, complete with the motorcycle escort and the works. We went through apartments, saw how bad the situation was and we gathered all of the families together and I said come hell or high water I was going to get the department to give us money to buy them new furniture and to fix the place up. Come year end, we just pushed on the department like there was no tomorrow and the ambassador did as well and we managed to get a lot of money and we got them a lot of furniture and furnishings and painted the place and fixed it up in many ways.

Rome was a wonderful place but you had a real problem- you know, they always say that American embassies to some extent reflect the host country. So you have a place like Rome where the embassy is just gorgeous on the outside.

Q: Yes, there's the Queen Mother's house.

GEISEL: Exactly, Queen Margaretha. In fact, I don't know if anyone has told you that if you went on what they called the Piano Nobile, the noble floor, there were lovely tapestries on the wall. But if you pulled one of them back you saw there was engraved in the marble a tribute that said on such and such a day the great Mussolini visited the Queen Mother at Palazzo Margaretha. Oh, it was a glorious place. But then you compare it to a place like Germany. Well Germany, the building in Bonn was very efficient and it was all gray and steel and worked very well, you know. And our embassy in Oslo where I was, it was designed by a noted Scandinavian-American architect. You get the picture. Well, in Rome, one of the things that's not so nice is that people are very conscious of hierarchies in Rome and there was, in my opinion, too much of that in the embassy.

Q: Well, I mean, there was nothing like going in to the ambassador's or the DCM's office. I mean, frankly, it was un-American.

GEISEL: The ambassador's office was a former ballroom of the palace but the two offices weren't really the problem. You know, if I would philosophize a bit, I would say the problem was you have a language like Italian, which really isn't good anywhere except in Italy; well, not even in Somalia.

Q: No.

GEISEL: Where in the heck else was it?

Q: Libya? But no.

GEISEL: Not even Libya anymore. Italian is really only good in Italy and so what you have, and rightfully so in terms of people having to need to know the language and having the contacts, the same people keep coming back over and over again in higher and higher jobs and that makes a hierarchy almost inevitable. And it's very bad for the people who are who are coming in as staff employees. It's difficult for the other agency people. There were, of course, far too many other agency people, and I don't mean "the" other agency.

Q: No, we're talking about FBI-

GEISEL: Exactly.

Q: And they tended to put people in who were of Italian extraction.

GEISEL: Precisely.

Q: Which isn't always the best-

GEISEL: No, it-

Q: For one thing, and that's speaking Italian anyway, they're speaking-

GEISEL: Well, speaking Sicilian, and that was part of the problem because in many cases there were people from the south who had, you know, bastardized American Southern Italian accents and vocabularies, which of course the Romans looked their noses down.

Q: Oh yes. I speak as a former consular general in Naples.

GEISEL: Oh.

Q: And I was not an Italian hand at all. For one thing, most people in Rome really didn't want to go down that far because it's kind of dangerous down there, you know?

GEISEL: Yes. I never felt in danger but I know what you mean. Were you still rattling around that gigantic building, the old consulate general?

Q: Yes.

GEISEL: Oh my God.

Q: But it was falling- I was there during the earthquake, we had a very major earthquake there in '79.

GEISEL: That's right, yes. That place was unbelievable. I mean, where you were was truly a vestige of a bygone era with all these examining rooms from the wave of Italian immigrants who came in the '50s and I don't know how many U.S. Public Health Service doctors they had

assigned to that post to just examine the people before they got on the boat to go to America.

Q: Yes. And immigrations almost had stopped by that time.

GEISEL: Yes.

Q: Well tell me, how about security? This must have been, because you had, what was it, General Dozier?

GEISEL: That was after my time. We did have one rocket attack on the embassy by the Japanese Red Army Faction, now that I think of it, that was just before the, I think in those days it was the G-7. They rented some hotel rooms across the street from the embassy and they didn't do much damage but it was a concern. The ambassador was heavily and I think rightly guarded, as was his wife, for that matter, and we put in quite a few security structures when we were there. Now of course the great battle, which we were largely successful at, was to get the Department to spend more money so that the security structures didn't look so bad, at least around our more beautiful buildings such as the embassy and the embassy residence.

Q: Yes. How did you get on with organizations like the FBI and Immigration and Treasury and all that?

GEISEL: I got on very well. We had no problems.

Q: Yes. Were you running across, had the problem been solved about paying taxes on, I mean the locals paying taxes to the Italian government on their salaries?

GEISEL: I didn't have that issue.

Q: Because that was a major issue a few years earlier in the early '80s.

GEISEL: No, it must have been solved. Interestingly enough, when we get to when I was IG (Inspector General) we can talk about that in London, because that made Rome look like a tea party.

Q: Were you closing any posts or not?

GEISEL: There was talk. There was talk of Turin but I think it was still open, barely hanging on. Yes, it was still open. Trieste had been turned into a consular agency by then with the marvelous Paolo Bearz and I understand that that was just closed very recently and I don't know why, hopefully because Paulo couldn't do it anymore because he would have been much too wonderful to lose if he could stay. Venice was closed with the consulate turned over to Wake Forest College. Naples was threatened but not all that much. No, you know, I don't think anything's changed. They've all gotten a bit smaller and they're all under threat.

Q: You know, some of them, Palermo's got all-

GEISEL: Oh, Genoa was closed, yes, yes.

Q: Well at one time we just had far too many and if it weren't for the military probably Naples could go. That would have meant that the hordes of southern Italy Italians would have come to Rome which I don't think that, you know, we served as an outpost's sake.

GEISEL: I think that's right but I think it's because of the military that we-

Q: Yes, it's the military.

GEISEL: -have no business closing.

Q: We've got the Sixth Fleet--

GEISEL: Yes, yes.

Q: Well, they've got a big installation there.

GEISEL: Yes.

Q: How about labor problems?

GEISEL: Oh yes.

Q: The Italians were always having these strikes.

GEISEL: Yes, we had a few. We even had a general strike where everything was supposed to close and it was so Italian because everything did close except that the garbage collectors, who didn't work very much to begin with, all came out and worked on the day when everyone else went on strike, which was very Italian. We had a couple strikes at the airport which made life a misery but we didn't have too many problems.

Now you know that you talk about labor problems and there's something that I'll mention for posterity. In Italy the labor courts were very strong. The embassy generally lost in labor courts, in the Italian labor courts, and I remember one case where we lost where, you know, the losing never meant that we had to take an employee back; we were told either take 'em back or pay 'em so much more money. I remember complaining to the Department of Justice attorney in Munich from the Civil Division and he'd been there forever and his specialty was labor courts and he told me something, he gave me wisdom that I thought was so accurate. He said, Harry, we're an honorable country and a judge from the labor court told me I'm not here to mete out justice, I'm here to protect the workers. My friend said this is the cost of doing business in Italy as an American Embassy. I thought that made so much sense.

Q: Yes.

GEISEL: So we didn't defy any labor courts. I had to hold my nose but it was the cost of doing

business and as long as they didn't make us do anything other than pay people more money than I thought they ought to get, I thought fine, it's the cost of doing business.

Q: How about dealing with organizations like Customs?

GEISEL: Slow, chaotic but almost always we had a Foreign Service National employee who knew someone or a cousin or a brother or something and was able to get things done if it had to be done and that's what I liked about the Italians. If there ever was a real problem you could find someone and then say this is a real problem and they'd work it through. Well, when in Rome do as the Romans do. And I'll tell you what I'll talk about just because I think it was a bit interesting. We had a G-7-

Q: The conference of the-

GEISEL: The heads of the group of seven, the United States and the big European countries; it's now as we talk the G-8. It was to be in Venice. The president was President Reagan and, as you can imagine, everybody from the White House thought of some reason they had to go on a pre-pre- pre-advance, a pre-advance, you know, all the rest of Venice and of course I went up with them to baby-sit. And everyone was very nice and it got to be- everything started changing because the government fell. So the visit to Rome that President Reagan was going to do was scrubbed except for a very brief visit which had to take place really to see the Holy Father and a courtesy call on the president, the president of Italy who was, as you know, is a ceremonial figure. And I think he may have seen the caretaker, prime minister, I'm not sure. I suppose it was Andreotti if it was. And this created endless problems and one of my contacts put it very well to me. He said Harry, don't worry, we Italians see the forest for the trees. He said it's just the opposite, you'll see, if you ever have to do a G-7 in Germany, the Germans will worry about all the details but they won't worry about the big picture. And how little did I know then that I was going to be transferred to Germany and he was absolutely right. But I still, I'm trying to think how many people were at that summit from the American side; it was obscene. I think we had 36 boats at \$1,000 a day per boat. And you know, it went on and on. Then I remember, the Secretary, Secretary Shultz, was coming in for a very short time, I think a little less than 24 hours because there was some other thing going on that he had to go to and yet the people from DS came to me and they demanded or he, the head of their advance, demanded "parity" with the Secret Service. He said if they have 12 boats I want 12 boats and all of that and I said I won't give them to you. I said you've got three stops, the President has 12. Well, he made all sorts of threats and I was sure he was bluffing; whether he was bluffing or not he didn't get the boats and somehow I survived and prospered. But you know, this is the thing that always gets to you is how people have no respect for the taxpayers' money at all.

Q: Well then, were you there when the Achille Lauro was seized?

GEISEL: No, that was a bit before my time. I did have a very tragic killing, massacre really, in the airport by oh, some Arab terrorist group, I forgot which one. It was passengers getting off, I believe, of a TWA flight. But it took place in the lobby. I don't understand, maybe it wasn't even passengers. It was Americans and if I remember right, eight were killed including a little girl who was at the school that most of our embassy kids went to. You know, there again that's the

sort of thing that once the Italians had a wake up call they were darn good and they were. But I remember just what a terrible, terrible feeling it was when that happened.

Q: Were you running into something that probably developed later but the growing almost Africanization of Italy? I mean, you know, so many immigrants from southern Italy and-

GEISEL: That was later.

Q: And Southern Africa came in.

GEISEL: No, no, no. You know, you would see Ethiopians and Somalis but no, it was not noteworthy the way it was later on. Actually the biggest thing that we noticed was the gypsies, that I'm sure were a problem down in Naples too. And you know, we would have a lot of issues with gypsy kids running around and messing with American tourists and picking their pockets and grabbing their bags and all of that. You know what was so nice though is I always used to say that the Italians were much more likely to pick your pocket while, you know, some of the northern Europeans might put a gun to your head.

Q: Yes. So you were there, how come you didn't last so long?

GEISEL: Well, because the inspectors came up with a terrible and I thought largely unjustified report on Bonn. And the ambassador was yelling and screaming-

Q: Who was the ambassador?

GEISEL: The ambassador was Rick Burt. And Rick was screaming something had to be done. His admin counselor was due out so it wasn't a matter of firing his admin counselor, which would have been shocking anyway but I he was apparently screaming, "I want the best" and I don't know that I was the best but I was the one who EUR asked if would I take a mid-tour transfer. It was not easy with respect to my wife and I can't say I blame her, to give up Rome for Bonn. She had a lovely life in Bonn but as she said to me, there was more history in our block in Rome than there is in half of Germany, and she never totally forgave me for leaving Rome to go to Bonn even though she understood that it was a much bigger job. It was much bigger in terms of the enormous embassy that we had in Germany and the huge constituent post; I think at that time, if Frankfurt had been an embassy, it would have been the fifth biggest embassy we had.

LESLIE M. ALEXANDER
Economic Counselor
Rome (1986-1989)

Ambassador Leslie Alexander was born in Germany of American parents and grew up primarily in Europe. He was educated at the Munich campus of American University, after which he came to the United States and, in 1970, entered the Foreign Service. Speaking several foreign languages, including German, French, Spanish and Portuguese and some Polish, he served in Guyana,

Norway, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Haiti, where he twice served, first as Chargé, and later as Special Envoy.. From 1993 to 1996 he served as Ambassador to Mauritius and from 1996 to 1999 as Ambassador to Ecuador. Ambassador Alexander was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

ALEXANDER: I went to Rome as the economic counselor.

Q: So you were in Rome from 1986 to...?

ALEXANDER: to 1989.

Q: Who was our ambassador?

ALEXANDER: Max Rabb, political appointee. Longest serving ambassador we've ever had in Italy.

Q: He was very proud of that.

ALEXANDER: He was, and with good reason. He didn't speak Italian but I thought he did a remarkably good job.

Q: Why don't we talk a little bit about him? How did you find him?

ALEXANDER: I thought he was great. I absolutely loved Max Rabb. I admired him. He had the ability to come across as sort of foolish and harmless. But that was all a façade to mask a very supple mind. Again, I think it's important to appreciate. He was a man who did not speak the language, as he said "I'm too old to learn." He was 80 years old. But he managed nonetheless to make himself understood and to be understood. He had some tough challenges on his watch: the Achille Lauro, getting the Pershing missiles in. We couldn't get NATO to agree to allow us to base these missiles. Max Rabb convinced the Italians to do it. They were the first, and once the Italians agreed to take them, the resistance from the others collapsed.

Q: This is with the SS-20, with the Soviet Union.

ALEXANDER: Yes. It was a major, major diplomatic coup on the part of Maxwell Rabb. One that I don't think he's been given a lot of credit for. I don't want to wax too hyperbolically. But Max Rabb's role in that issue alone went a long way towards bringing down the soviet empire.

Q: Oh yeah. The SS-20 versus the Pershing missiles and the Cruise missiles was the last great confrontation between the Soviet Union and the Western Alliance, and the fact that we were able to respond, sort of put an end to this very dangerous game of trying to up the ante.

ALEXANDER: And it put an end to it for several reasons. The Soviets realized that NATO collectively had the will to resist. Economically, they just couldn't take it to the next level.

Q: Yeah.

ALEXANDER: So again, I think Max Rabb's role in that was terribly important. There were other things that happened on his watch too. The Chernobyl thing, the nuclear plant blew up.

Q: In the Ukraine.

ALEXANDER: In the Ukraine. And of course, that had enormous political reactions.

Q: What was the Italian reaction?

ALEXANDER: Oh, like everyone in Western Europe, absolutely infuriated with the Russians for having tried to hide that. For not having alerted anyone to what was going on. So, the reaction in Italy was universally negative to Chernobyl. I think that helped to reinforce Max Rabb's arguments.

You have a large communist party and you like to flirt with this notion that the Russians are misunderstood and they're not really all that bad and blah, blah, blah and we're the bad guys. But this is the reality of this regime. These are people who will permit thousands of their own citizens to die rather than to say we've screwed up.

Q: This is the first time you were in a really big embassy. Sometimes embassies take on the aspects of the country they're in. Italian politics are a thing.

ALEXANDER: A work of art.

Q: How did you find dealing in the embassy? Was it a problem?

ALEXANDER: I wouldn't say it was a problem. It was challenging. I hadn't thought about it; it was the largest mission that I had served in at the time. We're talking about a sophisticated European nation, a proud and long history. These were the descendants of the Romans. People who had the greatest empire ever seen. The Italians were in their own right owners of a proud, wealthy and prosperous country, screwed up as it might have been in a lot of ways. There were a lot of things going for the Italians as well.

What I found frustrating about being in an embassy like that at that time was that there were so many competing interests: the political-military one, the economic one. Italy was the sixth or seventh most powerful economy in the world, or the global influence. It was a part of the European market and so every time we got into argument with Brussels we were directly or indirectly getting into argument with Rome. These interests had to be addressed. The biggest frustration was trying to get the ambassador or DCM focused on economic issues when they were dealing with vitally important military issues. Trying to find that balance. And among ourselves, in the various sections, we had to be careful not to so offend the sensibilities of the other sections that we would have engaged in a destructive relationship rather than a positive one. There were times that I would not bring things to the attention of my masters, knowing that my colleague, the political-military counselor, had very critical issues that had to be addressed. So, at country team I might shut up thinking what I have to bring up is just not as important as

what he's got to deal with. So, I'm going to keep my mouth shut so the ambassador can focus on this. I think that was often reciprocated.

We had a very good relationship; most of us. But there were other things. For example, I was Rick Ames' cover boss. Little did I know that the man would turn out to be the largest, the worst spy in U.S. history. But that was, in some respects, a distraction. Because he would come to me periodically, probably once a month or so, I don't think I'm exaggerating. I would go with him to some function. He used to drive a very expensive, the largest model that Jaguar made. He used to park next to me in the embassy. I asked him, "How can you afford, what are you, a GS-12, 14, 15, how can you afford a Jag on your pay? You've got a wife and a kid." And he said, "Oh, well Rosario comes from money." I believed that because I had known plenty of Foreign Service officers who had married the daughters of well-to-do Venezuelan, Colombians, and Brazilians. The other thing I found strange was he had a very obvious drinking problem, but nobody seemed to care.

Q: Did you get quizzed a lot later?

ALEXANDER: No, in fact I was in Mauritius when the story broke. In fact, I had just seen him two weeks before because I was on my way to post and ran into him just by accident. And we stopped and we had a cup of coffee; my wife and I and him and his wife. We were at a shopping mall out in Tysons Corner, Virginia, and stopped and had a cup of coffee for about half an hour and we left two days later for post and he was arrested two weeks later. When the news broke, I heard it in Mauritius, I was in my office and I heard the name and thought it can't be the same guy. Someone came in and I said, this Rick Ames, it's not the same Rick Ames who was in Rome and did this and did that? They said "yes." I said, "My god, I know this guy, I was his cover boss." And I had thought that someone would call, I didn't know that much about him. I was quite prepared to answer any questions. Nobody every asked me any.

Q: And somewhere in the files they have your picture.

ALEXANDER: I'm sure they do. Drinking coffee with Rick Ames.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the economy. From 1979 to '81 I was consul general in Naples and I can never forget being told that Naples was the foremost producer of gloves in the world and it didn't have one registered glove factory in it. You had this grey economy. It can be a very difficult economy to deal with.

ALEXANDER: It was difficult to the degree that Washington agencies had a phenomenal appetite for data. It was difficult at the time to explain that we could extrapolate, but we couldn't get the kind of direct data they were looking for because of this grey economy, this underground economy. I would say fully 35 to 40% of the Italian economy was underground. Nonetheless there are tools that we have and today I am sure they are more sophisticated than they were in the 80s. We had tools that we could use to extrapolate certain activity. So I can't say that was a major problem, a major headache. We were just as busy, however, with other, more political-economic issues than we were with strictly economic ones. For example, we had a full blown program to supply our embassy in Iraq. Almost all of that stuff was passing through Italy. Either

through Italian ports, we had to have procedures in place to get the stuff in and get it out discretely and quietly. On occasion we wouldn't fully disclose to the Italians what we were up to. Other times we would because we needed their help. Plus, we had promised them that we wouldn't ship live ammo, things that could blow up and kill people without letting them know, and on occasion they would get uptight. You're sending an awful lot of stuff through such-and-such a port. "Go elsewhere." "No, we can't, it's got to get here." So, the whole Iraq supply chain took up a lot of my time.

Q: Could you explain? Put it in context; why we were sending munitions and other things to Iraq at the time?

ALEXANDER: Saddam was engaged in this holy war with the Iranians— the war that dragged on ten years and killed probably more than a million people on both sides of the line. We supported Iraq in that because we were against the Iranians. The enemy of my enemy is my friend. We didn't like the Iranians and we thought that maybe Saddam was the answer to that problem, but as we now know, it didn't work out that way. But, again, we spent a lot of time making sure that Saddam was getting arms and munitions.

Q: How cooperative did you find the Italians in getting your reporting and statistics and all that?

ALEXANDER: I found the Italians to be the most responsive of our friends and allies that I had ever worked with. This doesn't mean they were pushovers and would lie down at every request. They would also dig their heels in and say, "No, we're not going to do that." There were plenty of issues in which we were never able to move them. We did nasty things to them in turn. We wouldn't accept Parma ham for many, many years, ostensibly for health concerns.

Q: What was the reason, do you think?

ALEXANDER: Some type of worm or microbe. They weren't processing the ham in accordance with our health standards. We were concerned that something would be introduced that would affect our pigs. So we kept Parma ham out for many, many years. Much longer than I think we had to. But, again, they did things to us. They wouldn't let our commercial flights land in Rome. They had to land in Milano and things of that sort. I bring this up not to suggest that we had a contentious, difficult relationship. I don't think we did. In the main, the Italians were among the best friends we had. They genuinely bent over backwards to try to please us. I think there was a lot of good will on the part of Washington as well. There were a lot of things that we were willing to do for them that we might not have done for the French. So I would describe my contacts as being serious, sober people, committed to trying to work with us, but very protective of their own national interest.

Q: It continues today, a dispute with the European Union over a common agricultural policy which, essentially, is heavy subsidies for a small group of farmers in both France and Germany. Did this have any resonance in Italy?

ALEXANDER: It did to the extent that the French and the Germans bought off the Italians with other EC programs. To be honest, the Italians also benefited from the common agricultural

policy (CAP). The CAP was very good to the Italians as well. There was a lot of inefficient farming being done in Italy. A lot of agricultural products that are critical to their economy: cheese, wines. So they were benefiting also from the common agricultural policy. Not as much as the French. Moreover, they were getting a lot of help for the southern part of Italy. All kinds of funny programs they had to develop the south. Essentially these were payoffs for Italy supporting the CAP or other programs of interest to the French and the Germans. This caused us a lot of problems. I can think of two or three occasions where my Italian counterparts pulled me aside and said listen, “we happen to agree with you, but we’re not going to side with you on this because we have to support the French,” or we have to support the Germans, or whoever, because we are in turn getting so and so, we’re vulnerable on that point, so you’re not going to get any help from us. One of them was, for example, on hormones in U.S. beef exports. This was a very nasty trade dispute that went on for several years. In fact, I think it’s still going on. The Europeans accuse us of having hormones in our beef and we said, “Hey, listen, these are natural growth hormones, there’s nothing unhealthy. We eat them, and you can eat them.” “No, no, no. Our kids will grow breasts.” And all this other stuff. And we had bitter, bitter fights. The Italians really didn’t have a dog in that fight, but they supported the common market, the EU’s line. They supported Brussels’ line on this because it was in their interest to do so.

Q: Did you find, I’m particularly interested, having been in Naples, they were putting these factories in that were right from the beginning sort of dinosaurs. They offered employment, they were inefficient and there wasn’t much of a market for steel, autos, and other ones. How did you see Italy juggling its finances, or its investment?

ALEXANDER: There were a lot of inefficiencies in the Italian economy, just like there were in everybody else’s economy. We spent a lot of money subsidizing steel in the United States that we shouldn’t have done. The Italians did the same. They used money to support social policy. You cite a perfect example— steel factories in Naples that were terribly inefficient. But if they gave work to thousands of people... (end of tape)

Q: This is tape four, side one with Leslie Alexander.

ALEXANDER: The Italian state supported all kinds of projects in Naples and elsewhere in Italy but, particularly in southern Italy, things that any economist would have told you, this is nonsensical. They weren’t doing it for economic reasons; they were doing it as part of social policy, giving work and spreading the wealth and all this other stuff. And even Fiat, which was supposedly the largest private industrial concern in Italy, did a lot of this in the south, because they were acting essentially as agents for the Italian state. Fiat itself wouldn’t have been able to survive had it not been for large injections of cash from the Italian state, so they acted as an agent of the state and doing the same kind of thing.

Q: Who was the, was he still there?

ALEXANDER: Gianni Agnelli. Yes. Agnelli was still very much in charge.

Q: He was sort of a major figure, wasn't he?

ALEXANDER: He was, he was actually a brilliant man. I mean, he was a very impressive man, but he had his blind spots as well and had a family that he had to contend with, because he didn't own all of it. He made mistakes just like, you know, Ford made mistakes. Anyway, Italy was still very much an economy that was dependent on government largesse, whether from Rome or from Brussels, and there were a lot of companies that had a lot of shake outs that had to take place. Olivetti collapsed while I was there because the Italian state just couldn't support it anymore. Brussels was getting fed up with it, and we were getting fed up with it, because in order to support these companies you had to violate all kinds of treaties in the GATT, now the WTO, all kinds of rules about government interventions and all this kind of stuff. The Italians were notorious for doing these kinds of things, much to the chagrin of their own European colleagues, not to mention the U.S. So, you had all this stuff going on, some of which concerned us directly, some of which didn't; but all of which Washington wanted to know about, so we certainly had enough things to report.

Q: What about the unions there? I mean, the communists had a large, what was it, I want to say there's the chisel and the wheel or, I mean, the C-

ALEXANDER: Yes, the C something or another. We had a labor attaché, so I didn't have to deal with that issue, fortunately.

Q: Were they a real problem in the Italian economy?

ALEXANDER: I don't know, I guess I would have to say to the extent that they were a problem, they were a problem because they were unionists, not because they were communists. Their ideology I don't think had much to do with whatever positions they took vis-à-vis the industrialists. I think it was classic worker versus management disputes and, I don't know whether it was even left versus right. They did what unions do.

Q: The thing that always interested me in a place like Italy, and I guess France too, is they would have these strikes which would last for one day.

ALEXANDER: Yes.

Q: To me, as a good American, I feel if you're having a strike, this is a serious thing and you don't make a show, you just stop and wait until you get something settled. They would have an almost symbolic strike which often would be to the detriment of the people. The bank tellers would go on strike without notice. I mean, that sort of thing, for maybe five hours.

ALEXANDER: Yes, yes. You know, the thing that used to frustrate people about the strikes was it was inconceivable to us that a local union could do what you've just said – go on strike for five hours and that would ripple nationally because then the bank tellers' union in the next town over would have to go on strike in solidarity with their brethren and this would spread like wildfire. So it often did have the appearance of being rather capricious, but there was a method, there was a logic behind it, as convoluted as it might appear to us, it wasn't quite as capricious as it might

seem, the notion of a one day national strike. In fact, it might even be argued that this is part of the Italian genius. Rather than waiting for things to get so bad that they would blow up and you would have a strike that could go on for months. Sort of like what has happened periodically in U.S. history steel industry, where I think it was Eisenhower who had to order that they go back to the mines or the steel mills or whatever. In order to avoid that type of dynamic, they would have these smaller strikes or they would do things to head off or to obviate the requirement for something much larger, bigger than anyone wanted to really get into. Italians, by nature I think, are intelligent people. They don't draw lines in the sand unless you force them to for a simple reason. Once you draw that line you know you're going to have to cross it and are you prepared for the consequences? A very long and proud history has taught them that in the long run you don't want to go there if you don't have to. It's just not their mentality. So I think this is part of their way of trying to defuse or deal with larger issues. Listen, let's do something small, possibly symbolic, but it will focus everyone's attention on a need to address a larger issue and we will address it and then we'll avoid having to do something crazy. So it works for them, in the main it worked for them. I think the French sometimes could have taken a page from the Italian book rather than shutting down the whole country for days on end. That rarely happened in Italy. If the trains were shut down, the planes were still flying and the buses were still rolling. In France everything would shut down, you can't move.

Q: I'm referring to today as we look at particularly Germany and France, their social programs have begun to really strangle the economy because they don't produce jobs. I mean, nobody put a factory into Germany or France because once an employee ...

ALEXANDER: Labor costs, yes.

Q: You can't get rid of them and the employment costs are so high.

ALEXANDER: Astronomical.

Q: You know, people go elsewhere. Did you see any...

ALEXANDER: Less critical in Italy. Again, 35 to 40 percent of the economy was underground, to the point that the employers weren't paying taxes and they weren't providing those kinds of benefits. Moreover, the Italians had many more small enterprises. They had large industrial conglomerates like Fiat, but as a percentage of GNP (gross national product), small companies contributed much, much more to the Italian economy than was the case in France or Germany. So I think that the impact of- the impact on employers of having to hire a person with all the sick leave and the maternity leave and this leave and that leave and this benefit and that benefit was not as pressing on the average Italian employer who had on the payroll maybe 10 people, eight of whom were relatives.

Q: Yes.

ALEXANDER: Again, I mean, that sounds amusing to a lot of people.

Q: It works.

ALEXANDER: This wasn't a Third World state, either. Italy produces Ferraris and aircraft.

Q: They produce quality.

ALEXANDER: Quality products, exactly, yes.

Q: It doesn't look great, but they produce the best gloves in the world.

ALEXANDER: No, they also have, since you're speaking of gloves and textiles, everyone knows about Italian design. We've all heard the magic names of the Versaces and the Guccis and the Fendis and etcetera. But behind is an enormous technological innovation as well. You walk into factories in China where they're turning out garments at 10 cents a piece, garments that we couldn't make here for less than two bucks a piece or five dollars a piece in Germany; you look at the machines that are doing that and a lot of those machines are Italian machines. So again, anyone who suggests that the Italians are a nation of shopkeepers or little mom and pop operations making gloves, that doesn't reflect accurately the picture of Italy, at least not the picture that I have. This is a modern industrial state with a rather unique approach to labor relations and to payroll taxes, and it works for them.

Q: I know we had a series of explosions at our consulates throughout Italy and all of a sudden we had to report how much we were paying local people, which we hadn't been doing before. This meant, of course, that, as we were reporting it to the government, they could tax a significant number of local employees.

ALEXANDER: Yes.

Q: There were various scandals going around as there are in every country, with Eni and also the Vatican. Did any of these erupt and cause you concern while you were there?

ALEXANDER: Well, the Vatican, the Banco Ambrosia thing, I wasn't affected at all by that. Some of the Eni scandals, to a certain extent. I mean, Washington wanted to know what was going on and what was the significance of these things. Neither my staff or I spent a lot of time on these issues. We would report them, but everyone else was reporting them; anyone could pick up a newspaper to find out. So, no, I'm not going to say that we spent a lot of time on those issues.

Q: One of the things that used to amuse me -- again, I was not an Italian hand or even a European sitting down in Naples for a short time -- but looking at the change of governments that went on and we would be asked what is the reaction down south? The reaction was a shrug of the shoulders. But seems like our political sector spent an inordinate amount of time reporting on the minutia of ministerial changes and all this. Was this of any particular interest to your section?

ALEXANDER: Much less so than it was to the political section. The reality was, I think you very appropriately described it; it was musical chairs, it was people changing portfolios. The

main actors were always the same, it was a kabuki dance.

Q: I know.

ALEXANDER: You know? And, but Andreotti was also Andreotti, whether he was a foreign minister or the prime minister or the head of the party or what have you; he was always there, as were the others. Basically, foreign policy didn't change, industrial policy didn't change. At times there were questions of, "my brother's bank needs some help and you're not doing it so I'm going to bring down this government so I can do it." In the big scheme of things, these weren't sea changes. Sea changes happened once every 20 years and it was usually provoked by exogenous factors, not internal ones. So no, it didn't matter to me who the minister of industry was or who the head of Eni was; it didn't change my world, it didn't change my issues. I often question whether it really changed anybody's world.

Q: Yes, I just have a feeling that it kept the political section busy.

ALEXANDER: They were responding to Washington. I could understand why the desk officer in Washington or the office director would want to know, I certainly would, what are the implications for us? The prime minister is no longer the person that we dealt with for the past three weeks, it's somebody that we're going to have to deal with for three weeks until they get another prime minister, but after a while the names were all the same and it was like having a deck of cards. Well, this week the king of spades is the prime minister. Okay. The next week, oh, now it's the king of hearts. In other words, you know who these people are, you've got the bios, you just pull them out and say okay.

Q: Did you get involved in the Pershing missile thing, did that have any effect? In a way the south was going to get a little more in the way of construction there. Did Sicily play any particular role?

ALEXANDER: No, not really, other than being the recipient of Brussels' largesse, you know, as part of the payoff the Italians to support whatever the French and the Germans wanted.

Q: Because the European Union was so basically economic, did you have to keep a watching brief on what was happening in Brussels?

ALEXANDER: Well we did, but that was taken care of because all of the embassies, all of the EU embassies were plugged in and recipients of Brussels. Our mission in Brussels would inform us, send us copies of most of the things that they were sending back; at least those things that had implications for the European posts in general. So we were well plugged in to what our embassy in Brussels was doing and was being told and what they were saying to the Europeans, so we would speak to one another. I had several conversations with my counterpart, for example, in Paris, on issues that were of common interest. We had to be plugged in and I think we were plugged in. Moreover, the Europeans themselves, I have to say, were very good about sharing information with us. I had a very dear friend in the local EU office in Rome and I could call her up and ask her any question or say, "is your boss free for lunch?" "Yes, he'd be glad to have lunch with you." And we would go out and I would say, "listen, I'm trying to understand this,"

or, “my government has a problem with this, can you give me your take on this?” They were very good. Again, as many trade disputes as we might have, and they exist to this day, whether you’re talking about subsidizing Boeing or subsidizing Airbus, whatever the issue is, the Europeans and the U.S. are still basically friends. We disagree on a heck of a lot of things, but we agree on a heck of a lot of things. Almost everybody in the EU is in NATO. We are allies and there is an amazing amount of cooperation that goes on. We tend to focus on the disputes and the differences; it’s not like dealing with the USSR. At times it could be just as acrimonious, but the relationship was very, very different. It was generally marked by a certain amount of warmth and candor and openness and the willingness to try to resolve our differences. It could get nasty when we got into fights over, you know, subsidies, agriculture or to aircraft production, but in the main it was a good relationship, a good, positive, beneficial relationship.

Q: Well then, you left there in when, in ‘89?

ALEXANDER: September of 1989.

**THOMAS MACKLIN, Jr.
General Services Officer
Rome (1987-1989)**

Thomas Macklin, Jr. was born on October 6, 1935 in Fort Worth, Texas. He attended San Diego State University and the University of Maryland and entered the Foreign Service in 1965. His career has included positions in countries including the Netherlands, the Hague, Vietnam, Barbados, Algeria, Israel, Russia, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on September 27, 2000.

MACKLIN: I went off to Rome in November of ’87.

Q: What was your impression of the medical part? Was it a bureau?

MACKLIN: Yes, Bureau of Medical Affairs. I thought the doctors were very good. Medically, I had great confidence in them. They had really good people. On a management level, it was just hopeless. It was a big mistake to get involved in that office. Doctors basically, whether they work in a hospital or what, have a mentality that says, “I’m running my own practice.” If you’re a doctor, you’re running a family practice. You decide what to pay yourself, where to put your office. You make all the decisions yourself. You don’t have to talk to anybody about anything. That was the mentality. So, these guys come to work for an institution. They don’t understand how positions are classified. They don’t understand why State does some of the stupid things they do. So, what happens? You get alienated. So, they trust each other but they don’t trust the Department of State. I was a newcomer. They didn’t want my advice. So, there was nothing to do. I was bored out of my mind. The typical experience in Med was, after I had been there about four months, there were one of these directives that came from the Director General that said, “We’ve got too many senior positions. OMB or someone is going to be after us to reduce the number of senior positions, so let’s do it ourselves first and they’ll see that we’ve got a lot of

self-discipline and it will be easier to defend what we've got. So, everybody has got to take their cut. We're going to make this across the board," so they told all the bureaus, "You've got to downgrade a certain number of positions." They decided they were theoretically going to downgrade a certain number of doctors. So, I went around to the people in the DG's office and said, "You know, I know the government is a bureaucracy and you've got to relate everything to a classification scale, to a GS scale or an Foreign Service scale, but really we're dealing with medical professionals whom we acquire on the open market at market prices. Not only that, we don't send these guys to Paris for the most part. We send them to places like Pakistan. So, if we don't approximate market scale for their salaries, we're not going to keep the good ones." That resonated. So, although we had gotten a piece of paper that said, "You've got to do the following. Tell us which positions you'll downgrade," I talked to the doctors. First of all, there were some of them there who didn't like me. They said, "How dare you presume to judge our value within this organization?" I said, "I'm just here to help. I can deal with the DG's office, but..." I didn't make much headway. Finally, I got the head of the Medical Division to say, "Go talk to him and see what you can do." This was about Thanksgiving. So, I went around to Alex De la Garza, who was in charge of classification, who was a pretty good guy, pretty smart. I went through this with him. He said, "You've got to make some cuts." I said, "Okay, let's make a few but just a few because there is an elastic demand for medical services in the Foreign Service. When you need it, you've got to have it and you've got to have the right quality." He agreed. So, we would only cut a few positions.

Well, at the same time, the medical director, Dr. Destin, had decided he wanted to write a letter to the Director General because the Director General really didn't understand doctors. So, I said, "Okay, go ahead and write the letter, but don't send it until I look at it." Remember what Lincoln used to do. He used to do this all the time. He would write letters to people and get it out of his system and then he'd file the letter away and never send it around to anyone. "So, please let me have a look at it because they've offered us this deal and it's a pretty good arrangement. We're only going to have to downgrade about 20% of what they told us we're going to have to do." He said, "Well, let me write my letter." Then I went back to California for Thanksgiving, came back and he had sent the goddamned letter criticizing the DG, criticizing the people who classified, talking about the "So-called classifiers who don't understand what doctors do, etc." So, I went back to Personnel and they said, "We don't have a deal. What do you mean? We were talking about that, but we're going to have to stick to our guns and you're going to have to..." So, I started looking of a job then. EUR, it turned out something happened to the GSO in Rome and so by the following spring, they said, "Well, if you want to go to Rome, you can go." I said I'd take it. So I went to Rome. I even got about eight weeks of Italian and got out of Med after one year.

Q: So, your wife stayed in Washington?

MACKLIN: No, she stayed in OES until about a month after I left. I went ahead and then she followed me. So, she curtailed by about four months and went on to LWOP [leave without pay] and had our second child in Rome.

Q: You were in Rome from '86 to when?

MACKLIN: To the summer of '89. I guess I went out there in the fall of '86. It was two and a

half years. Then I left there to go back to Moscow on a direct transfer.

Q: Talk about the embassy in Rome.

MACKLIN: The embassy is located in an old palace the palace of the former Queen Mother, Palazzo Margherita. It's a lovely old building. There are catacombs below everything in Rome, but there are a lot of antiquities there. There is that famous statue that we discovered there a few years ago that was just sitting around in one of the hallways. People didn't realize it was worth a small fortune. It's a lovely building right on the Via Veneto, nicely located. There are two or three annexed buildings. It's got a large parking lot with fountains and stuff. The ambassador has a beautiful residence in downtown Rome, Villa Taverna, which is a villa dating back to the 16th or 17th century which has miles of catacombs underneath it and huge grounds. The embassy itself is really a composite embassy, kind of like the microcosm of Washington, DC. If you took every agency that's represented in Washington, DC, and shrunk them down to the size of a pea and then moved them all to Rome, that's kind of what the embassy is. The State Department represented probably 25-30% of the whole mission. Lots of cops, DEA, Secret Service, FBI, naval security, NSA, the spooks... FAA. All these government organizations – Agriculture, Defense. They all tended to be kind of self-sufficient, sort of insular. There wasn't a lot of social interaction between these groups. There was some within the former cops (DEA, Secret Service, etc.), but it wasn't a terribly happy embassy. It was a political ambassador who was really just interested in himself, Max Rabb. He wanted to do a good job and if somebody wound him up and pointed him in the right direction, he would speak his lines, but basically all he wanted to do was travel around the country having fun. He did that. He was there eight or nine years and had to be dragged out with a team of horses. When Bush became President, he thought he was close to Bush. They just worshiped Ronnie and Nancy. He was a nice enough guy, an ineffectual ambassador. We had a wonderful DCM, a guy named John Holmes, who did an absolutely superb job and got no reward for it at all.

I really liked the city after a while. It took a while to kind of cotton up to, but I really liked it. It was fun. Good locals. A lot of intrigue. There were no great political issues. There were some pol-mil issues: participation in NATO, IMF, the base in Aviano, terms of reference for that, a lot of pol-mil stuff. We have so many military there between Aviano and down in Naples. There was a lot of turbulence in the Italian government at the time, but it never affected the bilateral relationship.

Q: When I was consul general in Naples '79-'81, I was not an Italian hand. I would watch all these reports coming out of our role in the change of governments. In those days, nothing happened. It was just the same old faces reshuffled. We seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time getting into practically county politics, but at the Rome level.

MACKLIN: Yes. It was true. All of these interrelationships. It was fun and intriguing, the way the Italians in the north looked at the Italians in the south, and everybody's cousin who can do something for them. We knew a guy who was a dentist quite well. He and his wife had a daughter and our oldest son and she played together. So, we used to do things. They had an apartment in a very small apartment building. Like most Italian apartment buildings, the water came from a small reservoir on the roof. The water had to be piped up there into the reservoir.

The size of the pipes and the size of the reservoir had a lot to do with your access to water. He had to remodel the apartment and he really needed to expand the reservoir. So, he didn't contact the water department. He spent four or five days calling everybody he knew across the board until he finally found somebody who was a friend who had a relative who worked with the water department. Then and only then working through the friend with the relative did he get his reservoir fixed. Got the permits, got it upgraded, got it done very quickly, but he had to do it that way. He couldn't go directly to them and get the paperwork done. There is a certain amount of that.

Q: I remember people would say, "I want to make a long distance call to the United States. I know somebody in PTT." That's the way you do it. Could you get things done?

MACKLIN: Yes. I had some very good locals, one guy in particular who was more Russian than Italian. He was kind of the head local informally. At least all the locals in GSO were kind of afraid of him. He was very good. He had been there a long time. We actually became good friends. It took a while, but we became good friends. He was very good. We made a lot of changes together and he was very open to ideas. We changed the way we did contracting and stuff. I found that we could get things done. The usual admin problems within a mission were there. "I don't like my housing" kinds of stuff. But in terms of repairs and upgrades and facilities and utilities, the usual operational stuff, there was no particular problem.

Q: Often as GSO at particularly a large embassy with a political ambassador, you find yourself dancing the tendons on the ambassador's wife.

MACKLIN: It was very important for me to get along with Mrs. Rabb. Actually, I liked her a lot. She was eight times tougher than her husband. She was New York Jew, "What's in it for me?" I really liked her. She had awfully good taste. She did a lot of work refinishing the residence, put a lot of her own money into it. She could be really tough. They were very well connected in the entertainment industry. At one time, they had Michael Jackson come stay with them at Villa Taverna-

Q: He was a popular music star.

MACKLIN: He was an idol at that time. He put on a performance for the Rabbs. Well, two of the Marines snuck into Villa Taverna to see Michael Jackson and she caught them and had those guys pilloried. Not a forgiving lady. But we got along very well. I liked her. She had good ideas for Villa Taverna. I have a lot of respect for Mrs. Rabb.

Q: You had by that time taken care of the arsenic in the ceiling of the ambassador's bedroom. Clare Boothe Luce when she was there with her family, the paint kept flicking out and she was actually suffering from arsenic poisoning.

MACKLIN: That's right. We were more careful than they were in those days. Incredible.

I had one big problem in Rome, which sullied the tour. I would have happily stayed for four years, but for three things. I wanted to go back to Moscow because it was changing. I didn't

think I'd get promoted in Rome. I had a terrible problem with the RSO. The second year, I almost developed ulcers. It was really awful. We had an admin counselor named Harry Geisel. Harry can be tough, but he delegates. So, he kind of left it up to me and as long as I never made a mistake, he would leave me alone. That was good. Well, Harry was tapped to go up to Bonn to be admin counselor. It was one of these admin daisy chain flip flops. So, Harry went up there and was replaced by a guy named Don Shay, who was an old line admin officer with a good reputation. I found him awfully lazy and not very imaginative. But in any event, Shay came in at about the same time we had a change in the RSO. The old RSO had been a pretty good guy, pretty laid back, but he had a staff that was kind of restive because they really didn't have much to do. He had two or three FSOs, assistant RSOs, working for him. There was no real threat there. There was not a lot to do. When I arrived, there was a guy I inherited that worked on contract, a guy we called "Captain Bob." He was just an example of how all of this started. He was a fireman from New Jersey who loved Italy. Bob was about 28 or 29. He had a lot of firefighting experience, although he had been a reserve or volunteer fireman in New Jersey and had been involved in what was a very famous hotel fire in New Jersey. He knew a lot about safety. He was an Italian-American. Because he was still an American, he couldn't really work, but he wanted to live in Italy and to stay there until he was there long enough (I think it took five years before he could get a work permit). So, Bob did a lot of freelance stuff. We had had a couple of years before an apartment fire that resulted in somebody's death. So, Captain Bob offered to do things like train the Marines in fire safety. He had good relations with the Italians, so he'd take them out to the Italian firemen firefighting camp and show the Marines how to do things. He came to me and said "For something like three dollars an apartment, I'll go around and do fire safety reports on every apartment the embassy has and I'll provide my own transportation. I'll give you a written report." Sounds good to me. He had a contractor's badge so he could get on the compound. He went around and with a lot of the places they didn't have enough smoke detectors. So, he sold some smoke detectors on the side. But basically, he was free labor the way I looked at it. He wasn't a bad guy, went to all the Marine parties and stuff. Everybody liked him. One of the assistant RSOs decided there had to be something wrong here. This guy was actually a volunteer fireman, not a real fireman. So, he did a background check through DS in Washington to ask why, which turned up that he had been a volunteer, not a "real" fireman. He said, "Well, this guy wears a fireman's uniform and goes around talking about being part of the American embassy." I said, "Look, he wears a fireman's coat because it makes him feel good, but he's free labor as far as I'm concerned and as long as he does nothing venal, I don't see the problem." This went on and on. This guy kept trying to get some goods on him. Finally, he built up a circumstantial case against Captain Bob. He went through his boss to the admin counselor. So, the admin counselor without asking me, sent me down a memo that said, "Captain Bob is no longer welcome in the compound. Don't use him anymore." So, I went back to the admin counselor and he said, "Look, my view on this is that gringos have to get along. I don't want to really get involved in this. Why can't you and the RSO just get along with each other?" I said, "Well, I'm happy to get along with him, but I didn't know he was investigating this guy who is free labor." Eventually, Captain Bob was reinstated. It took about six months.

At the same time, the other assistant RSO had decided to investigate GSO. The chief FSN for the RSO's office had a long time blood feud with one of the head locals in GSO. These two guys had had kind of a fight at one time. The GSO senior local was kind of a bully and had picked this guy up and threatened him physically. The other guy said, "I'll get you for this." So, he convinced

this junior RSO that there was misconduct going on. The senior FSN, not the most senior, also the Tavak [a little smoke shop]. So, he was convinced that he was working, that the Tavak was getting paid by us. He started to investigate. That went on for about two months before I found out about it. During this time, he would build up circumstantial evidence, none of which was valid, and then send it in to Diplomatic Security (DS) as the truth. So, he had built up quite a body of evidence that there was something rotten in GSO before I got a whiff of it. That was when the admin counselor said, "Well, number three cable, why don't you show this to Macklin before it goes out?" I said, "This is full of factual errors. He makes statements that are not actually correct. He says that this guy is the one who decides on hiring people. When we hire, he doesn't even interview. He's not consulted. He's not part of the process." "Well, that's not what I hear." I said, "Well, I don't know what you hear, but I'm the one who signs the paper. Why would this guy interview for an FSN working in another division in GSO?" We went through a lot of this and some of it was a bit acrimonious. So, at about that time, we were being inspected. So, the admin counselor said, "I don't know. Let's just get to the bottom of this. Let's ask DS to send an investigator out here and see if there is anything going on." So, they sent a team of investigators out there. They stayed there for about six months.

Q: Well, it's Rome.

MACKLIN: It's Rome. They had a wonderful time. They finally found with the senior FSN that they had been fighting with, they decided none of them liked him, but they couldn't pin anything on him. In fact, the admin counselor said to me, "He hasn't done anything that I haven't done myself a million times." But they wanted to get rid of him. So, finally the RSO looked through the RSO regulations and went back to the admin counselor, not to me. He said, "The RSO has the authority to withdraw someone's FSN security clearance if in the judgment of the RSO there is a basis for doing so. Why don't I on my own judgment withdraw this guy's security clearance and then we can fire him and we don't have to prove anything?" So, I went to the admin counselor and said, "Do you really want to do this if the guy hasn't done anything?" "Well, it will kind of clear the air." I couldn't talk him out of it. I said, "Okay, well, I went back and talked to my senior FSN and my senior FSN says to please let him resign because if you're fired from a diplomatic mission for security reasons, under Italian law, that means you've been involved in terrorism and it will affect the guy's future employability." So, I went back to Shay and said, "Here's the deal. Please offer the guy a chance to resign. Otherwise..." Well, he just didn't get around to it. So, they fired the guy.

At the same time, the investigators was going great guns and they started using a technique... They'd take the senior FSN in the FSO's office and he'd go off to one of the clerks in GSO and say, "Paolo, we haven't talked in a long time. Let's go have a talk." So, they'd go off and have a cup of coffee and he'd ask them a bunch of questions. Then he'd write up a report in Italian and submit it to State without having anybody clear it. He would write his own report of what he said she said, but wouldn't let her or me look at it to determine whether or not there was any truth in it. Then he would submit it to Washington saying, "There is all this stuff going on." So, I got really pissed. I wrote a letter to Sherman Funk, the inspector general. I was told not to do it. I did it anyways. I went through with this letter and I outlined every specific I could think of in terms of every specific incorrect procedure. Sherman Funk never replied. I was never penalized because of it. I transferred out of there about three months later. I got a good efficiency report,

helped me to get me promoted. I left with no acrimony between me and Shay, although I had a lot that I felt. The investigation went on for another two months, but they stopped interviewing people like that and they finally found one of the assistant assistant assistants, about an FSN-6 level, guys in maintenance had kept about \$12, so they fired him. That was the only other action they ever took. But the IG was able to keep its staff in Rome, two or three people, for at least six months. I was really pissed off at the admin counselor for not trying to shut the thing down.

One last anecdote, an example of another thing he had done. In Rome, at a big embassy in a big city, we had had the same warehouse for 30- years. Right after the war, we had acquired a basement on the other side of Rome about an hour and a half away. It was a basement with a ceiling about six feet tall. We couldn't even use a forklift in there. That was our warehouse. We had been looking for another warehouse for years, never could find one. We found one in the fall of '88 just before I left. A guy, an Italian who had always liked America because we drove the Germans out of his country, had a freestanding warehouse on the embassy side of town that was near no buildings. It was a regular two story tin warehouse, perfect inside and outside, surrounded by a big parking lot, it was just ideal, in pristine condition. He said, "I've always loved America. If I can rent this to you." I started running the contract through. Everybody thought this was wonderful. The post management officer said, "Oh, by the way, get the RSO to sign off on this that it doesn't pose a security problem." So, I ran it by him and he wouldn't sign it. He said, "I want one of my guys to look at it." He went out there and said, "Well, we have security requirements for embassy buildings that require set back and certain kinds of walls and certain kinds of cameras." I said, "Yes, but that's for a chancery where there are people working. There won't be any Americans working at this facility. It's just going to hold paper and supplies." "Well, I don't make the regulations. The regulations don't make a distinction. I don't make a distinction, so I can't approve it," he said. So, it wound up at Christmastime, I had to get a waiver. The RSO's office stepped back and said, "Well, if you can work it, I guess it's okay with us, but we won't help." In Washington (I had a deadline of the second of January), nobody's there at Christmas. I had to walk the thing through about five offices, getting it approved, and I finally got it approved and we got the warehouse. But it was all of that hassle.

Q: Sometimes at large embassies, you get people who have almost too much time not to be intrusive.

MACKLIN: Yes.

STEPHEN LOW
Director, SAIS
Bologna (1987-1992)

Ambassador Stephen Low was born on December 2, 1927 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He attended Yale University, the Fletcher School, and the University of Paris. He served in the US Army in World War II and entered the Foreign Service in 1956. His career has included positions in Uganda, Senegal, Brazil, Zambia, Nigeria, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 5, 1997.

Q: Did you run across the feeling that there are models and reasons with the government which for most of us... It's "What's on my plate today" practically and you try to do a little. But most of the time you're dealing with it not being that well-planned.

LOW: There weren't profound ideological differences. It was an open, friendly group. I didn't feel any hostility. I was busy. As I learned later at Johns Hopkins where I was director of its graduate school in Bologna, that the great problem for a practitioner coming in to academia is mastering the literature in a field. I did two kinds of courses, one on the formation and practice of American diplomacy - a process course. The other was on the issues of United States policy in Africa. They're both big areas with a wealth of literature. The library was pretty good. I would spend long hours trying to familiarize myself with what had been written on the two subjects. I made some progress, but I certainly wouldn't say that I was able to master the entire literature of either subject. I had taken up the cello some years before when I was in the White House on the National Security Council. This was important to me while I was traveling in Zimbabwe. I would land in Salisbury and go immediately to the music school to rent a cello. Then I could sit in my hotel room and practice. Just playing a C Major scale gave me great pleasure and provided a great release. Some years later I learned from a book the chief of Rhodesian intelligence wrote about the period that he respected me because of my interest in the cello. He was a violinist! When I got back to Santa Barbara, I started lessons again.

Then someone I had known for 40 years who had been doing research in Dakar when I was in the embassy there and is now a professor at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) asked whether I would be interested in going to Bologna as director of the Johns Hopkins - SAIS graduate school there. I told him I didn't think we wanted to go overseas again but I would let him know in the morning. I discussed it with my wife and the next morning told him we would be very interested. I didn't know much about SAIS or Bologna, but the more we learned, the more interesting it became. And the idea of learning Italian - the only major Latin language (Romanian excepted) we hadn't studied. There were a number of candidates for the position. We went through the formal interviews, visited Bologna and ended up being selected. For both of us, it was a brand new adventure to look forward to - somewhat like Kampala and Brasilia had been. So, I retired on April 3, 1987. On April 6, I was picked up by Johns Hopkins. I tried at age 60 to learn Italian, which I found more difficult than I had expected. Both Sue and I loved our five years in Bologna but when we had completed the five year contract we decided it was time to return to the States.

GERALD J. MONROE
U.S. Representative to FAO
Rome (1989-1992)

Gerald J. Monroe was raised in New York State and attended City College in New York. He served in the US Army and entered the Foreign Service in 1959. His

career has included positions in Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Germany, China, Switzerland, and Italy. He was interviewed by Raymond Ewing on March 22, 1999.

MONROE: Well, I went back to the department to be a liaison officer very briefly with the states, state liaison, intergovernmental liaison. I did that because they were bringing in a political fellow who wasn't quite there yet. Then when he got there, his feet weren't quite on the ground yet. Then I was discovered in the fifth, as I put it, like being discovered at the drug store, I was at the fifth floor coffee bar whatever it was, a little cafeteria there. An old pal actually from college days walked in and said, "Say, you are a food manager aren't you." I said, "Yes." He said, "How would you like to be our firm rep in FAO?" I said, "Well, I don't now, what is it all about?" I don't want to go out there to talk to any of those people because the people that I know who have done that, one had a heart attack, Touissand, a very nice fellow. He did have a heart attack. The other one came back, and the third one, Jack Direkey was sent off to Uruguay and was there three months. "No," he said. "I would take over. The ambassador was going to be recalled, and you'd be assigned as his DCM and when he left, you would take over." A long period ensued, several months when I was angling not to go out as this fellow's deputy, wait until he leaves, and then I will go out. Then you know, what was the White House going to do about this? Administrations were changing. Were they going to send someone else out, a political appointee. Of course, it did require six months family separation. Evangie, was at that point State Vice President of AFSA. She had to finish that up, and there was a question whether she could get a job there. She eventually did because of her credentials in handling central American communist issues.

Q: In political sections.

MONROE: In political sections of the embassy, but that happened later. Finally I was told go in January. I think people sympathized with my not wanting to work for that ex-Congressman given the track record. But come the end of January 1989, I was told, you go now. I was called on vacation in Vermont, and told, go.

Q: And you went. Were you deputy or were you in charge?

MONROE: I was in charge, but I wasn't, I didn't have ambassadorial title because they had withdrawn it with Ecker. Now, that was both good and bad. I mean, the good part of it was, for decades the thing had been an embassy.

Q: A mission. A separate mission from the embassy.

MONROE: Yes, that's right, with an ambassador as the principal. So, nothing changed. The embassy didn't get it back. We were on the top floor of this magnificent villa, that Ambassador Robson, Reagan's ambassador to the Vatican had acquired at great expense. The difference was our part wasn't decorated very well, theirs was.

Q: The Vatican mission was in the same building?

MONROE: It was their building.

Q: It was their building, but you were using part of it.

MONROE: We were using part of it and paying our share which I had to re-negotiate. We had more Americans than they did. They had 13 locals. We had two locals. One was my driver, bodyguard, Chiaso, you know, because he could deal with Italians, and could speak Italian. Well, he was Italian. The only problem was he couldn't speak much English. Then there was someone, a woman in her 70s who had been working for AID since the war or something, and was in Rome, and was still working for AID. AID had two positions there.

Q: In your office?

MONROE: In my office.

Q: You say you had more Americans than the Vatican Embassy. How many did you have?

MONROE: I had myself and another State department officer, a deputy, who was a mid-career officer, agriculture was too when they arrived because the principal was relatively low ranking for agriculture. Generally agriculture sends very senior people to those highly visible kinds of positions. The AID people both of them had separate budgets. One was to IFAD or the International Fund for Agricultural Development which is essentially an agricultural bank. That is the best way to describe it. And the World Food Programme. The agricultural fund, I said was under the aegis of policy planning at AID. The World Food Programme, of course was its own division, a food aid division which had an assistant secretary equivalent. So it was three agencies and four budgets. The administrative overhang was rather daunting actually that was the one that was in negatives.

Q: The administrative...

MONROE: Well, the requirement to administer the place proved to be far more difficult than I envisaged.

Q: You didn't have an administrative officer.

MONROE: No. We had first depended on the, you know, EUR was attempting to be very cooperative but both embassies were not. They were remarkably uncooperative. Some of our contracts for cleaning and what have you were still held by the embassy. Looking back to a time when we were around the corner from the embassy on the villa St. Daniel or whatever it was. Some were handled by the Vatican. Of course, I kept arguing that the Vatican should take over all of these contracts if they choose or will take them over, but give us a contract option. Well, what they eventually did was give us a, they did give us an accountant who worked at the embassy but was less committed to us. He was a dedicated...

Q: This was the Rome embassy as opposed to the Vatican embassy.

MONROE: Right. I argued strenuously that the mission should be integrated administratively. Actually I thought that all three should be I mean as they do in Brussels, because the Vatican had an administrative officer.

Q: The Vatican was completely separate from the embassy in Rome administratively and every other way.

MONROE: Well, all of us were dependent on Rome's communications. Technology was such at that time that they didn't have the small post kits available for the kind of setting we were in, which was a complex communications setting in a modern country more or less.

Q: When your office would send a telegram to Washington, it would be signed by Monroe?

MONROE: Yes. I mean I moved in there operating just the way Eckert did. That is the way I operated until the day I left.

Q: Nobody else ever came so you

MONROE: Well, I was never given the title of Ambassador because every time I was offered it from someone on the hill, they later found that person wanted the job, Phil Christianson for example, from Helm's office wanted to turn it into an embassy. Then another Congressman, influential Congressman, he didn't want the job, but there was somebody he wanted to give it to. A member of the black caucus, Donnely, I think. Something like that. Then Hecht, Senator Hecht from Nevada, remember him? He wanted it very badly. He called me and said, "Where is the nearest golf course?" I said, "All the golf courses are far out," and they were. I wasn't lying. I said, "I have never heard of one, but there must be one. I'll ask. I am sure Italians play golf." Well, he became very distressed at the visibly, I mean audibly distressed at that over the phone. I could hear as I sort of thought out loud. Well I think I know some one who must belong to a club. Well, I will ask at the FAO. Maybe he will know. But, in any case, yes, that went on. Every time I asked something for our administrative types back in IO, his response would be well I just got a call from the hill. They are interested in sending out so and so. He had a perfect ploy, but I am fighting for you. I don't know how many were interested except the ones that called me.

Q: As far as the State Department and maybe the White House was concerned, you were the acting permanent representative.

MONROE: NO, I was the permanent chief of mission. That was the title they finally got around to giving me sometime in April.

Q: And you were there about what, two and a half years or longer?

MONROE: Three years. My wife was there two and a half.

Q: And besides dealing with the two embassies, your main purpose was to deal with the food and agricultural organization of the UN and the World Food Programme and IFAD.

MONROE: IFAD and numerous legal entities I didn't know about but which I had to sit on the finance committees of, if you don't mind my ending with a preposition.

Q: What was your sort of main area that you worked on and what were the main problems you were dealing with?

MONROE: Well, initially, we had horrible, when I arrived, the day I arrived, I actually called on this, the director general of the FAO the day I arrived. The relations between the United States and him personally were just in the gutter. I mean just...

Q: What was the name of the director general?

MONROE: His name was Soloma, Edward Soloma. He was of Lebanese origin. He had come up the usual way in the FAO which is firm rep job at the FAO, division chief or something and then runs for director general and wins. We had not supported him for his third term. He had already served two terms. We supported him for his first term as a technocrat. We supported him for his second term because everyone serves two terms, but not his third term. We supported someone from Benin whose coming didn't make much of a showing.

Q: By the time you were there, this was his third term.

MONROE: This was his third term, so he was angry at us because we hadn't been supportive. He was angry at us because we were already falling into arrears, nothing like we ultimately fell into, and had only paid part of our dues our obligations. I was a member of the finance committee, ex-officio, as well as the program committee and a number of other committees, OECD. Multi-lateral life is one meeting after another because there are all of these little groupings. The place was a mini UN, I mean a mini New York in that sense. They all operate pretty much the same. You have the Geneva group which is a formal group of interested major donors. We had a lot of informal groups. We were unique because we weren't divided between Western Europe and others in the G-77. We were divided between OECD and non OECD which made for a rather slight variation. There were satellites who were members. Of course this in the descending days of the Soviet Union, but they were still there more or less. The Soviet Union had never taken up its seat, so that set of issues didn't arise. We didn't have east-west, but north-south was, you know, north-south conflict was the way in which someone kept power.

Q: In support of the south.

MONROE: He had the support of the south. So I began to call on everyone I possibly could. I had seen mistakes made. Dare I say Ambassador Whittlesey was not very diligent in making calls, so many people refused to talk to her, she found.

Q: Because she had not called on them.

MONROE: That's right.

Q: To introduce herself.

MONROE: That's right, so I decided that I was going to call on every African, every Latin American and Middle Easterner. All these were geographic groupings within.

Q: And all of these were representatives of their country at FAO.

MONROE: Well, I called on everyone. I called on ambassadors which many times they preferred. Most of my colleagues in the western group I met the ambassadors of. They invited me to a luncheon or something of that sort. That was easily done. I didn't really have to call on them, but I did have to call on African- (end of tape)

Q: This is June 9, 1999. Gerry, we have been talking about your assignment from 1989 to 1992, which was U.S. permanent representative to the UN food agencies in Rome, head of that mission. I think the other day we were talking about some of the things you tried to do on an ongoing basis to keep in touch with the variety of other delegations from Africa and all parts of the world. What were some of the main issues you had to deal with in that period? Were we fully paid up, or was this kind of the beginning of the difficulties we had paying our full share of the expenses to the UN agencies that subsequently come to affect all of the United Nations contributions?

MONROE: I think several things coalesced very severe relations, and probably our relations with the UN system was no where as bad as it was with the FAO. The reasons were several. There was an underlying problem with the UN system generally where the administration was concerned. I arrived just at the change of the Reagan Bush administrations. We had been falling into arrears during the previous two years. We had had several ambassadors. These people were political appointees. One was a prominent Congresswoman by the name of Millicent Fenwick who in general was very positive toward the FAO, toward development, and she for whatever reason was able to get along with Salma in a very positive way. Indeed she was frequently instructed not to take positive action but did that Salma considered helpful. As a matter of fact, someone called me just yesterday and asked to talk about. Excuse me, someone who is working on a biography of Millicent Fenwick, and they wanted to talk about the Rome years. She was fluent in Italian; she was fluent in French which was Salma's first language if not Arabic. I never knew which. French seemed to be the language he preferred to use. Then, when she left, she was replaced by an extremely conservative ex-congressman from upstate New York. His views more or less conformed to the views of many conservatives both on the hill and in the administration. Therefore, relations just fell into the cellar. Salma and Ambassador Eckert finally made their peace just before Eckert left, but much harm had been done. A considerable amount of negative reporting on Salma was done, negative impressions were drawn during the conferences and council meetings and assembly meetings and so on. So that in many instances, I would say that that part of IO that handled the FAO, we were involved in a cold war you might say. It was one of those cases where the desk officer loved to hate his client. And of course the feeling was reciprocated. I think Salma felt for several reasons, one is that this was his third term, and we had not supported him for a third term while we had for the first two elections. Incidentally it runs about six to seven years. It is a lengthy hold on the office. Salma had first been elected in '76, so this man had been running the FAO for a number of years. During that time there was a

considerable controversy attached to his name particularly where the first African famine of the '80s occurred or during this Ethiopian civil war and the tyrannical regime of Mengistu, and the FAO's actions during that time, the FAO's efforts to whatever their efforts were did not meet the standard the U.S. government expected to be met, nor did they meet the standards of the World Food Programme. That began, I think, the animosity between Salma and the Australian director general of the World Food Programme. I think I described that last time. There were already two strikes against anyone who went, three strikes if you count Eckert who was not Salma's favorite person. What one found when one made the opening call an Salma was a lot of hostility. Now this was before we managed to stay in by just giving him enough money to retain our vote. Several other things that happened during that first year. The council president was a prominent agriculturist from a member country. The term was three years. These people were elected. It was held to be the U.S. turn which is frequently the way things operate in the United Nations system, regions and to the degree countries within those regions have turned. As a major donor country it was pretty much felt it was time for the U.S. to head the council. We hadn't actually had that position for many years, several decades I think. A Belgian ran against, the Belgian current representative ran against the very prominent person that we found, the number three at Agriculture, and actually had been in the industry very well known grain broker working with Cargill, so this was a prominent man in American agriculture. He lost because many felt some had brought pressure to bear on the governing council membership particularly the G-77 or the developing countries.

Q: Who were sitting on the council at that time.

MONROE: That's right. I think the answer is he did. I think he clearly didn't want an American to win. He argued that it was inappropriate given the level of our arrears. In any case with this in hand, with that loss in hand and several other political things we had for the first time, a Palestinian resolution was introduced by the Egyptians of all people. We didn't really expect that. Well, the usual team flew out both from Israel and the United States to deal with this. As it turned out, I dealt with it mostly and a DAS from IO. We met constantly for the better part of a week with various middle eastern caucuses, and seemed to be making headway. We also had a very long afternoon with the Egyptian ambassador. We thought that perhaps we were watering this down to where it would be acceptable to the Israelis and to ourselves for that matter. One of the pluses of the FAO was that it had been remarkably unpolitical over the years. I think that was one of its strengths, probably one of the few left by this time. Certainly in terms of the way Washington viewed the agency. Well, the possibility of the usual kind of Palestinian resolution which was political without question. Palestine was already or the territories that the Israelis called it were already benefits of a fairly significant FAO program, so we could see no particular gain to be made except in the political arena. In any case, I think inexorably we were going to lose that one as we do in all agencies. We got a little more support there because even the Australians abstained. We got more extensions than we expected. Normally the Australians follow the EC's road on this sort of thing. They essentially support Palestinians resolutions. Notwithstanding their surprising level of support, we still lost the vote by a fairly significant number. It wasn't two votes to a hundred and sixty eight as it usually was the case in that sort of thing. In any case, Washington was very upset with that. I think that tilted the boat in favor of just getting off it and letting the FAO go slowly out to sea. There was no question that the organization, had we left, I knew the Canadians would leave, the British would have given very

strong consideration to leaving because by this time no one in the donor community if you want to call it that because that is the way the real division is. It wasn't so much contribution levels as it was donor and beneficiary or G-77 versus members of the OECD, however one wants to call it. I think at the UN it was Europe and others. At the FAO for whatever historic reason it was the OECD group. Therefore Washington decided we were going to get out of this thing. Now, there was not total unanimity even among the conservatives. The farm belt congressmen wanted to stay in.

Q: The Department of Agriculture?

MONROE: The Department of Agriculture definitely wanted to stay in simply because they found it a convenient venue for technical exchanges and because the FAO ran a structure of independent research organizations who were regionally organized. The Agriculture Department felt that this was of value relationship, not critically important to the agricultural welfare of the United States. In fact the United States technology was by and large the driving force of the agency. That said, much was learned from others obviously. Some of the G-77 had the largest seed banks in the world and so forth which was worth having access to through the FAO. But that did not mean to say that the Secretary of Agriculture would not have been influenced by the political world of the White House obviously. I think this whole Palestinian issue which was very barely caught. Of course, what happened was, as frequently happens with this sort of thing is the EEC persuaded the middle east that they were going, the middle eastern caucus that they would support them, or I should say the French, that they would support this resolution, so the ground was cut out from under us. Try as we might, we had much more negotiating success with Syria than we did with France as it turned out. Not unusual I suspect. With that behind us, I got to go over with my Agricultural attaché and hand this \$15 million check to the director general. It was one of the most unpleasant interludes in my entire career. I never quite dealt, even Soviets, I never quite dealt with a foreign interlocutor who was literally in a rage, I mean stomping about the office. It was almost carpet chewing.

Q: Why was he so enraged? You were giving him \$18 million for his organization.

MONROE: Well, he needed 56 from us. That's what he felt, plus we owed another \$70 or \$80 million at that time, I don't recall. The total indebtedness was far beyond \$18 million.

Q: Was he objecting also to whatever instructions you had to tell him?

MONROE: Oh, absolutely. I mean, he was convinced there was some sort of conspiracy. Indeed he never got above the personal in the entire three years that we worked together most of the time. It was just in his background. As he put it, he had been there whatever 15 years and he still had all his teeth. Probably an old Lebanese saying, an old Arabic saying, but whatever, I think it pretty much personified the man, his personality. Many people, many Americans and indeed many other Europeans considered Salama personally corrupt. I think that was not the case. He lived modestly. I was unaware of anything irregular in his dealings with the system, the UN system except the way in which his pension was calculated. The UN has several figures for income levels. One is used for pension purposes. The gap between that and what he actually made was the widest probably in their system. Other than that, I could find nothing that could

indicate crooks, you know skimming money from projects or anything of that nature. What was terribly corrupt was his use of permanent representatives from the third world. Many of these people don't receive or regularly receive instructions. Indeed they may not receive instructions in most matters of importance to other members. So they will vote in expectation of a permanent job at the FAO when their permanent representative status was concluded. This had happened enough to suggest that perhaps there was more than merit involved. Indeed Salama himself had been Lebanese special representative before he got a job with the FAO. I will say he seldom delivered. I mean it was probably, there probably were other aspects leading to his decision. None of them were based on merit. I know he did choose the Saudi for head of the newly arranged state of the middle eastern office which had been closed for years. It was quite clear that man was not up to the job, but there was a close relationship between Salama and that particular person. This, of course was not unknown to the department, and they had a view that this sort of maneuvering lended to the Palestinian resolution - i.e. that essentially what Salama had told us was that if we were to vote for the, rather if we were to support the budget and pay or make a good faith effort to pay, this Palestinian resolution might go away. That was certainly a very plausible interpretation of what Salama had said both to me and the assistant secretary. It was after the assembly conference. The Assistant secretary had no doubt and what's more whether he had doubt or not, and I had little doubt as well, he just didn't... I wasn't surprised, let's put it that way. I didn't see it as the worst thing that ever happened. It made sense to me, and I think the thing to have done was just what we did do, stay in but make clear that we were most displeased.

Q: How close in sequence were these steps? This all happened in 1989, the Palestinian resolution was passed, and soon after you delivered the \$18 million.

MONROE: It was a matter of weeks. The conference ended the second week in December and I had to have the check in his hand by January 2, which is when I delivered it. I have forgotten what the [connection was], so when the relationship between these events and the payment of that \$18 million was really, they were intimately associated.

Q: Was there also a debate though as to whether maybe to pull out entirely and not pay the \$18 million?

MONROE: Oh, yes. I'm sure that was the assistant secretary, the Secretary of Agriculture's view and some Congress people, but I know there was very strong opposition even among some Republicans from the farm states. On the other hand, the foreign affairs committee, some powerful people on the Foreign Affairs Committee were very strongly disposed toward our leaving the organization. Had we done so as I mentioned before, then the organization itself would have unraveled. The Canadians would definitely have left. The British were giving it serious consideration.

Q: Did you make a recommendation?

MONROE: Well, yes. From the very beginning I said we just have to see it through. Salama wasn't forever. He wasn't the FAO. He was a very shady character who had become director general of the FAO. He was about as bad as the system then had, but there had been worse.

There were worse than actually from one point of view. Salama was competent. One could never claim that he didn't know the business, and he didn't know the organization. He certainly didn't know how to handle Americans for sure.

Q: Who was the Secretary of Agriculture in this period?

MONROE: Yider.

Q: He had quite a bit of international experience himself.

MONROE: Quite a bit, and he had come to the conference. You know, he was there for as per usual, three or four days. Of course, everything went wrong that could from Salama's point of view. When I gave Yider the traditional conference party at my residence, Salama first accepted and then didn't show.

Q: Was this meant as a sign of displeasure with the United States?

MONROE: Obviously, and the Secretary noticed it. It might have been pointed out to him by somebody which I suspect. But he said, "Well as a major donor, he should have appeared." He certainly should have appeared after saying he was coming.

Q: Did he have an explanation?

MONROE: No, he really didn't. He apologized to me later personally, you know on a personal basis, which was his way, but he didn't, and he muttered some excuse in French which I didn't catch. I think it was meant to be an affront. Because, he went for example, somebody saw him in the Secretary of Agriculture's entourage of the Algerians. It turned out that the Algerians and Egyptians had been the people who had tabled the Palestinian resolution. So, there was a good deal of animosity or a good deal of negative energy from the Secretary of Agriculture as he left Rome. He really felt that he had not been treated very well by Salama. Salama believed that he had been similarly mistreated and not given appropriate regard given his status.

Q: All of this I think happened in the first year you were in Rome.

MONROE: It happened during the first year. I then decided that we needed to go to the United States, my mission needed to go to the membership and convince them that we were serious about the affair. That our concerns were well-grounded. There was a problem, a serious problem with the FAO, which others were aware of. I renewed my efforts to deal with Africans particularly. We were most successful, my staff and I were most successful with such countries as Cameroon. Ethiopia was going pretty well, but then the fellow defected which created another drama of its own.

Q: In the sense that he defected to you?

MONROE: Yes, at a cocktail party. So he stayed for dinner unexpectedly. I then turned him over to the embassy, but it made it difficult to renew relations with the Ethiopians. I believe Mengistu

was still there, or if not, someone like him. I don't recall the exact position this fellow was in, but it was obviously very serious. I also developed very close relationship with the Bangladeshi perm rep who had worked at the UN both as a permanent representative for his country but also doing special missions for the Secretary General. The same could be said of the Brazilian ambassador who was a superb diplomat. I saw him for awhile. We had about four or five lunches when I probably said that I think what we need to do is to get a country with a skilled diplomat such as yourself to figure some way to stay in this organization. He agreed to look into that. He did. He got the Argentine on board. I think there had been a change in the Argentine point of view as far as the United States was concerned. At least I was told that with a new president who is still in office. The view was that we would look at, we Argentina, would look out for our interests but we would not take on the United States. There was no real reason to, and we would try to be helpful to the United States where it was consistent with our own interests. They saw our staying in the United Nations system as in their interest. So, they helped in dealing with the Latin American group. This led to a little group of Latin Americans that I met with periodically which helped get Puerto Rico into the FAO, an interesting side bar.

Q: Puerto Rico was a member of the FAO?

MONROE: Was. They decided not to remain a member when there was a change of government, a change in the governorship. In any case, that was very difficult for the Latin Americans to swallow. They didn't like that.

Q: They probably felt that Puerto Rico was not an independent nation.

MONROE: Well, they wanted it to join as an independent nation. There is a special status at the FAO which had been developed for European, for British colonies. Puerto Rico joined under those special arrangements. Also, Puerto Rico didn't pay, so that added to our arrears. It wasn't much. It wasn't a serious matter.

Q: How were the relations with the western Europeans in this period? Coming back to the election to the chair of the council, I could understand why a number of countries would not be very happy about voting for the United States given this acrimony and problems that had occurred, but one of the problems was that we were competing with a close ally, friend, Belgium. You know, if there were going to be two candidates for essentially the same family, then others had to pick one or the other.

MONROE: Well, that was right. In fact it was the OECD who said it was our turn. It was that group.

Q: Our turn meaning...

MONROE: ...that we should run someone.

Q: We, the United States?

MONROE: The United States. It was only Belgium in that...

Q: Belgium is an OECD country.

MONROE: They are, and we understand the Belgian government had first instructed him not to run. He had been a very important colonial governor in the Congo. This was his principal contribution. He purported to be absolutely, totally, fully devoted to the aims of the G-77 because of this terrible experience with his as he would have put it. The whole title was independent chairman, and so he said that our person could not be independent because he had worked with Cargill. His position was that he would be under the instructions of Cargill, which was nonsense of course.

Q: But did things begin to improve with the western Europeans in this latter part of your time?

MONROE: Yes, we had, well, the French could not be reached. They were a solid supporter of Salama because he was Francophone. Everyone else as a I said, as a matter of fact, this reform minded group that so-called group that existed while I was there, when I first arrived, and really had nothing to do with these issues that I was discussing earlier, that is to say the bi-lateral issues. They were the result of Scandinavian skepticism about the honesty and the effectiveness of the programs that Salama was running in various underdeveloped countries. This was a result of something called multi-bi which means that effectively countries like Denmark and Finland will not have a very developed technical assistance agency of their own. It would be just a few people in the foreign office. They will use the UN system to deliver their aid through trust fund contributions. It is a complicated system, but the short title is multi-bi, multilateral/bilateral. The only problem with it is you have to trust your multilateral organization and you have to be certain that you can account for the monies you put in trust for multilateral organizations to use. As this became a problem, the Camberly group was formed. The whole problem with the Camberly group was at first it was designed to find systems and approaches for accountability rather than looking at the whole policy construct. Furthermore, we thought the Scandinavians would never do anything particularly serious to bring the FAO up short and get it cooperating. One of its major weaknesses was its total unwillingness to cooperate with other members of the UN system such as the World Health Organization which there was a real link there. I already mentioned the World Food Programme and several links, also other agencies, for example, UNDP, the United Nations Development Program which was a trust fund of the Secretary General. That organization had traditionally been run by an American. Parenthetically it no longer is. It is run by a British citizen, so I suspect that reflects the reduction in our contributions. Of course, UNDP was held to be under the control of the donors. It almost had a form of weighted building. I might mention it later because my next assignment really dealt with UNDP. In any case, our technical judgment was UNDP should be closely associated with FAO and other specialized agencies in order to have a resident representative there who was responsible for the entire country program where ever they might be, be it Ghana or Cambodia. Salama didn't see the world that way, so we had a technical problem with him. You know, his view was that he was very turf conscious to put it bluntly. His view was only FAO knew how to do scientific agriculture, and they were the only ones who knew how to apply these tools to the development populace. The Europeans were worried about that. We were not the only ones to conclude that. I don't think they were interested in the United Nations Development Program as we were, but I do think they felt that greater coordination and cooperation was absolutely essential if they were

going to get their money's worth. I formed a group myself to replace the Camberly group. I think it became known as the Monroe group actually. It was about eight or nine, or ten European perm reps including Australia. Again it was more structured, more obvious than the little group with Latin America that I also had. Their job, their aim, our aim was to bring FAO at least to a point where we could argue to our governments that it was beginning to turn around as Salama's last term came to a halt, came to an end, excuse me. The organization itself was going to change from within. We were attempting to influence individuals within the organization, the assistant secretary or the assistant director general level, not in any political way, not against Salama, but toward greater coordination, for example, forestry and so forth.

Q: Now were you there when his term did come to an end and the question of an election to a successor came up?

MONROE: I left the year before.

Q: But you were involved with the election of an American to the World Food Programme?

MONROE: Yes, I was. That was a very curious agency. It was begun in the '70s. The story I like best, there are lots of stories about how it was born, but the one that I thought was the nicest was that Henry Kissinger and the Shah of Iran got together and Henry Kissinger said we are going to need something besides oil to make this food conference of 1974 and the oil conferences and so forth during the same period, make sense to the world at large. So the World Food Programme was created, largely with American and Iranian money, oil money and American commodities. That's as good a story as any. I think the possibility of a multilateral food agency struck everyone as constructive for a number of reasons. It did allow us, for example, to deal more effectively with the first Ethiopian crisis, the first Ethiopian famine created by this dictator, Mengistu, in a way that no individual European country could have worked it. I said it was extremely difficult even for the World Food Programme because there were no NGOs in Ethiopia at that point. Normally the World Food Programme tends to broker food to NGOs and to other agencies such as the United Nations Children's agency. I'll call it that because the intercession no longer need be an emergency. It was designed initially for European children after the war. But that is an example of an agency that does a lot of feeding, that deals with refugee situations focusing on women and children obviously. But in Ethiopia, I believe World Food Programme had to develop a distribution system of its own which was not really what it was cut out to do, but it did this and it did it effectively all things considered. I think that may have been one of the reasons why Salama and Ingram became estranged. There was considerable disagreement as to when to declare an emergency, a food emergency.

Q: Was the World Food Programme under the FAO or was it separate?

MONROE: No, it was separate, but it was part of the FAO to the degree that the secretary general and the director general of the FAO chose the secretary general of the World Food Programme. "Executive director of the World Food Programme" was his title.

Q: So the Secretary General of the United Nations and the head of FAO jointly select the executive director of WFP.

MONROE: Exactly. And WFP used FAO administrative support.

Q: It was located in Rome.

MONROE: At least then, yes. It was located in Rome but it had a totally separate organization, had a separate headquarters.

Q: And you were the U.S. representative.

MONROE: I was the U.S. representative to that. I had a very senior AID official who dealt with the day to day stuff. But I dealt probably more with them with their executive secretary than any preceding permanent representative. One, I had known him from an earlier job when I was in EB and working on food aid conference which was another, I think I described that in an earlier time. But Jim Ingram was having a lot of problems at that point administratively and every other way with the FAO, so I was in constant communication with him.

Q: Did he then decide at some point not to seek another term.

MONROE: He had had his two terms and that was traditional. And he was of a panache. I think he was looking forward to, he had a years teaching stint at Oxford and then going back to the outback in Australia where he came from.

Q: And then we decided that we would like to see an American replace him.

MONROE: Well, again, in discussing this with the OECD, they agreed it was now, it was still the donor period, and incidentally the distinction between donors and beneficiary was very sharp in the World Food Programme. For obvious reasons it was delineated institutionally. The donor group, which was more or less like the OECD group except it included Argentina.

Q: A major wheat producer.

MONROE: Major wheat producer and a member of the World Food Aid Committee in London. We were not in the best position to convince Salama that this was a good thing to do. First we had to arrange for an amicable divorce between the World Food Programme and the FAO where administrative matters were concerned. The department had decided and I had endorsed the notion that it wasn't working.

Q: So that there should be a complete separation.

MONROE: A complete separation of administrative, not to change the way the executive secretary was appointed, but rather to let them administer themselves because they had a considerable amount of expertise in brokering ships and freight forwarding and so forth, marine insurance. So they had different needs basically. Their people did different things, and it was very hard to get expense accounts reconciled and so forth and so on. Of course the will wasn't there either on the part of the FAO in everyone's judgment. We needed to call the Secretary

General into the picture of the United Nations which the department did very effectively. They started sending to various meetings, they started sending a representative from the UN in New York, from the UN secretariat to attend these meetings. Happily it was an ex-Foreign Service officer with whom I had quite a long friendship, or had had. I mean we hadn't seen one another for approximately 15 years, but we had been friends for awhile, went through FSI or something like that. His name was Jim Baker, but not Jim Baker the Secretary of State. It just happened to be Jim Baker. He came frequently, and he told me that the secretary general was very reluctant to take a position because traditionally he had just let the FAO make the choice and preceding secretary generals had as well. He said however, he sensed what the problems were, so if we could come up with what I call an amicable divorce, if this thing could be made to work, then he would appoint an American of our choice. The Europeans had already picked the American unfortunately. He was the head of operations at the World Food Programme.

Q: And they wanted to see him promoted.

MONROE: They wanted to see him promoted because they knew his capabilities and they knew he was largely responsible for the good that the World Food Programme had done during the African crisis in the mid-'80s. That was not the person we chose. As a matter of fact it was Secretary of Agriculture took me aside and said the choice was a woman by the name of Catherine Britini who at that point was head of several of the feeding programs in the United States, the WIC program- (end of tape)

Q: Had run for Congress; had been defeated, a conservative from up New York State. She had been in the Department of Agriculture for some time, so she had some experience, not with the World Food Programme though I suppose.

MONROE: No, she hadn't. Very little international experience. The problem that she confronted at least with the Europeans was that she had had insufficient experience. Everyone holds the job to be one of the more difficult in the system because of the kinds of decisions. To give an idea of the kinds of decisions, I used to sit up with Ingram late in the evening while he struggled with whether to send a boat into Asmara. The last one had been fired upon, but people were in desperate straits outside of Asmara, and the trucks were lined up on the dock. He ultimately sent the boat in. I can recall his agonizing over that decision. I got that into a letter that the Secretary of State wrote him as he left office and everyone was aware of these kinds of decisions, two a day, that this man was making. It was one of the reasons he wanted to leave quite apart from his relations with Salama. The Europeans had difficulty envisaging someone like Britini taking some of those.

Q: Well, I know that today in 1999, she is still the head of the World Food Programme so tell us how you arranged for her election or selection.

MONROE: Well, the maneuver the department began with I think was a good maneuver. They sent cables to all of Africa. As a matter of fact, my successor was running that part of the program.

Q: From Washington.

MONROE: From Washington. Asking our people to go in there and make a demarche for Catherine Britini's selection. Salama called me in to say even before the first cable left the department I suspect, to say that this was nonsense. It wasn't an election. There is no way a permanent rep, at last he admitted it, the permanent rep population from that part of the world was going to tell him something he didn't want to hear.

Q: So how did you respond to that?

MONROE: Well, I said we just feel that we want you to feel comfortable with your decision. So then if these countries after meeting her and evaluating her background feel that she is the one they would like to represent their interests at the World Food Programme as the beneficiary community, I think then you would feel more comfortable.

Q: Was it his inclination did we think at the time that he was going to select the American who was the operations chief at the World Food Programme instead of backing a candidate that we endorsed?

MONROE: No there was no feeling of that. As a matter of fact, Chase let it be known that he was going to leave.

Q: He was the...

MONROE: He was the person, yes. This person decided the best thing he could do was get out of town as soon as a new executive secretary was chosen. The Danes then quite by surprise, put up a senior diplomat, which is essentially what Ingram was for us, had been for Australia, to run. Run, by that I mean to attract Salama's attention and give him an alternative to selecting Britini. This was not a good thing actually. He was very smooth obviously. He had a lot of international experience. He was very much your typical UN executive, diplomatic background, very smooth, lots of contacts around the world and so forth and so on. NO agricultural experience that we could determine. Then there was talk of running a minister of something or other from Sweden. This was a woman who had had at least experience with UNICEF, with the dealing with children. It began to look as if the OECD group was not going to support our person, not because they didn't think it was time for the United States, they just weren't convinced that our choice was a good choice. Since major donors are major donors, and they want to be certain that their money and their commodities are being appropriately handled. So I set out to convince them that Ms. Britini had the requisite background in the sense that she was well aware of the problems that arose in trying to feed large groups of people and so forth. She came out on several occasions, on every possible occasion actually to Rome. She toured Africa. She took my AID attaché with her to do this which was a good idea actually. I think it worked very well for both of them. To make a long story short, I had advised Washington from the very beginning that none of this, you know, we can work on countries, but Salama was going to choose to do this only if he thinks its.. So what is really going to count is the budget debate and the budget negotiations at that conference that was coming up. The conference where Ingram's successor had to be appointed. That would happen at a major assembly conference.

Q: We could be current or at least eliminate our arrears, that would make a big difference.

MONROE: That's right. So, I asked that the financial person from IO come out, and she did, a very capable person. I went in to see Salama's financial, technical people, and we said what we would be willing to do. Primarily we based our position on as full payment as possible. We were now in the Bush administration, and Bush was pro UN because of his previous experience. By that I don't think he was going to do anything radical about supporting the UN, but I think he felt we should pay our current dues. The question of arrears was extraordinarily complex and remains so at the UN. Very difficult to get the Congress to agree to arrears payments. We felt that we could get a little arrears out of them if the FAO agreed to use these arrears for a predetermined projects if we could agree on one. Because these are windfalls for the agency effectively and actually no longer had any need for the money in the truest sense. We were paying almost up to the penny on our current, and I knew we were going to so, I mean I got a call from someone I knew on one of the key committees in this thing. It looked as if we were going down the right track. What then became the issue was the zero based budget. We had always insisted on the no growth budget.

Q: In the FAO.

MONROE: In the FAO. Zero budget growth. Salama said that was our ideology; that was our religion, and it was wholly unrealistic given the arrears situation and so forth. Of course there were many members who never paid, mostly G-77. Of course, every time someone paid from the G-77, they would get up and say we are going to pay our \$23,000 which was the minimum you could pay. The minimum you had to pay as a member. Then they would say no matter how much we are suffering and how many people are starving, we are still going to make this payment because we think it is our duty. That was another one of Salama's maneuvers, which he never tired of. I mostly didn't arise to his baiting except at one point when he accused us of stealing from other members because we weren't paying. I then made a statement about how the American system operated and whatever else we were doing, we weren't stealing. Of course, given the amount of money we had spent on the agency at its beginning and over all the years, this was nonsensical. In any case, I believe that whatever happened in the autumn of 1991 it was really going to be based on zero based budgeting. Some sort of an agreement would be worked out finally.

Q: When was the agreement reached?

MONROE: Finally the agreement had to be made with the director general. We did; we had lunch in his office. It was the first time in our entire stay that the agency ever permitted that to happen. We actually had lunch catered in his office, and had the agricultural attaché there, had this financial advisor who was superb. He had his financial advisor, his administrative people. We worked on as usual it became a very complex arrangement which no one could understand, which was part of the most people who were privy to the background would not understand, which is not unusual at all. It is actually two budgets is what it mounted to. It was like UN payday. I was very reluctant to do this incidentally because I knew the higher of the two, the virtual budget as opposed to the real budget, would be the one that he would want to work on for the next round. But in consultation with the department, we decided to take the arrangement with

its faults because this was the only way we could be assured of one, a zero based budget outcome. It would maximize Catherine Britini's chances, and I think he made that clear. It would begin, it was one way of getting a little bit of arrears out of the Congress because they were interested in Catherine Britini by this point, at least some of them were. So, all in all, that is what happened. Everyone was happy. He appointed Britini, signed off and left.

Q: He was involved in her selection as well.

MONROE: Yes, he had to be.

Q: Were the African countries that had been lobbied, did it really make any difference what they thought?

MONROE: I don't know whether it made any difference where Salama was concerned. I mean it was something he could point to if he were criticized for her in his own little group whatever that was. You know, his group of perm rep supporters and what have you who had the base of his power. Without question, however, that group remained loyal to Catherine Britini throughout her tenure and remains loyal to her. Once she took office, and we overlapped for... I made the welcoming speech for her at one of the program committee meetings, so I was there then. I guess we went to a few African dinners together where some of the African group had gotten together and threw her a party. So I could see he had very good relations with this part of the beneficiary community, and things have gone on apace. She made some enemies in her own office.

Q: Her own office meaning the World Food Programme staff.

MONROE: Well, in the executive suite as it were because she really tried to fire all of Ingram's people, and that didn't quite work because many of them were UN civil servants, and they just couldn't be fired from one day to the next. But in general she did well. People supported her. She appointed an African as director of operations. He came from the Cameroon. My sense was that he was effective. It is always hard to measure how effective, but certainly he didn't fall on his face as some people thought he might.

Q: Certainly the food needs of the world had advanced in the period we are talking about.

MONROE: They have. She had Bosnia in that part of the world where there was considerable...

Q: Lots of things in Africa, Afghanistan.

MONROE: Lots of things in Africa, Afghanistan. North Korea has been one of her major efforts. I still see the fellow, my AID attaché who left government service. Worked in Latin America for a time, for the Latin American agent of the FAO. Then he became a consultant, and he has consulted for the World Food Programme in terms of organizational change. They are trying to be more decentralized. Well, they started out as a very decentralized agency. They had to be brought to Rome because of this need for administrative affairs. So, I would say, she has done the job.

Q: Okay, is there anything else we should talk about your time in Rome? I am sure there are lots of other things.

MONROE: There are that we could talk about, but I think that that's, I think I learned a lot about bilateral diplomacy in the very real sense and the techniques of dealing with perm reps who can't leave the room without cabling their government and perm reps who hardly ever hear from their government, the free standers as we call them. Also the fact there is a power structure in all of these organizations. There are cliques that cut across regional lines. There is the G-77, an extremely strong organization caucus you might say. It is a caucus in some agencies, not all, but in some agencies it can deliver a lot of votes when it has to.

Q: Would you say that you, as the United States representative, had very little leeway without instructions, without checking with Washington, or did you have a fair amount of autonomy and independence, chance to take initiatives?

MONROE: Well, as much autonomy as you could possibly want. Sometimes even more than one might have wanted. I think for several reasons. It was a specialized agency. It wasn't, you know, the security council after all. Secondly, for a long time, the desk officer left and wasn't replaced. Nobody thought of replacing him since we got along well. I had, I was in total agreement with my DAS if not always the assistant secretary, probably hardly ever with the assistant secretary if he deigned to look at, I mean he had a lot of other things on his plate fortunately. I think once he had decided to stay, he didn't care any more. He thought I was doing it as well as anyone could. The people who were somewhat more troublesome who were the other agencies. We also did fisheries which was not a problem except on one occasion, which would make a good problem in a school if there was a school that taught diplomacy, a good case study. I think I should mention one thing before departing. I did have other agencies to which I was accredited including several legal agencies which just happened to be there, something called UNIDOIT. It was a magnificent organization. It met, these were learned attorneys from all over the world and they were attempting to codify a global civil code, and had been since 1930. This old League of Nations organization that met in a beautiful villa. I only handled their finance, I was only involved in their financial matters, but it was a good deal of fun. We were also involved in finding who did [what in] this organization that was involved in art restoration. It was a UN agency. It was involved in trying to catalogue stolen art. It was a very interesting organization. They had me over to lunch once to show me the organization; I never had anything else to do with them. And then an agency that had sprung from AID but had become an international agency that gave advice on legal systems for third world countries. In other words, they would send specialists out to do a commercial code, legal code.

Q: And all of these agencies were based in Rome.

MONROE: They were all based in Rome.

Q: Which is why you as the multilateral U.S. representative got involved with them even though they had nothing to do with food or agriculture.

MONROE: That's exactly right although the brass plaque said special representative or

permanent representative to the UN food agency resident in Rome. It was a long time, so we didn't think we needed anything more on the plaque and couldn't think of anything else to say. I very seldom, I only went to those institutions when there were problems with finances, and there were from time to time because they were denominated in Swiss Francs, so the Lira-Franc arrangement was troubled. That was their problem. The others, I think the people providing legal support to third world countries had had some problems with the Italian government in a status problem. Someone argued that was because the FAO had a related but not similar I should say program where they went out to talk about agricultural law and sent experts out. Anyway, we finally solved that with the Italian government and took care of that.

PETER F. SECCHIA
Ambassador
(1989-1992)

Ambassador Peter F. Secchia was raised in New Jersey and served in the US Marine Corps from 1956 to 1959. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1963. He was appointed as Ambassador to Italy by President George H.W. Bush. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on June 6, 1994.

Q: Well then let's move on. We are talking about 1989, when in 1989 did you go out?

SECCHIA: I went in late June. We arrived on June 28, 1989.

Q: June, 1989. From the President, the State Department, what were your priorities?

SECCHIA: The priorities that had been listed at that time changed so rapidly. The main priority was the importance of the bilateral Italian relationship and NATO. You know most people forget when de Gaulle threw the Sixth Fleet out of France in 1967 it was the Italians that took them in. Most people forget that when the Dutch and the Germans wouldn't take the GLCMI (cruise missile) in that it was the Italians who took them in Comiso.

Q: That was a particularly important thing. This was a lynch stone of much of what really helped disintegrate the Soviet Union.

SECCHIA: That's right. And the Italians get very little credit for this because people only want to write about the idiosyncrasies of the Italian culture rather than the strengths of it. It was a courageous act for both Craxi and Andreotti to take. And the deployment which came later which was even more difficult. And, also, it was the Italians who helped when we could not get the Belgians or others to deploy the NATO rapid deployment force to go to Incirlik, Turkey during the Gulf War. The Italians were the first to give their Tornados, which in turn embarrassed the others to coming forward. So in many ways the Italians were an important part of our NATO relationship. I had been briefed on the importance of this relationship. I had been briefed on a lot of issues which I still can't talk about.

We were greeted by the Italian people warmly and we worked hard at it. My wife and I visited all 96 provinces. We made friends with every consul general. We met all the staff in the consulates. We worked with the military. We had 31 military bases in Italy. Because of the Gulf War, because of the NATO buildup and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military was important. In fact last night I had dinner with Adm. Bill Owens who is vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was my Sixth Fleet Commander when I was in Rome. He is a dear friend of mine to this day. Jon Howe, who was the deputy to Scowcroft I mentioned earlier, had been the CINCSOUTH at Naples for NATO and ended up being in Mogadishu for Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He was the Jon Howe who ran the Mogadishu operation, who was strongly criticized for the attack on Aideed and who has now had his career semi-destroyed by this activity which I believe was a political decision by the Clinton White House to go after Aideed. Jon Howe was a wonderful man whose career might have been destroyed by this because he was known in Italy as "the Butcher of Mogadishu." Unfairly again, but it is a press image of people. I knew all of these military people.

I took time to walk the country. I walked everywhere. I ran, I jogged, I skied, I boated. I walked every community, I walked and met people all up and down Italy...96 provinces, 234 cities.

Q: After all this unfavorable and really nasty publicity, how did you find your support at the embassy?

Where they sort of wondering who this guy was?

SECCHIA: It was very difficult in the beginning because the Italians were suspicious. I had to win them over one by one. To this day, my DCM who was Daniel Serwer still calls me. Today, he is unhappy with his career. i.e. The way the State Department has been treating him and his associates. He confides in me. I think I earned his respect as I did with most of my staff. A large portion of them came to the airport to say goodbye. The week I left, Toto Riina was arrested, who was the Mafia kingpin they had been after for 28 years. I would like to think that we had a lot to do with that because after the explosion that blew up Giovanni Falconi, the prosecutor and his wife and three security agents...

Q: This was down in Palermo?

SECCHIA: Yes. Judge Giovanni Falconi had been our best contact with the Italian relationship on prosecutorial and anti-mafia activities. We had dinner with Giovanni just before he was blown up. We had dinner with him on Thursday night at Villa Taverna, on Friday my wife and I went north. On Saturday morning Giovanni Falconi hung a picture on his wall of he and I together and told his secretary (who announced this crying on television after the explosion), that I was his closest friend and that we worked together and how wonderful was our relationship. Giovanni Falconi was one of those people who was able to talk to the Pentiti (the squealers, the talkers). He was one who was able to send witness protection persons to the United States and then interview them. He understood American law and tried to change the Italian law so that they too could prosecute. When he was blown up on a Saturday afternoon, I was in Portofino. We flew back...we borrowed a car, we had given our driver the weekend off and I have to travel in an armored car (a security position), but we didn't wait, we just took a friend's car and drove to the airport without police security. We took a Navy jet and flew to Palermo. That is another

story...I could talk an hour about that.

Italy worked with us to change the law after that. Martelli was the Minister of Justice and being a Socialist he always feared offending the large block of Communist vote. The left wing vote had never wanted to tamper with the post-Fascist year of laws which said there would be no wire tapping; no surveillance; no police that aren't in uniform; you cannot trace private money. There were many laws that they had put in after the Fascist years to give people individual liberties. The Liberals on the left would never give those up. But until the government had permission for wire tap, surveillance, and undercover police work all of that was being done by our people for them. Because they couldn't do it, is why they couldn't capture their Mafia people who were always able to be one step ahead. With no money tracing, no electronic transfer of documents, etc. So we changed that law. I went to see Martelli. (I could also tell you stories about getting our forensic teams in to discover what had happened.) Meanwhile the Queen of England had visited the site. There had been chartered buses, the Italian tourist associations were selling tickets. By the time we got our forensic people in there the evidence had been destroyed. Two months later when Borsellino was blown up (he had been Falcone's associate), our forensic team was waiting at the airport in Washington. It happened at 5:00 and by 9:00 that evening we had permission to bring the forensic team in. Within months we had discovered who stole the car, where it came from, what kind of explosives, who provided them. It was the beginning of the end for the Mafia. At the same time Martelli agreed to try to change the laws and he did change the law.

My friendship with Falcone, his family coming to see me at the embassy, his family writing letters to the press that said, "Ambassador Secchia is the only person we trust, our own government couldn't protect my uncle," that kind of thing...they sent me a pen from his personal belongings. It brought big emotion. The Communists and the left had changed their name now to PCI, they agreed to support the reform so they changed the laws. I would like to think we had a lot to do with that. When I left Italy, the Italians personally presented me with the papers when they arrested Toto Riina after 28 years. So having captured the "boss of bosses" of the Mafia, who today has more and more people turning on him. There is more information coming out...having had a part of that, having had a part of the extradition of Al Jawary, the first Arab terrorist ever extradited...it was a successful team.

Q: This was a very high priority, extradition, particularly after the "Achilles Lauro" business where top terrorist was let free by the Italian government. Could you explain what led up to this and what your role and the embassy was in this?

SECCHIA: One day, I can't remember exactly when it was, we received a phone call that the British intelligence people at the airport in Rome had spotted someone who they thought was an Arab terrorist. He had a briefcase with several identifications in it. We had a good relationship with the British and they called my people and my people called me saying they had this guy and think he is someone important. We need to stall his departure because we have to prepare the Federal papers so that everything is done legally. This is how we got in trouble on the "Achilles Lauro," we didn't have the right papers filed to keep Abu Nidal in Italy. So this time we were going to do it right. So again, I don't want to compare careerists to non-career, but because I had friends that I had made through friends, I was able to get his departure delayed.

While his departure was delayed overnight, our people worked around the clock preparing documents to give to the Italians that we thought this was a bad person of great significance. We were able to present those papers in the morning. Our Department of Justice people did an outstanding job working (with the FBI) to come up with who they thought this guy was. We arrested him. He had, I think it was nine different ID packages...I'm a little fuzzy over the years. We finally identified him as Al Jawary, a man who had provided the false identification for most of the Arab terrorists over the years. Now, a young person like you won't remember, but for several years we had had terrible terrorism in Naples, Frankfurt, PanAm 103, Greece, it was for our diplomats and our military...and we needed to apprehend these people. We then proceeded to wait a year and a half...I can remember when Bush came to a NATO summit in Rome in November, 1991, we were flying back to the airport and the last thing he said to me before he got on his new 747...no I was on his helicopter, Marine One, with him, Sununu, Scowcroft and Baker...all four of them said to me, "Peter, get Al Jawary." They said it different ways like "You have an important task, you must get this guy."

The Italians meanwhile had been threatened by the Arab terrorists. If they gave him up two Italian ambassadors in North Africa would be "taken care of." The Italians were at times always willing to help us but would only go so far if their own people were threatened. This was a difficult issue for us. We tried to work all kinds of deals. Would we transport Al Jawary to a friendly third country for trial? Would we put him there and kidnap him there? Would we have US marshals arrest him at an international airport? We tried every scenario. We didn't think the Italians would give him to us. There were five people on their decision board and we needed three votes to make this work. The President of the Republic, the Foreign Minister; the Minister of Justice, the MOD, and the Prime Minister, who was the president of the council; President Andreotti; the Minister of Defense; Minister of Interior, who at that time was a friend of mine. We started working on them one by one. I would report back monthly how I thought I was doing. The Italians kept postponing it. A year and a half went by.

Finally one day during the Gulf War when most of the terrorist organizations had been neutered and Saddam Hussein, who had been funding a lot of this, was on his knees, it was an appropriate time for the Italians to make a move and they did. They gave us Al Jawary. So we had to secretly whisk him out of Rome and fly him home. We never made an issue of it. We never went public because the retaliation threats were still there. We just did it very quietly. He came home and was debriefed.

I received a cable of "Bravo, well done." If you go back historically, all the assassinations, all the problems we had, the bombings at the USOs, we never have extradited...we still are trying to extradite the Libyans of PanAm 103. We never, never in the history of our country extradited an Arab terrorist, or any terrorist that I know of. They usually get tried in Greece or Germany and then they are under that law. The Italians were the first, just like they were the first to take GLCMs, the first to go to Incirlik, the first to take the Sixth Fleet, they were the first to give us a terrorist. So the relationship had a lot of value for the Americans.

This sent a signal, 17 years ago Al Jawary blew up in New York City an El Al office. He had used two bombs. One did not go off and had his fingerprints on it. Seventeen years later we found him. The signal that action sent out (just like the missiles in Comiso might have been the

beginning of the end for the SSTs), the Al Jawary extradition might have been the beginning of the end for the Arab terrorists. They learned that after 17 years one finger print on a suitcase in a car in New York City, and we got him.

So that was a watershed. It was an interesting moment but a very important signal. For our intelligence community it was a great victory because it said, "We will get you, you son of a pup, no matter how long it takes." So the Al Jawary incident never got put into the press, but he is here and has been debriefed and we are learning a lot. I am out of the loop now.

Q: The Italian government has always been sort of a cipher until very recently it has been basically the same government, the same people, switching...Andreotti has been going on and on and on. How did you deal with them? Where did you feel power was and what would the American Ambassador and also the American embassy deal with what always seemed like a closed political system?

SECCHIA: Well, we are quick to be critical of that system, but if we think about it, we have constantly rotated our leadership between two parties, so how can we critical of them when they rotate it between four parties. We don't ever elect a liberal or conservative party candidate or the communist party candidate or the party of free love in the United States and they didn't elect the communist or the fascist. But what happened is that in their parliamentary form of government, in my judgment...they love America, they love what we stand for and they try very hard to duplicate what we did. But what they failed to do was create a government that could work with the stability as ours did because they wanted to give no one the power to do what Mussolini had done. They created a government through their constitution that would allow no one to become all powerful, but it also made sure that no one would become powerful enough to stay in control. In doing this there were many parties created and these parties shared in a collective kind of voting where if your party got 3 percent of the vote you got 3 percent of the parliament. So if there are 900 members of the parliament, you got 27, even those you didn't get any votes in any one town higher than 2 percent or 1 percent...you might have gotten 5 percent in this area and the rest of the places you got 1 percent or less, but accumulatively you were 3 percent. So then you went to the party secretary who would say, "Okay, here is my list of prioritized senators. I get 27 so I will take these 27." So if you were good to the party secretary you were in the top 27, if you weren't, you were down below. It had nothing to do with popular vote, it was by party vote. So the party secretary became all powerful.

Now there are two reasons that I use to explain to people. Italian governments changed rapidly, but you see in America when Sullivan left as Secretary of Education, or when the Secretary of Defense Aspin resigned, we don't change governments. In Italy a government has to be changed whenever the balance changes. So let's say, for instance, you had a government of 29 ministers. Those ministers are put together by a group of party secretaries. Let's say the three of us are in this room. We would say you have 7 percent of the vote, I have 23. That is 30. He has 21, that is 51. We would probably come together and say, "Let's form a government. We have 51 percent. Can you deliver all your votes in parliament to approve our government?" "Yes" and "Yes." Okay, so now we are going to try it. So we sit down and you say, "Okay, I have 21 percent and I will give you 15 ministers." "And I will take 12 and give you 3." If we agree on what we want it might be that you only want five ministers, but you want Defense, Justice, Telephone and

Telegraph and Labor. Now wait a moment, you can't have the four most powerful, I want..... So what we would do would be to divvy it up. I will take the Minister of Defense because most of my guys are strong on defense so I want to be in control of the military. You could have Sanitation. He would say, "Well, I only have 7 percent and I don't count, but without me you can't win." So we have coalition government, which I think is dangerous.

I will defend to the death our two party system because of this. This is what happened in the Pat Robertson/Kemp/Bush fiasco in Michigan. Bush had 45, Kemp at 10, so Kemp's 10 was in charge. The

Robertson people gave Kemp the moon and he was running the show but he only had ten percent of the delegate vote. That's a problem. And here you would be an equal partner because your 7 percent is very important. So you might hold out for Minister of Telegraph and Telephone which has the most jobs. Jobs are very big in Italy because their post-war mentality of no jobs/ no food, an agricultural society that comes out of a culture that says "everybody is picking on us" and "we have been invaded 19 times in our history." They are very wonderful people. Peace loving and happy. But they just don't want to be harassed. Their history tells them that. So they try very hard to succeed with us as the role model.

So now we have formed our government and have our 29 ministers. Then we elect the minister of all ministers called the prime minister. That is why in these different modified forms of parliamentary government Americans don't understand it but the prime minister means the first minister. So use 29 ministers, you might be party secretary and appoint yourself a minister, but she wouldn't or I wouldn't.

Then the 29 ministers sit down and since I had 27, you had 21, you had seven, we agreed that I am going to be prime minister or my guy, my party person. Most of the ministers come out of the parliament either the house or the senate side, very few come out of the private sector, which is different than in our country. If they aren't out of the parliament they are called technician ministers. They are specialists like the minister of finance might come out of a bank of Italy and is an economist. However, the minister of defense would never be a military person, just like in our country, so he would always be out of the parliament, never out of the private sector. So we vote amongst ourselves, we have amongst ourselves all 29 ministers.

Once we have a government formed, who are we going to elect. You are mad at me because I wouldn't give you Post and Telegraph, so you put a guy up against me. Now again your seven votes are going to make the difference. I can only deliver 27, he's got 21 and your 7 is 28. So you guys decide, "Okay, Secchia, we are not going to take Andreotti, I'm for _____." I'm for Andreotti, you're Craxi and you want Amato. So you put Amato up. She has seven of her ministers that she thinks she controls, but she doesn't. She says she wants them to come with me, they put a block together and go with you. Amato wins, Andreotti losses. So Amato is the prime minister, president of the council.

Now when Sec. Sullivan resigned here, or when Sec. Aspin resigned it didn't make any difference. But in this government (that you two put together) if you have a resignation, one might not make a difference, but let's say two. Now the vote changes. If those two new guys you put in are going to vote for me, you call for reelection because you have a threat against you. So now we vote again and two of your people don't vote with him, they vote with me. So now my

27 has 2 of yours, his 21 only has 5 of yours, so he ends up losing and I am the new prime minister. So, hence we have a new government in Italy. We haven't really changed the government, we have changed two cabinet members and they changed their vote for president. And that is why in many cases in Italy you read "New Government," that they have 50 new governments in 50 years. This is because of these kinds of changes of coalition government. There would be times when we had to have four parties to get the 51 percent and Altissimo from the Liberal Party was sitting there. In that chair might be the Social Democrats who had two percent, so those two guys...(ironically Altissimo was in Grand Rapids last week visiting me)...but those two guys together had less than five percent of the vote. So any one of them took our group over the top because together we had 50.6 percent and those two guys gave us 54 percent. So they became a pain in the ass, just like you were originally. So now we have to deal with them and they would sit there and say, "Well, I'm mad." They would get mad over an issue, let's say fishing policy in Naples. They were powered based in Naples. Or tomatoes. The tomato problem in Italy...when we retaliated. When Carla Hills said, "Okay, if you are not going to buy our beef, we are not going to buy your tomatoes." So the party that is based in the Naples area where the tomatoes are grown threatens to walk out. If he leaves the government, there is a new government because he takes two ministers with him. That is why all these changes, which really weren't changes.

Q: Let's take trade, as the American Ambassador would you go to the party chairman, the party secretary?

The official way would be to the foreign minister.

SECCHIA: Let's talk about GATT. We had a problem with GATT that can never get resolved. The

French wanted to stop the agricultural gains America had made and we wanted to break down the cartels and tear down the trade barriers that prevented our soybeans from going into that market. So you would sit down with your people and decide who controlled the committees and the legislature, just as you do here. I would call on the senator in charge of the committee. I would call on the minister of agriculture, the minister of foreign trade, the foreign minister, the prime minister and would argue the American position. They would tell me off the record that they didn't agree with the French position but that they were partners with France in the European Community and that slowly, slowly we will get to the right position. There was always amongst the Italians a very strong agricultural lobby because the Christian Democrats had the farm vote. Italy had thousands, if not millions, of small farmers because after the war and even before the war. Mussolini had given a lot of the wealthy land to the peasants. We ended up with a situation in Italy where everybody had five or ten acres of land just to live on. They saw themselves as farmers, probably because they got a lot of benefits as farmers. They got a lot of subsidies as a farmer. We were proving how subsidies were destroying our farms.

So that was the argument, you went to see everybody you could to get the Italians to vote. Normally the Italians voted the right way. They had their pride and independence, but they agreed with most of our position on most issues. There were times they had to work around the French and not be isolated. They want to be part of Europe. Even our own press, I noticed yesterday that Maureen Doud who is probably one of the most prominent reporters following the Presidency, reported that Clinton "left Italy and flew to

Europe." That is an interesting slight, but in many cases it is how the Italians perceive themselves as being cast in the North Africa, Greece, Turkey part of Europe and not part of Europe, not acceptable. If you remember the good old boys club the G7 was the G5, I believe, and it was under President Ford, who supported Italy and Canada (I am not sure they came in together). We supported Italy going into the G7.

The Italian economy is bigger than Great Britain's today. It has come out of the ashes of the Second

World War and grown to be this vibrant, exciting economy. And that is even with 20-40 percent unreported that we all know about.

Q: The black market.

SECCHIA: Now, again, in my judgment a lot of the problems might be opportunities, but because we have a very unique situation in Italy...you have a strong government political/economic partnership. IRI, the largest employer in Italy is owned by the government. The government appoints the bank directors. The government owns Alitalia that flies the airplanes and Al Italia that makes the airplanes. They own the steel mills that make the steel to make the airplanes. They own the coal that produces the steel. They own the electric company which make the electricity to burn the coal to make the steel to make the airplanes to fly the airplanes and they can control a large percentage of the travel because of the size of the government. So you have a socialist thinking type of government that had, up until the last year or two, control of the resources.

What you had then was very powerful senators and very powerful legislators and ministers who had within their office the right to decide the future from an economic sense, not just from a political sense, of many of their country people. So these ministers were a very important and cherished position in this debate we had a minute ago about how to form a government. If you ran the postal service and you decided that there would be a post office or not a post office, you could hire all the people you want in your post office. So you gave jobs which was very powerful. If you controlled transportation, you had the bridges, the highways, the railroads...just the linen contracts to launder the sheets on the trains was a scandal of years ago. There were lots of economic advantages

Meanwhile, you had a very unusual situation. You had a very powerful government that controlled an awful lot of the economic engine of the country. Then you had political systems that had been designed, post World War Two, and probably never fully thought out. If you think about how it was in 1948, 1950, it was "Stop the Communists." We don't want Yugoslavia to spread through Trieste. We fought to hold Trieste up until 1958 when we finally got the international community to give Trieste to Italy instead of Yugoslavia. We had Hungary which was invaded by the Soviets. We had Tito who feared the invasion of the Soviets and hid weapons, which are today in possession of the Serbs, but this was his program. So we would have done anything, in my judgment, under the years of Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, the brinkmanship period...we would have done just about anything to keep the Communists out of power in Italy as we did in...

Q: And we were doing it.

[pause in tape]

Let's stick to the time you were there. The whole Italian government was beginning to unravel because of corruption at that time.

SECCHIA: Well, that is part of this problem. What happened was they created parties but never created a way to fund them. Culture in Italy isn't used to having people contribute. The Church and the State handle the charity. There are no tax deductions. In fact, only recently can you even give money to the Church and deduct it. There were no political contributions, so what happened was, again in my judgment, in the fifties when we stopped funding the friendly parties...we had helped rebuild Italy and it was working.

Q: We put a tremendous amount of money into the CDU although it was technically a secret but an open one.

SECCHIA: I don't know how it was done, all I know is that when we were no longer there...it was probably easier to support a political party in the late forties and fifties. When the country became bigger and more complex the political parties became more involved. The reconstruction companies like IRI became more powerful. Instead of having to get a truck load of olives to the market you are talking about train loads of steel and high tech products and it became very important to business people. Now if you were a businessman in Italy you wouldn't want the Communists coming in and taking over the resources of the state and taking over your business. You liked the status quo so you were contributing but you didn't have a vehicle to contribute so you gave a little cash which became a little more cash and a little more. It became very important, almost like we had strong military support here when we had the evil Soviet Empire and when it crumbled we no longer needed it. In Italy when the Soviet Empire crumbled, in my judgment, so did the political system. Because if I was a businessman giving you money to stay in business Mr. Secretary and you would get elected and in the government and I kept the party going, no problem, you didn't take any money, I gave you the money. It was the bustarello, an envelope. But that bustarello became an all important envelope because it also meant the difference of whether you won a contract to build a bridge or build a harbor or you got to fly, your planes were purchased, etc. So the bustarello was not only to help you build your party, but it said, "Look, I want you people when you get into congress, to vote this way on this issue." So because you had the legislature in such powerful position that they could also make economic decisions. It isn't like in the United States where you can only get a legislator to change or impact legislation. That same legislator can't decide that you get a bridge contract in most cases. In Italy they could. So the bustarello got bigger.

Then it became "one for me and one for you." So certain politicians started taking the envelope and taking some case out for them. Others would take the envelope and pass the money down to others. But it was a way of doing business, just part of the culture. We knew it was happening, they knew it was happening, but nobody talked about it. We reported about it although we never had proof of it. We just knew it was happening. In many cases this went on to where the envelope got bigger, the rake off got bigger, the economy got bigger, and it kept feeding on itself to the point where one got Raoul Gardini. He who recently killed himself. He was caught giving

hundreds of millions of dollars to get a legislative vote on the privatizing of a federal company.

So, what happened, let's give an example. The way the story goes Gardini, who was a brilliant businessman (called "the farmer"), he captured the soybean market in Chicago in 1989. I had to call him in and reprimand him and give him my government's message. Gardini was the first to be involved in a private sector privatization of a federal or state owned company. The beginning of privatization was, "Okay Raoul, you can have 40 percent and we will merge your company and the state company to form this largest agro-chemical company in Italy. Feruzzi group owned 40, the state owned 40 and 20 was in the public market. It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out if Gardini got a hold of the 11 percent of the 20 that he would be in total control and that is what he did. At least that is what he is accused of doing. He then took charge and moved a little too fast. The legislators (the Socialist left), which were a part of the majority, felt that this should be slowed down a bit, that he was moving too fast. We appoint the directors, all the people and there is a little deal going here. He was going too fast for them. Finally he orchestrated a deal between Min. of State participation, which was one of the ministries of state. They said "You buy us or we buy you." They put a high price on it and he sold out making 5 billion dollars. But there was no stink, it went through, everybody voted, it was done. Well, it turned out now that he paid out 2 - 3 million dollars in gratuities to get people to go along with this deal. He made several billion on this deal, the tax payer lost. He got caught and shot himself.

That all was happening at the same time the Soviet Empire collapsed and you, with a pasta factory in Modena, had been giving an envelope to the parties who would keep the Communists out. There were no longer Communists, so why should I give you an envelope anymore? It is like in America, there is no longer an evil enemy so why build B-2s? Why do we need more tanks? So in Italy they just had their own peace dividend, but they put it in their own pocket.

So then the parties got into trouble. They needed to fund this machine that was giving out jobs and putting in ministers. So they had to go get bigger bustarello from the people who remained. As the different people pulled out of the anti-Communist group of these five parties, we needed to raise money. So we went back to those who gave us an envelope and asked them to put more money in it. So the envelopes got bigger yet and the parties got weaker yet and got in debt. At the same time all of the leadership was in their seventies and all of the population and voters were in their thirties. There was no longer a bond between paratroopers, partisans, anti-fascists. It was no longer, "I remember the old days when we were hungry." It was a "I want it now Daddy" generation. So the party leaders were being weakened, their envelopes were more crooked than ever...originally they were well worth it and we probably supported it...but now the bustarello was getting a little more tainted, they wanted something for it. The parties were broke, the leaders were old, the Communist Empire had disappeared, there was a global economy...you could sell your pasta all over the world. You didn't need the minister of agriculture because under EC and GATT you can do it yourself. But after the war you needed them because your family was living in a cave.

At the same time the young prosecutors like Dipietro were starting to chase rumors which in the past had been stifled by powerful political leaders who were no longer powerful. At the same time...in Italy they always appointed judges by party. The Communists had 30 percent of the parliament, they tried to get 30 percent of the judges. There is a Communist judge up in Venice

who has been chasing Andreotti for ten years. He and his followers want to get Andreotti. In Italy a prosecutor in Milan can investigate a city commissioner in Palermo. There is no jurisdiction or boundary. So you have all of these accusations that come from anywhere with any motive to get somebody. So, up until now, when that happened Andreotti would talk to somebody, who would talk to somebody who would shut this guy up. Well, as they got older, the party got weaker, got in debt and the people were changing. The Church was losing its influence.

I like to draw the parallel to when I was a kid I used to go to this little pond and there were frogs, turtles and snakes there. After every storm when the sun came out, all the animals came out. When the animals came out they fought for a place in the sun. You could watch them. There would be one stick in the middle of the pond and a lot of seaweed. Up would come a turtle and lay on that stick and up would come another and they would be jamming for space. Then the frogs would come. I got to thinking that when the evil empire dissipated and the clouds parted and the sun came out all of us were looking for a place in the sun. Crimea was saying we don't want to be part of the Ukraine any more. The Serbs were saying that the Croats sided with the Nazis and killed hundreds of thousands of us, Tito is gone, we know where the weapons are stashed, we are going to get even, so the Serbs want to kill a couple of hundred Croats to get even. What are they doing? They are fighting for their place in the sun because the clouds have left.

In Italy you have the guy who has been giving an envelope for forty years saying to his son, "You know I gave the envelope but we don't need it any more, you keep it for the kids." That is what happened. If you study Italy and you know what they did and why they did it you would be a genius because this is the land of Verdi, Machiavelli...they love their music, they love their food, they love life. But their life is no different than our life, it is just that they have been in a very unusual...If Canada had invaded us six times in the last few centuries, we would have a hard time having an open border, wouldn't we.

Q: There were these changes. How did we view something like the Lombardy League, which was a league of the north?

SECCHIA: The Department of State never took a position. In modern day diplomacy we let the Italians pick who they wanted. If the Lombardy League wanted to secede and split Italy we wouldn't be supportive of that, but it really was none of our business. It was watched . . . but seldom given credibility.

Q: Did you make contacts with these people?

SECCHIA: Yes, we called on these people. In fact it backfired on us. My DCM called on them, and later they put out a press release that we had done so. It gave them credibility and we would have to refute the fact that we gave them credibility. But they were a moving force because I think 60 percent of Italy's budget is spent in the south and 17 percent of their GNP is produced in the north. So the north is angry about that. But I don't know if there is any real strength of changing the name of Italy or splitting it. Italians do not have a national presence. I used to tell President Cossiga that it was amazing how proud a Piedmontese would be about the Piedmonte or a Bruzzezi would be about Abruzzo, but when they played their national anthem at a soccer

game nobody took their hat off, people kept talking and eating. There was really no national spirit. There were still 20 different regions, each proud of their own region, protecting their own style of pasta, their bread, their fish, the way they cook their fish, the way they dress, and their folklore. Protecting the past and never worrying about the future. And yet the movement to make Italy a republic and have it unified...it is amazing because in the United States we would argue among states, but if anyone attacked our shores we would all come together on the beaches in a uniform fighting together. Whereas in Italy you would put troops together. The Alpini from the north and you would have their soldiers from Rome. They would still act regional. There is a regional mentality and concept that is in the culture which makes it very difficult for national spirit. They really don't have a president. They have a president that is elected but he is elected by the parliament. He is like the Queen of England. He approves government actions, he doesn't really get involved in government.

Response to questions in letter of June 6, 1994

1. Your view of the industrial leaders of Italy and how you dealt with them.

Because I was a businessman, it was easy for me to deal with them. We had a lot in common. I was always impressed with the sense of style and the genius of art that the Italian businessman seemed to intuitively have. From the window display of a grocery store to the design of a elegant automobile . . . the Italians seemed to have this inherent sense. As industrial leaders, they loved doing business with Americans and that too made it easy for me. Many of these industrial leaders are very proud of their association with American business people and, in fact, wore it proudly on their sleeve.

The AT&T partnership with Italcable and other major partnerships gave great impetus to our commercial activity. The little business person was ever receptive and large turnouts at Italian/American Chamber of Commerce events, NIAF events, and joint seminars were always very exciting. Larry Eagleburger distributed our Embassy Rome cables worldwide on two occasions.

2. Your view of the labor leaders of Italy and how you dealt with them.

These labor leaders were similar to the newspapers. They were normally appointed by the party to which they threw most of their votes. The communists and socialists seemed to have the biggest interest in the labor activities and turned out large labor groups whenever they wanted to have a demonstration or bring an issue into the press. The Christian democrats had their labor leaders too. However, all of these labor leaders and the parties have been realigned and now it's only the PDS (formerly the communists) that have much influence in any of the labor organizations.

3. Issues that concerned 1 & 2 and the United States.

Italian industrial leaders were always concerned that the fluctuating value of the dollar and their own government, two very inconsistent variables. The Italian labor leaders really didn't have much to do with the United States. Many of them would ask to come to the United States to have

contact, but having been an appointee of a Republican government, I didn't have too many U.S. labor contacts for them. Nor was I ever directly asked. My Embassy staff did set up several joint meetings and there were leaders from American unions who came to Italy to talk to the Italian leadership. In those case, I was involved and supported those meetings. Issues that concerned industrial leaders in Italy on a domestic front were the Italian government's inability to control labor movement protests. Quite often the Italian government would yield to the loudest and noisiest demonstration and this bothered industrial leaders who I often believed were slipping a lot of their personal cash out of Italy and investing it in other countries. A prime example of that would be the IFIN division of the FIAT family fortune. This was established in Luxembourg (1970-72) to invest their family fortune into "anything but Italian companies." (Supposedly in fear of an eventual communist takeover.)

Industrial leaders were also concerned with the inability of the Milan BORSA to react in a very sophisticated manner. Their stock market didn't seem to function properly. I always thought this was the result of the fact that most people who understood Italian business knew that the accounting and the untruthfulness of the balance sheet was part of the game. i.e. If Cogafar (the construction division of FIAT) could spend millions of dollars for government cooperation (sometimes described as bribes) their balance sheet really wasn't truthful. If these same industrial leaders had elegant yachts, magnificent villas, and pallazzi in many cities, including Rome . . . there was also fear that this was being paid for by the company treasury. Therefore, if the companies were able to syphon off cash and to withdraw profit, it was pretty obvious to some that the stock market wasn't properly reflecting the potential of earnings per share or an accurate cash flow. This would be another reason why industrialists would be investing in the American market or in other securities outside of Italy.

4. Contacts with the Communist Party (PCI).

I had very few contacts with the communist party. In fact, it was State Department policy at the time that I (U.S. Ambassador - Rome) not meet with the communist party leaders. My DCM could do this with lower level people and when I noticed that Baker was taking Shevardnadze fishing in Wyoming, and that Bush and Gorbachev were seeing each other on a regular basis . . . I asked for permission to meet "secretly" with Achille Occhetto who was Secretary of the very powerful PCI. He understood that this meeting was not to be publicized. The Italian government was quite paranoid about the American Ambassador having any contacts at all with the communist leaders in Italy. The communist party had one time risen to 36% of the vote and had recently dropped down to around 22% when I had my meeting. It was an enjoyable session and we talked about the goals of both of our governments. Occhetto's main mission with my Embassy was to achieve recognition and to see government officials in Washington (photo ops). This I told him I could not do. That was my only meeting with the communist party leader and this occurred about one month before I left post. I did it because I felt that the next Italian government might include members of the newly re-formed communist party (PDS). If that happened (and it did) the next Ambassador might have difficulty surmounting this "never having met" obstacle and at the same time working with a government that included that party. Therefore, I convinced my superiors to give me the opportunity to have this (un-announced) meeting so that the communists could not

say that the Americans had not met with them before they were in the government. (Ciampi appointed two communist ministers soon after my departure. They both resigned over an issue I do not recall.)

5. Consultations with the Italian Government as Yugoslavia came apart.

The Italians were very concerned about Yugoslavia and we had many discussions regarding this. I could dictate for hours on this one subject. I think the most revealing development of all these discussions was the fact that the Italians appropriated adequate funding and expected a large number of refugees from the Catholic Republic of Croatia. However, the Catholics didn't come to Italy. The Muslims did. That became another problem since the Italians felt they already had too many Muslims, after Kohl and the Holy Father led the world into recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. The Italians felt that the Baker-Bush policy on recognizing Croatia and Slovenia was the correct path. But Kohl and the Holy Father pushed recognition prior to boundary agreements which was a mistake.

6. Our concerns over the exodus of refugees from Albania.

It was common knowledge that the first ship that came to Brindisi was orchestrated and arranged for the electronic media. Afterwards, Gianni De Michelis, the foreign minister at that time, arranged a package with the Albanian government. The Italians in effect paid the Albanian government to keep their people home. This was a policy that De Michelis also attempted to use in the Yugoslavian refugee situations. He believed that when it came to Africa, Yugoslavia and Albania, that it would be more expensive for the Italian government to take care of the refugees after they were in Italy than it would be to pay their governments to keep them out of Italy.

7. Your view of some of the personalities in Italian public affairs.

Wonderful people who are friendly to the Americans. Those who I thought did an outstanding job were

Gianni De Michelis, who made quick decisions and in most instances was supportive of our position during the Gulf War. It was very difficult to get decisions out of the Italian government because there was a five party coalition led by the church oriented Christian Democrats. The Pope had given 43 speeches opposed to American foreign policy in Iraq. De Michelis was one we could call on and who in many instances did an outstanding job going forward and publicly speaking out in support of our policy.

Bettino Craxi was another strong leader in Italian politics. He had no trouble making a decision. If I went to his office with problems involving anyone in the socialist party, whether it be Minister Martelli (minister of justice) or other socialist ministers of defense, etc., Craxi would pick up the phone and straighten out the problem.

Andreotti was a man who I find hard to believe would have anything to do with the Mafia other than to acknowledge their existence and recognize that he alone could not fight this organization. He was a very well read historian whose knowledge of the U.S. and world history always amazed me.

Remember, after the years of fascism, the Italian legislature passed laws that protected the civil rights of many. There was no wire-tapping, there was no under cover surveillance or out of uniform police work. There was no tracing of money or data on family financing . . . all to protect the civil rights of people and to make sure that there would never be another fascist police state like that of Mussolini.

However, the Mafia flourished under these civil rights and then became a very strong and powerful part of Italian politics in the south. Andreotti's Christian Democrat party had a lot of its vote in the south but I still find it hard to believe that he was involved or ordered any of the murders that other are now saying he ordered. He was a brilliant man, well read, and I do believe that he is a true friend of the United States and western democracy. Andreotti did a lot for the governments of southern Europe and did much for the Italian people. It's amazing that he was in leadership in 1948 when Italy was an agrarian economy shipping only truck loads of agricultural products and he was still a leader when they were the fifth largest industrial economy in the free world 45 years later. I'm sure that through all of this he never became a wealthy man as many other Italian politicians did. In my personal opinion the conclusion to all of this will prove that he was in fact a statesman, not an assassin.

Georgio Lamalfa was the secretary of the Republican Party. I think he had that leadership position only because of his father's name and the respect that his father had earned. Though Georgio was pro-American he was left leaning and at often times threatened to work with the communists. The left was always a threat to the center. He played this to the hilt through the coalition government years. Since he had only 2 - 5% of the parliament it was to his advantage to be the swing vote in a 51 - 53% coalition.

8. How you dealt with presidential and secretary of state and congressional visits.

On U.S. congressional visits - we avoided them. Our staff detested them. Most of our congressmen were an embarrassment. They wore the wrong clothes. They came to the wrong meetings. They treated the Italians with disdain, and in many cases they were not well educated nor had they completed their homework. Some were dumb, dumb, dumb. I guess I'd have to admit that I spent a lot of my time trying to convince congressional delegations not to come visit. I was upset in the beginning, with the fact that many of them came on a Friday and spent the weekend shopping and left on a Monday. All the time asking for staff support from a very tight budget. I departed post wishing that all of them would cancel their visits or come only to shop. When we had briefings for them they weren't paying attention nor were they well aware of the situations concerning the bilateral relationship. Every once in a while there was one who wasn't interested in shopping or a photo op but that was the rare occasion.

The major problems were senators like Claiborne Pell who thought they had all the answers and were the most brilliant in the world. Yet they couldn't stay awake. Congressmen like Jack Brooks, who had such disdain for our foreigners and minorities that he treated everyone like they were an immigrant washer woman. Congresswoman Schroeder made our military feel unwanted and foolish.

Secretary of State Baker's trips were very well trained and they would work, work, and work. So much so that you almost felt like he didn't need an Ambassador. He had his mind made up. I guess if one were to ask if he ever accomplished his goals, you would have to say "almost every time." He knew what he wanted and he was a great negotiator. I often heard it said that if you had a choice of being in a foxhole with one person, that's the guy you would choose.

On presidential visits, George Bush was an easy president to host. He was well liked by the Italians and riding a very high popularity when he came to visit me for a NATO Summit in 1991. We didn't see much of him toward the end of the campaign when his numbers were dwindling. However, the Italians were always interested in George Bush and one of the reasons that Clinton was able to paint him as the "international president" and one not versed in domestic policies, was because Bush did have this relationship with the Europeans. Especially the Italians. His visits were well received and I would say other than some of his staff, they went very well.

I can think of one example when they came to the Villa and wanted breakfast for the staff and those who were coming to meet the President. This turned out to be their drivers, their photographers, their nurses, their doctors, and all of "strap hangers" who travel with the President. Later on the President's office refused to pay me for the breakfast even though a staffer had ordered it. I had to pay for it myself. (\$300)

9. The role of the Italian-American Congressman in our relations.

These are very important. The Italians feel very strongly that their exported citizens have a potential contribution to the future of the world through all of their Canadian/Italians, American/Italians, Argentina/Italians, etc. They spend a lot of time at this and have recently created a ministry for "Italians Abroad."

The Italian/American Congressman is held in very high respect and the visits are enjoyed by the Italians.

Both Democrats and Republicans were always well received. Normally the Italian/American Congressman was not as big a problem as the others because in most instances he/she had relatives to visit, places he wanted to go, and was hosted at one social event after another by those who were proud to know him/her an Italian/American Congressman.

The Italian/American Congressperson in most cases was interested in furthering the relationship and worked rather well with the Embassy. They understood Italy.

10. How valuable you found the diplomatic social life in Rome.

Not very valuable. I made all the perfunctory calls on the major ambassadors (64) and from time to time would have to call on an ambassador to resolve a bilateral problem. I remember working very closely with the British Embassy on trying to extradite an Arab terrorist that their intelligence people had apprehended. But, in most cases it was a game of chicken. The French ambassador was always interested in helping France and could care less about America. I was interested in America and could care less about France. My role was to improve the relationships between Italy and the United States and that's what I worked on. It didn't help me to have a good

relationship with the French Ambassador to do this. The Italians didn't care much for him either.

Though we all worked together in NATO - we had a NATO ambassador and DOD was watching this.

The Italians and the French didn't get along. The Germans and the Italians seemed to get along but on a very official basis. There were very few social/diplomatic events in Rome. The pecking order was too disproportionate. The American Ambassador is treated like royalty. (This wasn't me - it was the desk I was using and the flag I represent.) That made it difficult for other ambassadors because the Italians would fawn over my wife and me. However, when we looked at it the other way, there wasn't much that other ambassadors could do for us. It's almost ironic that the Russian ambassador Adamiscin once asked me if I would help him with the Italian government. He wanted to get him a police escort so he could get through traffic (just like I had). He could get no one to see him. The Swedish ambassador told me she waited a year for the foreign minister to see her.

11. How you spent a typical day.

Early in the morning to very late at night there were too many people to meet, too many visitors who wanted to visit, too many cables to write, and not a very effective and efficient secretarial staff to do the communicating. The secretaries sent to Rome are people who usually have problems. Many of them have no social life in the United States and, therefore, this diplomatic service has become their life. Their ranking through Civil Service and their commitment to travel makes them job qualified. It has nothing to do with their talent. Their lack of talent also seems to be unimportant. I had one secretary who could not use her word processor and I had another one who didn't have a word processor because we couldn't afford to buy her one. In 1989 we were still using 1968 techniques. They did not even have dictation systems. They still took dictation on note pads. It took me 2 - 3 days to get letters out and that was very seldom to the standard to which I was accustomed. Spelling was atrocious.

Their dedication was adequate and their desire to do the job was in most cases unquestioned. However, they are poorly trained and I do not believe that they start at an high level of efficiency. This made a typical day very long because for me to do the work I had to do, it took 7 secretaries. (I know, I can't believe it either.) However, there just wasn't enough efficiency to get the job done. There were too many vacations, too many sick days, too much home leave, too many special arrangements for administrative leave, bereavement leave, etc. Most people are only in the office 63% of the working days needed. So 7 secretaries is probably equivalent to 3 1/2. If you consider that 1-1/2 good people could do the protocol work, you needed two in an office as full time efficient secretaries. You could probably staff a G-7 embassy this way.

A typical day for me was getting through all this paper work, cables, and trying to learn what was going on by keeping abreast of the Italian newspapers, meeting Italians. In fact, I only went home for lunch one day a week on the average. There wasn't enough time. Every evening there were 2 - 3 social events. My wife and I traveled almost every weekend because we felt that we wanted to see the entire country. We visited all 96 provinces. Most of this travel was as a guest

of Italians because we didn't have the travel budget and we had an 8 year old car that was continually breaking down. The car, the mobile phone, the secretarial help and the equipment that we had to use was an embarrassment. There just wasn't any funding for this because of the low value of the dollar. We had to buy our own swimming pool furniture to put around the pool at Villa Taverna. This cost me \$28,000. I imagine a career ambassador would have known how to get that money but it would have had to come from some other fund. I spent a good portion of my day trying to figure out how to pay the bills and how to have one of the largest RIFs (reduction in force) in the history of the State Department. We reduced our staff by 42 people.

THOMAS P. MELADY
Ambassador
Vatican City (1989-1993)

Thomas P. Melady was born in Norwich, Connecticut in 1927. He served in the U.S. Army in World War II. He received his BA from Duquesne University in 1950 and his MA and PhD from Catholic University in 1952 and 1954. His career has included positions in Burundi, Uganda, and the Vatican. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on January 13 and 19, 1995.

MELADY: So I got over there in August, and began my almost four years as ambassador to the Holy See.

Q: What is the interest of the United States and its connections with the Holy See?

MELADY: When we established diplomatic relations with the Holy See in 1984, we had a Special Envoy--there's a whole difference between a Special Envoy and Ambassador. It was done with the procedure whereby the President nominated William Wilson to be ambassador to the Holy See, that is to the government of the Roman Catholic Church. As a professor of political science, I'm very much interested in church-state relations. I spent my whole time studying the whole confirmation process in which the majority of the senate committee members said, "We have unique special interests with this government with its worldwide connections. It is both a source of information and they engage strategy and they have influence in various parts of the world." So Mr. Wilson was approved by a landslide majority in the senate. And before going to Rome, there was a court case under our constitution, the American United for Separation of Church and State, and several other groups--I've forgotten their names now, they are in my book--they said it was a violation of the constitution. And the court held that it wasn't, the President did have the power, Article II, Section 2, said the President nominates with the advice of and consent of the Senate. He did that, and that the senate was the controlling group which would make the decision. So therefore, the first who was Ambassador was Mr. Wilson, the second, Mr. Shakespeare, I arrived as the third ambassador. I had no doubt there would be vital interest involved. I must say it turned out to be more than I ever thought it would be from the standpoint of information worldwide. The whole Gorbachev business when we got information that no one had, including the CIA, which I was able to transmit to Washington--the cooperation between

Gorbachev and President Bush and with the Vatican in the key period of '89 to '91, until Gorbachev left office in '91.

It's a unique diplomatic post. I think very much like the embassies of the 19th century. If you just check the embassies (I used to teach diplomatic history) you have the ambassador and a few aides. That's all we had. I mean, we represented U.S. policy, we were involved in visas. I used to kid my good friend, who was the ambassador to Italy, if someone called us who had a visa problem, I'd say call his embassy. If something on trade, call the other embassy. We just did diplomacy. We were a small staff: the ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, a political officer.

Q: Who was your deputy chief then?

MELADY: I had two. Jim Creagan, who is now the Deputy Chief of Mission to Italy; and Cameron Hume, who is now chief of the political division at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations--both first class officers.

Q: Jim Creagan certainly. He was political officer in Naples when I was Consul General there.

MELADY: Oh, he has had a great Italy experience. I'm just hoping he gets an embassy in the next go-around. You never know how the cookie crumbles. There never was any doubt in my mind that a U.S.

Embassy to the Holy See was in our interest. And I felt so strongly about it that I wrote a book, "The Ambassador's Story. The United States and the Vatican in World Affairs." It always would have been an interesting place, but under this Papacy with a Pope who was very much involved in strategy. It was even more valuable for the U.S. to have a diplomatic mission there. This goes back to the meeting of, before I got there, the famous meeting--President Reagan and Pope John Paul II. At that meeting, and I remember the background, 1982, we had a Special Envoy. Reagan was getting ready to go to the meeting, and the essential advice was in "executive summary," "Don't be talking about overthrowing the communists in Eastern Europe. Look what happened when we talked about it before. The Hungarian revolution, the Prague revolt of '68, the Soviets aren't going to do it." It's interesting. By the time I got there the Papal advisors were saying the same thing as this "Polish" Pope, "Don't be talking about it." Well, lo and behold, neither (President Reagan or Pope John Paul II) followed the advice of their experts. The President brought up to the Pope that he had read that the Pope had said that one day "Eastern Europe will be free, and Eastern Europe will join with western Europe." And President Reagan said, "Your Holiness, when will that be?" And the Pope said, "In our lifetime." The President sort of jumped out of his chair and said, "We're both not exactly young people." "Yes." So the President grabbed his hand and said, "Let's work together."

I remember Time magazine about 1991 had a major cover story, The Holy Alliance, and a picture of the Pope and Reagan. The article, with the exception of the first five paragraphs, was really quite accurate. With a handshake, without a formal treaty, there was never anything written--I know that--the United States and the Holy See cooperated in one of the greatest events in modern history. The collapse of an empire without, relatively speaking, any major bloodshed.

Q: What was the Holy See doing with its influence with the Soviet Union?

MELADY: Well, actually they had very good sources of information despite the difficulty of operating there. Soon after I arrived, I found out that there had been about a three to four year contact between Rome and Moscow. Cardinal Casaroli had been there on one of his visits in '87, there was a famous conversation between Gorbachev and Casaroli where they were talking about some things. At the end of a formal meeting, Gorbachev volunteered that he would be visiting his mother that weekend. And he said, "My mother is a deaconess in the church." And, of course, Casaroli knew he was talking to a very astute person, not an adolescent high school boy who just blabbed on, every word was meant to convey a message. And he described how sometime when he visited his mother in this cottage where she lived (she took care of changing the linen, etc. on the altar of the--it was the orthodox church), she had two portraits of Marx and Lenin.

Pretty standard at that time for any Soviet home, and that sometimes she would take them down, when she took them down there were two icons, and she would bless them. He said, of course, she is the one who baptized me. So the conversation went on and naturally Casaroli reported all that to the Pope and it began a correspondence period in which the letters were rather friendly. Gorbachev sent a note to the Pope inviting him to send a delegation to the 1000th anniversary of the orthodox church, and invited the Pope to come. The Pope said he appreciated the invitation but he couldn't make it but he sent a very high level delegation. Other letters followed. So therefore when Washington heard in November '89 that Gorbachev on his way to the Island of Malta to meet President Bush on December 1, with a stop-off in Rome to meet the Pope, I received high level instructions to find out what was going on, which I did. And I got all this information about the three and a half year relationship with Gorbachev, and the analysis by the Holy See that there was a change in the attitude of the leadership. It was far more flexible and amenable, and prepared for change, providing the change would protect their interest. But a rather rapid change which they found. They were communicating that. Our people and in my briefings didn't feel that way. They thought maybe Gorbachev was trying to pull something off. Remember the crop harvest wasn't too good. Was he looking for some of those arrangements in regard to wheat and other things.

The President told me later that he felt that way too. So about two days before Gorbachev arrived in Rome, I received additional instructions. Try to find out what the Pope thought of Gorbachev, and various such questions. Can Gorbachev be trusted? Well, I dealt with Casaroli, who was number two--the head of government--the formal title there was Secretary of State, which confuses people here, but really is Prime Minister. I had known him for years before I went there. I didn't have much time because it was like two days after he saw the Pope, he would be in Malta. So I had to see Casaroli fairly soon, and I saw him in a long meeting and he briefed me on all of the things that were said, which I transmitted all to Washington. And then he said, "In regard to trust, we think we know the man, he's from the heart of the communist power structure, he believes in change and he wants it. We believe he can be trusted, within those perimeters." So I got that cable off.

I wonder if I can come back another time to continue this?

Q: Absolutely. We'll pick up on the Holy See. We're just really starting, we've talked about the

Gorbachev thing, but there's much more to talk about.

Q: Today is the 19th of January 1995. I'm never quite sure how to pronounce your name. Malady. I'm sure you get Melady.

MELADY: Meledy is the first guess. When I was in the Army, I stopped correcting the sergeants. They get irritated anyway.

Q: Let's talk about the organization of our mission to the Holy See. It started when?

MELADY: Well, let's get a little history. In the 19th century we had diplomatic envoys to the Papal States. Now, technically that was not the Holy See. You may recall in history up until the unification of

Italy, the territory of the Pope actually met the criteria of a sovereign state. They had land, they had a government, they had an army, they had currency. These Papal States extended from approximately north of Naples up to Florence.

Q: That was the mid section of Italy.

MELADY: And the United States recognized the Papal States, first in a cautious way with consular officers, but then full diplomatic officers from 1848 to 1867. In 1867 the United States congress passed the no-funding act. In Article II, Section 2 of the constitution is quite clear. The President appoints with advice and consent of the senate, and that was done. But the house of representative got the purse strings, and said, no more money for a mission accredited to the Pope.

Q: This is the 1860's.

MELADY: So our mission to the Papal States closed. When I was ambassador to the Holy See we tried to discover the grave of the first diplomatic representative, Mr. Jacob I. Martin. He was only there for three weeks after he presented his credentials to the then Pope, and he died of malaria which was quite a curse in those days in that part of Italy. And the State Department would only allow \$100 for sending the body back, and the family had him buried there. We found the grave. It is in the Protestant cemetery in Rome. We have erected an appropriate stone, and every year flowers are placed on his grave. He was the first diplomatic representative of the United States in what is now known as Italy, even before the Republic of Italy.

After 1867 there was a long interregnum, which coincided with a period of anti-Catholicism in the United States. The most difficult period was the Ku Klux Klan movement against immigrants. Now, some would say it was primarily against immigrants, some would say against Catholics, it was probably a mixture. A large number of immigrants were coming from Ireland, France, Italy. Eastern Europe came later, Germany, Spain, Portugal. I doubt that there would have been any kind of diplomatic representation in the late 1800's. But probably after the unification of Italy in the 1870's, our basis for recognition of the Papal States was based on the traditional customs. It had territory, chief of state, etc. That disappeared with the unification of Italy. The government of the Roman Catholic Church, which is the Holy See, existed and about

18 to 20 countries still recognized it in that period of the end of the 19th century. Along came the first 30 some years of this century and FDR, seeing that the clouds of war were gathering in Europe, wanted some sign of contact with the Vatican. He did various things. He sent Joseph Kennedy--he then was U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom--as his personal representative to the coronation of Pius XII. Pius XII had visited the United States as Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State which is really their operating head, and was the guest of Roosevelt at Hyde Park. So there had been activity. FDR was convinced that the Vatican was a great source of information.

Q: Pacelli had been nuncio in Munich.

MELADY: So, what to do? And FDR's advisers came up with what they thought was a solution. They were fearful they would have trouble in getting Article II, Section 2 carried out with confirmation by the senate. So President Roosevelt announced on Christmas eve, 1939, after the war had started in Europe, that he was sending to--and he used the word the Vatican, not the Holy See--a personal envoy who would represent him, not be a government official. He also announced in that same radio address that he would be in contact with the Council of Churches in Christ in New York City, and the Jewish theological seminary.

Q: Touching all bases.

MELADY: Well, it was a qualitative difference, and the other contacts were never really carried out. But soon after Myron Taylor, his long-time friend, a leading Episcopal laymen and retired head of U.S. Steel, went off to Rome as the Special Envoy. There was some opposition to it, but there was no focus for debate because it did not require senate confirmation. Whatever goals he had for Myron Taylor, it certainly exceeded the goals. It was a gold mine. As things went on in '40-'41 there in the heart of Italy was Myron Taylor, operating in Rome outside of Vatican walls. After Italy declared war on us, he went inside Vatican walls. For a while he had freedom. He used to go up to Florence to visit his villa. The two significant sources of information for the United States, were Myron Taylor and Mr. Allen Dulles in Switzerland. So significant was the information some of it is still classified. That was the office of Special Envoy. FDR died, Mr. Taylor continued through the first several years of Truman's administration. He was an older man then, and then he retired.

In 1950 Truman concentrated on the Vatican assignment, and he saw what a gold mine of information came out. Information, there wasn't much strategy, but information. He, without much consultation from what I can see in my own research, decided that we ought to have an ambassador. So he nominated General Mark Clark in 1951 to be the United States ambassador to the Vatican. Now I'm saying Vatican rather than Holy See for a reason. And on the basis the Vatican was a sovereign state, it was independent, it was small, that it had a chief of state in addition to being the Pope and leader of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world, was sovereign of the territory of the Vatican. It had its own other characteristics.

But he didn't do much advance research on it and it raised a great storm. I recall because I was a student at the time at Catholic University, never knowing that I would later become the ambassador to the Holy See. I recall going down to the convention hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution, it was packed. I was then doing an MA on international relations. I was

shocked as most of the signs were clearly in the category of anti-Catholic, some of them quite vulgar as a matter of fact. The nomination got stalled. It was quite apparent it wouldn't get through, and it died in that session of the senate, and Mr. Truman did not resubmit it. Technically, therefore, it never was defeated, but it would have been.

Q: It's a little hard...we're doing history now and both of us are of a certain age, and we know the era.

But somebody coming along to understand the depth of anti-Catholic feeling there was in the country in some areas, and it would come out in these things. The idea being that somehow the Pope was a foreign agent. It's almost like anti-communism in a way.

MELADY: Yes. This was really quite strong. Actually, I'm doing another book which we can get into at another time, it's not out yet, "A Catholic Layman Looks at His Church." I'm right now on that, in the 19th century. Never to the point of oppression, never to the point where they excluded Catholics from the establishment. Catholics clearly were not in the establishment. There were other reasons, they were first generation immigrants, peasants, laborers, etc., not property owners. So there were other reasons. The one exception probably was a few Catholic families in Maryland who got here early because of Lord Baltimore's agreement--the Calvert family among them.

But getting back to that period. It really was a rough period. And obviously the three succeeding presidents--President Eisenhower, who made a visit or two to the Pope; President Kennedy, who announced in the campaign he was opposed to the reestablishment of a Special Envoy; and President Johnson, who also had some visits with the Pope--never reinstated, which they could have done because it did not require senate confirmation, the Special Envoy business. President Nixon reinstated the Special Envoy, and did what President Truman did, selected a prominent American. He selected Henry Cabot Lodge, who had been a previous U.S. senator, and a previous ambassador to Germany and Vietnam.

Q: And also a non-Catholic.

MELADY: That's right, a member of the American establishment. And he served throughout Nixon's term as well as the two years of President Ford.

Q: Did you have any feeling, looking back on it, that he did much there? One of the things that comes through with Lodge was that if he wasn't really engaged in things, he could be...lazy is the wrong term, but he has been called this. If he really got going on something, he'd do it.

MELADY: Well, I did some research, because remember a Special Envoy which meant he had someone in the State Department, I've forgotten the name, he's a retired Foreign Service officer living in Portugal, so it was the local officer so to speak, and there would be an office at the U.S. embassy that would sort of handle the paperwork. Although he would always stay in the big hotels, and he would generally see the Pope, and it was in a way very high level type of representation ad hoc. Remember it was the Vietnamese era and a major thing was in presenting our case in regard to Vietnam. And also remember it was the year of a major confrontation between the two super powers, and they'd be talking about and informing the Pope of the dangers

of communism.

That took us through the administrations of Presidents Nixon and Ford, and along came President Carter. President Carter continued the Special Envoy, and appointed Mr. David Walters of Florida. Mr. Walters served for a brief period of time, and I wasn't able to find out just what was done there. It was about 12 or 13 months, and he resigned. And then President Carter appointed Bob Wagner, a former mayor of New York City, and you might say went back to the role of a rather prominent person. Walters, by the way, was Catholic. So he was the first Catholic to hold the post. Bob Wagner was also Catholic.

When I received my appointment as ambassador in '89, I talked to Bob Wagner. And he told me what a delightful position it was. It came at the end of a career. He was still in the practice of law. He took it all very seriously, he played a role in trying to extradite the hostages out of Tehran, and lots of things. He served the last three years of President Carter, and made a very strong recommendation that we send an ambassador there.

Along came President Reagan. People didn't notice at the time, but President Reagan in the first week or 10 days after his election were known historically...announcements were only made about major appointments--Secretary of State, members of the cabinet, he announced that his long-time friend, William Wilson, a well-known business leader in California.

Q: William Wilson?

MELADY: Yes, William Wilson, a well known Republican, civic leader, with other corporate interests, and a member of President Reagan's kitchen cabinet, would be his Special Envoy. Mr. Wilson went out (it didn't require confirmation) so he was out there probably right after the inaugural. Mr. Wilson, at that time regarded it really just about as a full-time job. A man of evidently significant personal means, he established his own residence. There really wasn't any budget, and carried on. He was, of course, the President's personal representative still, but he was given the courtesy title of ambassador. And in private life he was well known in Rome's aristocratic circles, the old noble families, his wife being of partial Italian descent. He carried on as Special Envoy. In 1981 President Reagan decided he wanted to see the Pope--I go into more detail in my book, a full chapter, it was quite important. You may remember in the campaign and in private life, President Reagan talked about the freeing of Eastern Europe from the communist oppression, and also Russia. He was warned by his advisors that this was not going to happen. Look at (he was told) the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Prague revolt of 1968, the rioting in Poland. The Soviets are there (he was told) and they have superior armed forces and there would be blood shed, and the Brezhnev doctrine, etc. Evidently in getting ready for the visit, Judge Clark, then assistant to the President for national security affairs, came across a speech the Pope had given some months earlier on his first visit to Poland after he became Pope.

Q: John Paul II, who is Polish.

MELADY: Made his first trip to Poland, and in an address that was ignored by the American newspapers, but was in Le Monde and therefore it came up in some research, the Pope said, "Soon Eastern Europe will be free" (of this domination), and western Europe and eastern Europe,

because of their common heritage, will have a community in Europe." So the president had that quote, and there was more in the Pope's speech. In getting ready for the visit I found in my own research for the book, that some of the Pope's advisors too were concerned in '80-'81, that he was talking about freeing Eastern Europe. They said the only reasonable goal was reduction of the oppression, "some outside contact, build up the strength of the church in Poland and Slovakia, and Lithuania, where it had lots of members, etc." So a meeting took place. Mr. Wilson was the Special Envoy, he arranged for the appointment. President Reagan was there with his advisors. Then as the Pope does, and he did with me, he meets only with the principal. For example, I was not present when he had his long talk with President Bush, that's a standard procedure. He and the Pope, and President Reagan met alone. President Reagan gave him that quote, and Reagan said, "When do you think it will be?" And the Pope said, "In our lifetime." At that point the President grabbed his hand and said, "Let's work together."

You may remember that about 1991, Time magazine had an article on the "sacred alliance," the United States and the Vatican with a picture of President Reagan and the Pope. Its a fairly accurate article, with the exception of the first four or five paragraphs (from what I could see from my knowledge of the archives). There was no signed document, no formal agreement on cooperation between the Vatican and the United States.

Q: You said 1991?

MELADY: 1981. Eighty-one was the meeting. The 1991...

Q: ...was the article.

MELADY: It was a very interesting article. They (the Pope and President Reagan) talked about how to help each other, and the President said, "We'll do everything we can." The Pope emphasized it should be a non-violent transition from his analysis of the situation in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland. The Pope felt that you could maneuver the transition through tactics, and strategy. He then, as in the Gulf War later, has always opposed the use of war to solve problems. I think he recognized that in a political pact there might very well be a riot, but not war. It was a very important meeting and the President returned to the United States and instructed the State Department to work closely with the Vatican. Following the Papal-Reagan meeting the Special Envoy office suddenly had a lot of visitors. General Vernon Walters, then Ambassador-at-Large in the first term of President Reagan, was a frequent visitor. Other senior people like Judge Clark, then assistant to the President for national security affairs. And they coordinated assistance, and strategy. The U.S. assisted the solidarity movement. I was president of Sacred Heart University at the time, and even I had some visiting professors because there were all kinds of exchange programs. Printing presses were made available, advice on strategy. That was clearly the deciding factor when President Reagan said, "I want to establish a full fledged embassy."

He appointed an in-house commission in '83. The in-house commission was to look at several points. Is it constitutional? Is it in the national interest? And is it political prudent? Haig, who had left the State Department, got involved. A private person was brought in, Dr. Billy Graham.

Q: The most prominent Protestant leader in the States.

MELADY: And Senator Lugar, who at that time was chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. In other words, there were quite a few people in on it. It was the unanimous recommendation, that it was constitutional based on Article II, Section 2. The President appoints with the advice and consent of the senate. It was the unanimous opinion of the group that it was in our national interest. The Vatican had gone from merely being a treasure house of information, to having influence and engaging in strategy. The third was probably the most important aspect of the study, and Dr. Graham played a major role there. He felt that while there certainly would always be opposition to it, that it wouldn't be a firestorm, and that it would get senate confirmation. So based on that in '83 there were discussions with the Vatican. President Reagan's original proposal was to recognize Vatican City. The Vatican said no, you must recognize the government of the Roman Catholic Church. This dates back to the 1815 Vienna conference. Around 70 other countries so recognized the Holy See in 1973. And President Reagan did that.

In January 1984, President Reagan announced the appointment, the nomination of Mr. Wilson as our U.S. ambassador to the Holy See. And that set in motion the normal procedure; the senate must confirm. Senator Lugar, meeting with his ranking Democratic colleague who was Senator Pell at the time, agreed they would have hearings and there wouldn't be so much of an examination of Mr. Wilson's credentials, but rather "should the U.S. have relations with the Holy See?" And that went on for about three weeks, and there were some organizations that were quite strong in opposition. The American United for Separation of Church and State, ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union). Actually the Baptist Association, the southern Baptist group of which Dr. Graham is a member, was opposed to it. And some Catholic organizations, not major ones, but several were also opposed. That went on for about three weeks, the public hearings. And to make a long story short, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee by a strong vote, voted in favor. Then, of course, it went to the floor of the senate. The confirmation got 80-some votes, I think 12 were opposed, and one or two weren't there, so it was a landslide confirmation. Mr. Wilson took the oath and went off to Rome as the ambassador of the United States to the Holy See.

Now, there's another footnote. Under our constitution there's still another way to challenge a decision by the Senate. Did it violate the constitution? So several organizations brought a suit, and I'm not a lawyer, but it went before the superior court in Philadelphia, for some reason, and the court ruled unanimously that there was no violation of the constitution. It was the constitutional prerogative of the President. He had to consult the senate, and that if there was any question about it, it was basically a political matter to resolve at election time. But constitutionally there was no question. So therefore, Mr. Wilson became our first ambassador to the Holy See having served previously as Special Envoy to the Pope. Mr. Wilson served approximately two years--it was in the second term of the President Reagan, I haven't the exact date but I'd say until about '86. And then he resigned in what was described as a controversy over whether or not he met with Mr. Qadhafi, head of Libya...

Q: With whom we were, to use a term, at loggerheads.

MELADY: So therefore, he served approximately two years as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. He was succeeded by Frank Shakespeare. Mr. Shakespeare had been in the administration of President Nixon, head of the United States Information Agency, and a communications executive in New York. And for a short term, I think less than a year, was ambassador to Portugal when he was named ambassador to the Holy See. The same questions came up in his confirmation. And I think he may have had one or two votes against him, but he was confirmed. And the same question came up in regard to the court, and the court made the same decision. So therefore, he served from approximately 1986 to the spring of 1989--he was the last Reagan appointment. I was nominated by George Bush, and he stayed there until the spring of '89.

I was fascinated by these questions in preparing for my confirmation. And I remember when President Bush asked me to serve. The process takes a couple of months. I used to go down to the Department every Thursday as Ambassador-designate and read all the files thinking that there would be a big question of the church-state thing again. And while that was not my specialty as a political scientist, I had a long-term interest in it. I was told by Senator Jesse Helms, then a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee...

Q: The House has affairs, the Senate has relations.

MELADY: He did not show up at the Senate hearing. Senator Biden presided. No questions came up.

Several people had sent in petitions. I remember I was rather surprised, Senator Biden said, "Leave your document, and we'll put it in the record," and they were quite nice to me. I was unanimously recommended by the committee. I was pleased by the fact that my two senators who were Democrats--I'm from Connecticut--strongly supported my nomination. And then I also had letters from Protestant and Jewish groups. I had been active with ecumenical affairs. And I was recommended by the committee unanimously, and then was confirmed. I can't say unanimously because it was a voice vote, so technically you say there was no recorded opposition.

Q: The period again was...

MELADY: From the summer of '89 to the spring of '93.

Q: And this was when basically Eastern Europe crumbled.

MELADY: Oh, yes. I arrived as Poland was pulling out of the communist orbit, and the whole transformation of Eastern Europe.

Q: What was going on as far as American relations with the Vatican because most of Eastern Europe has a very strong...I mean Poland is the most renowned, but Czechoslovakia, Romania, all had strong Catholic roots. Were we doing anything, either coordination or something?

MELADY: Well, once we opened up the embassy under Wilson, and continued by Frank Shakespeare and by the time I got there, we shared the Vatican analysis which was, the mood

was changing. The time was right for a transition, and that we should think of using strategy, always opposed to the use of war. But the information which the Vatican conveyed to us, was they felt things were also "right" with Gorbachev. So the dual analysis was that things were ripe in Eastern Europe, and Gorbachev.

I recall in Czechoslovakia, there in Rome in October of '89 before Gorbachev's famous visit to Rome, that there was going to be a religious ceremony, and all ambassadors were invited. It was for the canonization of a Czech woman, Agnes. And it was said that maybe about 25 people would come from Czechoslovakia. About a week before the ceremony, it was on a Saturday, it was announced that approximately a thousand had gotten out of Czechoslovakia. And by Tuesday or Wednesday, 5,000. They came by car, they came by train, they came by various ways. The Czech government, which wouldn't allow the Pope to appoint any bishops to any of the vacant Sees, was very hard dogmatic communists. They announced towards the end of that week that they were sending an official delegation, and that they would allow the Vatican to transmit it electronically so the people in Czechoslovakia could see the ceremony on television. I remember I went to the ceremony. There were about 10,000 people from Czechoslovakia. They sort of took over the Basilica.

I remember saying to my wife as we walked out, and I was going to a coffee shop there in Via Concilroziore, "That this is the defining moment." I remember it was a Saturday and I wasn't planning to be at the embassy, and a Marine came up to me and said, "Oh, you've got a message. You've got to go to the embassy." So I found my driver and I went to the embassy. I had instructions from the State Department to find out what was going on. And I received some instructions. I met with Cardinal Casaroli, the number two, and he gave me their analysis. They were convinced from the reports from the church of the underground, that Czechoslovakia was "ripe" for change. Cardinal Korec, now a cardinal, was a leader of the church of the underground in Czechoslovakia. It was a strong movement. And so we encouraged the Pope to visit Czechoslovakia. Well, they had a rapid transition in Czechoslovakia after that ceremony in November-December of '89. Soon the Pope was allowed to appoint the bishops. And then he was invited to visit Czechoslovakia in 1990. This was dogmatic communist country. You had the awful memories of the '68 spring revolt. The Pope quickly visited the country in one day. And his evaluation was that, "Yes, there is a movement." I recall looking at my television set there in Rome and seeing the candlelight march in Prague. And I said, "Will this be another '68?" Because the same Soviets were there in bigger numbers than in '68. There could be a violent reaction by the Soviets. That was the assumption the Vatican passed on to us. Gorbachev would not order the troops in. To this day I don't know whether the Pope had inside information, whether it was just a feeling, or just what it was. That was a very important thing--the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia, and the rise of Havel. So we worked very closely in the period of '89 through '90 because it was then Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania where the Communist empire fell apart.

By that time it had moved into the '90s, President Bush had a more confident feeling about Gorbachev, and he more or less converged with the feelings of the Vatican about Gorbachev that we could deal with him. So when Gorbachev sent word that he couldn't rush things in regard to the Baltic states...remember the Vatican and we never recognized the Soviet takeover,

particularly in Lithuania. We got word and I met with the Vatican officials, to give Gorbachev a little breathing time. And that happened. Now the attempted coup against Gorbachev in the summer of '90...

Q: He was in Odessa down in the Crimea.

MELADY: The Pope was in Hungary and very interestingly he wrote a...I'd love to have the document, it must be a great archival piece. He was on the outskirts of Budapest, and an aide said to him, "He has been overthrown." He issued a very strong statement supporting Gorbachev in terms of human rights. There's no question that he had that confidence. President Bush followed it with a statement. So did the Prime Minister of England. I remember Mitterrand didn't say a thing. And that gave us another year of Gorbachev. So in that, I would say, the Vatican was a significant player in a) the original analysis that the time was right and coming in with information and participating on strategy. And it went on later to the Ukraine, and the breakup of Russia itself into the federation. Gorbachev fell, went out of office, the end of the Soviet Union in December '91, the first visit Yeltsin made when he assumed his responsibilities as chief of state, was to Rome in December '91.

Q: What was the impression of Yeltsin who continues to be a controversial figure in the analysis that you were getting from...

MELADY: They were less confident. There was a very special relationship developed with Gorbachev which continues to this day. And Gorbachev has maintained his contacts with the Pope, and has written articles on it, etc. But when I interviewed Vatican officials in December '91, after the Yeltsin visit, they obviously were pleased that Yeltsin came down and reported to the Pope. He pledged to continue and carry out the promises of Gorbachev in Gorbachev's December '89 visit, which were freedom of religion, human rights, the restoration of the rights of the Ukrainian Catholic church, and the full freedom of the Pope to appoint without prior consultation bishops to all the vacant Sees in Russia. Yeltsin pledged to continue that. But they didn't feel, and never have felt, as close to Yeltsin.

Q: Were you getting from the administration of the Catholic church, and the Holy See, any concerns about the grass roots priests who had risen up in some of the communist countries, particularly Czechoslovakia?

MELADY: First of all, we knew that happened, and you had the famous case of now Cardinal Korec, a Slovak. So we were interested in getting what information they had. But when it came to church matters, I followed the guidelines very strictly. I separated between the state, the government. So the question of these priests who were married, was a church matter. I stayed out of all church matters.

Q: The problem, particularly in Latin America, of liberation theology? We saw this as being somewhat of a revolution, almost Marxist type of theology coming out of parts of the Catholic Church in Latin America.

MELADY: Well, giving you a quick summary. The political implications would have been appropriate for the ambassador to get into. The theological thing of doctrine would not be appropriate. That was the position I held. So I would report on the political aspect, but during my four years I followed a very strict policy of avoiding religious and church activity. Liberation theology, which was of great concern--perhaps in the time of President Reagan, and Nicaragua, etc., and that whole business of my two predecessors than it was with me, although I did have instructions in regard how to react to it, I separated the part that would affect us politically from the strictly religious.

Q: But in a way it was very political.

MELADY: Oh, yes.

Q: Was it much of an issue when you were there?

MELADY: It was not a major issue.

Q: By that time it had lost whatever...

MELADY: Oh, yes. The whole Nicaragua thing had been...

Q: For one thing Latin America had turned much more democratic than before. How did you find American Catholics? One of the big problems we have if you're the ambassador to Israel, and I'm sure you probably had an awful lot of people who come for religious purposes, its the social side you've got to tend to it but it sort of gets in the way of the practical diplomatic...

MELADY: People don't quite understand that I was the ambassador to the government. We rendered various courtesies. For example, the weekly audience of the Pope. We arranged tickets for prominent Americans, but always just Americans, not just Catholics. I made that a very important point with the staff who'd try to get first row knowing when the Pope came down the steps he would visit personally. I had people of all denominations in that first row. He also had a very select number, about 30 people could attend his private mass in the morning, and I would try to get people into that. But, for example, I made a point to distinguish, I thought it was important because of our constitution, in what was accepted as the basis for opening the embassy in the Senate hearings of 1984. For example, the canonization of a saint, and other religious ceremonies, we regarded them as affairs of state, not religious. Being Catholic personally, I benefited from attending. But it would be like our ambassador in Norway, who was a friend of mine, evidently there would be the birthday, I've forgotten whether it was of the King, would be at the Lutheran church. And she attended an affair of state.

Q: I have to say I was Consul General in Naples, I'm a non-practicing Protestant, but I could recite the Catholic mass in Italian after a while. I went to everything.

MELADY: Like when I was first got out of school I served in Ethiopia and our ambassador would go to the various things in the Ethiopian orthodox church, when the Emperor was present. So we would distinguish. But not, of course, everybody could see that fine line. I can remember,

for example, a very definite prohibited area to stay out of, anything dealing with appointments of the Pope with Bishops. I can recall one day my secretary said, "There's a Mr. & Mrs. So-and-so who just came in from the airport and must see you immediately." So I said, "Of course, bring them in." And they sat down and I called for some coffee, and they were people you might say, as they say in French, of a certain age, a couple. And he said, "We have a very important document here for you." And he pulled it out. "The Pope is going to make an awful mistake if you don't get this to him." And I said, "What's that?" "We have inside information that the Pope is about to name Monsignor so-and-so as a bishop and we've got this..."

I remember I said to the lovely lady, "I have to stop the conversation here as I cannot get involved in this. I am the ambassador of the government of the United States to the government of the Holy See. I have nothing to do with the religious activities, appointment of priests, bishops, etc." And she started to cry. You know, a person who didn't have an understanding of the hearings. I said, "I think there are channels for you, but it's not the U.S. government channel. If you were still in the States you should have gone to the nuncio." I said, "Here there is the office of the Congregation of Bishops if you wish to go there." And I tried to explain the whole thing, but they never really quite understood. We did have one famous recorded attempt to influence an appointment. It was at the time of the Special Envoy. President Roosevelt instructed Myron Taylor to take up with Pius XII the fact that he felt that his good friend, the Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, Bishop Shiels, should be named the next...there was a vacancy here in Washington, the Archbishop of Washington. So the records are there following some business that Myron Taylor had with Pius XII. He said, "Oh, by the way, I have a message for you from President Roosevelt. President Roosevelt wants you to know the high regard that the American people have for Bishop Shiels, and that he would make an excellent Archbishop of Washington." The record says that the Pope smiled, and brought up something else. And Bishop Shiels remained the Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago. That was a definitely prohibited area. Some felt that maybe I was a little too strict on it. I am for better or worse, a known Catholic layman. I felt I had to be quite correct on the matter, and I also believed in it. I never officially called upon five or six high ranking people in the curia of the Vatican because they handled strictly religious matters. I dealt with the Secretary of State and the several subordinates. I dealt with the head of the educational office. I dealt with the foreign aid office, the office concerned with assistance to refugees, and other matters. But I did not deal officially as the ambassador of the United States of America with those offices charged with strictly religious activities.

Q: Did you find that you were rubbing up against or involved with the...what is it, the American House?

There's an essentially an American desk at the Holy See.

MELADY: Oh, yes. The North American Affairs. Monsignor Harvey, James Harvey, a native of Chicago. The Vatican, by the way, our people in our Foreign Service only have about a tour of duty of three years. The Vatican is not forever, but you definitely stay on for about seven years to eight years and have a different approach to it. Maybe even as long as ten. Jim is still there. I just talked to him a few weeks ago. And as the North American desk officer he has therefore been the officer for the United States and Canada. Oh, I wouldn't see a lot of him on U.S. policy and the usual exchange diplomatically of government policy. I had a lot of business. For example, a very important assignment given to me was Israel, to encourage the Holy See to establish diplomatic

relations with the State of Israel. The instructions were secret at the time. They were later declassified. But the most amazing thing is, we kept it secret. When Archbishop O'Connor came over to Rome I briefed him, got him sympathetic to the matter. He played a leading role in influencing the Pope, helped me carry out my instructions. I also dealt with Jewish leaders, particularly the American-Jewish Committee whereby Rabbi Rudin, and Rabbi Leon Klenicki of ADL. I went off on a surreptitious trip, approved by the State Department, to State of Israel, to meet the heads of the small Catholic minority groups, to find out the problems. I played something of a role and I was very pleased when it happened. It happened not while I was there but we were on "third base" when I departed Rome in March, 1993. The Commission on Vatican-Israeli Relations in 1992 was established. The final establishment of Vatican-Israeli relations happened in December of '93.

Q: What was the problem between relations?

MELADY: Well, that's a long thing. The sovereignty of that area; remember it had passed from various hands. A long period was the Ottoman empire. And the Vatican had various concessions with the Ottoman empire, this little piece of land was tax free, etc. The Vatican wanted to make sure that all those rights were accepted by the government of the State of Israel. They were also concerned about full freedoms in Israel for everyone including the Christian Arabs, and their right to participate in the government, and have equal rights. They were concerned about the state of war that existed at that time. In fact I don't think it would have happened if President Bush, and Jim Baker, hadn't engineered the Madrid conference. Everything began to move rapidly after that. First of all I recall, I was called to the Vatican and given a message to President Bush congratulating him on the Madrid conference from the Pope.

Q: You might explain what the Madrid conference was.

MELADY: On the Middle East.

Q: You were getting the Palestinians and Israelis together for the first time to discuss things.

MELADY: It was a major accomplishment. The Holy See was very happy about it. Soon after that the Holy See announced in Israel the appointment of a commission to study the matter of diplomacy. We thought the commission was moving rather slowly. It was very legalistic, this point, that point. Our position was, which we expressed to the Vatican officials, and which Mr. Baker did, and actually the President on his visit, that, "Why don't you proceed ahead quickly and resolve these things later?" The Vatican wanted to resolve the issues as quickly as possible, but the movement went very quickly. And in December of '93, five or six months after I completed my mission, the New York Times phoned me. It was about November of '93 that the State Department responded affirmatively to my request that my instructions be declassified, or at least that part of the instruction that I received from Secretary Baker, so I could have it in my book. I recall I spent that period in Lithuania between mid-December and mid-January advising the universities there in restructuring, and the New York Times tracked me down to my hotel. And I was very happy because the data had been declassified. I could talk about the whole role that I

played, and the government played. It was Holy See decision. But you might say it probably was an unusual fact that an ambassador of a third country received instructions from his government to urge the government to which he was accredited to diplomatically recognize another government. It was unusual.

Q: What was our rationale?

MELADY: That it would help the peace process in the Middle East. There would be a step forward, that it would increase the influence of the Holy See. I personally, as an individual, was very happy to carry out the instructions, which I would have carried out anyway because it was my duty, but personally because I felt it helped to correct a misperception that somehow the reason that the Holy See was anti-Semitism--that there was an anti-Semitism. I feel there wasn't. But this clearly was a perception in various circles, including Jewish circles, that I had been long active with the Jewish groups in my work as a trustee of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. So some of my friends, would frankly just tell me that they felt there was a lingering.

Q: There were still some things...I'm using the wrong term, but within the documentation, or whatever, of the Catholic church about the Jews being responsible for the death of Christ. Wasn't there something...

MELADY: Yes. One great result of Vatican Council Two, and something I participated in and played a very minor role in at their meetings, was to eliminate those references. You might say that the Jews killed Christ, that was exactly the...

Q: We're of an age where Irish boys chasing after Jewish boys and yell "Christ killers." That still permeated the church up through our youth.

MELADY: I can say now that in my personal talks, I'm thinking I made an official call on the Secretary of State of the Holy See, and transmit a message on this matter, and then at the end of the conversation I'd say, "Personally"...and I had gotten to know the people there quite well..."I really think it should happen." I said, "I know its not true, that it was not deliberate anti-Semitism, but that was the public perception." It's now past history but it was a step forward in better dialogue, etc.

Q: Back to something else and then we'll go to the Gulf war. On the social side, you say you'd arrange for prominent Americans. Whose a prominent American? This must have been a can of worms for you.

MELADY: Well, that was a judgment call. I say the judgment call, obviously if it were a U.S. senator, or former mayor, or people who had titles regardless of religious background, there was not a problem. And there's a lot of competition for that first row. And some people would sort of understand, and would request "tickets," and they wouldn't even ask for the front row because they sort of knew that. These are just judgment calls you have to make. And I'd say it's remarkable that in my four years there, probably just one exception from the standpoint of "getting good seats," that I avoided negative reactions. The one thing I felt important, and told

my staff, that if Reverend Smith walks in, who happens to be of the Baptist church in Texas, he's just as important as a Monsignor from New York. We stood straight and leaned backwards on treating all Americans the same regardless of religious affiliation. I had a theme that I represented all Americans regardless of religion. And in the review of my book, I thought it interesting that Rabbi Jim Rudin, of the American Jews Committee, in his review it was his observation that I managed to carry out that goal.

Q: Did you get a lot of congressional mail and that sort of thing?

MELADY: Not so much, but congressional visitors. But not so much in regard to mail. It's a very popular place, former members of the senate, present members of the senate, and former and present members of the cabinet. We had former presidents, both President Ford--didn't have Nixon, he was planning to come in '90 and '91 after Moscow but got sick in Moscow and phoned me and didn't come down. But I had President Ford, who made a private visit to the Pope, and President Reagan. President Reagan after his last visit to Moscow had a long visit with the Pope, and the Pope also received Mrs. Reagan in for the whole business meeting which was unusual.

Q: The Gulf war. We're talking about events of '90 where Iraq seized Kuwait in a surprise invasion.

George Bush led the opposition to this and eventually we led an Allied invasion which took back Kuwait.

MELADY: The Gulf war, there were three phases to it. The invasion, August 1990. You might say there was a total convergence between the Holy See and the United States. It was a unilateral invasion, it was the wrong thing, it was condemned. About two or three months after that various information came out about the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. It was bad. The Holy See condemned it, we condemned it. The convergence came to an end in or about October of '90 when we began talking about military action. And particularly when we introduced a resolution in the Security Council of the United Nations. And then I was called in by the Pope, and while acknowledging that it was wrong, and Iraq should leave, he urged the U.S. to avoid the use of war. I remember his famous words: "War is a road of no return." So therefore, it was the first area of disagreement in our policies while I was the Ambassador. I remember I was back on consultations. I informed the Department of State on the Pope's opposition to the use of war. His whole life when he fought the Nazis, then the communists, his whole campaign in Eastern Europe, strategy, etc., but war should be avoided. In November I was back and I informed the President personally in the Oval Office that we weren't going to get Papal approval of the use of war to solve the Kuwait problem. Some in the Department thought we should be critical of the Pope. Some thought that I should be under instructions to request the Pope not to voice the opposition publicly. I was back in Washington and I knew this was happening. So I took advantage of a personal connection, and got to see the President. I remember when I heard on one day, thanks to his staff, I got in the next morning in the Oval Office bright and early, 7:15 or 7:20 after his briefing with the security people. I said, "I know we would like to have the Pope agree that it is a 'just war'. And there are six criteria for a just war. The sixth one, I said, he doesn't accept proportionality. You have to do what's in proportion. He thinks we should prolong the embargo, strategy, etc. The President more or less told me there was no change in plan, that

we were going to proceed with whatever we were going to do. And I said, "There's no point in my being given instructions to ask him not to speak." First of all he had already spoken, while in an indirect kind of way. Because I said, "We have to respect him, because of his unique role, if he gives in to our pressure he loses his position of influence. If it became known that he gave into American pressure, and didn't speak, he loses the independent moral voice which is intrinsic to his sovereignty and respect." I have great admiration for President Bush. He understood that. I was never given those instructions to, "Ask him to keep his mouth shut."

We can sit here and have a big long debate what would have happened if the thing had gone on for six months or a year. It only lasted a few weeks, and the military operation came to an end, and then we had the Madrid conference. But there were several subsequent developments. The Pope always said we were wrong, but never held it against the U.S. I mean he smiled a lot and went on to other things. It never became personal. In the months preceding the Gulf War and during the war I never had a difficult personal experience with Vatican personnel.

Q: What was your impression of the Pope as a leader in foreign affairs? We're talking about John Paul II, Polish origin, the first one who is not Italian.

MELADY: Let me give you my impression. As a man, this will very much be in my new book, he is the product of his culture. So what was his culture? It was Catholic and Polish. I'm not quite sure what was the predominant element, but let us say he was strongly Catholic in a middle class family by our standards now. I've been to the little town where he was born. I've talked to the people. At an early age he went into the seminary which was traditional then, less traditional now. From the people who knew him then, sort of unique for a seminarian, in addition to being good in Greek and Latin, all those kinds of things, his interest in the theater, he was also writing poetry. He was ordained, and he lived through the whole Nazi occupation of Poland. There's a lot of written record because he was really chaplain to the students at the university in Krakow in southern Poland, which is the historic cultural capital of Poland. His advice to the Polish students was to stay together, help one and another, remain faithful to your beliefs, but don't do anything to risk war. Then came the communist takeover, and he systematically rose quickly to Monsignor, Auxiliary Bishop, and Archbishop of Krakow, a position of strength. He was the architect of a strategy against the communist leadership. He was always pushing for the rights of the church. He took some time off to go down to Rome and do his doctorate, went back, was active in Vatican Council Two.

Q: Under Pope John XXIII.

MELADY: Yes, and Paul VI, who made him a Cardinal. It was the time also he came to the attention of people from the standpoint of his philosophy. He was regarded as a strong person, articulate. That is combined with a very avuncular kind of personal personality. He was the friendly uncle. He set high standards, but he was always understanding. He was exceptionally good in languages. I'd say at this moment in the church, I think Time magazine made the right decision, it was my decision, Man of the Year. Strong and articulate for what he represents. He takes on what could be unpopular causes like the Cairo conference. He has played a major role in world affairs.

Q: You're talking about the Cairo conference which was on population.

MELADY: That's right. After my tour of duty.

Q: He was opposed to...

MELADY: What was the key element of the U.S. proposal that abortion be recognized as a legitimate form of family planning throughout the world. He essentially side-tracked it. I'm not going into the merits of that, but he played a leading role. I'd say a significant role. But using his tenure so far in the papacy, as a person to deal with, you know you were dealing with a man of history, the moment you sat down with him. He knows strategy. He speaks with a commitment. It is awesome. I got that evaluation from most of my colleagues--my European colleagues and ambassadors. He has a phenomenal memory. He remembers me personally. I hear from him, and of course, I was the ambassador of the United States, you might say it was a major country in that four year period.

In summary, I'd say he's a significant world leader, and has been an excellent leader for the Catholic Church.

Q: Do you have time for one more question"

MELADY: Yes.

Q: This is one that has bothered me. And that is, I'm a Balkan hand, I served five years in Yugoslavia, and I know that I served there during the '60s, and I know that in the Serbian world the Catholic church...and we're not talking about the communist, we're talking about the normal Serb, has a very deep concern and distrust of the Catholic church. Not just because of being Serbian, but because of the role that the Catholic hierarchy played during World War II, of forced conversions, slaughter, and this sort of thing, and that the Catholic church did not play an ameliorating role in this, but actually was in the forefront, the local priests. When Yugoslavia was coming apart, the first two states you might say to try to recognize Croatia, the Catholic one, with Germany and the Pope. You couldn't have asked for a worse combination. As a Serbian hand myself, I knew what this did. This aroused every animosity that you can think of. And here is the Pope who is a Slav. Why couldn't he have kept quiet on this one?

MELADY: What the Holy See advocated has turned out to be quite right. We wanted to keep Yugoslavia together. Those were my instructions. Keep it together. The house that held together was held by the communist hard fist of Tito. You had the whole phenomenon that little Liechtenstein could be independent. Luxembourg could be independent, the Baltic states, but why not the Slovenians? Why not the Croatians? After 1989 it became apparent that the Croatians really wished to have their own nation-state. I mean, I've been there, their own culture, their own country. And we said yes to 40 countries in Africa, to Benin, ex-Equatorial Guinea of Spain. We said yes to them all. We didn't say they had to remain part of the colonial power. Every public opinion pool in Croatia, and Slovenia said they wanted independence. So therefore, by the time I arrived in Rome, the Vatican was saying that the solution was to grant what these people want. My instructions were quite clear, "keep Yugoslavia together." And so I followed

my instructions in '89 and '90. Right now the Serb record has not been very pretty, they're charged by the United Nations with atrocities.

Q: To understand, 50 years before the Croatian record was less than pretty too.

MELADY: And I can understand the reason for those tensions, and this is hindsight, but here is tragedy going on, would it have been a little different? If Europe had accepted either in late '89, or early '90--I've forgotten the exact month, the position of the Holy See was, recognize what the people want. Croatia, independent. Slovenia, independence. I don't think they had made a pronouncement on Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Q: Bosnia-Herzegovina was sort of off to one side at that point.

MELADY: It had to be worked out. Serbian, Montenegro, etc. We had a lot of supporters of Yugoslavia, and you can see why, because it was a great success story in the 1950's and we pulled Tito out of the communist empire, we put a lot of money into Yugoslavia. I thought it was interesting that most of the officers of the Yugoslav army were Serbians. The whole "greater Serbian" philosophy. So it's hindsight.

I'm not saying it would have been any better. But it would not have been worse than the current tragedy.

Q: Which the Serbs resolved at this point.

MELADY: With the Serbs still fighting it in Bosnia-Herzegovina, even going over to Croatia. Would it have been a less of a traumatic event if we had gone the route of '89 by saying, we'll accept these boundaries of Slovenia, Croatia, Herzegovina had to be worked out, Montenegro agreed to stick with Serbia, that was now Yugoslavia. I think probably there's fault on both sides. Certainly the way we went. My instructions were changed in about '91, and we're accepting that reality; Slovenia and Croatia would be independent.

Q: My only concern on this thing was, the Pope and the Catholic church because of its not so benign role in the 1940-'45 period in Yugoslavia, that it would have been best for them to have let other countries take the lead, but to have the Holy See and Germany, the two parties that were seen by the Serbs as being unfriendly powers certainly going back to early things. I mean France, England, United States, anybody but not those two. Anyway, I was just surprised.

WILLIAM HARRISON MARSH
Food and Agricultural Organization
Rome (1992-1994)

William Harrison Marsh was born in Pennsylvania and raised in Pennsylvania and Michigan. He attended Cornell University and served in the US Air Force while attending the School of Advanced International Studies and Princeton University in Japan. He entered the Foreign Service in 1960, wherein he served

in Vietnam, France, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Switzerland, and Italy. He was interviewed by Lambert (Nick) Heyniger and Vladimir Lehovich on December 3, 1997.

Q: Let's go back, I pushed you much too fast. You had an idea, an interest while you were still in Geneva in going over to Rome?

MARSH: Yes, I did. Partly because it was Rome and partly because of the subject matter and partly because the Food and Agricultural Organization had the worst reputation of any specialized agency in the United Nations. Because I had helped the reform movement in the Geneva Group I mentioned there in Geneva, in which we tried to achieve budgetary sanity and transparency and accountability in all of the UN agencies there and elsewhere I returned and was assisting the Assistant Secretary. It was John Bolton, who was a remarkable fellow. Many considered him very acerbic. I considered him as very purposeful and very effective. He was always very decent to me so I had no complaints at all.

I was thrown immediately into work at Rome on a TDY basis to work a divorce between the World Food Program and the Food and Agricultural Organization. So I went to Rome I think seven times in two years. I went to London twice, because I went to the International Maritime Organization to try to work the way out of some thickets there that had developed. Then in addition I was given the job of obtaining success for the candidacy of Catherine Bertini to head the World Food Program, to become its Executive Director.

The World Food Program has been something of a sleeper in the UN system. It hasn't had very high visibility, but there have been years in which we've given it more than a billion dollars altogether for its emergency feeding, for its developmental programs, for its refugee assistance programs and all that sort of thing. So it is very important to the United States both in terms of humanitarian affairs and its high political objectives.

I was told that I was to work single-handedly to get endorsements from UN member countries, particularly those associated with the World Food Program, so that Catherine Bertini would be named to head it. She had had no international experience but had been Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Nutrition, and in particular for food stamps in the United States, where she had run, incidentally, something like a 26 billion-dollar program. So it was a great deal of work. I sent out 175 telegrams, made innumerable phone calls and finally ended up getting 75, 76 endorsements which prevailed therefore on a very reluctant Director General of the FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization], and a sometimes ambivalent Secretary General of the UN, to name her. There is not an election. The head of the World Food Organization is named by the UN and the FAO acting together.

Q: So there is a lot of sort of behind the scenes diplomacy?

MARSH: Oh, yes. I went to conferences at Copenhagen, Nairobi, and a number of other places. It was very exciting. I did a lot of traveling that time and then in 1992 went to Rome, this time as Permanent Rep.

Q: Tell us a little bit about why you wanted to go to Rome. Had you now sort of developed a really keen interest in multilateral affairs? Or was there something particular that you wanted to accomplish in Rome?

MARSH: Well, there was the effort to revitalize and reform the FAO. I had that in Rome and I had already worked at that and achieved a certain reputation for what I was able to do with it. And, yes, I did like multilateral diplomacy though it was a lot of work, a lot of work. Then I wanted to be a chief of mission and whereas in the '83-'84 period good friends had sort of wafted the notion of an African embassy past me, I didn't want it. I didn't want it for family reasons, I didn't want it for substantive reasons and I didn't want it for tombstone reasons. Tombstone reasons...I know too many people who have had an African embassy and zip afterwards. Therefore I didn't want to be out and defacto dead at that time. I wanted to work right up until age 65, when I would retire.

Q: Sometime after I retired did the Department increase the retirement age from 60 to 65?

MARSH: Well, the Act of 1980 increased it from 60 to 65.

Q: Okay. So, you were chief of mission?

MARSH: That's correct.

Q: Did you get the title or rank of ambassador?

MARSH: No, they had taken that away when my predecessor was named at the post.

Q: That's a disappointment.

MARSH: They apparently saved something like \$900,000 a year by doing away with an ambassador's residence, a DCM-ship and the ORE that goes along with those. They saved that money. But, again, everything has been driven in recent years by money, money, and money...the lack of it and that sort of thing.

But at any rate I had two years in Rome, not three. John Bolton was succeeded by a new Assistant Secretary whom I found entirely unsympathetic and who found me entirely unsympathetic, and one who had no interest whatsoever in reforming the FAO, then headed by perhaps the biggest scoundrel in the history of United Nations organizations.

Q: Who was that?

MARSH: That was Edouard Saouma, the director general of the FAO. He was a man who was corrupt in every sense of the word but whom the assistant secretary decided needed to be befriended. So I served my time, having been elected to the Finance Committee of the FAO, having served as co-chairman of the Geneva Group again, having been elected as head of the OECD Group there, and having been considered a very effective and well-liked American permanent representative. I am happy to say that when I visited Rome again, after having left in

September of 1994, when I visited Rome in October of 1997, they did everything but spread their coats in the streets for me, and greet me with hosannas and applause! I knew that I had been very successful. I had received 27 letters in 1994 from foreign colleagues expressing regrets at my departure and so forth, which I have carefully saved.

Changes of administration can be very difficult things. Occasionally you will get people who are completely unsuited to the job. One of them was my ambassador to Morocco and I curtailed. The second and final one was the Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs and I curtailed.

I came back to the Historical Division and spent a very pleasant year and three quarters, largely working at the CIA and at the Eisenhower and Truman Libraries. Largely compiling documents for the Foreign Relations of the United States series that dealt with extraordinary operations and clandestine operations of the United States. That is to say the overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954 and the restoration of the Shah in 1953.

Q: Wow. Not, interestingly enough, Vietnam?

MARSH: No. It's very interesting. I reviewed the volumes for 1964 and 1965, four volumes in all, two each for each year, on Vietnam. I made a number of suggestions and they just sank like a stone. Everybody's mind is made up on Vietnam. Nobody is of an open mind concerning it. Even when you suggest such a simple thing as putting maps in the first volumes and putting some bit of military information there to discuss the buildup and the fortunes of major U.S. military operations within Vietnam. Historians are not prepared to listen to that. Their minds are made up.

Q: Okay, now with your agreement I would like to ask you two things. Number one, I would like to take you back to Rome when you were the perm rep [permanent representative] there and ask you if you could give us perhaps just two or three of the highlights of your two year tour there. Sort of important things that you thought were going on and your were working on there.

MARSH: For one thing is the extension of the World Food Program's activities to cover humanitarian crises such as Somalia, Rwanda, Central Africa and that sort of thing. I think matters of extreme human urgency. Secondly as I mentioned, the very uphill Himalayan struggle to reform the FAO itself which is an organization very largely out of tune and out of pace with the crisis of agriculture throughout the world.

Q: Is it one of these UN organizations that some people say are over-staffed and have too many people who have been there too long?

MARSH: Over-staffed, too many people there too long, and located in a very bad work climate. That of Rome is very, very bad. The bureaucracy of Rome is beyond belief. The stupor and the arrogance of the Italian bureaucracy astonish me. I had no idea of such a thing. All I can say is that it is quite a change to go from Geneva to Rome. Everyone should do it the other way around so as to end up with the efficiency of Geneva!

Q: This is a UN organization which after all does not deal so much with the problems of the developed world, that is to say North America or Western Europe, but it deals with the problems of the developing world. Would it be better therefore, for example, to have the FAO in a country like the Philippines or some place like Nairobi or even a country that really has food problems, like India?

MARSH: You mean to situate the FAO there where the need is great?

Q: Yes.

MARSH: Well, you know, the FAO was located in Washington until 1957 and then as a sop to the Italians, to give them prestige in their new post-war identity, it was moved to Rome. Rome is not an important intellectual center, particularly in the field of agriculture.

Q: Someplace that you think about when you think about food.

MARSH: That's right and so it is very difficult for people to keep up their expertise in a place like that. Plus the fact that most people coming to the FAO don't even speak Italian. What I'm trying to say is that if the FAO were still here in Washington it would be a piece of cake for people at the FAO to keep up with the state of the art. The great state universities, and Cornell University, are so close to deal with exigencies of all kinds.

Q: You have large non-profit organizations for example, like the FORD Foundation, which are very active in certain parts of the world in trying to improve agriculture and better strains of wheat and things like that in the Philippines. I think it would be easier to follow that kind of stuff. Are you familiar with, for example, a French agronomist named Rene Dumont?

MARSH: Yes.

Q: Where would Rene Dumont think that the FAO should be?

MARSH: You may have one guess, and that would be fine.

Q: Paris?

MARSH: That would be fine because at least you would have access to everything in the French language, whereas having access to that in the universities in Italy in Italian...thank you very much! Not much help!

The practices of the FAO... for example the Legal Advisor at the FAO went from Rome to Geneva of the same plane I did. I was going from Rome up to Geneva for a high level meeting on the Geneva Group. I stayed in a third class hotel, having flown coach; he stayed at the Inter-Continental having flown first class. Now first class for a one hour flight in Europe just doesn't make any sense at all.

Q: Nonsense.

MARSH: It's ridiculous. So the principal contributor of approximately one fourth of the budget of the FAO is in steorage shall we say, and staying at the flophouse shall we say, and an FAO functionary is in glory!

Q: So when Madeline Albright, our Secretary of State, is trying very hard to persuade the American Congress to pay up our arrears to the UN, you think it would be helpful if the UN for its part showed more effort to economize?

MARSH: No...not necessarily. Well, I think it should economize for other reasons, let's put it that way. But point of fact is that I take a very orthodox position with respect to payment of dues. These are Treaty obligations of the United States... pay up and shut-up about the past! But talk a lot and act a lot for the future. Pay it. Besides which, I don't want members of the Congress complaining about the 'perquisites' of foreign officials because I may laugh myself to death!

Q: We still all fly in and out of National rather than Dulles!

MARSH: That's right. That's right.

Q: Okay, Bill, one final question. You have had an unusually, in my opinion, an unusually long and, if I may also say so, a distinguished career in the Foreign Service. I think it is 36 years. Most of the rest of us have served considerably shorter time, at least these days. I wonder if you could take five minutes and give us some of your thoughts of what the Foreign Service should be doing and what the United States Government should be doing now, that we are not. In other words an overview of the lessons learned in your career.

MARSH: When I first came into the Service there was a gentlemanly code in effect, *noblesse oblige*, if you will, and one wasn't supposed to complain about salary or about 'perquisites' or something of that sort. So we did without or we paid ourselves for things in the public interest. Times have changed and today's young people demand gratification and reimbursement. They also want to budget their time themselves, rather than having some old DCM or Department official tell them to do this or that. I found for example that the notion of a forty-hour week was very well installed in my people in Geneva. If I asked them to take, perhaps, two hours on a Sunday to go and meet a Delegation, see them to their hotels and then work with them throughout the rest of the week, some people were very, very begrudging, openly begrudging, of even two hours on Sunday. I think we need to take these realities into account. Times have changed.

I think we have to understand that there are great costs to the three-year career.

Q: The three-year career?

MARSH: That's right, which is now becoming people who want to come in for a single tour. I think there are too many people in the Department who say this is great because then we can use lower paid junior officers all the time and not have to have these high-paid old fogeys like Marsh, who has been around for 36 years. There is a cost. There is a terrific cost in that sort of

thing.

I think that we also in the Department are suffering from a terrible complacency, ever since 1991, and that complacency is the wolf is dead, hurray, what with the evaporation, the collapse of the Soviet Union. There are plenty of crises that have taken place and will be taking place, actually we have been very lucky, much too lucky. How well wired in are we with the decision-makers?

Q: The decision-makers overseas?

MARSH: Overseas, yes. For example, it has taken two efforts by the IMF apparently to bring President Suharto of Indonesia around to accepting the austerity that his situation has imposed on the country.

Q: This goes back to something that you were talking about earlier, that political reporting from overseas posts is pretty good. But oftentimes economic reporting, particularly macro economics in terms of let's say South Korea's overall economy or Thailand's overall economy or Indonesia's overall economy and the concerns about possible collapse...we don't do a good enough job on that?

MARSH: I think we worry ourselves to death with respect to that. What we need to think about is much more pragmatic, namely to what use can a given set of reporting be? Tailor our reporting so that content and subject matter and timing and so forth correspond to policy-makers' needs, that kind of thing. We have got perhaps too much of an academic focus. Saying what a given political or religious minority is thinking about at a particular time in a particular country is going to be of interest, even though we are talking about Western Europe, for example, rather than some fomenting Eastern society.

Also we need a sense of proportion about things. I remember one time when there was a cable from New Delhi on Indian reaction to a given policy move. This is some time ago, a decade or so ago. It was 24 pages long! Now did they really expect Washington to read 24 pages on that sort of thing? Besides which times have changed and we have got to change with them.

For example, with respect to a hijacking in Geneva soon after I arrived there, CNN had found a way to get its people on the airfield. My Security officer was unable to get on it. Washington was having simultaneous filming and stories from the airport, real time work. The mission couldn't possibly compete with that.

The wire services, television services all of that kind of thing plus the fact that you've got now electronic mail moving at incredible rates. That means that you are going to get narrative reporting, not very analytical but that is going to be taken care of. What we are going to have to deal with then is to get the interpretation of the news analysis in as quickly as possible. Our processes where you go through supervisory layer after layer even at a small embassy overseas just make that ridiculous.

I admit to being something of a Luddite here, but we have become idol worshipers, we worship

the computer now. All I want to say is that I have my reservations about it. You know, with his quill pen Thomas Jefferson didn't do a bad job, so stop knocking those of us who still rely on handwriting. I incidentally found out my nickname from Rome. It was 'Mr. Fountain Pen' because my staff thought it was so archaic and unusual that I had an ink fountain pen, as a matter of fact.

But in any event, is it cost effective? Is it truly cost effective to spend all this money on computers, to be training people in computers, to be having officers do all their own secretarial work? Maybe you should set up steno pools and maybe you should set up secretarial pools...note the difference between those two...and all that kind of thing rather than having substantive officers do it.

Another thing, too, is that once you put a computer in front of an individual, remember, he has got direct access to the world...or she does. No DCM is going to be able to guarantee that a disgruntlement is not going to reach a Senate office, or that an ultimatum is not going to go to a local critic of the United States. This is a different world because you are putting a huge communications tool in the hands of everybody. And, also, let us fact it...they haven't found out a way yet to make these free from penetration by adversaries.

Some nerd in Columbus, Ohio is even now reading what you are writing on your machine.

Q: Yes. In terms of running an embassy and presenting a sort of united policy front. With the proliferation of American government agencies abroad now the ambassador and the DCM are having a much more difficult time sort of keeping track of what is sent back to Washington from their post with or without their permission.

MARSH: That is true, but, Nick, there is something else as well. It is that for a lot of people the difficulty of the job is in leaving the mission or the embassy and going out and seeing the local contact and having a discussion in Heaven knows what language, then making notes on it and then coming back and writing it all up and reporting to one's superiors about it. How much simpler it is just to stay in front of that machine.

MICHAEL M. MAHONEY
Consul General
Rome (1993-1995)

Michael M. Mahoney was born in Massachusetts in June 1944. He went to graduate school at John Hopkins University and served in the Peace Corps in Liberia. As a member of the Foreign Service, he served in countries including Trinidad, Tobago, Greece, the Dominican Republic, Canada, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on October 17 and November 3, 1995.

Q: Mike, you were in Rome from when to when?

MAHONEY: I was in Rome from November of 1993 until June of 1995.

Q: Can you describe the embassy, as it was constituted at that time, and a bit about the atmosphere there?

MAHONEY: It's a very, very big embassy. There are a large number of agencies that have located regional offices in Rome. For example, I was surprised that there were so many branches of the Justice Department present there. There was a regular FBI office in Rome. Then there was another special Justice Department office to deal with organized crime. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, which is a division of the Justice Department, has a regional office there. The Federal Aviation Administration has three different units operating in Rome, each of them basically operating independently. There is significant military presence, because of NATO. The Agriculture Department is there. The Commerce Department is there. I think, in total, there are about 25 or 30 different entities of the United States government there. And these entities, by far, dwarf the actual State Department presence. So it's a very big, in effect, world-size embassy.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

MAHONEY: The ambassador was Reginald Bartholomew, who actually is a career government employee. I think he was the first career employee to go there since probably the end of World War II. And the view is that he was sent there because the Italian political system, I would say, not the social or economic system, but the political structure was going through a major crisis. Huge bribery and corruption scandals had erupted in the early '90s, and a very significant part of the group of people that had governed Italy on and off since the end of the war was thrown into disgrace. And I think the American government concluded that it really needed a professional diplomat there to be present. It wasn't so much a question of risk for Italian-American relations, but still, one just had to be very careful how one stepped through this very delicate situation.

Q: He had a considerable reputation. He had been in other posts, and he had been in Lebanon, too, hadn't he, during the difficult period?

MAHONEY: He was ambassador in Lebanon when the embassy was blown up, and was injured in that bombing, as a matter of fact.

Q: How did he operate, from your perspective?

MAHONEY: He had also been ambassador to Spain. He had an extensive political-military background. He came up, originally, through the Pentagon, as a policy analyst there, and then came into the State Department at a very high level in policy planning and was assistant secretary for politico-military affairs. And before he went to Italy, he was under secretary for international security affairs.

I found him to be an extremely energetic guy, who was knowledgeable on every possible foreign-policy subject, and particularly on European security affairs. He spoke quite good Italian, and he, by dint of extreme energy and a willingness to entertain and go out all the time, ensconced himself, I think, at the highest levels of Italian social and political activity, and spent a

huge amount of time cultivating, I thought, very useful contacts.

So I think his strategy was really externally oriented. He paid attention to the management of the embassy when various issues came up that he felt had to be attended to, but I just don't think that his interest was in sort of sitting down and saying, okay, we have budget problems, and we have to look at the 20 different places our money goes and how we can economize, restructure, and that sort of thing. Maybe that wasn't the thing that he should be doing anyway.

But I thought he was an extremely effective ambassador in external work with Italy. He was very vigorous, for example, in pursuing American business interests, and worked at the highest levels of the Italian government when there were American corporations trying to get things done, and I think quite successfully. I thought he was a very, very capable person.

Q: I always think, when you're in the Foreign Service at a post, if you've got a highly effective chief of mission, it does things for how you work, too, doesn't it?

MAHONEY: On the consular side, in terms of business stuff, we had very little contact or need to use the ambassador's office.

And this goes into some of the sort of cosmic changes, I suppose, that have taken place in the consular business.

I did get to go to his morning staff meeting, which was, I have to say, one of the most educational experiences that one could have in life, because he tended to give long analyses of the political scene in Italy, interspersed with his own understanding of the political scene in the United States and elsewhere in Europe. He was an extremely interesting guy to listen to.

But on the specific consular side, a number of the things that might have engaged ambassadors in other years were not present.

For example, the visa waiver had entered into effect in Italy, as well as in most of Western Europe. And this meant that, with very limited exceptions, such as students and exchange visitors and so forth, Italians do not need visas to go to the United States. So the whole question of other parts of the embassy getting involved in visa activities essentially was not present in Italy.

The major part of the work that we did, and the most important part, was American Services work. But we had extremely good contacts that had been cultivated for years with the Italian authorities that we needed to deal with.

So, I would say, the front office of the embassy, with very, very limited exceptions, did not get involved in the consular business, nor we with their activities.

Q: Who was the deputy chief of mission?

MAHONEY: The deputy chief of mission was a Jim Creagan, who was also a career diplomat. I think this was his third or fourth tour in Italy.

Q: He was my political officer in Naples, and I found him a highly effective political officer. A bit nervous, but certainly he was well versed. It sounds like a very strong team.

MAHONEY: Ambassador Bartholomew was an extraordinarily quick study. Creagan provided, I suppose one would say, the kind of in-depth detail that was very useful in filling out the ambassador's picture. Creagan knew where every Italian politician had been for the last 20 years and what their perambulations through the Italian system had been and so forth. And he was always able to add very useful information to fill out the picture.

But the ambassador certainly was quite prepared, a great deal of the time, to go his own way, and do so very successfully.

Q: When you say your main job was American Services, what were some of the major things that you were dealing with?

MAHONEY: Hundreds of thousands of American tourists come to Italy every year, and they get themselves into an extraordinarily wide range of problems, apart from people actually being arrested, mostly for drug-related business.

For example, in Rome alone, in a given year, we have close to 1,000 lost or stolen passports. Rome probably has some of the most sophisticated pickpockets in the world (a great many of them non-Italian, incidentally; a lot of them are Latin Americans). So there were always Americans who had fallen into some sort of distress.

A lot of people come to Italy for religious reasons, in some cases for what one might think of as religiously psychotic reasons. Rome is, of course, the headquarters of one of the great world religions. So it attracts, I think, a fair number of people who are, in some ways, prone to losing their grip almost, in the case of religious hysteria.

Q: In diplomatic terms, we call them religious nuts.

MAHONEY: Yes, something like that. I haven't talked much specific-case stuff in this thing, but I'll give a very quick example.

We had a fellow who came over who had, I think, graduated summa cum laude from a great American university. He wanted to do, he said, some sort of research on something in the Vatican library. But he really hadn't gone through the scholarly chain to get himself into that library and to get access to its resources. We got a call one day that he had been arrested literally getting into a brawl with the Swiss Guards at the Vatican, trying to force his way into the library. And this was a fellow of apparently great, certainly in an undergraduate way, intellectual distinction. But he had flipped out in Italy at the Vatican.

A lot of people came to Rome with terminal illnesses, hoping to find some sort of miracle cure.

So we spent a lot of time on this kind of stuff.

Q: If an American was arrested on a drug charge, what was the procedure?

MAHONEY: The Italians were pretty good about contacting us. Even if you were carrying a fairly significant amount of narcotics, the sentences usually were not more than about five or six years. The conditions in the Italian prisons, I thought, were fairly benign. You couldn't get out, but people didn't seem to be unhappy to be in jail in Italy in the way that I've known them to be in places like Mexico. I found the Italians generally very cooperative. We would go and visit the prisoners. They usually all, as far as I could tell, appeared to be quite guilty, caught with the goods. I thought we had a very good working relationship.

Q: Even though a person had a five-year sentence, did the Italians, from time to time, as is done in some countries, just sort of basically kick them out after two or three years?

MAHONEY: Sometimes they would do that. If the people had any kind of good story.

We had a woman who left the United States, went, I guess, to Colombia, and was flying through Rome somewhere, and they caught her with two or three kilograms of cocaine. She had left an 11- or 12-year-old daughter (this is a one-parent family) back in the United States, in New York. And basically the daughter fell into the hands, then, of the New York Social Services Agency. We presented this situation to the Italian court, and although the woman was sentenced to seven years in jail, after about five months they let her go. She went back to the United States.

Q: Did Rome issue immigrant visas?

MAHONEY: No, the immigrant visas in Italy are issued only in Naples. By the time I arrived, the number of visas had declined to something on the order of about 1,800 a year, and of those only about 1,200 were actually issued to Italians. So that you could see that there had been a kind of astonishing change in these, considering that at the end of the nineteenth century, millions of Italians immigrated to the United States. Even after World War II, I think it's safe to say, hundreds of thousands immigrated. Now, it's almost a nonexistent industry.

Q: Were there any problems with Italian Americans coming back to the homeland and wanting to settle down, and they find that they either get in trouble or have problems?

MAHONEY: I would say really only with sort of horrible bureaucratic disputes. Italy is a country that is incredibly bureaucratized.

If you want to get an Italian driver's license, you have to go through a process that can take you days, if not weeks, involving dozens of steps between various agencies of the Italian government. And this drove [no pun intended] some Americans, including Italian Americans, crazy. So what you found often was that there were many, many people living in Italy who

simply spent ten, 15 years driving around on American driver's licenses. Some of them had imported cars from the United States, and they drove those cars around with American license plates for ten or 15 years. And every now and then, one of them would suddenly fall into the hands of the Italian authorities and find themselves in a nightmarish labyrinth from which it was almost impossible to emerge.

Some people got into property disputes of an unbelievable nature. They would buy a piece of property and then find out that 15 other people had claims to it, and that these claims went back to 1820, and sorting this thing out became almost impossible.

I wouldn't say there were a myriad of these cases, but there were enough of them to keep things interesting.

Q: During the time you were there, there was a tremendous unraveling of this almost enshrined corruption that grew up after World War II, with the Christian Democrats sort of leading the way. Did the corruption problem, in any form, get the Consular Section involved?

MAHONEY: No, as I say, in part because the visa business had really gone away, you didn't see that except as a kind of general interesting intellectual backdrop to what was going on in the country.

The Italian Socialist Party, incidentally, really ceased to exist. It's gone now; there's no such thing anymore as what one thought of as the Italian Socialist Party.

What interested me about the consular business in Italy was the change in overall approach to the work.

The consulate in Rome, for example, had implemented the use of the machine-readable-visa system, as had the consulate in Naples and the consulate in Milan. We also had the automated passport-issuance system in effect. These were certainly wave-of-the-future items that were major steps in the automation revolution that's been going on in the consular business almost since I came in.

At the same time, the forces of consolidation were dramatically at work. In the last ten years in Italy, they've closed posts at Turin, at Palermo, and at Genoa. And the Department had made a decision to close the post in Florence, but there may have been a last-minute reprieve. In fact, they are really beginning to nibble around the edges of the idea of closing in Naples.

This is a trend present not only in Italy, but in many other countries where historically we've had large numbers of constituent posts, and where one of the arguments for the constituent posts has been the need for consular services. Because of budgetary problems and because of the advantages of modern communications -- fax and so forth -- the trend is increasingly toward consolidating consular operations at one post in a country, even large countries, perhaps maximum, two posts. You could certainly see that tendency at work in Italy, and I think it'll be going further.

The use of the machine-readable-visa is one of the more controversial developments among consular officers in the last ten years. But so much has been invested in it, and it's so necessary for the anti-fraud profile of the Department, that I certainly think that sort of thing is here to stay, and that, in fact, it will be expanded on in various ways.

So those kinds of trends and issues were what I found really interesting about the work in Italy.

I was the consul-general in Rome, with the responsibility of being the reviewing officer for ratings of chief consular officers at other posts. So I had, through that role, influence and leverage on consular operations elsewhere in Italy.

Q: I was consul-general in Naples, '79 to '81. Naples has traditionally been sort of the entrepot for the United States for immigrant visas. Even when I was there, it was down to maybe 3,000, which was rather small potatoes compared to posts such as Manila or Seoul. Were you being asked to say whether we needed Naples as a consular post?

MAHONEY: By the time I got to Rome, Naples had shrunk to a post that had two consular officers only, eight Foreign Service nationals, a political/economic officer, a principal officer, an admin officer, and a USIS officer. That was the whole operation.

As you will recall, the consulate is lodged in this huge building on the oceanfront in Naples. The consulate building is now full of empty space, and there was a real question as to whether that building was necessary, whether it needed to be maintained, whether other government tenants could be got into that building, and whether, in fact, the services were necessary.

Now people argued, well, you had to have the consular services there because of the military base. But then people said, look, they closed the consulate in Palermo where there are military bases in Sicily, and life went on.

And then there was the issue: Did you need to have separate political reporting from Naples? Did you really need a separate USIS office in Naples? If you got down to having a post with two or three officers, in this huge building that required a lot of maintenance and upkeep, what was the point?

I, and others, argued that it was very necessary to have representation in the southern half of Italy.

Really the main case for that, on the consular side, is that outside of the Western Hemisphere, Italy has the largest number of Social Security beneficiaries in the world, and half of those are in Naples and to the south in Italy. That is, there are 40,000 beneficiaries in Italy, 20,000 in Naples and going south, and that those people needed to be serviced. There were ten Foreign Service nationals in Naples whose job it was to do federal-benefits work, and that they needed to be there, and that that presence was required. And that was the most certainly compelling argument from the consular side.

Q: I, even when I was there, which was a decade before, thought that Naples, for anything but

the Social Security, could be closed. But there was the other problem, and I think a very serious political problem, of closing down a post that traditionally had been a source of great Italian migration to the United States.

Incidentally, when everybody says they came from Naples to the United States, nobody ever lived in Naples. (The Neapolitans didn't go to the United States; Neapolitans are a different breed of cat.) But they went through Naples, and they may have lived nearby, and they said they were from Naples, but I think you'll find very few were true Neapolitans. They have their own life.

Going back to these meetings you had. You were the new boy on the block, which is always an interesting period, because you're absorbing these things, you're politically aware and all. What was the feeling that you were getting from listening to the ambassador, talking to officers, and just being in Italy? Italy was going through a very traumatic period, as it continues to do. What was your impression of the Italian political scene and what it was doing at that time?

MAHONEY: In fact, it was going through a tremendous upheaval. I would say maybe a third to a half of the people who had been in the Italian parliament, let's say, in 1991 or '92 not only were gone by 1993 and '94, but most of them might have been in jail or under arrest. All kinds of former prime ministers. Craxi, who had been prime minister many times, had, in effect, taken himself off to exile in Tunisia. Andreotti, even now, as we talk, is on trial in Sicily for alleged Mafia-related association.

A completely new political party was founded by a man named Silvio Berlusconi, a big television and media magnate from northern Italy. Berlusconi was elected to parliament and became prime minister in the spring of 1994, with a completely new political movement. The real question was whether this sort of new impulse was going to, in effect, win out or whether it would end up being diluted and basically transformed by the old nature of Italian politics.

Berlusconi was forced out after seven months in office, and a complete cabinet (maybe this could only happen in Italy) of people who were not members of parliament, non-elected people, was put in, in a sense, kind of as a government of good managers. And that government remains in office today. Even though it was seen as a government that was only going to last a few months, it's already been in about a year, and may continue for a while.

So it's like the line in the poem, "Slouching toward Bethlehem to be born." The thing is trying to be born, but whether, in fact, it will be born is a question. But the individuals who represented the old order have definitely been disgraced and are gone.

On the other hand, as to whether the nature of Italian politics, and the way Italians do their politics, is going to change, there were many people around the embassy who were very skeptical about that.

Q: Was there a line that the embassy was taking on this whole thing?

MAHONEY: The ambassador's point all the time was that our job was to manage the Italian-

American relationship through this period of very high seas and storm on the Italian political scene. That we were not taking sides behind any particular faction, but that at the end of the day, we wanted to be assured that the relationship between the United States and Italy remained intact, and that we really did not make mistakes or get ourselves cast into the wrong kind of role as that process went forward. And I think he was very careful and sensible about how he did that.

The Italians, certainly, since the end of World War II, seemed to have very strong expectations that the United States somehow would intervene in their politics. And the point that the ambassador was making was that we were not going to intervene or interfere in any way in their politics, but that we wished to maintain good relationships with the political players, and that it was for the Italians themselves to sort out.

For example, the post-Fascist movement that had managed four or five percent of the vote in Italy since the end of World War II...

Q: MSD or something?

MAHONEY: MSI, which rather transformed itself, got a new leader, and put in a new constitution of its own that really finally abjured Fascism and spoke in terms of democracy. And for the first time since

World War II, in the summer of 1994, the leader of the MSI was invited to the 4th of July reception, as was, by the way, the leader of the far-left Communists. This was seen as a statement by the embassy that all of these political players now had their role, and that we were going to be in communication with all of them. And I think that was a sensible and healthy thing to do.

Q: Were there any great consular cases that you had to deal with that gave you lots of trouble?

MAHONEY: There were one or two that were very illuminating, I thought, in a way, of Italy.

In one case, a family -- a father, a mother, a seven-year-old boy, and a five-year-old girl -- were traveling at night in southern Italy to get the ferry to Sicily. And as they went down the road south of Naples, a couple of people tried to stop their car and rob them.

Although there was very little violent confrontational crime in Italy, and even direct holdups in the streets were very unusual, there were occasional incidents on the highway south of Naples.

When the family tried to drive away, the would-be robbers fired a shot at the car. The shot penetrated the trunk of the car and struck the head of the seven-year-old boy, who was sleeping in the back seat. The parents did not realize this initially. They drove down the road until they came to a sign that said "POLICE," and they pulled in and said that this incident had happened. Then they noticed that the seven-year-old was not stirring, and finally discovered the bullet wound. The child died in a hospital about 12 hours later.

The parents decided to donate a number of organs from the boy to Italian children -- kidneys, parts of the eye, other things.

Italy is a country that has probably the lowest rate of organ donation in Europe. Italians are famous for going all over the European Community, trying to get organs, because they can't get them in Italy. There are a number, I guess, of cultural and religious historical reasons for this.

The fact that the Americans were willing to do this had a tremendous impact on Italians, such that within a couple of days, the three remaining members of this family were brought to Rome, and on very short notice I was told to organize a call for them on both the president of Italy and the prime minister of Italy, which I did, and accompanied them to these meetings.

The prime minister, Berlusconi, to his great credit, had no media present, took no photographs, and treated it as an extremely dignified occasion, after which he made available the prime minister's jet, to return this family to their home in California, at no expense to them, and provided, separately, an Italian military jet to fly the coffin of the child back to the United States.

Throughout Italy, for months afterwards, playgrounds, schools, shopping centers, streets were being named after this child. And the embassy got a constant stream of communication from memorials, from all over Italy, to be forwarded to this family, which we undertook to do. So we obviously had a tremendous amount of work to do.

The family came back to Italy about eight months later, and were taken, in sort of triumphant procession, all over the country, honored and speechified and so forth.

I couldn't imagine a similar phenomenon in the United States, but something about which the Italians, once they got into this kind of thing, had no limits, in a sense. It was quite a fantastic phenomenon.

One other case that was quite interesting was a major child-custody case involving a very well-known American modern artist, named Jeffrey Koons, who works in New York and makes things like rabbits, huge, large, as-big-as-people rabbits, out of aluminum that he sells to museums for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

He married an Italian woman named Ilona Staler, whose public pseudonym was Chichalina. She had been an Italian pornographic film star, subsequently elected to the Italian parliament, where she became notorious for all kinds of striptease activities in public while a member of parliament. Mr. Koons met Ms.

Staler, and although each hardly spoke the other's language, they got married and produced a child, who they named Ludwig Maximillian Koons.

They were living in a 17-room apartment in Manhattan, when, I guess, Mrs. Koons became disillusioned with the situation and, without notice, took the child to Italy, where, two or three months later, the father came and managed to get his hands on the child for a few hours, and spirited the child out of the country, back to the United States, to begin divorce and custody proceedings.

The wife went to New York. Since they were still married, the court found that she was entitled

to live in the apartment. The artist, Mr. Koons, provided a bodyguard for the child while his wife was there. One day, after the court case had been going on for about six months, Mrs. Staler said they were out of bread and milk and so forth, and asked the bodyguard if he would go to a convenience store, which was just located about 100 feet from the entrance to the apartment. The bodyguard agreed, and he went down to the convenience store.

In the two or three minutes he was gone, a car pulled up in front of the apartment, and Mrs. Staler spirited the child out to the car, subsequently out of the United States, and back to Italy, where Mr. Koons, shortly thereafter, arrived.

And a huge, contentious legal battle commenced in Italy, which I think is still going on, involving the spending of huge sums of money. Mr. Koons's attorney is Theodore F. Sorensen, who was at one time the counsel to President John F. Kennedy. So it gives you an idea of the level of activity. And that was still going on when I left.

So there were very interesting consular events that went on in Italy.

Q: What are sort of the rules of engagement for a consular officer when you get between, say, the native-born mother in a county, or native-born father, and the American who is trying to get the child, when it's all happening on your turf?

MAHONEY: The rules of engagement simply are that one gives as much attention as possible to the American party, tries to follow the case as closely as possible through the local legal system, and if it appears that the child is being in any way mistreated, works through social welfare authorities in the host country to check on the child's situation and see what's happening. That really is about all that we can do. We're not in a position, with a country like Italy, to argue that they don't have a functioning legal system. But it's a very delicate and difficult situation, because, obviously, the American parent is in a very aggrieved situation.

The whole issue of child custody wasn't a significant issue in Italy; there weren't many cases. But it's become one of the major growth industries of the consular business in the last ten or 15 years. There are now an estimated 3,000 or 4,000 cases worldwide. And with certain countries, particularly in the Middle East, it's a subject that has reached the highest levels of intergovernmental relations.

Q: You had been sort of a Washington hand for quite a while. Did you feel the hand of Consular Affairs in the Department of State coming in and trying to get you to do things you didn't want to do, or just getting involved?

MAHONEY: I would say not very much in Italy. I just don't think Italy was a country with very significant consular problems. The workload was going down, not up. A number of posts were closing. The number of personnel was declining. I myself had very, very infrequent communications with the Department, and they with me. It wasn't a post that drew a lot of interest, I don't think.

Q: Well, Mike, as a wrap-up on this, you've been involved in consular management much more than many other people, and we're both old consular hands, where do you see the consular situation going today?

MAHONEY: There are a couple of things. One is that we face a period of either static or declining resources. That is, the old agenda, which existed from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, where the consular function put in, year in and year out, its requests for additional positions based on increasing workloads and those positions were simply granted, is gone now.

So how does one cope? There are several strategies. One is to try to get permission to retain certain sorts of consular fees, particularly fees that are received from foreigners and therefore are not a tax or a charge to American citizens.

Q: You're talking about the fees going directly to consular expenses as opposed to going into, as they usually do, the general U.S. fund.

MAHONEY: Right. Exactly. In the last couple of years, the Consular Bureau got permission to levy a fee on machine-readable visas, and to keep that money for increasing automation, anti-fraud, and what we refer to as border management. So far, they've gotten permission to retain \$107 million, which is a pretty big piece of change. But that permission was given on a temporary basis, and the consular function and the Department itself, I think, are interested in trying to make that permanent.

And then the issue is: How would you apply that money, if you're not going to be able to apply it to pay additional positions, which I don't think you're going to be able to do?

There are a lot of revolutionary possibilities in automation. I'll give you an example.

Imagine that we put in, for example, a series of kiosks at ten or 15 places in London, which is a post where we still do several hundred thousand visas a year, even though not so many, specifically, of British citizens. A person can come up to one of these kiosks, which, like an automated teller machine, functions 24 hours a day, punch in their name, and then a questionnaire will come up on the screen, asking them their date of birth, their type of employment, the number of years they've been employed, do they have credit cards, a whole series of questions that a visa interviewer would normally ask, or that a Foreign Service national would have to make sure were filled in on a form. After the person answers all these questions, they push a button, and the information goes off the screen. The computer has a series of profiles, by nationality, by age, by income, whatever, that it immediately does a sort on, based on the information that's given at the kiosk. And then a message comes up on the screen that says, for instance, "Please come to the embassy," (or some other processing point) "one week from today at 9:30 in the morning, for further processing of your visa." In the meantime, that information is printed out back at the embassy, or wherever, and it's looked at again by an American officer. It's already been transferred into the visa-lookout system, and the lookout has been done. And a decision is basically made whether to issue that visa or not, based on the profile.

Think of all the work that this can save and the convenience to the applicant. And imagine putting this sort of system at the 100 largest visa-issuing posts around the world.

That's one sort of thing that you can do if you have resources.

On the personnel side, there is no longer any requirement for a consular commission, to issue a visa, to visit an American in jail. And they're about to amend the regulations so that passports can be issued and notarials done by people that do not have consular commissions. And what this means is that, I think, a significant number of people, mostly American family members, are going to be doing a large part of the functional work that has been done in recent years by consular officers, by people with commissions.

There is an intense argument that goes on all the time on this subject as to what this is going to lead to and whether it's going to produce a parallel personnel system that ultimately is going to crash and burn, because we will be making the equivalent of appointments without having a competitive process.

But for the moment, this is very definitely a program that's in train.

All these people who are called consular associates or have other labels have to take the consular course at FSI. But there are a lot of people doing that work now, and there will be more doing it in the future. And this is seen as basically a resource saver.

I think the use of consular agents is going to increase. The justification for the existence of many posts around the world now is that they provide emergency services to Americans. But that can be done by consular agents, who are people that are hired basically on contract, local residents, usually Americans, but not necessarily so, who can be there if the American is arrested, if the American has to go for emergency medical treatment. They can receive passport applications and send them off by courier service to a central processing point to do passports for Americans resident in their district.

I see consolidation of consular work at perhaps one post in every country as a future thing. They've already, in the United States, instituted huge consolidated operations for both passports and visa processing, in New Hampshire on the site of the former Pease Air Force Base. I think more of that is coming.

To produce these computer programs, to field-test them, to distribute them, this is what you use the money for that you get from fee retention, so that you have a reliable stream of income to do innovative stuff with the consular business.

HOWARD K. WALKER
Deputy Commandant, NATO Defense College
Rome (1994-1997)

Howard K. Walker was born in Newport News, Virginia in 1935. He attended the University of Michigan and Boston University and served in the US Air Force. He entered the Foreign Service in 1969, wherein he served in countries including Nigeria, Jordan, Tanzania, South Africa, Togo, Madagascar, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on November 14, 2001.

WALKER: But across my desk came this military message that the NATO Defense College in Rome was opening invitations to be the deputy commandant, the number two position. I said, "Ah, that sounds interesting. How do I do this?" I found out that nominees came in from the minister of defense, or in our case the Secretary of Defense. I said, "How do I do this? I don't know Les Aspin from a hole in the wall." By this time, Wisner had moved over to a Under Secretary position in the Department of Defense. I went to see him. He said, "You're our man. You will be good for that." So, he persuaded Secretary Aspin to write a letter of recommendation for me. Getting that vetted and approved through the Defense Department... First of all, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Colin Powell), even though he didn't know much of me, though we had met a couple of times... Then the question would be, at what level would I go over? The bureaucracy in DOD wanted to make it a GS-15 level. I thought about it and said, "I'm getting ready to retire. What the hell? Two or three years in Rome might be nice." But I must give the credit to the president of NDU, General Surgeon. Paul said, "Howard, that's ridiculous. You shouldn't go over there as a GS-15. You've been ambassador. You go over at that level..." The level was equivalent to a supergrade. Surgeon said, "This is what you have to do" and he called his contacts over there. That's the way it came in. So, I went over at the same pay scale as when I had to leave the Foreign Service. I left the Foreign Service. At that time, I was a DOD employee. That also was a very interesting thing. I learned a lot about European interests in NATO and political-military affairs there, but that is a completely other story.

Q: Let's do a sampling of it. What were some of the lessons you brought back from that, how the NATO system works at that level?

WALKER: I went over there in 1994 and NATO was still looking for a Post-Cold War mission. Senator Lugar had just written "NATO out of area, out of business." It was still a question of, there being no longer the threat of an invasion through the Folda Gap, what is its mission?" It soon was given the present of a mission in the Balkans. To see the Europeans flagging around looking for a way to deal with this, wanting on the one hand some of them to be independent of the United States... One of the central themes was transatlanticism versus a European identity. At that time, 1994-1997, there were very few, if any, who wanted to do anything to jeopardize the transatlantic relationship except for the French, but certainly not the Germans or the other small countries around. Their argument was that, "We're not sure about the Russians yet. Besides, one nice thing about the Yanks is that they're over there. They don't have this historic baggage." Anyhow, for the most part, members were strong transatlanticists with the exception of the French, still looking for a way for pride and other reason to develop a European military capability.

Q: Did you have the feeling that there was a split between the French military and the French politicians? I've often had the feeling that the French military understand the realities and the capabilities of the United States, that it's better to be with them, but the French politicians

pushing this are not.

WALKER: I didn't get that at all. If I hadn't been deputy commandant, I would have walked out of some of the French military's lectures. I remember once when we took them around... All of the students at the NATO Defense College traveled in our own plane to all the NATO capitals. We had this lecture by this French four star that was so anti-American in an insulting way that if I hadn't been deputy commandant, I would have walked out. I met with the Americans later and tried to put this into some kind of perspective. In no other place did I find other than among the French any question of the importance of the transatlantic relationship... The French acknowledged the absolute importance of it as there was no serious threat they could face without the help of the Americans. Their effort was how to get that without giving the Americans leadership. But there are a lot of things we could talk about. I give two or three lectures in different places around the world on the transatlantic relationship and on NATO. But my central themes there were the importance of the transatlantic relationship to the Europeans but less important to the Americans. In some ways, we just wanted the use of their space to conduct military operations for NATO and wanted them to get out of the way and let us do the job. But sophisticated Americans came to see that you needed Europeans for more than that and we're seeing that more and more today, I hope.

Q: Maybe it's a generational thing... I belong to an older generation. But I've often seen NATO as a way, by having the U.S. there and making NATO a strong power, it keeps the French and Germans essentially together into some sort of organization that keeps them from maybe drifting apart and starting another one of these damn European civil wars.

WALKER: That was certainly one of NATO's original purposes. But they are together now in the EU in an even more important way.

Q: Maybe NATO no longer needs it... But I keep thinking that at some point peculiar leaders who can spring up in any country-

WALKER: What NATO did was make it unnecessary for France or Germany to have to rearm against each other. There are other interesting things. For example, we would get briefings by our equivalent of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff of every place we went with these students. It was interesting to hear from them at that level what they thought their security risks were. Obviously, you'd hear interesting things in Greece and in Turkey. But it was interesting to hear in Northern Europe, in Norway and Denmark and places like this, how much of their strategy was based on homeland defense. They knew they couldn't project power. All they could do is do what they could in the way they did in the second world war, to fight an occupying power as best they could. Interestingly, when we started in the latter part of my tour going to what then were called Partnership for Peace countries, we went to the Baltic countries. Same thing. That's what they were talking about. They were scared to death of what Russia was doing in Chechnya as a precedent to come and do that there. They said, "What are we going to do?" What Chechnya has shown us is that homeland defense can be effective, probably the most effective thing we can do. So, that was interesting. It was interesting when we made the NATO Defense College's first trip to Moscow. We met in the war room of the Warsaw Pact and had our briefings there. It was just incredible to listen, to see all of these uniforms around there. In a

personal way, it was interesting to see Moscow change from one year to the other in terms of a drab place to see the monuments where so many people died, to see on the streets of Moscow very few men my age because they were killed in World War II, to see a monument in a cemetery of people lost in Afghanistan and to hear them talk about how that was their Vietnam.

I did some other things, too, at the NATO Defense College that I'm rather proud of. One is, I sort of was in the forefront - or as the chairman of the military committee put it, I was pushing the envelope for NATO for an association in Central Asia and in the southern Mediterranean in North Africa and the Middle East. In Central Asia, I arranged to go out and give some briefings to people in Central Asia to their ministers of defense, foreign ministries, and their military institutions of higher learning on not only what the NATO Defense College does, because they were beginning to send us some students, but what NATO does and military-civilian politicians in a democracy. That was very interesting, a part of the world I didn't know and probably would have never gotten to. You can see the carpets that I brought back and so on. And then the effort that I initiated, orchestrated, and conducted in North Africa to establish a relationship between NATO - or to operationalize a relationship that NATO decided it wanted pushed by the southern Europeans with North Africa. I went down there and gave them a briefing on what the College did and discussed with them some ways in which the NATO Defense College and their own concerns could be melded. Some things came out of that that continue today, courses that they come to take at the NATO Defense College. It's my understanding from people I talk to at the College today that the new Secretary General is trying to make the NATO Defense College the center for NATO's outreach both to North Africa and increasingly to Russia. So, that was an interesting time.

I left there after three years and was very happy about that. I left my government service, came back here, and had a triple bypass heart surgery, which I'm convinced was caused not so much by the cuisine in Rome but the stress of the French in that situation. Then I started going back to what I did before I came in the Foreign Service - university teaching. Now I give courses in international relations, in diplomacy, and one in American foreign policy and in comparative government. I've given that at the American University here in Washington. I give it at two universities in South Africa - the University of Capetown and Stellenbosch University. And at John Cabbott University in Rome. It's a delightful life. And I'm doing a little lecturing on cruise ships on the side.

JAMES W. CHAMBERLIN
Science Counslor
Rome (1995)

James W. Chamberlin was born in Miami, Florida in 1945. He attended Principia College and the University of Alabama. He served in the US Army in Vietnam and entered the Foreign Service in 1973, wherein he served in countries including Brazil, Thailand, Poland, and Italy. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on February 19, 1997.

Q: Furlough is kind of a work leave without pay, because of a dispute in the government.

CHAMBERLIN: I wasn't sure if I should travel to Rome while on furlough status. Along with the notice saying I was furloughed, Rome had sent me a ten page telegram of furlough instructions, which essentially said, "Don't travel." But my wife and I had already shipped our household effects to Rome and packed our car for the trip before we received the notice, which arrived about one minute before the end of my last day in Warsaw. I was worried that if I left Warsaw, Rome would refuse to pay my travel expenses.

I was angry because the furlough, just as I was getting in my car to drive to Rome, reminded me of one of the lowest points in my military service in Vietnam. My artillery battery was stationed at Firebase Barbara, on a mountaintop near the Ho Chi Minh trail, just south of Khe Sahn. We received word from intelligence that an enemy battalion was massing at the base of our mountain. Shortly afterwards, I got a call from our battalion headquarters in Dong Ha, ordering us not to share our gasoline with the anti-aircraft "dusters" assigned to us, because it was too hard to get gasoline out to our isolated position. Vietnamization meant that we no longer had American infantry support. The dusters were used as anti-personnel weapons because they fired rapidly, and each 40 mm round was a tracer. A duster firing was an intimidating sight. They were our best defense against a ground attack. I was angry that someone in our headquarters preferred to see us die, rather than to resupply us with gasoline. Needless to say, we cooperated with the duster crews, who fired thousands of rounds into the area where the North Vietnamese battalion was forming. The attack never materialized.

When the furlough threatened to put my wife and me on the street in Warsaw on a cold November night, I had a "Vietnam flashback" to that night on a mountaintop in northwestern South Vietnam, when the US Army said, "You're expendable." Those two days are forever linked in my mind as the nadir of US Government responsibility. After several angry calls to Rome, I got the Embassy to agree to furlough someone other than me, so that there would be no question that I could travel. Unfortunately, this was a bad omen for my assignment to Rome.

In spite of the fact that my wife and I thought that Rome would be the best assignment we ever had, we didn't enjoy it much. She and I had been thinking about my retiring; so, we decided after a year in Rome that we would come home, and that's what we did. We did as much sight-seeing as we could on weekends and holidays before we left.

I handled some interesting issues in Rome. Italy held the Presidency of the European Union for six of the months that I was there, which increased our workload considerably. We worked with the Italians on EU issues, as well as on the bilateral issues that were the normal workload of the office. The most public bilateral issue was a messy one, a fishing dispute. Before I arrived in Rome, the State Department had been sued by four environmental groups that claimed that the Department was not enforcing a UN resolution stating that no country could fish in international waters with drift nets longer than 2000 meters. When I arrived in Rome, the Department thought that it looked like we would win the case. We argued that we had been very diligent about raising the driftnet issues with the Italians, but we lost. When we lost, we were instructed by the federal court in New York to force the Italians to stop fishing with driftnets longer than those specified by the UN resolution. It was a very difficult negotiation; delegations came from

Washington to tell the Italians what was acceptable. It was no longer the State Department's call as to what was acceptable for Italy; it was the US federal court's call. The environmental groups who were the plaintiffs had no first hand knowledge of driftnet practices in Italy; so, they talked to the Green Peace representative in Italy. My staff knew him very well; he was very knowledgeable about the issue, but it was a very strange arrangement. The State Department in effect represented the federal court. The federal court got its information from the US environmental groups; they got their information from Green Peace Italy. This meant that Green Peace Italy was using the US courts and the Department of State to dictate terms to the Italian Agriculture Minister, who controlled fishing. We eventually reached an agreement, but I left before the fishing season started. So, it had not yet been put to the test. We will find out later whether the Italians live up to it.

Q: You were saying in some ways?

CHAMBERLIN: In some ways of calculating the possible sanctions if Italy did not comply, the value of the US-side trade in all fishery related items was one billion dollars. Most of that appeared to be jewelry, and I always wondered whether by creative use of some Department of Commerce categories, all jewelry could be considered to be fisheries products, or whether the one billion dollar figure simply counted all jewelry without classifying it as a fishery product. Clearly jewelry with a pearl in it, or with a piece of coral on it, could legitimately be included. Nevertheless the figure was never really challenged. There was a possibility of one billion dollars in sanctions if Italy did not follow the UN resolution. The Italians said they were already in compliance with the resolution. The question for the future is whether they will be diligent enough about enforcing it, and the time frame in which they will do it. It's going to be a call for the court and the environmental groups.

Q: Were there any other issues that you dealt with while you were there or was that the main one?

CHAMBERLIN: Another big issue was Italy's space cooperation with the US, both bilaterally and through ESA (the European Space Agency). The most important aspect of our space cooperation was the international space station project. A major part of the station will be built by the Europeans, and another part by the Russians. The Italians have committed about one billion dollars overall to the station. At its own expense, Italy is building a compartment for the Shuttle to ferry items to the space station. In return, the compartment will be treated as an Italian contribution to the space station, and they will get additional access time, experiments and people. So, the total of their participation is pretty significant. But we must make sure that the Italians honor their commitments. That is going to be tough issue, because the Russians have so many financial problems that they have not been able to live up to their obligations with respect to the space station. Russia's delay could hold the whole space station up, and throw the timetable off. We might have to reallocate the financial responsibility and the space station access of all the parties involved, including the Italians.

Unfortunately, I also worked on the tethered satellite issue. Italy built the tethered satellite, which was launched by the Shuttle. It had been launched once before, several years earlier, but

the tether had jammed. The Italian Space Agency (ASI) did its best to make a celebration of the experiment. The launch was televised on closed circuit TV in the ASI offices in Rome. ASI was looking for more public support and financing for its program. Ambassador Bartholomew attended as did then Prime Minister Dini. The Italian Ambassador to the US was in Cape Canaveral for the launch, and ASI and NASA arranged televised exchanges by the two sides. The launch went smoothly, but when the satellite tether was almost fully extended, the tether broke. The satellite went drifting into outer space, instead of being pulled at the end of its tether for several days before being reeled back in. The crew of that Shuttle mission visited Italy to try to put the best face on the incident; they made many appearances, including a reception by the Ambassador. But it is always hard to put a good face on something that has gone wrong. After my bad experience with the US-built scrubber in Krakow, I was feeling snakebit by American technology, for although the Italians built the tethered satellite, an American company built the tether that broke. No one knows exactly what happened, but an expert panel concluded that there was probably some small defect in the tether that was not caught by the manufacturer or NASA. The Italians are very good at building high quality, high technology equipment. They are building a very sophisticated antenna for the Cassini mission to Saturn, and in general Italian companies are acquiring a good reputation for producing such items.

During some of my discussions on space issues, I met with senior representatives of STET, the Italian telephone company, which was interested in communications satellites. In an informal conversation, one of the STET executives said to me, "You really don't like me, because you won't even let my little daughter go to Disney World." He was referring to the Helms-Burton Act, that penalized companies, caught by its provisions on trading with Cuba, by prohibiting travel to the US not only of the employees, but of their families as well. This conversation spurred another "Vietnam flashback," this time to my return to the US, when many Americans seemed to believe that all Vietnam veterans had committed some kind of atrocity or war crime during their tour of duty. I had tried very hard in Vietnam to assure that my artillery battery did not shoot at civilians, and I was pleased that I had served on or near the DMZ, where the war was more conventional, and it was easier to tell who the enemy was. In particular, I had tried to avoid hurting any children. So, when a STET executive accused me, even in a friendly and humorous way, of threatening his child, I was horrified. I felt that as a Foreign Service officer in a friendly country, I was in a more immoral position than when I was in the Army in Vietnam. It strengthened my feeling of unease in serving this government. In particular, it rankled me that President Clinton had avoided the draft and criticized the US presence in Vietnam, at least implicitly criticizing the conduct of myself and other veterans who had answered our country's call. As President, although he criticized the Helms-Burton Act, he put aside his moral convictions and signed it, thereby sending me out to tell Italian businessmen that we didn't want their children in America. Even more frightening is that it apparently worked; STET later took action dictated by the US and removed itself from the Helms-Burton sanctions. After I left the Embassy and returned to the US, I happened to see an episode of the mini-series based on Herman Wouk's *War and Remembrance* on the History Channel. In that episode, which takes place in Italy, the Nazis try to intimidate the Jewish heroine by threatening her child. In the book, the Nazi diplomat Dr. Werner Beck tells her uncle, "But there's also the question of Mrs. Henry and her baby 'rotting here,'" in an effort to force her uncle to make propaganda broadcasts. As she escorts Dr. Beck out, Mrs. Henry says she will try to get her uncle to comply, adding, "You can count on my concern for my baby." As I watched and thought about it, I felt dirty, dirtier

than when I had returned from Vietnam, where I had never harmed or threatened a child at all. And so when our government had stooped to the level of threatening children, when life imitated art and I was playing the role of a Nazi, it seemed like a good time to retire.

WILLIAM P. POPE
Deputy Chief of Mission
Rome (1999-2002)

Mr. Pope was born and raised in Virginia and educated at the University of Virginia. After serving in both the US Army and the US Navy, he joined the Foreign Service in 1974. Mr. Pope served several tours in the State Department in Washington, dealing, notably, with Counterterrorism. His overseas posts include Gaborone, Zagreb, Belgrade, Paris, Pretoria, Rome, and the Hague, serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in the latter two embassies. Mr. Pope was interviewed in 2006 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Well then, you left there in '99?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Whither?

POPE: To Rome.

Q: As what?

POPE: As the DCM.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

POPE: He was a former congressman from Philadelphia named Tom Foglietta.

Q: One of the real problems of sending, particularly in Italy there's a tendency to send people who have been of Italian background want to go there and bask in the fact I came back as an ambassador. My family left there poor and barefoot and look at me now. I served as Consul General in Naples at one point and you know, these immigrants who'd done well aren't really received in Roman society. How did it work?

POPE: When he left, after Bush was elected and he left at the beginning of '01, the Italians, many Italians asked me privately, both in and out of the government, don't send another Italian-American. You always do this and you don't understand; you think we want an Italian-American. We don't necessarily want an Italian-American. We want the best possible candidate, Italian-American or otherwise. But not somebody automatically and we just don't think you should do that and send a Polish-American to Poland and an Irish-American to Ireland, etc. We

don't practice that kind of thing and we don't think you should. We hope you won't.

Q: Well, you were there from '99 to when?

POPE: To 2002.

Q: 2002. What were the issues in Italy at the time?

POPE: Well, when I first came, of course, there was, I mean all the way through, a lot of work together on organized crime. There are not that many FBI offices in the world, LEGAT, it's called, Legal Attaché, we had a big FBI office there, so that was one of them. The Balkans was still a problem so we did a lot of very productive work with the Italians on transnational organized crime. That was a big one. And I rejuvenated our internal law enforcement committee. We had almost 30 agencies; this was a big embassy, one of the biggest Class I missions, and I pulled together all of the law enforcement-related entities into a committee to press for more sharing of information internally and alertness to what's going on. And then of course the Balkans was still an issue.

Q: And Kosovo was a-

POPE: Yes, Kosovo was still an issue. And Serbia-Montenegro, a lot of tension there.

Q: How did the Italians feel about the Kosovo business? Because they had had this tie to Albania and they had a lot of Albanians who ended up in Italy as refugees.

POPE: Right.

Q: Did that play any role?

POPE: I don't think so. They were a neighbor across the Adriatic and on a really good day, clear day you could actually see the other side. So the Italians were acutely aware of it and they were the frontline of defense, but I don't think their policy differed too much from others. They supported Serbian territorial integrity but they didn't feel that it was a good idea for the Serbs to be slaughtering the Kosovars or for the Kosovars to be slaughtering and putting pressure on the little Serb minority that was left. So I don't remember that they were particularly out of step. They did have some carabinieri stationed on the other side of the Adriatic but that was more for crime prevention reasons.

Q: I imagine crime, I mean, you had the Mafia and you had the Camorra. I mean, was it the 'Ndrangheta I guess way down in the boot of Italy. I mean, Italy had a very solid criminal class.

POPE: Yes, that's right.

Q: Did they, was there operation of such a nature that we were mainly concerned with it or was it sort of an internal Italian?

POPE: Both. There was an internal dimension to it which we on occasion tried to help them with a bit, but it was mainly the cross-border aspects of crime which wasn't all the Mafia. The Italians themselves were very concerned with the groups that had begun to get themselves solidly implanted on the other side of the Adriatic -- the Russian mafia, the Albanian mafia. Some of them were extremely vicious, made the Italian mafia look like Sunday school teachers. And they were very concerned about what was going on. Obviously everybody's glad for the end of communism and Milosevic's fall and all of that, but with the break up of Yugoslavia and smaller countries and a non-Communist but weak Albania and Kosovo that was in rebellion, there's a lot of area for crime to come in when government isn't strong. And they were really concerned about that, about drugs, weapons, nuclear materials coming out of the former Soviet Union and immigrants.

Q: Italy also, I mean, in the trafficking of human beings, mainly prostitutes coming out of Eastern Europe.

POPE: Yes but not only.

Q: They were, I mean, Italy was sort of a collection point.

POPE: They were. And by the way it was not only prostitutes. I mean, a lot of it was economic migrants too. There were prostitutes but it's also economic migrants who were just trying to get into Europe or to go on to the U.S. or Canada for economic reasons. They couldn't walk across like you can from Canada or Mexico, so it was harder to get in. So there were those factors as well. And the Italians, I remember, asked for additional help because they would say that, if you took their coastline and straightened it all out it would be the longest coastline of anybody and they're coming across from Albania and from Montenegro and different places across here. They've got these swift boats; they're faster than anything we've got, the Italians would say. And they're smuggling cigarettes and drugs and guns and people. The Italians asked the rest of the European Union for financial and other kinds of help to try to seal this border down here because then you have Schengen of course. And once somebody's in, unless you have the bad luck of getting in a traffic accident, you can basically go anywhere you want unchallenged, just like inside the U.S. So that was a big issue.

That wasn't the only issue. We spent a fair amount of time in the Embassy. Well first of all, as I say, we had almost 30 agencies. This was before the formation of DHS, Department of Homeland Security so you had a lot of individual elements like INS and Customs and of course Internal Revenue, Secret Service. Internal Revenue is not part of DHS but Secret Service and others and all those were all independent agencies that had offices at the Embassy in Rome and serviced various areas including North Africa or Africa from there, so we had a really pretty sizeable group and so we covered every issue you could imagine. Social Security was also there, for example. Social Security because in Sicily there was a big population of people who had been born in Italy, especially in Sicily, had emigrated to the United States, had become citizens, had worked for 40 years, retired and then gone back. And they were citizens just like you and me and were eligible for various kinds of citizen services and consular services, so the Social Security had their hands full. And Internal Revenue too because these people were paying taxes. So all of the elements were busy. We were involved as an Embassy in everything you could

imagine, regional as well as bilateral with the Italians.

One of the things that I spent a lot of my time on, in addition to overall management and the most senior kind of political approaches, demarches and things, was the military relationship. Not too long before I came, we'd had this very tragic accident up in the north with a plane that had flown too low and had cut a wire and a lot of people were killed, mostly young people, skiers. And it was really bad and it was still reverberating when I got there, even though it was prior to my time.

Q: As I recall there was at least allegations that the men involved, the pilots anyway, had tried to cover up and their superiors may have helped them.

POPE: There were a lot of allegations. They were eventually acquitted. And it did not go down well. The incident happened before I came, I think about a year before I came, but it was still echoing, and even our best friends in Italy were really unhappy about it. And of course people who weren't so friendly to us were using it as well. But the acquittal came while I was there and you could imagine headlines were not too happy. They were acquitted because their altimeter was broken and they didn't know that they were at 300 feet instead of whatever height they were supposed to be.

Q: Yes, it's a little hard to think that somebody can look out the window of the cockpit and be that far off, particularly with mountains on either side.

Well. Did you suffer from a lot of demonstrations?

POPE: No. No, not very many. There'd be the occasional one across the street I remember looking out; I remember there was once there was a group of nuns. What were they doing? Must have been something to do with the Balkans, hands off of somebody, but all very peaceful, 20 nuns across the street, very few protesting.

Q: Well one of our, you know, trainings in crisis is how to deal with enraged nuns, you know.

POPE: Well, that's good. But that was very few. And when there were things happening in Rome that didn't necessarily have to do with us but where the planned route of march was in our area. The Italians were really good about getting whatever resources were needed, including these big armored vehicles, to block streets. They had a lot of strikes against and sometimes there'd be a line of march that would come from an area and would go down below the Embassy. And to make sure that nobody wandered up the street a couple of blocks, the police would bring these big blue armored vehicles and whatever they had to and just keep ringing it off and just have these folks march. And so they were very good, the Italians.

Q: How did you find political reporting? Maybe I mentioned this before but when I was Consul General in Naples I was not an Italian hand, I'd been in Korea beforehand, but I used to find the political reporting from Rome and the interests in Rome to be a little bit unworldly almost. This was a bit back in '79 to '81 is the period. But reporting on a change of a couple percentage points in a local election or something or there'd be a change in government and it seemed like,

you know, nothing really happened; these people were just exchanging places and it was sort of viewed with a great deal of disdain down in southern Italy. I mean, this is just a minuet that was going up in Rome. But did you find yourself as not being a real sort of Italian hand? Or that sometimes our people who are dealing with get almost too precious in dealing with changes in the government?

POPE: I think there was less of that by the second half of the 90s than there may have been before. For one thing, there had been a broad shift in the way reporting was done. CNN of course had made a huge difference in terms of spot reporting; we weren't doing so much of that anymore. And I think that reporting was more sparse in the sense of not so many numbers of cables and that kind of thing. It happened under my watch so I don't know how objective I am. Yes, and I wasn't an Italian hand, but I felt like we did a pretty good job in using our resources and in trying to report what was important. Obviously, if a government fell, everybody wanted to know who the new defense minister was going to be and the new foreign minister and finance minister, that kind of thing, and what they were going to, what changes there'd be, if any, for U.S. interests; that was obviously first and then whatever else we could find out was welcome. But in terms of over reporting minutiae I don't think so. By then, I think we understood that we were not in that business so much anymore.

Q: Well by this point had the Internet got to the point where the desk officer in Washington could read-

POPE: Sure.

Q: -the daily newspaper maybe even before you got hold of it.

POPE: Yes.

Q: This had to make quite a difference.

POPE: It does.

Q: Because you know, I mean, I take it that one was no longer reporting what was in the paper unless you were saying what it means as opposed to-

POPE: We were in a certain sense. If we woke up in the morning and read the papers and watched the news and saw something hot that we knew would be an issue in Washington, by being six hours ahead we were able to put together draft press guidance, for example, and zap it back to Washington. We were not disadvantaged by being behind Washington; we were ahead of Washington, so that was helpful. So no, we were not so much reporting what was in the paper but reporting on what it meant as well as providing draft guidance if we thought it might rise to the level of being asked to the spokesman, for example.

Q: How did you find the Italian Government? Again, I go back, sort of in history, where Henry Kissinger used to say that in his European travels hopping by Rome was really more a matter of form because there was nobody really to talk to because it was so diffuse and all. But in your

time how was it? Was that changed?

POPE: I certainly do not agree with what you just said. That got sort of corrected for five years by Berlusconi's government, but one thing we heard up to the time that Berlusconi came in was from people outside who did not really know Italy. Oh, it is so unstable. You have got one government a year, 58 governments in 58 years after the war and what kind of country is that anyway? But as you were hinting there is a great deal of stability underneath that top veneer, and you had a lot of the same people, you had especially a lot of the most senior civil servants providing lot of continuity in government. And the people I was dealing with, at least, were all of really high quality, smart people in of course the Foreign Ministry but in across the government, in finance, very sophisticated, worldly, bright people.

Q: Well here you have, I mean, you alluded to it and I realize you want to maintain propriety and all that, but how did it work? You had an ambassador who was not essentially an Italian hand. I mean, outside of being of Italian descent but he came out of Congress, came out of local politics from North Philadelphia was it?

POPE: Yes.

Q: And you had, you know, major issues to deal with. How did this work? I am getting a smile and you are being a very good DCM, very impressive.

POPE: It mostly fell to me, to be honest with you.

Q: Often the ambassadors in a case like this spend a good bit of time going around opening exhibits or getting out shaking hands and doing that. Is that kind of where things-?

POPE: Not so much.

Q: Not so much?

POPE: I was doing that too.

Q: Were there any relations, I realize we had our ambassador and all, but did the Vatican play much of a role at this time?

POPE: It is interesting because they kept saying not. The Italian politicians would say we are independent and we do not report to the Pope, but as soon as an election was approaching and they were starting to run for office you would see them going to call on Cardinal Sodano or whoever it was. They would make a big deal of calling on the cardinal and making family-friendly pronouncements and so it was definitely still a factor. Our embassies, of course, were separate. We provided administrative support to our Embassy to the Holy See, and they were in a completely separate building in another part of town and we did not really intersect too much but we watched for Vatican influence on things. When the Pope pronounced on issues of world peace and war and whatever, it would reverberate not only in Italy but of course far beyond Italy. And we had two terrific ambassadors while I was there; they were both excellent. The first was

Lindy Boggs, former member of Congress. She is from New Orleans. Absolutely classy lady, wonderful lady.

Q: Came from a major political family.

POPE: Major political family. And she was terrific. And she was not so young; I think she was already more than 80, if I remember right. And she was full of vitality and she entertained a lot and she called on officials and traveled around Italy and called on cardinals as I recall. She was excellent.

And then we got Jim Nicholson who is currently the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs. And he came out of the 2000 campaign where he was the campaign chairman. And he was absolutely top notch too. He is smart, energetic, worked really hard, developed a good relationship with the Pope and was very active.

Q: From your vantage point, how was Italy fitting into the European community?

POPE: Interesting. Because they considered themselves one of the big four; France, UK, Germany and Italy. And they really did not like it when there were meetings of the French President, the British Prime Minister and the German Chancellor and they were not involved. They really, really did not care for that. And it was clear that there was still a lot of ambivalence at the very top of the EU about where Italy fit. They believed that they were one of the big four and the other three had these frequent meetings in places where they were not involved and it was clear that they at least some of the time considered them in the rest of the group. The Italians really did not care for that at all. But they were very dedicated Europeanists at the same time, dedicated to the EU and supporting the EU and working through the EU. After Maastricht, increasingly not only in the economic side of things but on the political side, military and other ways, they were very devout Europeanists.

Q: Did we use the Italians, it is not a very nice term, but to carry our water for us within the European Union? In other words, there would be issues and use them as somebody who was friendly to us to deal with maybe the French and others or whatnot?

POPE: We tried to influence everybody in the European Union, including the French, to be friendly inside the EU to promote policies inside the EU that we liked or try to slowdown developments that we did not like. I think carry water is probably too strong a term but of course. We talked to the Dutch when I was there and they were the President of the EU during one of the years I was there; I think it was '97. And we had President Clinton come for the US-EU Summit and during that six months we interacted with the Dutch very intensively to try to convince them of the wisdom of advancing some of the things we were interested in inside the Presidency. And we did the same with the Italians and I know my colleagues all around Europe were trying the same thing. Carry water is probably too much, but there were some things.

For example, one of the big arguments that was going on, everything changed after 9/11 but before 9/11, there was a panoply of things we were talking about, Kyoto and genetically modified organisms, that was a big deal, agriculture, and privacy. The Italians in particular, not

so much the Italians but the head of the Italian Privacy Commission was an Italian lawyer who also was the head of the European Privacy Commission and he was a real ardent advocate of not sharing information across borders and really withholding. And I remember being at a meeting in the Hague when a senior USG official came from Washington and was talking to the Dutch businesspeople about these new privacy regulations that were coming out. He said essentially that your tax guilders are paying for the EU to put in the following policies. What do you think about this? And he was outlining about how if you, for example, have bought a subsidiary in the U.S. you cannot transfer payroll data, personnel data or anything else from that company back to your headquarters here or from your headquarters back to that company. It is illegal because you are violating the rights of your employees. And you should have seen the faces around this room of these businesspeople. How can we operate if we can't share our own data? And this was the head of the commission in Italy who was the head of the European effort on privacy, data privacy, was really strong and not very amenable to persuasion.

Q: Did this get resolved or not?

POPE: Not while I was there, but some of what I have read it has lessened to some degree. They have seen the light they cannot adopt super extreme positions, that within reason there has to be some amount of data transfer, particularly at the corporate level.

Q: What about the _____ and cultural policy? Italy really- this is really a German-French issue but the Italians, how do they feel about this?

POPE: I do not remember. Like the others they were always talking about how our taxpayers' money goes and we should not be subsidizing somebody's farmer to create mountains and mountains of butter. The thing that I remember that particularly exercised the Italians was protecting their branded products like Parma hams and different kinds of cheeses and things. The thing that really got them was the European Commission, the central regulators coming out of Brussels reaching into small villages and small mountaintop operations that had operated the same for hundreds of years in creating these very special cheeses. They would literally stir them by hand and that kind of thing. And they would get these regulations down from Brussels that you have to create separate men's and women's restrooms and all of these different things and these little mountaintop operations were maybe as big as the room we are sitting in, did not have any restroom, they had a little outhouse partway down the mountain behind and there were no men's and women's anything, and wheelchair ramps and all of these different things for operations that really should not have been affected. And so the Italians really were unhappy on a number of scores. I think it was less the common agricultural policy and more on their specialized names; Parma keeps coming back to me. But that type of thing and also the regulations that were ensnaring. Because the way the Italian economy was set up, it actually encouraged, because of taxation and regulations, it actually encouraged enterprises to be very small; there were few big ones like Fiat. But there were special regulations, as I recall, for under 15 employees. They did not have to file all kinds of papers and taxes and things they did not have to do if they were a small business. And so what you had, when you had some entrepreneur he would set up 10 different enterprises with 14 people each instead of one that had 140, 150 employees. And these regulations really hit these little enterprises coming out of Brussels.

Q: What was happening politically in Italy? Was Berlusconi a figure- he had not achieved power yet, had he, or did?

POPE: Not when I came but before I left, yes.

Q: Well how did we view the Berlusconi phenomenon and also, you know, what is it, the Northern Movement and all?

POPE: Yes, Lega Nord, Northern League.

Q: How were those viewed?

POPE: Well Northern League was viewed negatively by everybody, a little bit like Le Pen in France as being really too isolationist and too anti-immigrant. There was some way when you could be a little bit more conservative and a little more circumspect without going that far. The first couple of years I was there, there were left-wing governments and we had perfectly fine relations with them and when we needed help on anything we got it, from a security point of view, for example. I did feel, this was me personally, I did feel that we perhaps had allowed ourselves to get a little bit too oriented toward the parties of the left and too knowledgeable; I did not know so much about the parties of the right. And in addition to trying to enhance Embassy relations with the U.S. military around Italy, one of the things I was trying to do was get our political compass a little bit more toward the middle and so I made a point of getting to know some of the people who were going to be coming in, Fini and some of the others. And in retrospect I think that turned out to be the right thing. Because I was chargé for most of the year 2001 and that is when Berlusconi was running and then he came in and was consolidating his new prime ministership.

Q: Did we get any feel for Berlusconi and the United States?

POPE: You mean before?

Q: Yes, before.

POPE: Well he said all the right things about wanting to be the best ally in Europe of the United States, etcetera. And his philosophy certainly fit with the new administration in the United States.

Q: When the new American administration came in, did that cause any changes in the Italian policy, would you say?

POPE: Not so much because it was not very long after that when Berlusconi was elected. Bush came in at the end of January of '01 and Berlusconi was elected in May and took over immediately; they do not have as long a transition. The new Bush administration was still getting consolidated at that point, so it happened more or less simultaneously. Italy has always been one of our closest friends. We have huge ties economically, but also blood and history and everything else.

Q: How did 9/11 hit?

Okay, we are going to stop at this point and we will pick this up in 2001, September 11.

POPE: Yes.

Q: 9/11 and Berlusconi and the Bush Administration are both pretty new on the scene and how did that work out.

POPE: Yes. We had been concerned, I want to say one thing before you turn it off, we had been concerned over the year 2001 and even in 2000 about terrorism. It was not new and we had actually, I had actually closed the Embassy at the beginning of 2001 so we can talk about that a little bit too.

Q: Good, great.

Okay, today is the 29th of September, 2006. I do not know if we talked about Berlusconi coming in but you know, there had been, and I am not up to date on this but sort of the Lombardi group or something. I mean, the idea of sort of a Northern separatist group and all and Berlusconi. How did we view, at the time, when he came in, and then we will move on to other things, how did we view him?

POPE: Who, Berlusconi?

Q: Yes, on the Italian scene.

POPE: Well there had been leftist governments for quite a long time, left of center, with which we had had good relations. It had worked well. Even in the early days of the Bush Administration, they were very attentive. I mentioned having closed the Embassy, that was in early January of '01, it was just before President Bush was inaugurated but it was understood the general policy thrust where he was going. The Italians pulled out the stops to ring our Embassy with additional security and do whatever we asked for. This was D'Alema, who is now the foreign minister by the way, the D'Alema Government, so there is not an issue there, but it was obvious that a Berlusconi Government was going to be more simpatico, more ideologically attuned to the new administration in the United States. He was a breath of fresh air, in a certain way. I mean, lots of people were appalled that he was coming in, this guy who was an incredibly wealthy businessman and had been an entertainer on a cruise ship as a young man and all of this kind of thing, but there were others who said he was exactly what we need, let us shake it up, the old political establishment where you see all the same faces again and again, let us shake it up and get some new people in there.

Q: This is 48, I guess, it has been sort of the same merry-go-round.

POPE: Just about. And get some new people in and get some more modern economic procedures and laws and let us shake it up. You remember just very recently there was an election in

Sweden, not to get too far off the subject, but the Social Democrats have been in power so long. When any one party is in power so long they get stale, they tend to go a little off the tracks and you need somebody new and maybe it was that way in Italy, at that point.

Q: Well you mentioned closing the embassy. What was the threat and how did you get information and what was the problem?

POPE: The threat was Islamic terrorists in Rome going to actually bomb the Embassy. The information came from a not-unexpected channel. And we had some late meetings, late night, middle-of-the-night meetings and various opinions of what we should do and I basically decided and informed Washington and they were very supportive of it. And this was nine months before September 11, eight months before. And there was a big outcry in Rome, there was a huge outcry about it. Some people understood but others ... I remember a very senior retired politician who had been out of politics for a long time but still sounded off in the papers from time to time who was just fulminating about this; the Americans are trying to embarrass us, there is no such thing as Islamic terrorism, what are you talking about, I know what this really is, this is really an American disguised protest over our policy on the death penalty. That was the most imaginative of all of the explanations of why we closed the Embassy, for one workday only, and the Italians ringed the place and we reopened the next workday. This was a Friday; we reopened on a Monday. And I can assure you it had nothing to do with the Italians' well known policy opposing the death penalty, it was just, it was classic. You know that expression in Italian, that wonderful expression, "dietrologia," what is really behind it, you know, the sun came up this morning, what does he mean by that, what is the really meaning behind that? But that was really a stretch, even by Italian standards, to think that we would close our embassy for a day in disguised protest over the Italian policy on the death penalty without actually saying here is what we are doing and why. Silly.

Q: As you were making the decision to close the embassy, what were some of the particular thought processes? Why keep it open under obviously heavy guard or why close it? I mean, what would closing mean politically? You cannot help it in any country but particularly a country like Italy where there is something behind everything, you are sending a message. Can you talk a little about that?

POPE: We were not trying to send any message. It was just that the timeframe, if this was good information, the timeframe was so short, there was just no time and it was about protecting people. And it was a judgment call. And it did not happen, so either I made the wrong judgment and it was not going to happen, or they pulled back and it was going to happen.

Q: Was anybody arrested on this thing?

POPE: I cannot tell you for sure. There was another group that was arrested at the same time and I recall that very clearly, or a little after, who had maps and things like that with them, unrelated to the closure, and I cannot remember whether there was.

Q: By the time you were there had the whole thing with the Potere Operaio and the Red Brigade, was that all gone?

POPE: It was until, I have forgotten exactly-

Q: These, by the way, were terrorist organizations essentially in the '70s, maybe going back a bit, homegrown terrorist organizations.

POPE: Right. Not too long after I came an aide to the labor minister was gunned down on the street in Rome. There was a note that the authorities tracked to the very same typewriter, one of those old-fashioned manual typewriters that had been used in the '60s and '70s by the Red Brigades, the very same one.

Q: Those are the ones who killed Moro.

POPE: Among others, yes. And this was the, I called it the grandsons of the Red Brigades, and they finally did break that and arrest some people who were trying to reconstitute themselves, obviously much younger than the original ones. But they did have the same typewriter, so clearly they were linked in some way. And there was at least one other while I was there, incident, having to do with the Red Brigades. There was another one in Milan, I think, attacking somebody on a bicycle, a senior official as he was arriving home.

Q: When Berlusconi came in one of the always problems of Italy political thing is, you know, rather both corruption and using the government influence and all. How did we view that? I mean, did we see it was going to get worse or better or?

POPE: I do not remember spending a whole lot of time thinking about the internal domestic government corruption-type thing. I mean, our focus was overwhelmingly on foreign policy, had been initially on Balkans and getting over the Cavalese incident. Subsequently, by the time Berlusconi came, we were really starting to focus on the relationship with the U.S., new president, new prime minister. Shortly after that President Bush came out in July of '01 for the G8 Summit that was held up in Genoa. And it was only his second trip abroad as President and very shortly after that you had 9/11 and that overwhelmed everything. We were not focused on how well-behaved any particular government was internally.

Q: Just one further question then we will get to other things. During this time, how did the relationship with the Vatican work from the American Embassy to Italy in Rome? I mean, obviously we have an ambassador to the Vatican and all that but still you are sharing each other's territory and the Catholic Church is a tremendous influence in Italy. In your time how did we view that relationship with our ambassador or ambassadors?

POPE: Well there was never the slightest problem or issue. We had two absolutely terrific ambassadors to the Holy See while I was there. The first one was Lindy Boggs, widow of Hale Boggs, later long-time representative herself; she was absolutely wonderful, delightful and very effective. She was really hard working, very effective; she was absolutely delightful. They kept in their lane and we kept in our lane. And obviously we did follow internal politics and we did find it really interesting during the Italian campaign in late 2000 and early 2001, it was interesting to watch politicians who had not been near a church in their adult lives suddenly

calling on cardinals, as long as there were a lot of cameras around. So it was interesting to see it. But I just do not remember ever having the slightest issue of getting in either lane. We provided administrative support and Marines to their small embassy which was over near the Circo Massimo and otherwise we stayed out of each other's lanes.

Q: The Bush G8 Summit, of course this was an Italy focus but how did that work for you all?

POPE: It was a huge effort, an enormous effort. I have forgotten the number but the Embassy sent something like 300 people up there, it was so big. We sent people, a big swath of people from the embassy plus people from consulates and people over from Milan. It was in Genoa, and it had been selected by the previous government and dropped on the Berlusconi Government with about two months to go before it was going to be held. It was about as difficult a spot in Italy to have it given that-

Q: I was going to say Genoa is just not that big a place.

POPE: It is not big and it has these little narrow, twisting streets. I can recall the Secret Service was not really very enthusiastic, but we had nothing to do with the choice of it. That is where they decided to do it and we had to make the best of it. But it was an even bigger effort than a presidential visit normally would have been, given the complications. It was far from us, we did not have representation there. If it had been in Milan, for example, we have a big consulate that is larger than many embassies and that would have made all the difference. But it was a big effort. It finally worked out smooth as silk in the end, except for the riots. You know, the anarchists who all dressed in black and who were smashing windows.

Q: They killed a policeman didn't they?

POPE: No. A policeman killed one of them. But if you look at the films, and of course there was a huge outcry, how could a policeman kill an innocent protestor, and you look at the films, and a police jeep-type vehicle had gotten separated from all of the others and was surrounded by people in black who had black masks on, by the way. They were masked and were attacking this jeep and you had a young police reservist who was about 19 or 20 years old inside this vehicle being attacked from all sides, and the one guy had this cylinder, you could see it.

Q: It looked like a fire extinguisher.

Q: It looked like a fire extinguisher but the guy who was being attacked from all sides, this 20-year-old police or 19-year-old police reservist being attacked, saw something being tossed into his vehicle which could have been a bomb or a flammable thing like some kind of grenade. He fired at this guy and killed him. And there was a huge outcry. Honestly I thought he was justified but, you know, it was not our call to decide it; I thought he was justified. These were the same people who had been going down streets attacking people, smashing windows, smashing bank windows with rocks and clubs they brought with them for this purpose, wearing masks; these were not law-abiding citizens who were peacefully protesting. The people who were peacefully protesting, and there were a significant number, included nuns and normal people, but they were dressed normally and they had signs and they marched peacefully and they were left alone. I

thought that the guys in black were basically terrorists of a kind.

Q: Yes. Well I mean, there is this group which seems to take a more virulent posture than they do in the United States.

POPE: Much. I had not known much about them but they are actually a very scary group and there are some apparently who, where they get their money I wonder, but who just go from country to country to country and even set up little training bases, not just to camp in while they are waiting but how to attack police, how to attack buildings. Then they come dressed in masks. I think the police have every right to find and arrest all those people.

Q: Yes. Well let's come to, I guess, 9/11.

POPE: Yes.

Q: Where were you, tell me, where were you and what were you doing and what happened?

POPE: It is interesting. It is ironic. I was at the Embassy having just come back from spending the morning out at the Ambassador's residence. We had no ambassador at the time so we were using the Residence for a variety of things. We had set up an off-site because the Foreign Service Institute had sent out a team for training for disaster situations. So we had that team that morning and we had done some scenarios. Instead of actually running it, I decided to sit back and let the acting DCM do so. I had named the number three person at the Embassy as the acting DCM, and she was chairing the mock disaster. One scenario was a big plane crash. I have forgotten what the other scenarios were, but I spent half a day out there. They kept going and I came back to the Embassy and grabbed a bite to eat and went to my desk. That is when somebody said to turn on the television. It was really ironic that we had been playing those kinds of games that very morning.

Q: What did you, when you saw this, I mean, as the news, the first crash seemed like an accident.

POPE: Yes.

Q: The second crash obviously not and then, you know, we knew the Pentagon and all. What did we all do in Rome at the time and then what sort of instructions were coming out?

POPE: Well, like everybody, I did think the first one was an accident. I remember seeing that smoke plume come and I thought unbelievable, if the pilot could just have maintained enough control to go to one side of the other but he went right into the middle of it. Isn't that unbelievably tragic? And then I very quickly understood what was going on. We closed down, started sending people home and pulled together the Emergency Action Committee to decide what to do and there were lots of ... The phones were ringing off the hook, cables flashing back and forth and we got very good guidance and cooperation from the Department, from the Bureau of European Affairs, DS. Diplomatic Security was sending stuff out, the Italians ringed the place again, more than they had normally, they had a fair amount already around and they ringed the place. I felt we reacted to it pretty well.

Q: Our consulate what did-?

POPE: Same. I was on the phone immediately to the consuls general, the three principal officers, and they sent people home, we shut down. It was already mid-afternoon, and we just started filtering people out, closed down and decided what to do.

Q: What was the reaction that you were observing in Italy to this?

POPE: It was shock, dismay. I never met an Italian who did not have a relative in the United States and lots of them in New York. And shock, dismay, horror. Very shortly after that we had people appearing with bouquets of flowers and very much like the funeral of Princess Diana or after Diana was killed and outside Buckingham Palace there was this mountain of flowers; we had the same, we had wreaths being put up against our gate and flowers, people outside holding candles. I went out and talked to a lot of people and they were all, there was extreme solidarity. Then phone calls started coming. I got called by the President of Italy, Carlo Ciampi, and went over there about six our time, which was about noon Washington time, and had a one-one-one with him. He had a message for President Bush, which expressed extreme solidarity. He was angry, basically; they cannot do this to us and we will do something about this.

Q: Was it pretty well understood, I mean, in many ways, probably the most sophisticated people in the continent were the Italians as far as dealing with things, where this came from? Because you know, at first, I mean, there was some, I would not say controversy but you know, I mean, also there are some planes crash and there is no sort of note left behind and all.

POPE: I do not remember any question about it. I do not remember that anybody had any doubts who did it and basically why. And of course Berlusconi sent a message to the President as well and my phone was ringing off the hook from ministers and head of the national police. What do you need and what can we do? The various groups, the parliamentary groups came to call, the President of the Senate came down and we had almost like a little informal prayer ceremony in the portico of the Embassy. The largest mosque in all of Europe is in Rome and they have a very enlightened and very moderate leadership and the leadership of that came out very, very quickly with a ringing denunciation of such terrorism. It is un-Islamic, we oppose it, we do not support it in any way, we support our friends, our American friends, we are horrified and aghast at this. Then they came to the Embassy, and I received them. And then later, my wife and I went to the mosque to have tea and have a mini-vigil with them and be quiet with them awhile. And the Jewish community had a special service for the dead at the Grand Synagogue of Rome. It was an amazing time. And President Ciampi organized a huge, it was just gigantic, an interfaith service for the dead at Saint John in Lateran, Saint Giovanni in Laterano.

Q: Saint John of the Chains, yes.

POPE: And they had the head Imam and the Rabbi of Rome and Cardinal and Protestant Minister from the International Baptist Church and my wife and I there along with the President and his wife and then all the whole cabinet and everybody was there and it was ... Oh and the other thing that was so impressive, something that I will never forget, I see it when I close my

eyes, the Mayor of Rome put together a torchlight parade that was probably two- the night of the 13th or maybe 14th, I think the 13th, that started near the Coliseum. We were given torches, not flashlights but real torches, and he and I were at the front and right in front of us were people carrying a banner -- No to terrorism, support America. It was dark and we were walking. Behind us were thousands and thousands of people carrying torches. It looked like a sea of lava coming down from a volcano at night because it was kind of snaking around the streets behind us. I looked back several times; I was almost in tears, it was a stunning thing. And we went all the way around and came all the way back to the Piazza Venezia, where a big stage was set up, and the mayor, gave a ringing denunciation of terrorism and support for America. If New York bids for the 2012 Olympics, we will withdraw our bid because we will support New York, etcetera, etcetera. Then they put me up there, and I spoke for 10 minutes or something to the crowd. It was just a swirl of things, a blur of things that happened after. It was an amazing time.

Q: Were we concerned about the Muslims in Italy at the time? Because Italy has always had quite a few Somalis and others coming in and at that time how did we get in from Europe various elements of the embassy and also from the Italian police, how did we deal with the Islamic community there?

POPE: Especially in Milan, there was a lot of concern, around Milan. There were others in other places but it was especially in the North. There it was one mosque in particular that was not a grand, beautiful, real mosque like in Rome but was kind of a backyard, garage-type mosque, very radical. And the Italians had been, the Italian authorities had been concerned about that one and ones like it for some time and so. But security was the preoccupation of everybody inside the Embassy. I remember pulling together the Law Enforcement Working Group that had been revived prior to 2001, and I was really glad I had because we had many, many agencies. We had almost 30 agencies of the U.S. Government and several of them were independent law enforcement or enforcement-related type entities like Customs and FBI. Whatever they had been doing, everybody went to work on whatever we could find, both about 9/11, if we could, but as well as what is going on inside of Italy and our own self-protection. And the Italians, I remember, pulled resources off of other things they were working on that were important things to them to put resources on this, on potential threats that they worried about.

Q: I am sure we probably were not paying much attention prior to this but afterwards, the Saudis had a policy of supporting schools in madrassas and Italy.

POPE: I do not remember that being an issue; I do not remember that coming up. It could have, it could have been there and we just were so overwhelmed with 9/11 and our own protection that we were not reaching out a little bit farther to that; I do not know. I do not recall it.

Q: It is the sort of thing that really is, after the initial shock, as we started taking more and more a look around, including right here in Washington, we started saying what are they teaching?

POPE: Oh, it is a definite issue.

Q: And you know, the Saudis were our friends but they had made a pact with the devil.

POPE: Yes, it was an issue for sure later on, especially after I left Rome and came to Counterterrorism, it was certainly something that a lot of people were looking at. But in the early days, right after 9/11, the very end of 2001 and early 2002, that was far off the radar scope, if it was present in Italy and I just do not remember whether it was or not.

Q: When did an ambassador arrive?

POPE: December '01.

Q: So during the really very critical time you were it.

POPE: I was.

Q: What was happening as far as, you know, I mean, obviously Afghanistan and the Taliban were sort of the heart of the al Qaeda apparatus and Iraq was a completely different issue but got involved. How did we treat those two things vis-à-vis the Italians during the time you were there?

POPE: Iraq was not on the scope while I was there, but Afghanistan was overwhelmingly on the scope, and the Italians not only completely supported us but wanted to be involved. They wanted to send planes, troops, ships, something.

Q: Were there any particular, I mean outside of support and all, were we trying to do anything with the Italians, either on terrorism or anything else during this sort of end phase of your time there?

POPE: Sure. I mean we had extremely good intelligence and law enforcement working relationships with the Italians, who are very good, by the way, they are very good, especially in areas where they focus. They knew a lot about the Balkans, they know a lot about North Africa, and we had long, long standing relations and working efforts with them on law enforcement, working on the Mafia. We always had a very strong FBI presence in the Embassy, the Legat was really good, he had worked on mafia issues in New York, our Legat, and he was excellent.

Q: When you say Legat?

POPE: Legal attaché. But he was in fact, he is the senior FBI guy. Not every embassy has an FBI presence, only a few, but some of the larger ones do. We had a robust FBI presence long before 9/11, over the years.

Q: You know, you had the mafia and camorra and all that sort of stuff.

POPE: That is right. We supported the Italians, they shared information with us. We had an excellent relationship there and on the Intel side. The Italians were highly praised as not only wanting to cooperate but actually having something to cooperate with, having really a solid and very effective intelligence apparatus. And so all of that was to the good when 9/11 hit and we were working 20 hours a day, all parts of the Embassy just about trying to see what they could

share, sharing information with them and at the same time trying to secure ourselves better inside the country.

Q: Were there any incidents or problems during this time that you could think of?

POPE: Well, there were a lot of different things that happened. There was one where some guys were arrested with maps and they insisted that they were just tourists and they had the American Embassy circled on a map. Now maybe they just wanted to come see how beautiful our embassy was, but there were others who thought that they maybe had other things in mind. I think that group was expelled. The one that got the most press and actually was amusing was the supposed effort to tunnel under the Embassy and poison our water supply. And that came about because there was an apartment somewhere in Rome and some guys were discovered in there and they also had a map with the Embassy circled but also there was a tunnel- Rome is riddled underneath with tunnels and a lot of them date back to Roman days and then on top of those there are others that are newer. And a lot of the utilities are carried there. And right behind the embassy there is a big tunnel that does not go under the Embassy property but parallels it down one of the main streets and crosses over Via Veneto and keeps going somewhere. It carries phone and sewer and water and all kinds of different pipes down there. And people are not supposed to be able to access it because what they have done is they have built walls inside these tunnels and you have to go down into a specific section, through a manhole in top, and you have to get a permit from the city to access the manhole, and then you can go down and work only in that area and then you have to come back up and then get a permit for the next manhole. And what some workers do is to get one permit and then go down and knock a little hole in the wall in between the sections and go through and then knock another hole so they can just go up and down and work on the different parts of it.

Well, the authorities for some reason were alerted to this apartment. Nobody even knew who the original tenant was because it was one of these things where guys just kept coming and going. And out on the patio in a closet they found a couple of bags of fertilizer, so somebody decided- and the American Embassy was circled on the- and ammonium nitrate or something- was circled on this map and also these tunnels had a couple of circles and something about the water supply of the Embassy. And so the authorities looked down in this tunnel and saw a hole knocked and had decided that these so-called Islamic terrorists had gone down into the tunnels and somehow knocked the holes themselves and were going to drill through to the Embassy and poison our water supply with these two bags of fertilizer that were out on their patio. But the thing is, going from the wall of the tunnel, not the walls that were made to block off the tunnel but from the side of the tunnel into the Embassy was solid earth and rock and it would have been a huge, and it was many, many feet, effort to dig from that tunnel in all the way through and into the Embassy and find the water supply and then dump a couple of bags of fertilizer in it. And what I understood was there was a lot of pressure in that system and if they somehow had actually been able to dig through all the dirt and rock, many, many feet to get to the thing and then had tried to punch into it, they would have been knocked over like a fire hose with the pressure coming out at them and they would never have been able to get anything into the system. But for days, the press was going crazy. The Italian press I could understand, because they do get very excited, this was the tunnel and water plot. And I had the phone ringing off the hook. But a U.S. paper had a journalist out there who just loved the story and I said the problem is that while we have

had some threats we were concerned about, this one is ridiculous, it is not real. The paper printed it anyway, and then of course the Department was all excited. So it worked both ways. We had some very concerning moments.

After 9/11 we had to have several what I call “Town Hall” meetings because there were many employees who were really concerned, Italian employees, particularly, who were really worried. And I can remember telling them, honestly, we are doing everything we possibly can and the Italian authorities are doing everything they can but the reality is this. This is the American Embassy. You saw what happened in East Africa. We are a target and we are doing everything we can, but I cannot promise you that nothing will ever happen. I come every day. My office is right facing the street on Via Veneto. My wife comes every day for her language lesson. I have not stopped her from coming, and we are just going to go forward here. And I pray that none of you leave us, because there has been some talk and people are so scared that they might stop coming, they might leave our employment. I said we value all of you and we want you to stay, but if you are that worried maybe you need to go to work for the Swiss Embassy or Swedish Embassy or somewhere where you feel that they will not ever be a target. We are a target and we are doing what we can, but I cannot promise you nothing will ever happen. There was a lot of that and also the other thing with the schools.

There were a lot of people who were very courageous about themselves but then where the children were concerned they get really nervous, and so there were lots of school issues. And fortunately one of our two RSOs, one of the two senior RSOs, had children at the school and was really well plugged in. He did a great job of calming the schools down and helping me calm the parents down, because there was a lot of people going into orbit over the schools even though they were pretty courageous about themselves. So it was an amazing time.

Q: What sort of security- you were the Chargé, what sort of precautions were around you?

POPE: Well we already had around the house, around the Residence, we already had permanently stationed carabinieri with guns and vehicles around before 9/11 hit. I had a detail front and back and an armored car and so none of that changed; they were just less willing to let me do what I wanted. I used to like to walk to work, and they sometimes would let me but once 9/11 happened the answer was absolutely not, no walking.

Q: One of my great pleasure when I was in Naples was walking the streets, I walked almost every major street in Naples but you know, after the Red Brigade got going I had to stop that.

POPE: Rome is glorious. And on weekends they would sometimes let you sneak out to walk the dog.

Q: Is there anything we can think to cover about your time there?

POPE: In Italy?

Q: In Italy.

POPE: It was just terrific. One thing that was a real concern when I was first there in particular was the fallout from the military jet disaster up in the north, that had happened before I came, but it was still reverberating; it was horrible.

Q: You might explain what this was.

POPE: Yes, this was a Marine jet that was on a routine training flight up in the north and for some reason was flying very low in a valley. As I understand it, the plane clipped a cable car line for skiers and 20 skiers fell to their deaths. And it was a huge flap and the Italians rightly were just outraged by it, Italians of all stripes, not just the more leftist ones, everybody was just outraged about it before I got to Rome. It reverberated for a long time, it was still reverberating when I got there.

Q: Well as I recall too the Marines involved tried to and even some of their superiors tried to cover up some of the details of this, at least that is the impression I was left with.

POPE: This all happened before I came but the press claimed that the pilots were on a joy ride. That is what the public seemed to believe. But as I say, it was before my time and I just know what I read. The trial was taking place while I was there and they were acquitted because they said their altimeter was not working. That really caused outrage; no one could believe they were acquitted. And I am not casting aspersions on that because I do not know exactly how the military court system works and I am sure they got a fair trial and that people did the best they could on it, but I just know the public reaction and politicians; there were lots of speeches and protests in the Parliament and in the newspapers and it was a big deal for quite awhile.

Q: What was your impression of, realize it is a relatively short time but how the Berlusconi Government took control. I mean, were there changes that you see, appreciable changes?

POPE: Well they were focused on trying to modernize the economy and of course they were overwhelmed immediately with the G8 Summit. They got through that pretty well, because it had been well planned and they grabbed it and got on top of it and took care of it. And then, just like President Bush, initially Berlusconi was not so focused on foreign affairs. He had more domestic ideas in mind and so did they about reforming the Italian economy. For example, their law does not encourage larger, more efficient enterprises. It encourages small enterprises because if you have, as I recall, 15 or fewer employees, there are a lot of different regulations you do not have to meet. If you have 16 or more, you have unbelievable kinds of taxes and regulations and things. So what they would do, instead of having an efficient company with 150 employees, they would break it into 10 small companies of 15 each. It was just very cumbersome and Berlusconi was trying to fix those things and bring Italy into a more modern economy when 9/11 hit.

Q: Well then you left in December.

POPE: No, no, no, I did not. The new ambassador arrived in December.

Q: Ah, yes. When did you leave?

POPE: June of '02, the next year. The new ambassador was terrific, by the way.

Q: Who was the new ambassador?

POPE: His name was Mel Sembler. He had been under Bush 41, the ambassador in Australia and I heard from people that he had done a terrific job. You know very well that political ambassadors are a mixed bag, as are career ambassadors. Some are really smart and terrific and serious, and some others are not. He was one in the former category. He had done a really good job in Australia, by all I had heard, and he proved it when he came out because he was very serious, worked hard, came to work every day, read everything, listened to everything we had to say and then asked questions and was very serious; not only did all of his duties you would expect him to do but he went to national days, he went to a lot of national days no American ambassador usually attended. Of smaller countries and smaller, less highly ranked countries. Went to national days where an American ambassador had not been seen in years and that was highly appreciated by the smaller countries. And so he did a really fine job, he was an excellent ambassador. He was experienced too, but he was serious.

Q: Yes, well he knew the trade.

POPE: And he had been part of the 2000 campaign. Jim Nicholson, who succeeded Lindy Boggs, I mentioned, we had two terrific ambassadors to the Holy See, and Lindy Boggs left and then we got Jim Nicholson, who is now the Secretary for Veterans' Affairs. He had been the head of the 2000 campaign for Bush. He is a war veteran and businessman and he was excellent, really superb. And Mel Sembler, who had already been the Ambassador to Australia, had been the finance chairman for George Bush in 2000 and had come out and was really doing a great job during the six months or so we were together, and I know he carried on very well. He was highly regarded by the Italians, by the way, who just thought he was terrific.

Q: Just as an aside, I am sure all our ambassadors and staff had problems explaining the 2000 election with the disputes and all. I mean, Americans were astounded; this must have been hard to, you know, I mean here is the great American democracy and people are looking at hanging chads and all this.

POPE: Yes, it was pretty difficult. Like most embassies do, we had a big party, we had rented a ballroom at the hotel next door and had a huge election night party and the Democrats Abroad had a little table and they were all wearing straw hats, and the Republicans Abroad had their table and wearing straw hats and there were balloons all over and big TVs with reports coming in from different states. We were going to break up around midnight, I remember, and there were lots of reporters there and confetti and all the stuff you would expect. About six in the morning, everybody was exhausted and had bags under their eyes. I finally said this is not going to be solved in awhile, everybody just go home and try to sleep a little bit. So everybody went home and slept a couple of hours and then went to work.

Q: Oh boy.

POPE: Little did we know where all this was going to go with Florida and hanging chads and all

of that and the Supreme Court. We just could not imagine it at that point. But the Italians were really interested in it as it unfolded, of course.

Q: Well then you left in say June?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Where did you go in 2001 or 2002?

POPE: To our little country house in Sweden. My wife is Swedish and we have a little country house and I went to unwind and rest.

Q: Ah ha.

POPE: You know, people say Rome is so wonderful and it is, it is just as great as it gets. But it is a pretty big job because like I say, we had almost 30 agencies and 800 people and three decent sized consulates and it was a big job and I was pretty weary. Little did I know how weary I was going to be but I was glad to have a little time off.

ALPHONSE F. LA PORTA
Political Adviser to Commander of NATO
Naples, Italy (2000-2003)

Ambassador La Porta was born and raised in New York and educated at Georgetown and New York Universities. After serving in the US Army, he joined the Foreign Service in 1965. During his career the ambassador had several assignments in Washington in the personnel and administrative field. His foreign assignments include Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, New Zealand, where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Naples, Italy. In 1997 he was named Ambassador to Mongolia, where he served until 2000. Ambassador La Porta was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: You were in Naples from when to when?

LA PORTA: We got to Naples in January of 2001 just after New Year's and I left in October of 2003.

Q: All right. I think that's when we'll pick this up next time. We haven't gone into how you got the assignment and all that, but we'll pick that up the next time.

Today is the 19th of October, 2004. How did you get to Naples?

LA PORTA: As it often happens in this business, there was an underlap in the assignment of political advisor to the commander of NATO forces in the Southern region, that's AFSOUTH

headquarters in Naples. My predecessor had curtailed his assignment because of personal reasons and the post was vacant. It turned out that the vacancy persisted for several months without the Political Military Bureau (PM) making an effort to fill it until my good friend and colleague, John Finney, took over running the POLAD office and asked why hasn't anybody done anything about filling this job? There were no good answers of course. Apparently the career management division wasn't going to advertise it until the following year as a 2001 vacancy, so there was no institutional effort to fill the job off cycle. John Finney said, well, I know a guy that might fit – somebody who has done a lot of Pol-Mil work over the years – and I know he's leaving post. John called me up and asked if I be interested. This is probably the third or fourth time that this kind of thing has happened over the years, but needless to say it took only a nanosecond for us to decide it would be just dandy to go to Naples especially as we anticipated this would be our retirement tour.

Let me just back up a little bit. Especially since my assignment was not due to end until December of 2000, the Department institutionally was not terribly interested in looking around for openings or temporary bridge assignments. They would have been just as glad if I had come home, looked around and said I'm going to retire, and then that would have been that. As it happened this assignment to Naples was not only fortuitous in terms of timing and being able to finish out my career before I approached the age of 65, but also was a good challenge and it was certainly something that I was very much interested in doing. I'm doggone glad that I did.

Q: Could you describe the POLAD structure?

LA PORTA: POLADs (sometimes called Foreign Policy Advisors) are located at 16 major commands (COCOM's or combatant commands) world-wide. Normally a POLAD has a small office and advises the commander, normally a three-or four-star general. POLADs also are important conduits of information to State and other agencies, the civilian side of DOD, embassies in their region, and international organizations, NATO in our case. Because of my seniority (rank as an MC with fairly long time-in-grade), I was a three-star equivalent which gave me very good access and privileges.

Q: Okay, let's talk about AFSOUTH, what area did they cover and what was your role?

LA PORTA: The NATO regional command in Naples basically covers everything from Spain through to Central Asia and that includes the Mediterranean basin and the new members of NATO, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. It also includes the Balkans, Turkey, Greece, Ukraine, Russia and the Caucasus states – Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. We even had cooperative programs and training with the Central Asian countries. For NATO, we covered the Middle East and the Levant, plus North Africa from Egypt all the way around to Mali. NATO has a program called the Mediterranean Dialogue, which includes Jordan, significantly Israel, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Mali. It's quite an interesting institution, but this gives the NATO Southern command, which operates under the authority of Brussels, a very wide scope of action. Previously most of NATO's interest had been in the North during the Cold War and immediately after. The command that received the most attention was AFNORTH in Holland that commanded the not only the NATO AWACS fleet, but also air defense in the Northern region and all of the forces pointed at the former Soviet Union and its satellites.

The function of a POLAD, as I used to call it the in-house “pet diplomat” of the commander. Whatever authority and/or influence we had depended very much on our relationship with the commander. Before I went to Naples Admiral James Ellis was then the AFSOUTH commander or the CINC.

Q: The present administration doesn't like the term CINC.

LA PORTA: That's right. Well, Mr. Rumsfeld said that in the United States, there's only one commander in chief and that's the president and so he abolished the term insofar as the regional U.S. commanders were concerned. On the other hand the title still survives in NATO although the recent reorganization is phasing that out. Now everybody's a commander, a regional commander as distinct from a regional commander in chief. Leaving that aside, the functions of a POLAD or political advisor are to keep the commander current with civil developments within the entire area of the command's responsibility. This is a tall order in a place that has a very broad geography and hypothetical reach in terms of the application of NATO forces and other kinds of interests, such as civilian-type interests like the NATO environment program and the science and technology program. The Partnership for Peace, which is one of the most important things the NATO regional commands do, also brought us into close relationships with the new ex-Soviet states.

We construed ourselves in the POLAD office as a mini-embassy embedded in the NATO military command that looked after the commander's diplomatic and political interests. I was very fortunate because I had two extremely supportive commanders. The first was Admiral Ellis whom I served for a little more than a year. Admiral Ellis later went off to command STRATCOM at Offutt Air Force Base just outside Omaha, Nebraska that commanded all of the strategic forces, long range aircraft, missiles, and the nukes. They also had a special responsibility for global warfare and anything that required more than a regional reach. Admiral Ellis, although he had been commander in Naples for about two years was not happy with his POLAD advisor or the workings of the office. There were only four officers assigned to the POLAD office: one U.S. officer who was a Greek/Turk expert, an Italian officer, a British officer and a French officer. Basically the office had fallen into a slump, except when it came to preparing the commander for his trips. Except for meetings in Brussels the office largely was confined to answering questions.

Admiral Ellis made it clear to me when I was interviewed before I went to Naples that he wanted a pro-active organization and that he wanted somebody to look ahead and define the issues as well as to undertake longer range planning in addition to day-to-day staff work. He gave me my mandate and I will have to say I got 110% backing from Admiral Ellis and his immediate staff for everything that I did. After a little more than a year, Admiral Ellis was replaced by Admiral Gregory G. Johnson, affectionately known as Grog Johnson. He was another navy four-star admiral, a man who had a terrific political military experience as a defense advisor to former Secretary of Defense Cohen under the Clinton administration and also former military aide to Colin Powell when Powell was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Admiral Johnson was a political science graduate of the University of Maine and did not come

up through the academy circuit, but I think his job as commander in Naples allowed him to expand his political military horizons and do all of those things that had been suppressed during his long military career.

The commanders in Naples had a second hat. They were dual hatted as both a NATO commander and as a U.S. commander. Both Admiral Ellis and Admiral Johnson were concurrently commanders of all U.S. naval forces in Europe, a command that is called USNAVEUR, which had its headquarters in London and is now being relocated to Naples. We had two headquarters. We had a U.S. national staff located in London. We had a multinational staff, the NATO staff located in Naples. As POLAD to Admiral Johnson and Admiral Ellis I was accredited to both headquarters. I was POLAD in London at the same time I was POLAD in Naples.

This was an interesting aspect of the job, but what this did in practical terms was allow us to draw resources, especially human resources, from both the NATO and U.S. channels. In other words, we could work both the NATO and U.S. personnel military personnel systems. Secondly, it gave us a double barreled entree into Washington. We could play the NATO role and go through Brussels, and deal with the U.S. NATO mission in Brussels on issues, or with other diplomatic missions there, as well as the NATO International Staff, but we also had the option of going through London straight into the Navy staff back in Washington. We had a lot of relationships that I believe were able to successfully use to prosecute the commander's business.

Q: Well, All, when you arrived and as it developed, what were the major issues, countries, I mean I immediately think of the former Yugoslavia. Did you have Kosovo and all that and then build up to the Iraq business? What was the situation before 9/11 and then after 9/11?

LA PORTA: During the first year our overwhelming preoccupation was the Balkans. We always said to the admiral that he was also CINC Balkans, the commander in chief of the Balkans, but that he had other things to do in the region besides just tend to the Balkan crisis of the day. During the first year we had an outbreak of ethnic warfare in Macedonia and the POLAD office was running a 24 hour a day watch on that situation. I had to bring in extra officers from NATO in order to support our political military watch.

During that operation we functioned very much like the political-military action team or PMAT does today in the Political Military bureau in State. After 9/11 this office was stood up to run a reporting system on the conduct of the war, incorporating intelligence and other kinds of information to deal with all aspects of the conflict. We did this in the spring of 2001 for Macedonia where fighting between the Macedonian Slavs and the Albanian population broke out in earnest. It was a successful model of what we could do from the POLAD standpoint because in practicality the few of us in the POLAD office were able to get information quicker, more directly and hopefully better than was coming through the regular command and Intel channels which had to go through several levels before the information found its way to the commander.

Q: How did you get it, did you essentially have your man or talk directly to our embassy in Skopje?

LA PORTA: One of the things we did was put an officer in Skopje. We had a succession of officers, starting with a Belgian lieutenant colonel, take up residence in Skopje in the NATO office there, but he worked as an extension of our office, so he was reporting to us rather than waiting for information to go through the various NATO hands or national headquarters. We put our person on the ground very quickly.

We also worked directly with not only the U.S. mission in Macedonia and the NATO combat command organization was stood up there, but also we were in direct contact with the non-American NATO POLAD. He was, initially I think a Dutchman. We also worked bilaterally with other diplomatic missions, especially the British, to find out what was going on. We established contact with their attachés, and with my British officers we worked a pretty wide information effort in terms of collecting open source information, newspapers and other kinds of reporting.

Q: But other than getting information, what was NATO doing?

LA PORTA: Well, in the beginning NATO had a senior diplomat who along with a senior EU diplomat were trying to negotiate a stand-down between the Albanian dissident forces. It was always difficult to characterize the Albanians; you certainly didn't want to call them freedom fighters because they didn't necessarily have that as their objective. They were always vague about questions of autonomy or regional autonomy. You really couldn't call them terrorists because they did have an organization, they did have declared goals, they did have people who entered into negotiations so we usually called them just simply the dissidents because they were just unhappy with the way they were being dealt with by the Macedonian Slavic majority government. Eventually there was an extended negotiating process that lasted about two and a half months from June 2001 until roughly the middle of September in which there were numerous levels of negotiations. They finally got an agreement called the Ohrid Agreement which is named for a lake in Western Macedonia on the Albanian border.

Q: Beautiful.

LA PORTA: A lovely place and all kinds of nice hotels. The Albanian fighters and the Macedonian government agreed on a comprehensive plan for confidence building measures, including multiethnic policing, recognition of the Albanian language, using the Albanian language in the government and in parliament, conducting a real census prior to elections that were to be held in late 2001, and a range of other measures in education and social areas. The number of Albanians in the police and the armed forces was to be incremental. This negotiation occupied a number of international organizations, not only NATO and the EU, but the International Organization for Migration and even some of the UN agencies in minor ways.

We also had to cope with the refugee flow of Slavs living in Albanian majority areas or Albanians wanting to get out of the fighting. It was quite a challenge and it was one of the more successful models for diplomatic intervention and crisis resolution. There was very little loss of life, mostly people killed in sporadic incidents, and the number of NATO forces on the ground was minimal. It was only a couple thousand.

It was the position of NATO, representing all of the allies, that there was solid agreement among

the allies as to what needed to be done. Once the Macedonian government as well as the Macedonian Albanians understood that this was the full weight of NATO opinion coming down on them as well as the EU, they began to honor their agreements and behave in a more civilized fashion toward each other.

Q: Now, did you accompany Admiral Ellis to Skopje and talk to the various parties and all?

LA PORTA: Constantly. I arrived in Naples on January 2nd, two days later I was on the plane with Admiral Ellis headed for Skopje. We used to get to Macedonia about every six weeks during the crisis period which lasted most of 2001 and generally speaking to other areas in the Balkans at least every two months. Admiral Johnson established the policy, after things wound down in Macedonia, of trying to get to Macedonia about every two months, and visiting with his NATO commanders in Kosovo and Bosnia at least once every six weeks, either in those capitals, in Naples or another location.

The Kosovo situation likewise was one for which there were no easy answers. It was a perfect example of all sides behaving badly and typified the old prayer book rubric of "there is no health in us" because there sure wasn't. It was the case of whether it was Slavs or different Albanian factions or the UN failing to measure up or acting out in the worst possible ways to preclude coming together or development of a genuine consensus. Consequently it was the force of NATO action backed up politically/diplomatically by the EU. NATO was really on point to keep the factions and parties who didn't like each other one bit at least engaged in some kind of effort to create a unified government.

Q: Well, Al, I'm speaking as somebody who spent five years in Yugoslavia. Did you have a Balkan hand who could take you back to 1358 or 1398? That's their modern history. But bring you up, keep you up to date who was whom and who was doing what to whom?

LA PORTA: There were a lot of Balkan watchers. We worked with the POLAD office in KFOR, the NATO command in Pristina. The POLAD office there had two officers. Sometimes they were Americans, sometimes not. They had a staff and access to people locally. By and large they did a good job of keeping up with the other diplomatic missions and serving as a channel for us in Naples and also for the POLAD in Brussels.

The question of Southern Serbia was a running problem in early 2001 through about early July. We had an American POLAD in the area, Sean Sullivan, and his deputy who was a U.S. navy lieutenant commander, Wayne Porter, who were intimately engaged in negotiations with the Albanian and Serb factions to get a truce and some confidence building measures in place. Everything from building village roads and sinking new wells in remote villages, establishing a code of conduct for politicians, obtaining a better deal for Albanians in the local educational system, getting Albanians into the medical service were some of the things that were done.

Southern Serbia, or the Presavo Valley, was a precarious situation and there was great fear that the situation, which was aggravated by parties in Belgrade and exploited by some Albanian hypernationalists in Kosovo over the border, could have erupted into a general Balkan war. I think that it's to the credit of NATO diplomacy that that situation was not allowed to get worse.

The other issue of course was in Bosnia. While I wouldn't characterize the situation there as unstable, it was certainly fragile. Over the three years I was in Naples I sensed a progression in terms of increased confidence on the part of the ethnic communities in Bosnia toward each other and the BiH government after a series of national and local elections demonstrated that Bosnia-Herzegovina could indeed hang together. In Croatia, another area of concern, the question in 2001 is whether the radical Croat nationalists would "seize" the government legally or provoke a renewal of the conflict with Bosnia. That didn't happen either. I think there it was a case not so much of NATO active diplomacy, although certainly in Zagreb that was very important, but a kind of moral suasion. NATO and the EU combined to tell the Croatians that they had to behave, especially if they were to be accepted in the Partnership for Peace, which they wanted very much, and to gain legitimacy vis-à-vis Belgrade which was looking for any way it could to minimize or humiliate in some cases the elected government in Zagreb. This is the post-Tudjman government. We had close relations with the OSCE mission in Zagreb and kept in close contact with our embassy as well as SFOR, the NATO command in BiH. All of us worked on the government in Zagreb to play it straight and helped it to mature.

Q: I was just thinking that you were blessed with having the Balkans and then those two firm friends Greece and Turkey to deal with. I was consul general in Naples back when Admiral Crowe was CINC and he would roll his eyes when you talked about Greece and Turkey. You know, when you think about the rest of Europe, I mean they settle things in marble halls and do things in a traditional way. As soon as you move into the Balkans and Greece and Turkey, here you've got people who are kind of allies at each other's throats.

LA PORTA: If I could just finish up with a footnote on the Balkans before going to that other Balkan country, Greece.

Q: I have to point out that I was consul general in Athens and I remarked to somebody, well, you know, Balkan justice referring to the Greeks, is not like the justice in the United States and it was a headline thing in the papers. The American consul general had called Greece a Balkan country.

LA PORTA: Well, you talk about Balkan justice today and CNN had a headline that I saw while eating lunch an hour or so ago, was the assassination of the sports editor of a newspaper, I believe it was in Athens, who apparently was responsible for collecting some evidence on Greek doping scandals during the Olympic games. Balkan justice was meted out to him.

Let me point out one small paradox. If you can believe it, the country that probably showed steady, not always consistent, improvement over the three years I was in Naples and since has, believe it or not, been Albania, as faction-ridden as that country is between the warlords, Sali Berisha and his rivals, and its very low economic base. I used to compare the level of development in Albania with the least developed parts of Indonesia. The Albanians managed to create several governments that did cooperate not only with their neighbors, but also within the coalitions they formed. They began to provide more better government than not.

They put a lot of the worst tendencies beside them, including corruption, and they have begun to

do some very useful things militarily. They allowed NATO and U.S. forces to use Albania for training exercises en route to Iraq and Afghanistan. They have been extremely responsible in the kinds of diplomacy that they pursued in the region, including the tripartite relationship between Croatia, Albania and Macedonia, in trying to get more responsible governments together to look at issues of border security, transnational crime and a few other things. In a funny kind of way, Albania which during the decade of the '90s was driven by two periods of severe inter-ethnic conflict, they now are beginning to show signs of being respectable. Remarkable.

Q: I take it Slovenia was a rather benign spot, was it?

LA PORTA: Slovenia was benign, but they also took pains until about the middle of last year not to involve themselves very much in the former Yugoslavia, as the people who considered themselves the most Western, closest to Italy and sophisticated. That is how they viewed themselves, calling Slovenia the Alps of Southern Europe and looking northward and westward as opposed to southward. The place where they have recently come into trouble with some of their neighbors has been the revival of some territorially inconsequential border issues with Croatia. I don't know why, and I'm not an expert in this area, it was pandering to some domestic hardline sentiment or just simply out of spite that they decided to revive some of these arguments, but it seems to me that if NATO and the EU combined to sit the two down, lock them in a room and come out with an agreement that will be binding to settle these minor disputes, they could probably do it.

Q: Let's talk before we move to the broader picture, the squabbling NATO allies.

LA PORTA: Not having served in Athens, but having served in Turkey, one of the things we always used to say is don't forget that hysteria is a Greek word.

Q: I'll agree with you.

LA PORTA: From the NATO command standpoint you're exactly right, whether it was commanders like Admiral Crowe or more recent ones, you could always count on these two allies behaving badly and consuming inordinate amounts of time of very senior people in NATO. The only, let me put it this way, I think there are a few good ways of getting beyond the history of challenge and response, like two teenagers who continually are needling each other and cannot find it possible to behave in a civil way toward each other. These two countries still have not grown out of their adolescence in the modern era.

One of the things that I felt that was consequential in terms of NATO attitudes vis-à-vis both Greece and Turkey was really developments in Afghanistan, Iraq and in other places in the Middle East. I argued both in Naples and in Brussels, and even in Washington, that it was time for NATO to adopt a mature alliance policy on the two rivals. This couldn't be done at the regional command level, but needs to be said to both Greece and Turkey, look, we've got more important business than to tend to your disputes over air space, ostensible rearming of one or another Greek island off the coast of Turkey, or some other dispute concerning transit of ships or aircraft. Until you guys figure out that you really want to adopt a more mature approach – mature probably wasn't the word we want to use but something like that – then NATO is not going to

consider using any of the locations in your countries for exercises, training or other purposes. In other words, if they are not willing to fulfill their obligations as allies, then some of the political and tangible benefits can be withdrawn or held in abeyance.

They did begin to get a little of that message, especially as the Iraq conflict was warming up. The Greeks found ways to distinguish themselves from the Turks over develop the “second front” in Northern Iraq and moving supplies and forces through Turkish territory. The Greeks decided to play ball and put a lot of the command and control arguments behind them. They allowed NATO forces to do some training in Greek waters and to use the bases in Crete for counter terrorism operations and for maritime interdiction. We were able to make very good use of those training opportunities.

Q: Maritime interdiction was a major naval counter-terrorism program in the wake of 9/11. Could you briefly describe the program and what success it might have had?

LA PORTA: For NATO, maritime interdiction and surveillance in the Mediterranean were call Operation Endeavour. It had two parts: providing surveillance and security for U.S. and allied ships passing through the Strait of Gibraltar and other tight waterways; and detecting and stopping ships, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean, suspected of carrying contraband such as missile parts, things that could be used to develop nuclear and biological weapons, and the like. Operation Endeavour was highly successful, secured wide support in NATO and was a highly visible counter-terrorism deterrent – to the extent that the French showed up and volunteered ships for it.

Q: Souda Bay and other places. For a long time there had been very good training and then they under the socialist government.

LA PORTA: Socialist government, Papadopoulos’ son, Nikos Papadopoulos.

Q: What about while you were there was Greece causing any problems vis-à-vis Macedonia or the former Republic of Macedonia?

LA PORTA: FYROM, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. When you referred to it in NATO the parlance you had to use those words by Greek insistence; in international fora they were known as FYROM rather than simply Macedonia. Yes, the Greeks never let an opportunity go by when they didn’t remind you of their complaint with the Macedonians about the name of their country. There again it’s a matter of let’s grow up rather than a question of false nationalistic pride, pure and simple. In FYROM/Macedonia today you have some of the best preserved Greek Orthodox churches, ruins and artifacts. In fact there were a considerable number of Macedonian pieces in the series of exhibitions on Orthodox religion that was at the New York Metropolitan Museum last year. The things there are truly remarkable and the government in Skopje has taken great pains to preserve them.

The recent Turkish problems that we had vis-à-vis Iraq truly constitute a blunder in U.S. diplomacy. I’ve said that many people whom I tend to admire, like Paul Wolfowitz and Marc Grossman who were the two people in the United States government most conversant with

Turkish affairs, botched it so badly in the run-up to the Iraq conflict. Although those individuals jointly and individually made virtually monthly visits to Ankara to try to get Turkey to come around to some kind of agreement on using Southern Turkey as a conduit for troops as well as supplies and other things into the North and also to put some limits on the potential bad behavior of the Kurds. This would have been in Ankara's interest but we failed to secure that agreement. On the basis of my contacts in Ankara, both on the U.S. and Turkish sides, Washington simply didn't understand what the Turks required in terms of assurances, more than assurances, guarantees that they were going to benefit from the situation in the post-conflict environment.

For example, the 1991 Persian Gulf War resulted in a huge outpouring of Kurdish refugees from the North across the border into Turkey. There were reasons for that, but basically the international effort to contain and mitigate the plight of those people cost a few billion dollars along the way. The Turks rightly so didn't want that to happen again, yet nothing that the United States could do could give them assurances that wasn't going to happen. Likewise, Washington found it impossible to give a guarantee that the Kurds would not eventually go their own way and have some kind of independent or excessively autonomist status within Iraq. We could not find a way to bridge that gap. Beyond the political realm we wouldn't even give them assurances that the Turks would get a cut of the military supply business, construction and other things in Iraq that we ourselves could not do well.

Q: You know, you were following this and I was just actually looking at newspapers, I got the feeling that part of the problem was that you had a new Turkish government, more of an Islamist government that you've had before, but a secular Islamist government and all and sort of voting against helping the United States is kind of a way of cutting its teeth and it required a little more time to say, okay, you got that out of your system, now let's talk Turkey or something like that.

LA PORTA: Literally and figuratively. I think that's correct, but I think there was also a fourth fundamental misunderstanding in addition to the ones I've listed. We did not understand clearly what was happening on the political side within Turkey. The Turkish General Staff (TGS), no matter how long we negotiated with them or thought we were negotiating with them, really was passing the buck to the new government of Tayyip Erdogan as a litmus test on whether that government was going to measure up in pursuing Turkey's national interests as the TGS defined them.

Q: As opposed to being more Islamist.

LA PORTA: Exactly. We didn't understand that it was too late by the middle of January 2003 that we had to start writing down these understandings and guarantees, unlike the Gulf War in 1991-92 when a lot of assumptions made, but the United States was seen by the Turks and others not to deliver. Secondarily, I think that we didn't understand what the Turkish General Staff was trying to do politically, that was basically to put the monkey on the back of the civilian parliament to sanction their role as a NATO member in the Iraq conflict.

Q: The Turkish General Staff is doing this and you're NATO SOUTH, I would think that TGS would say, hey fellows to the admiral and to you and all this is what we're doing, go back to your State Department, Department of Defense and explain what we're doing.

LA PORTA: I don't recall whether they made it that explicit although I think that there were some people in the Turkish General Staff who had closer contacts with high ranking American military officers who said that. On the other hand, Washington basically tried to get away with the argument that was clearly inadequate that you, our allies, have an obligation to do things for us and, by the way, don't forget all the things that the United States has done for Turkey over the years. It wasn't enough. I don't think that the specificity and degree of understanding or knowledge on the part of our top people was adequate, based on looking at correspondence, records of meetings and reports from Washington as well as reporting from the field in that pre-Iraq conflict period.

Q: I may be showing a prejudice or a bias or something, but from what you're saying I feel a couple of things all over of Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz who was very impatient and had taken the State Department almost out of the picture and were pressing ahead and everything was in a hurry and they knew best. Were you getting that feeling in Naples?

LA PORTA: There was no question about that, but in the Turkish situation there was a fundamental miscalculation in terms of how we chose to deploy our forces. We had ships laden with logistical supplies and later on, just before the onset of hostilities, with troops sitting off the coast of Southern Turkey for four months. Our commanders were distraught from day to day at not getting anywhere on the Turkish problem. I believe it was the result of fundamental understanding in Washington as to what the Turks really required.

Q: I mean here you are sitting as the political advisor to, as I take it although this is done out of CENTCOM, essentially this was NATO SOUTH troops and all that, what were you all doing on this?

LA PORTA: In a technical sense there were a couple of things that were our responsibility, not CENTCOM's. Number one, NATO did set up a defensive command because they weren't going to allow troops and other things to transit Turkey. That command, after some negotiations which really weren't all that painful, was set up in Southern Turkey at Izmir and Incirlik Air Base. NATO did insert air defense batteries and we deployed AWACS aircraft to surveil the battle space over Southern Turkey in defense of allied territory. And the Turks appreciated although they welshed out on their large alliance obligations.

Q: Who was the enemy?

LA PORTA: The expectation was there could have been an adventure by some Iraqi armed forces or the use of weapons of mass destruction of some sort against, if not Turkish territory, against the Kurds in the North. There were also concerns about potential Russian reactions to the onset of hostilities. The Russians were making threatening noises, as were the Iranians, about taking over some territory. The Russians were going to send "humanitarian forces" from Russia to take a role in the situation. Then the Iranians were clearly supporting the Ansar al-Islam, which was holed up in extreme eastern Kurdistan, but still adjoining Turkey. There were a few things out there, not to mention the security of the pipelines that ran through Southern Turkey. But NATO did stand up a command that was largely air defense. It was a multinational

command, and it took a lot of negotiations with the Turks to figure out where to put in the communication centers and other things. What the whole escapade showed, in my view, was that the U.S. political miscalculation revealed fault lines between a number of important relationships in the region.

Q: Before we move to the Iraq War, I'd like to check out something before Osama Bin Laden attacking the World Trade Center on 9/11/01. You got there just about the time the Bush II administration came into power and there were a series of moves which almost right away set the stage for unhappiness on the part of many people in NATO, "old" Europe and all that, missile defense, and not signing the International Criminal Court statute. Anyway, I mean most of these moves seemed to be the United States was repudiating many of its past stands as far as being one and going great unilaterally into things. I mean were you picking this up or was this a difficult time?

LA PORTA: I think it was. The whole souring of the relationships with the various allies of "old" Europe was a continuing phenomenon. From the NATO perspective it was borne out of a certain amount of frustration as for the most part the NATO forces were not modernizing to the degree that the United States thought was necessary to make them fully combat capable. We're seeing this right now in Iraq and in terms of some coalition contributions in Afghanistan.

The second thing is that the European countries over the decade of the '90s had not made the kind of investments in upgrading their capabilities, for example, in long range air, combat surveillance systems or intelligence gathering and many other ways that would have allowed them to minimally keep pace with the United States. So by the time of the George W. Bush administration there was already a climate of non-performance, if you will, on the part of the NATO allies.

The third thing that I think was important, and a number of writers like Robert Kagan have been very forceful if not brilliant in pointing this out, is the growth of a European identity and mentality that is very much at odds with the United States. There is a growing estrangement in tone and substance of the development of an EU or European system that looks toward increasing laws, heavy regulation, heavy protection of social systems and rights, and heavy taxation. This occurred during the Reagan and Bush I administrations and is still continuing into the Clinton administration. The United States is moving in a very different way toward liberalization, deregulation, toward at least until recently, fiscal responsibility, debt reduction, liberalization of trade, etc. The Europeans, it became apparent by 2000 and 2001, had moved very heavily in exactly the opposite directions. Today you have very different societies, not irreconcilable, but they certainly look a lot different.

Q: Did you find a developing visceral dislike for Bush or did that take the Iraq War?

LA PORTA: I think that had begun before the Iraq War. In fact I think it began right after 9/11 with the "axis of evil" and the cowboy mentality that even had some negative reactions within the United States. I think that the Quadrennial Defense Review with its strategic doctrine, declaration of preemptive warfare, putting things out there in very stark reality, black and white, are you with us or against us – Europeans have found all of that grating and highly offensive. It's

more than style. It's more than cowboyism at its worst, but these symptoms underlay a deeper division between where Europe was headed and where the United States was headed.

Personally I was not happy in most respects with our diplomacy in Brussels, both in the EU and in NATO. In the beginning we tried in traditional ways to bring people together and to paper over the differences, or to find cosmetic ways of dealing with some of these very different or divergent patterns. In the EU in particular, there was a total lack of candor. In the G-8 process as well on the economic side there was always a willingness of the United States to do those things that were of benefit to us, but not to pay much attention to what any of the other seven were interested in. There was a failure in the EU to really talk, as well as in the OECD to some extent, candidly about the economic differences, really draw them out, seek solutions, for example, on the question of subsidies. Year after year we tolerated the different abuses of subsidies which was akin to substance abuse; you're talking about subsidies abuse. We abuse, they abuse, but we abuse in different ways and we never really deal with the fundamental problem. We allowed this to go on and never really dealt with the underlying problems of how are we going to identify common interests in order to focus on something better than the systems that we now have where things are just getting worse.

In NATO I felt that the Bush administration decided from the beginning that they weren't going to try hard to deal with the allies. Consequently our mission in Brussels, Nick Burns and before him Sandy (Alexander) Vershbow were always left with a weak hand. They didn't have the authority to really go in there and get some agreements on defense policy or on other things. I think that the strong language that has been used by Washington simply made things worse without an effort to help things get better.

Q: You were saying, here's what we can do.

LA PORTA: No, we never really entered a real negotiating situation. We would go into defense planning committee meetings or meetings on the ministerial level of one kind or another and we'd put our views on the table. We'd make a strong speech, usually backed up by the NATO Secretary General who was very much on our side. George Robertson was probably more American in his approach on NATO defense matters than anybody in Washington. Yet we never really took those issues down to a level where governments could focus on them in concrete ways. We lectured, we hectored, we abused and that eventually got nowhere. You just wound up turning off any friends you had in these governments.

Q: I come away looking at sort of the major picture that as the European Union has developed particularly Germany and France, that the United States has world interests and Europe essentially has obviously European interests and different economic interests and trying to make a buck here or there, and not being terribly worried about who is supplying the money.

LA PORTA: The European abuses were abominable. Yet many of the things that are beginning to come to light and many of the things have not yet come to light have been known for years. For example, the French support of the Iraqi military, bribing everybody in sight in Baghdad, and being party to Saddam Hussein's scams over the years. We never blew the whistle on them. This is so characteristic of the way we've inadequately dealt with bad people like Saddam Hussein or

terrorist threats. We have covered up and we've lurched from incident to incident. We've not dealt with the underlying issues. We knew that Iraq was learning nuclear technology for decades and never did anything about it. We know that the North Koreans have been engaged in every kind of transnational criminal activity that you can imagine, but yet over the years nothing had been done about it.

Eventually you pay for inaction or turning a blind eye for political or whatever other kinds of reasons or just simply sometimes because a job is too hard. Now, and this may be an ultra realist point of view, when it comes to terrorism one of the messages that we have pretty much unsuccessfully tried to send in the United Nations and NATO that it's time that this kind of neglectful behavior has to stop. The international community has to do things together, not separately, while Washington is currently talking unilaterally. You have to do things together to begin to deal with the aspects of the problem, whether it's law enforcement, intelligence, coordination or development of multilateral and other kinds of institutions. I firmly believe that we have not made use of NATO to fulfill legitimate U.S. interests in these areas. The current attitude within the administration is well, we're not going to deal with NATO because it's too hard or because we'll just into a current unsatisfactory fight with the French. This is the wrong attitude. I think you have to go in and find ways of doing even if that means finding a new consensus on a new decision making procedure or simply not allowing the French to stand in our way.

Q: Did you feel that you were getting. I mean in the first place did you feel you were almost in, I won't say in an enemy camp, but you were a State Department officer with your Secretary of State being Colin Powell and you're in a military command with a Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and they seem to have been on divergent tracks for a long time with Rumsfeld winning almost every round. Did you get that feeling?

LA PORTA: There's no question that the senior commanders that I knew, whether in Brussels or in Naples, were appalled and in some cases despondent over a lot of the attitudes and directives that came out of Washington from Rumsfeld in particular. The U.S. military, going back to the end of World War II, had become accustomed to operating in alliances and coalitions. When they saw this unilateralism come along and DOD's civilian bureaucracy in Washington trumping military advice at every turn, any smart commander is not going to be very happy with that situation. Whether you consider strong civilian leadership is a plus or it just further erodes our military capabilities when you have a system when the advice of senior military commanders is consistently rejected, no matter how some of them try to cover up, you don't have a good situation for the best direction of your forces and when you use them.

With regard to the French, the French policy adjustment in Iraq, as distinct from its tolerance in Afghanistan and willingness to interact with NATO forces, for example, in patrolling in the Mediterranean against terrorism, took on a different form with Chirac's election in the middle of 2002. At that time Colin Powell was the Secretary of State and it was clear that Chirac in his own head or with the urging of advisors decided now that Chirac had rid himself of the governing condominium with the Socialists, it was time to pursue Gaullism to its logical consequence. This was parallel change with the United States pursuing more unilateralist policies. So Chirac decided that now is the time to establish the leadership of France in a unifying Europe where it

could A) dominate Germany because of the innate weakness of the feckless and ineffective Schroeder administration with the Greens in his government, B) playing off the Brits against the United States, and C) driving through to assume total dominance of the EU and of European security and defense policy. In other words, the French were pursuing the embodiment of the force de frappe of de Gaulle in having an independent Europe with Eurocentric armed defense. I think our people missed it because we were so consumed with pursuing our own policies, or perhaps we saw it and we didn't understand what was happening.

I think that the failure of this is going to be really the end of Trans Atlanticism as we saw it develop through the '50s and '60s and became to be comfortable with in the '70s and '80s and into the '90s until the fall of the Soviet Union. The people who are now advocating a kind of the reforging of a Transatlantic Alliance to heal the breaches are not getting terribly far in the current climate in Washington.

Q: How did you find the influence of France in the NATO headquarters.

LA PORTA: One word, insidious.

Q: Okay.

LA PORTA: The reason I say that is the French substantially increased their unilateral contributions to the NATO military staffs, combat and other operations. The French have always held back but they have lulled NATO into a sense of false security by providing officers, or offering to pick up parts of the responsibility for NATO operations that were really of importance to them.

For example, our command in Naples was responsible for conducting Operation Active Endeavor in the Eastern Mediterranean. Active Endeavor was a counter terrorist maritime interdiction force that tracked civilian shipping for nefarious activity. It also was a means of deploying a defensive task force in the Eastern Mediterranean to anchor that strategic region while U.S. and coalition forces were in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. After operation Active Endeavor was deployed by agreement of the Defense Policy Committee, not the NATO Council where the French could have interposed their objection. Active Endeavor became a living and breathing thing. It had a command and control structure, it interoperated, it gathered in forces of not only the United States and Britain, but also German and other forces. A couple of Scandinavians came in and even the Swedes came down to interoperate as a PFP country.

Q: PFP?

LA PORTA: Sweden was a Partnership for Peace country. There were also contributions from the Greeks and the Turks in this task force. The number of forces in composition of the forces we had was changing and then every two months AFNORTH deployed a naval task force into Eastern Mediterranean to relieve the Southern region force which came back for refitting and training. Then the Northern Europe force backed out and so forth. This was the kind of operating system we had. It was very effective and today it is very effective.

The French woke up after about two months of this and they said there's something happening here and we're not part of it. All of a sudden the French announced that they were going to send two ships to interoperate with Operation Active Endeavor in the Eastern Mediterranean. What's going on here? Are they just out to collect data on what NATO was doing? Yes. Or are they contributing something by conducting their own patrolling patterns, reporting data and so forth? Yes, too. Obviously the French considered it in their interest to be part of this operation. I had French officers working in the POLAD office in Naples, constantly through the period, and they were a very good office. One of the graduates of the POLAD office in Naples went on to Fort Leavenworth to Command and General Staff College where the French have one billet each year; now that officer is assigned here in Washington as the assistant defense attaché in the French Embassy. I'm proud to say that I had a hand in training him for pol/mil work. The French officers were very good. Whether they reported to their government or to the foreign ministry or whomever on what we were doing in the POLAD office, because I tried to do everything in a transparent way. We had control of compartmented intelligence and military cable traffic so that wasn't an issue. The French will play when it's in their interest to play. A year and a half ago the French hosted a major naval conference that NATO conducts every year, the subject of which was maritime patrolling and counter terrorism. It was a little unseemly that this conference should be held in Nice, but it was a nice place to do that.

Q: Okay, well, what about how did the attack on the United States by Al Qaeda and all the subsequent move to Afghanistan affect what you were up to?

LA PORTA: From the U.S. Naval Forces in Europe standpoint we were a supporting command, therefore it was our job to get the forces through the Strait of Gibraltar or through airfields in our region and get them to where they needed to be, whether in Central Asia or elsewhere. We did not have a command and control responsibility, so our job as a supporting command was to monitor those activities and be an "enabler" in order to get those forces to CENTCOM. In the NATO context we kept what the British would call a "watching brief" on developments in Afghanistan because to the extent there were problems that engaged NATO forces. There were air forces that went through Northern Europe or NATO AWACS involved were coming out of Holland. Operation Active Endeavor was a defensive response to counter terrorism and NATO was a full-fledged operator in the maritime area.

We did some planning in the POLAD office. We were asked by Admiral Johnson to figure out that, if NATO did take a role in Afghanistan, what might that be? How might that be constructed? What kind of command and control arrangements would be appropriate and how Southern region interests would be affected. I had an officer on my staff who quickly got very smart about Afghanistan and Iraq; he was also the officer who handled our Greek and Turk problems. During the post 9/11 period we had to become a lot more expert on terrorism and WMD; my British officer became the WMD guy and he had to know a lot more about chemical warfare and other things. One of the things that we did from the POLAD office was to sponsor small meetings within the command like seminars. We brought down a British WMD expert from London to talk about chemical, biological, and nuclear warfare. We did half-day seminar to educate our senior commanders on the issues, terminology, etc. We had another program on counter terrorism and we had a seminar for the command on the rule of law. We brought in an expert, who had good Balkan credentials, about the ins and outs of legal reform because NATO

troops supported in terms of transition in the Balkans.

One other thing that I was very pleased with was that we linked up with CSIS here in Washington, DC – the Center for Strategic and International Studies that is headed by Dr. John Hamry. John Hamry was deputy secretary of defense during the Clinton administration and was a good friend of Admiral Johnson's. We worked with Simon Serfaty of CSIS to run a two-day conference in Naples for military commanders from Central Asia, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, people from NATO and our usual Southern region allies on challenges to this Southern region from transnational threats.

The POLAD office was engaged in two very distinct, I think successful, planning exercises. First of all we did a study that began under Admiral Ellis and was continued under Admiral Johnson on how to tailor NATO's mission in the Balkans and to get the right mix of military forces, what missions these forces should have, and what kind of command and control structure. Everybody was looking for an "exit strategy" and ways of winding down the U.S. components of NATO forces in the Balkans. That became a particularly strident theme under Donald Rumsfeld and we were under real pressure to do something. We did what was called a joint operations area review, JOA review, in which a small team of military officers, including one U.S. naval reserve officer, came up with a model for assessing the on the ground situations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and to some extent Albania in terms of NATO missions and forces. This JOA review was later adopted as NATO policy and become the planning instrument used by Brussels annually for the NATO council. What started out as an internal exercise later was absorbed into NATO as the planning methodology.

The second thing I was very pleased with was a geographic strategy for the Southern region. This was done by a retired Foreign Service Officer who was married to the management counselor in Rome. Richard A. Smith was his name and he had a lot of NATO experience. I knew that Ras Smith, when I could tear him away from the tennis court, would turn out a good job intellectually in outlining what NATO's interests were in the breadth of the Southern region. We had to consider not only the military threats, but also cultural, religious and other kinds of diversity and major NATO programs like the Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue and other instruments. This regional engagement review became the policy to guide how our command looked at the rest of the region and defined relations with our Northern sister command in Holland. We were able to achieve some changes and the kinds of things that we did.

Q: Were you concerned, I mean you were sitting and overlooking the Mediterranean at the time it was becoming an increasing flood of North Africans, mostly young males from Algeria, from parts of Africa, Libya, Morocco, you name it, up into Southern Europe and all, including Italy. These are having already having profound impacts on certainly on France and I imagine on Italy and Spain. These are almost all illegal people coming in. What were you doing about or concerned about it?

LA PORTA: Yes, illegal migration was a great point of concern, in the operational sense in terms of boatloads of people headed for Southern Europe, NATO having to work occasionally to rescue them, or having to deal with criminal phenomena that resulted from that activity. One of the things that we looked at in the regional strategy was the impact of illegal transnational

activity of all sorts, whether trafficking in persons like refugees or prostitution, or smuggling of weapons, money laundering and other kinds of contraband. Our thesis was, and I think still is today, that all of these kinds of illegality whether in the Balkans, Mediterranean Basin, or pointed at Europe from Northern Africa, Central Europe or Russia, are convenient hosts for terrorism. In other words, terrorism rides on the back of these kinds of phenomena and provide very convenient ways for terrorists to insert themselves in ways that are inimical to the security interests of the United States or of NATO. So, it was our basic approach and you had to take a multifaceted approach not only in military means, but also law enforcement and intelligence. Other instruments had to be brought to bear.

Through the Mediterranean Dialogue NATO in the Southern region had a clear and present means to engage with exactly this kind of activity. For two years in a row, at POLAD office instigation, Admiral Johnson hosted meetings of senior military and other policy people from the Mediterranean Dialogue countries which as I said ran from Israel to North Africa, but excluding Libya. With representatives from the alliance countries, we began to try to enhance military cooperation and connectivity among the law enforcement, maritime patrolling and other kinds of establishments. There's a long way to go in this area and there are very distinct national differences in one or another of the North African countries.

On the European side, some believe that the Europeans still are unsuccessful in grasping this phenomenon and pressure from the South whether it's in refugees or illegal activity and whatnot. They're in a state of denial, they don't want to do anything because these people are not white, not Christian, not like us. The French in particular have had their traumas over assimilating the outflow of populations from the Algerian wars. The Germans have had their own national difficulties in assimilating the influx of Turkish guest laborers and other people from Eastern countries over the decades. In Italy well, the problem is all around you, but so far the Italians can't bring themselves to do anything except turn boats away when they can. There are very few legal and social mechanisms to deal with those kinds of issues. The Spanish likewise are hung up over alien populations, not in the least because of the threat of terrorism and the concern that they could combine forces with the ETA, the Basque terrorists.

What we tried to get people to understand was that in terms of enforcement, all law enforcement, intelligence military patrolling and other kinds of activity, hang of a piece. In other words, there is nothing that is purely EU, there is nothing that is purely NATO, but they all go together whether it's Interpol or other kinds of law enforcement coordination. Europe will not be able to manage the problem of illegal migration, just as the United States cannot manage the problem of illegal migration, until they understand that this is a phenomenon that is not going to stop. Once you understand that intellectually, you can say, what can we do to mitigate the problem? The paradox is that, like the United States, all of these European countries need immigrant labor to keep their industries going and keep their national economies afloat because of aging populations, or in some cases regional dislocations. There is insufficient farm labor in the South of Italy to harvest the crops of grapes, olives, or wheat and other things because parts of Southern Italy have become depopulated and nobody wants to do that kind of work anymore. Similarly in the United States there isn't a restaurant that doesn't survive on migrant labor from Central America and Mexico. You can't pick the crops or run businesses in the Western part of the United States without migrant labor. That's become a phenomenon in Chicago, New York

and even the Washington area. You wouldn't get houses built if you didn't have Salvadorans.

Q: The language of construction is Spanish in the Washington area.

LA PORTA: I can tell you I had a bunch of masons at work on my house recently who didn't speak very much English at all. The point is that until governments say okay, we recognize the inevitability that people are going to move from less fortunate areas to more fortunate areas for whatever economic or other reason. There are quids that Europeans could employ in order to get the goodwill and cooperation of the North African states in managing this kind of activity as opposed to doing nothing at all and in some cases corruption to facilitate it.

Q: Was this something you kind of watched, the watching brief, but except for safety at sea or something, was this sort of beyond you?

LA PORTA: The accumulation of concern among the NATO allies is overdue and I don't think it's yet gotten to the point of actionability. For example, under the EU's Barcelona Process, which is what they call their Mediterranean Dialogue with the North and other African states, it would be possible to cut a deal with those governments and say we need your help in law enforcement to control illegal migration and transnational criminal activities. In exchange for that we will create an orderly legal worker migration program targeted to economic needs of our societies. Let's get the right kind of people and give those people the opportunity to migrate and work in Europe under a certain set of conditions, but in order to do that we need the cooperation of the African states and some in the Middle East to exercise sufficient control and do what's necessary to staunch some of this illegal activity. Nobody has come to this point of entertaining that kind of "grand bargain."

Q: One last question. You know the French and sometimes the Germans, but particularly it's always the French who are pushing through this idea of having a European military as opposed to a NATO military. How was that treated during the time you were there?

LA PORTA: Badly and inadequately. I don't think that anybody really realized the implications of that, had the administration here in Washington not been so intent on pursuing its unilateralist agenda. This allowed the Europeans to pursue their own independent defense agenda. Washington should have worked with Britain, the Scandinavians and several others to inhibit an independent European force under what they call ESDP. I think it is just terribly debilitating because by having its own European defense capability under ESDP the Europeans themselves are just simply going to become content with the mediocrity, inadequate readiness and incapable armed forces. In other words they're going to start looking like the armed forces of the second and third rate countries around the world.

Q: Another Latin America.

LA PORTA: Absolutely. I think that this is an area that this administration and the Defense Department has let go by erroneously. Some in the administration have said that it's about time the Europeans took responsibility for their own defense. My view is very different in that you can go down that track at the price of knowing that the NATO alliance forces will be degraded

and NATO capabilities will suffer. Secondly, you can be sure that, whatever the occasion is to use forces, U.S. reintervention will be required to bail them out. Indeed that is already happening. In Africa where when the French decided under a vague EU mandate to intervene in the Congo's border war in Central Africa, they didn't have the capabilities to get there and the U.S. provided airlift for them. We were also providing airlift for the OAU forces to go into Darfur in the Sudan.

End of Reader